

Editorial

## Readiness to Teach

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This issue explores the theme of Teacher Readiness, examining how it is perceived by early childhood teachers, the sector, and how it is enacted by Initial Teacher Education (ITE) providers. Teacher readiness has led the discourse in recent years and has underpinned several key reforms that have significantly impacted the sector. These reforms have raised critical questions about the expectations for graduating teachers and helped to establish greater consistency and quality of teaching. We received a wide variety of responses to the call for papers for both our practitioner and peer review sections. The practitioner section revisited vital areas for early childhood and raised questions of readiness with regards to reflective practice, design of learning, partnership with parents, using one's own funds of knowledge and re-evaluating at the role of theory in supporting readiness.

The first article by Joy McLelland positions reflective practice as being one of the defining characteristics of supporting readiness to teach. Using the metaphor of gardening to represent intensive but rewarding labour, Joy McLelland highlights the significance of reflection for early childhood teachers. Kerrin Hearfield further explores the theme of teacher readiness by demonstrating the importance of being able to intentionally design supportive learning environments that can inspire play-based learning. Chel Freeman and Krystal Taiapa examine teacher readiness in terms of bicultural practices that support te ao Māori (Māori worldview) and te reo Māori (Māori language) in early childhood settings. Through discussion with students who have shown tremendous growth in bicultural practices over the duration of their programme, the authors identify common themes that have shown to underpin their success.

Galina Stebletsova and Elizabeth Polley delve into the challenges and solutions for building strong relationships with parents, especially when direct interactions seem limited to improvised drop off and pick up transactions. The authors discuss the importance of relationships with parents and provide practical strategies for teachers to overcome barriers of time and convenience. Janice Pennells looks at how being teacher ready can be perceived as the teachers involving themselves in the curriculum and drawing on their own funds of knowledge to enhance their pedagogy. The section concludes with an exploratory case study by Maddie Hendrie, Fiona Woodgate and Chelsea Bracefield, which examines student teachers' perceptions of the connections between theory and practice in their early childhood education programme.

The peer review section opens with an evocative autobiographical study by Devika Rathore and Pearl D'Silva, who critically examine the discourse of teacher readiness, particularly for early childhood teachers from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, through a strengths-based lens. Drawing on their personal immigration experiences, the authors reflect on their own sense of readiness

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as they embarked on their early childhood teaching journeys in New Zealand. Informed by Devika Rathore's PhD research, this study reframes the often deficit-driven perspective on CALD students to one that is more reflective of the values of the sector. The authors identify shared challenges and provide practical strategies to support other CALD teachers in becoming ready to teach.

Helen Stewart-MacKenzie approaches teacher readiness by exploring the concepts of love and aroha, as outlined in the early childhood curriculum. Supported by extensive literature and her previous research, Stewart-MacKenzie argues that only teachers with a deep understanding of these concepts can effectively integrate aroha into their daily teaching practices, fostering mutual respect with children, families, and communities. Next, Marjolein Whyte presents findings from her PhD study focused on teacher readiness for inclusive early childhood education. Her article identifies the barriers faced by disabled children and their families within early childhood settings. Through a comprehensive review, Marjolein informs readers of the current situation and the challenges for inclusivity in early childhood education.

Continuing the inclusivity theme, Erin Hall and colleagues address the challenges that student teachers and teachers with disabilities face when deciding whether to disclose their disabilities. They advocate for increased equity funding to ensure that all student teachers and teachers with disabilities receive adequate support in their initial teacher education (ITE) programs and professional settings. Sandy Radford examines the impact of organizational culture in early childhood centers on teacher readiness. Drawing on her PhD research, Radford illustrates how organizational culture affects new teachers' sense of efficacy, belonging, and well-being. She emphasises that student teachers are not passive but can bring unique perspectives that enhance their readiness to teach and contribute to the overall teaching environment.

The issue concludes with a thought-provoking article by Lynley Tulloch, who critically examines the concept of readiness to teach within contemporary social and political contexts. Tulloch introduces new materialist and posthumanist theories to challenge traditional notions of readiness. She encourages educators to embrace (un)readiness and adopt dynamic, relational, and creative approaches in their teaching practices. Tulloch's article reminds us that teaching is inherently relational and fluid, urging educators to think deeply and creatively about their interactions with children and the evolving nature of early childhood education.