



TE HUNGA RANGAHAU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

NEW ZEALAND ASSOCIATION FOR RESEARCH IN EDUCATION

2022



Lynn Foote Award (ECE)

Raella Kahuroa
University of Waikato

Dr Raella Kahuroa, PhD, completed her doctoral thesis titled *Critical pedagogy in early childhood education: Four case studies in Aotearoa New Zealand* at the University of Waikato, supervised by Professors Linda Mitchell and Margaret Carr. While early childhood education has consistently articulated goals of social justice and equity, and critical pedagogy has been discussed extensively in the scholarly literature, there has been little evidence-based research to support early childhood teachers to understand this notion.

The thesis' strength therefore lies in the way critical pedagogy is made explicit and accessible through examples of dialogic and relational engagements between teachers and children. Further, these engagements were revisited so that young children were supported to think critically themselves about their relationships with each other, and to develop working theories about environmental and social issues.

One examiner commented that the findings chapters “were the beating heart” of the thesis, weaving concepts together to offer “insightful, engaging, detailed and nuanced” analyses of teacher practices. These “definitely make a credible case for the use of critical pedagogy in early childhood education”. The findings were made clear and credible through the action research approach adopted, the evidence of praxis as reflection plus action in teachers’ work, and through the in-depth and trusting relationship build between the researcher and participant teachers necessary to reveal the inquiries and reflection inherent in teachers’ daily practice.

Raella’s thesis contributes new knowledge that has significance for early childhood practice and teacher knowledge in New Zealand and internationally. In recognition of this high-quality thesis, the NZARE ECE SIG is delighted to name Raella as the recipient of the 2022 Lyn Foote Award for Student Research in Early Childhood.