



Pepa 1  
Session: 4 - 10.55 to 11.25am - 303-B09  
SIG: Adult & Higher Education

Jane Furness  
University of Waikato

Keywords: Adult, literacy, wellbeing

**Adult literacy learning and wellbeing: Evidence over time of the importance of wellbeing frameworks for understanding valued outcomes**

This presentation compares an in-depth qualitative study carried out in the mid-late 2000s (n=19) with one undertaken from 2019-2024 (n=20). Both studies involved mainly Māori participants and were shaped by kaupapa Māori research approaches to the extent possible, focusing on relationships, collaborative research design and reciprocity. Both studies focused on participants' experiences of literacy learning and the link between these experiences and what was important to the participants in their lives, their whānau-centred values and their aspirations for themselves and whānau. Two frameworks for understanding the key factors shaping positive literacy and holistic wellbeing outcomes and a model of pathways toward wellbeing developed in the first study were considered against the second study using a process of comparative analysis. The significance of this paper is the confirmation it provides of characteristics of literacy and of people that underpin valued literacy learning for adults and the consistency of the pattern of idiosyncratic yet tangible pathways that adult literacy learners travel towards enhanced wellbeing. This comparative study emphasises the importance of taking into consideration people's real lives, values and aspirations for ensuring meaningful outcomes from adult literacy education. Linking research to literature, we ask, "why does this approach remain at risk?"

Submitted by: Jane Furness, University  
of Waikato

Pepa 2  
Session: 5 - 2.15 to 2.45pm - 303-B09  
SIG: Adult & Higher Education

Tara Winters  
University of Auckland Waipapa Taumata  
Ray

Keywords: assessment for learning; higher education; studio-based learning

### Assessment for Learning: Current practice and future orientations for studio-based learning

Despite a growing interest in learning-focused approaches to assessment, the implementation and study of assessment for learning practices in higher education remains limited. This research explores how educators in the creative arts apply assessment practices to enhance students' learning experiences. Assessment for learning involves various methods designed to inform and support student learning, distinguishing it from assessment of learning which focuses on performance and measurement. The call for a paradigmatic shift from assessment of learning to assessment for learning continues to be a significant focus in educational discourse (Sambell et. al., 2013; Yang & Xin 2022; Ibarra-Sáiz et. al., 2020). In the context of creative arts, there is a strong connection between everyday teaching and learning practices and the pedagogical concept of assessment for learning. Continuous feedback throughout the creative process from various sources drives pedagogical activity. Students' artistic practice sits at the centre of the teacher's activity. By examining the strategies and methodologies employed by lecturers, the study seeks to provide insights into effective AFL practices that might be adopted across various disciplines. We conducted a survey and semi-structured interviews with staff in Fine Arts, Music, and Dance Studies. Using systematic text condensation, we identified preliminary themes while preserving individual voices. This presentation shares early findings and discussion. Next steps include linking these insights to existing research and theory, exploring connections to broader disciplinary contexts, and considering potential implications for practice.

Submitted by: Tara Winters, University of  
Auckland Waipapa Taumata Ray



Pepa 3  
Session: 1 - 12.45 to 1.15pm - 303-B09  
SIG: Adult & Higher Education

Dr. Sonia M. Fonua  
University of Auckland

Dr. 'Ema Wolfram-Foliaki  
University of Auckland

Keywords: Māori and Pacific, Professional development, talatalanoa vā

### Connecting through talatalanoa vā to indigenise Higher Education

While Māori and Pacific pass rates remain low in all sectors of NZ's education, the focus continues to remain predominantly on students' changing rather than whether educators are equipped to engage and support Māori and Pacific students' success. Many educators in Higher Education have limited familiarity with Māori and Pacific ontologies, epistemologies, and axiologies which prevents them from being able to embrace knowledge systems and education approaches that enable Māori and Pacific student success. In this presentation, we will share two key elements: 1) He Vaka Moana Talatalanoa (HVMT); 2) research conducted about HVMT. HVMT is an ongoing staff professional development experience that actively explores transforming educator practice by centring relationality through vā (relational space). We will explain how HVMT has become a Motutapu (safe space) for engaged staff to learn, reflect and share how to critique, and contest their experiences, beliefs and knowledge of Māori and Pacific learners, in a space that prioritises face-to-face connection over digital, using data collected from research conducted during talanoa with regular participants. We offer the conceptualisation of talatalanoa vā, as a means to understand the importance of ongoing, supported relational space focused on Māori and Pacific student success for authentic PD opportunities and transform teaching and learning spaces to successfully engage Indigenous peoples.

Submitted by: Sonia Fonua, University of  
Auckland



Pepa 4  
Session: 3 - 10.05 to 10.35am - 303-B09  
SIG: Adult & Higher Education

Shu-Hua Tang  
National Taiwan Normal University

Keywords: psychological-distancing writing, self-authorship, time perspective

### Enhancing Undergraduate Students' Self-Authorship Through a Time Perspective-Based Reading and Writing Course: An Action Research Study

This action research study developed and implemented a 16-week reading and writing course aimed at enhancing undergraduate students' self-authorship by integrating time perspective, literary reading, and psychological-distancing writing. Based on Kegan's and Baxter Magolda's developmental theories, the course guided 59 Taiwanese undergraduate students from sophomore to senior year to reflect on their past, envision their future, and examine their present selves. The curriculum was divided into two phases: "Reading Others," which used literature and reflective tools to explore personal experiences, and "Writing the Self," which employed strategies such as mental contrasting and AI-generated future scripts to support goal-setting and internal reflection. Despite initial challenges with students' resistance to self-disclosure and their vagueness regarding future projections, psychological distancing techniques enabled students to engage in more in-depth dialogue. Qualitative data from reflections and interviews showed a developmental shift: 84% of students initially relied on external authorities, but by the end of the course, nearly half reached the internal phase of self-authorship, with 8% demonstrating stable internal beliefs. Students reported greater clarity in their values, future planning, and self-understanding. The findings highlight the course's effectiveness in fostering self-authorship and provide insights for incorporating more flexible and reflective practices into higher education curriculum design.

Submitted by: Shu-Hua Tang, National  
Taiwan Normal University



Pepa 5  
Session: 6 - 4.05 to 4.35pm - 303-B09  
SIG: Adult & Higher Education

Emma Cunningham  
University of Waikato

Rama Makad  
Zayed University

Preeya Reddy  
Zayed University

Amir Kaviani  
Zayed University

Keywords: tertiary education, transition, academic identity

### Exploring the micro-ingredients of successful transition experiences for first-year Emirati tertiary students.

Transition is a broad concept encompassing various shifts, such as moving between educational programs or institutions, entering the labor market, or changing jobs (Coertjens et al., 2017). This qualitative study took place in the United Arab Emirates and explores the experiences of first-year Emirati students as they transition into university, focusing on the role of key support figures and the development of their academic identity. Using qualitative methods, data was collected through a combination of written responses and focus groups with 52 students (37 female and 15 male) and analysed thematically. Preliminary findings highlight the critical role of family, culture, faculty, and peer support in easing the transition, with emotional and academic guidance from their lecturers playing a pivotal role. Additionally, students reported a growing sense of independence and self-efficacy as they adapted to their learning environments and expectations. Challenges such as adjusting to university workload and developing effective study strategies were also identified. The study provides insights into how institutions can better support first-year Emirati students by fostering academic skill development initiatives. The potential implications of our study contribute to understanding the factors that shape students' development of their academic identity in higher education, within the context of the United Arab Emirates as well as further afield.

Submitted by: Emma  
Cunningham, University of Waikato



Pepa 6  
Session: 1 - 1.45 to 2.15pm - 303-B09  
SIG: Adult & Higher Education

Michele Morrison  
University of Waikato

Brent Wagner  
University of Waikato

Keywords: Second-career academics, liminality, duoethnography

### From Expert to Novice: When Professionals Become Academics

Second-career academics (SCAs) (Dash, 2018) face unique challenges when transitioning from senior professional roles to academic positions, experiencing prolonged liminality as they navigate unfamiliar organizational cultures and develop new identities. While research has examined liminality in early career researchers (Djerasimovic & Villani, 2020; Larsen & Brandenburg, 2023), little is known about how mid-late career professionals traverse the liminal divide between professional practice and becoming a tertiary educator. This qualitative study employs duoethnography, juxtaposing the lived experiences of two former secondary school teachers appointed to lecturing roles in higher education. Despite decades of teaching and senior leadership, both found themselves novices in a performative research environment. Their extended dialogue reveals how culture shock, loss of power, and diminished confidence dented positivity as they strove to establish an academic identity and career. Key findings from the initial investigation suggest that liminality varies in depth and duration, based on multiple factors including induction, mentoring, teaching/research/service obligations, performance management systems, and researcher development processes. This research demonstrates that tailored mentoring approaches and resolute institutional commitment to SCA enculturation are vital in boosting identity work, research capability development, and organizational return on investment.

Submitted by: Michele  
Morrison, University of Waikato



Pepa 7  
Session: 1 - 1.15 to 1.45pm - 303-B09  
SIG: Adult & Higher Education

Tanya Fitzgerald  
The University of Western Australia

Sarah Jane Aiston  
Teesside University

Keywords: Leadership, universities, elites

### Leadership in elite universities: Who is present, and who is absent?

A cursory glance of university websites reveals an unambiguous commitment to their public mission, an unrelenting attention to university rankings and espoused research and teaching successes, and virtuous statements about an institutional culture of inclusivity, acceptance, and diversity. However, less attention is paid to how university leaders might reflect these broader commitments in terms of who is appointed as Vice Chancellors (VC), Presidents, or Rectors. Curiously, at this senior executive leadership level there is a homogeneity to the face of leadership that suggests that the processes that produce and reproduce these leaders require serious attention. Drawing on Sandel's (2020) conceptualisation of merit, we present a snapshot of the biographies of those who lead elite universities and considers ways in which leadership in these institutions is an exclusionary space. We use global university rankings (Times Higher Education, QS and Shanghai) to identify VCs/Presidents/Rectors in the top 100 universities and extract from publicly available sources (eg university websites, resumes), their educational backgrounds, career trajectories, networks and affiliations. In doing so we offer insights into their meritorious and prestigious careers and ways in which university leadership operates as an elite occupation (Muss, 2021). Preliminary analysis indicates that there is a façade of sameness that dominates leadership in elite universities. That is, although the profile of the university leader might portray a level of diversity, their career trajectories suggest a level of sameness in terms of educational background and credentials, achievements and accomplishments, prior roles and appointments, and alma mater.

Submitted by: Tanya Fitzgerald, The  
University of Western Australia



Pepa 8  
Session: 4 - 11.25 to 11.55am - 303-B09  
SIG: Adult & Higher Education

Ami Moller  
The Open Polytechnic | Kuratini Tuwhera

Keywords: Academic integrity; lived experience research; tertiary education

### Down the rabbit hole: The lived experience of an academic integrity specialist

With the significant challenges educational institutions face in managing academic integrity, there is a growing call for specialist roles dedicated to coordinating academic misconduct matters. As these types of positions are relatively new (and not uniform in organisational placement, qualification requirements, or duties), the experiences of those in these roles have not been thoroughly considered in research literature. In Aotearoa, there is little research exploring who does this work and what they report it is like to do the job. Last year, I took on the role of coordinating academic misconduct investigations for a large polytechnic. A recently completed phenomenology-inspired reflection of my move into the job considers how my doctoral research directly informs my positionality as an academic misconduct specialist. It now seems fitting to extend my exploration to include others who work in similar positions to uncover more about the lived experiences of those reviewing potential academic misconduct cases. This presentation offers findings from my own journey into an academic misconduct coordinator role and sets to propose further research with those in similar roles at other institutions around the country.

Submitted by: Ami Moller, The Open  
Polytechnic of New Zealand

Pepa 9  
Session: 3 - 9.05 to 9.35am - 303-B09  
SIG: Adult & Higher Education

Sean Sturm  
Waipapa Taumata Rau/University of  
Auckland

Keywords: Anthropocene, socio-environmental education, pedagogy

### Strange Solidarities: Pedagogies that Affirm a More-Than-Human World

How can those of us who care about universities and other educational institutions best respond to their uncaring humanist privilege that seems to entail the privatisation of common goods and the deprivation of many communities? If we in educational institutions are to forsake our humanist privilege and live and work symbiotically not only with animate nonhumans but also with 'inanimate' (e.g., digital) or once-animate (e.g., historical) ones – and alongside those among us whom educational institutions treat as 'nonhuman' – it will likely require strange solidarities that take the form of alliances in difference, ways of 'relating to the world and to other(s),' as Luce Irigaray (2017) puts it, 'which require us not to be what they are while being able to be in relation to and with what they are.'

In this presentation, I will introduce some pedagogical experiments that colleagues and I and our students – along with the other-than-humans who also inhabit our university campus – have undertaken to explore such strange solidarities. Through these experiments, we have aimed to experience, understand and create symbiotic intergenerational and multispecies relations – and thus model how we and our students can enact such solidarities in our lives and practice as educators. The experiments have often involved the translation into what might be called 'socio-environmental education' activities that draw on 'walking methodologies' and 'art-based research.' We walk the campus or occupy its places, and sense, talk and otherwise think about and map them in words and images. The deeper purpose for us humans as participants in the strange solidarities that result is to unlearn our human(ist) privilege and to learn to live and work symbiotically with other-than-humans in ways that recognise their differences

Submitted by: Sean Sturm, Waipapa  
Taumata Rau/University of Auckland



Pepa 10  
Session: 3 - 9.35 to 10.05am - 303-B09  
SIG: Adult & Higher Education

Bonnie Xuehua Fu  
University of Auckland

Keywords: civic engagement, digital multimodal composing, systemic functional multimodal discourse analysis

### **Understanding learners' civic engagement via second-language digital multimodal composing: A systemic functional multimodal discourse analysis approach**

Learners' civic engagement has been increasingly acknowledged as an important component in the language curricula, especially in second-language/foreign-language contexts, for connecting students to the world outside the classrooms. This study attempts to investigate how five Chinese EFL undergraduate students demonstrated their understanding of indigenous language preservation in English digital multimodal composing (DMC) artefacts, video assignments in this case. Data were collected from students' videos, video-stimulated recall interviews, and essays about indigenous language preservation. Videos were analysed in the systemic functional multimodal discourse analysis (SF-MDA) approach, with interview responses and students' essays triangulated to interpret students' decision-making in constructing three meta-functions (textual, ideational and interpersonal). Findings reveal that students' videos displayed the argumentative genre structure, and learners combined semiotic resources in multiple and creative ways when constructing the meta-functions in different generic stages, with the highest modal diversity seen in the argument presentation stage. DMC was also reported as providing a creative and flexible space for civic engagement. Implications on the pedagogical use of DMC in facilitating learners' civic engagement in language curricula will also be discussed.

Submitted by: Bonnie Xuehua  
Fu, University of Auckland

Pepa 11  
Session: 5 - 2.45 to 3.15pm - 303-B09  
SIG: Adult & Higher Education

Sereana Naepi  
University of Auckland | Waipapa  
Taumata Rau

Keywords: Pacific research methodologies, talanoa, decolonising higher education, structural racism, community voices

### What is University For? Pacific peoples perspectives on institutional futures

This research centres Pacific voices to challenge the colonial foundations of universities through individual talanoa (as both a method and relational methodology). Forty Pacific community members including current and former students, university staff, and external community members with varying experiences with universities from across Aotearoa participated in this study. Data was analysed using culturally-responsive thematic analysis that maintained Pacific epistemological frameworks. Moving beyond deficit narratives that position Pacific peoples as problems to be solved, this study asks a fundamental question: what is the purpose of university from Pacific standpoints? Pacific peoples shared their aspirations, frustrations, and visions for universities. This paper raises questions about if our community see universities purposes as spaces for critical thinking, economic prosperity or places for our young ones to grow. The implications extend beyond representation to fundamental questions about whose knowledge counts and whose futures matter in Aotearoa's universities. This research refuses to package Pacific experiences into palatable recommendations for institutional consumption and instead provides space for Pacific peoples to both challenge and reinforce institutional purpose. The study demonstrates how Pacific communities seek universities that honour both critical thinking and cultural identity, with implications extending beyond representation to fundamental questions about whose knowledge counts and whose futures matter in Aotearoa's universities.

Submitted by: Sereana Naepi, University  
of Auckland | Waipapa Taumata Rau



Pepa 12  
Session: 8 - 11.35am to 12.05pm - 303-B11  
SIG: Assessment

Thomas C. Pearce  
University of Auckland

Keywords: informal formative assessment

### **A Productive Struggle: Informal formative assessment in Aotearoa New Zealand primary school classrooms**

This paper explores how three Aotearoa New Zealand primary school teachers enacted informal formative assessment. The research drew on critical and socio-constructivist theories and qualitative multi-case study methodology. Three classroom observations and four semi-structured interviews were carried out with each of three participating teachers. Findings show that formative assessment was a pragmatic, thoughtful and continuous component of broader responsive pedagogy. It enabled teachers to make productive instructional decisions that responded both to individual student needs as well as to the complexity of a typical classroom. The teachers' enactment of informal formative assessment was shaped by their individual values and theories of learning, their professional expertise, and in response to structural demands. Despite differences in their enactment, all three teachers positioned informal formative assessment as a core professional responsibility that supported deeper learning through responsive, student-centred teaching. The findings highlighted the complex and at-times competing demands that teachers mediated in order to support their students. The implications of these findings for the future of assessment in Aotearoa New Zealand schools are discussed. They underscore the need for systems at both the school and national level that support and acknowledge the centrality of teachers' ongoing, informal assessments in enabling meaningful learning.

Submitted by: Thomas C.  
Pearce, University of Auckland

Pepa 13  
Session: 8 - 12.05 to 12.35pm - 303-B11  
SIG: Assessment

Bev Coombridge  
Bethlehem Tertiary Institute

Keywords: Resilience Agency Co-construction

### **Circles of Strength: Exploring the Cyclical Relationship Between Resilience and Agency in Early Primary Education**

Resilience and agency are often treated as distinct in educational discourse; resilience as a trait aiding recovery, and agency as a capacity for intentional action. Drawing on research with 5-7-year-old learners in Aotearoa, this paper challenges that separation, proposing a cyclical, relational model of resilience and agency in early primary education. Situated within a constructivist, culturally responsive action research framework, the study involved co-constructing assessment contexts with young learners. Quantitative data from self-perception surveys showed gains in persistence, self-belief, and decision-making. Qualitative analysis revealed a dynamic interplay: agentic actions, designing and reflecting on assessments, led to challenges and affirmation, fostering resilience. This resilience, in turn, empowered further agency, forming a virtuous cycle. The findings highlight the foundational role of emotional and relational support systems, often undervalued in traditional assessment models. Building on Vygotskian and socio-ecological perspectives, the study reconceptualises the Zone of Proximal Development to include emotional and relational scaffolds, honouring learner interconnectedness. This research reframes assessment design as a relational and emotional endeavour that supports identity formation and holistic wellbeing. It contributes to theoretical discussions on learner growth and offers practical implications for designing classroom experiences that cultivate resilient, agentic learners grounded in connection and hope.

Submitted by: Bev  
Coombridge, Bethlehem Tertiary Institute



Pepa 14  
Session: 9 - 1.50 to 2.20pm - 303-B11  
SIG: Assessment

Anna Fergusson  
University of Auckland | Waipapa  
Taumata Rau

Lars Thomsen  
University of Auckland | Waipapa  
Taumata Rau

Emma Lehrke  
University of Auckland | Waipapa  
Taumata Rau

Keywords: constructed responses, LLMs, summative assessment

### Keeping assessment human: Exploring the use of LLMs to support human marking of constructed responses in large-scale statistics courses

In large introductory statistics courses, constructed responses are a key mechanism for assessing how well students understand important ideas. While automated grading is often used to handle the summative assessment of large numbers of written responses, in our research we have focused on developing and evaluating marking tools and systems that support humans to mark more efficiently and accurately. To improve the reliability of human-driven marking of constructed responses at scale, we explored how large language models (LLMs) could be leveraged to support rubric evaluation, marker training, and moderation processes. Using a design-based research approach, we retrospectively applied LLMs to historic student test and exam short answer question responses to systematically analyse how these models might reveal ambiguities in rubric wording and explored the potential usefulness of LLMs to assist with the moderation of marking that typically occurs once grading is completed. We also evaluated the use of LLMs to provide real-time feedback on human-driven grading decisions within our custom-built marking tool called Smarky. Our findings indicate that LLMs could serve as effective support to the expertise and contextual knowledge provided by human markers, primarily by surfacing weaknesses in rubric criteria and wording that may lead to inconsistent mark allocation.

Submitted by: Anna  
Fergusson, University of Auckland |  
Waipapa Taumata Rau



Pepa 15  
Session: 9 - 2.20 to 2.50pm - 303-B11  
SIG: Assessment

Keita Durie  
New Zealand Council for Educational  
Research

Elliot Lawes  
New Zealand Council for Educational  
Research

Keywords: Assessment, Te reo Māori, Digital tools

### Te Urungi: a reo Māori vocabulary assessment for English-medium speakers

Te Urungi is a low-stakes, formative, online assessment of reo Māori vocabulary for English-medium speakers at Year 4 and above. Developed and maintained by NZCER, it supports ākonga with beginner to intermediate proficiency in te reo Māori. Te Urungi sits at the intersection of a world described by reo Māori, a world described by reo Pākehā, a quantified and measured world, and an evolving world of learning. As such, it has provided a rich opportunity for us, the developers, to try to balance the values and possibilities that emerge when these worlds meet - especially within the context of online assessment. This presentation will describe the recent refresh of Te Urungi, including: the purpose of the assessment and its refresh; the metaphor underlying its name; the approach to assessing vocabulary; key psychometric properties of the assessment; the distributions of ākonga achievement; and plans for future development. This session will be of interest to those engaged in educational measurement, assessment design, digital learning tools, and bilingual or second-language education.

Submitted by: Elliot Lawes, New Zealand  
Council for Educational Research

Pepa 16  
Session: 4 - 11.25 to 11.55am - 303-G20  
SIG: Teaching and Teacher Education

Andrea Delaune

Keywords: AI Image generation, moral imagination, early childhood education

### **Moral imagination and the image of the Early Childhood Teacher: AI-Generated imagery and 'The Intentional Teacher'**

This work-in-progress explores how AI-generated imagery can support preservice teachers to critique the "image of the teacher" utilising the moral imagination (Delaune, 2026; Murdoch, 1998). AI image generation presents both an ethical challenge and an educational opportunity. While AI image generation can reflect and reproduce societal biases (Bendel, 2025), it has also been argued to enhance critical thinking (Lin & Zhang, 2024). In this study, preservice teachers (the participants) within one ITE provider were supported by their ITE lecturers (the researchers) to generate and analyse AI generated images of 'the intentional teacher, early childhood' to consider how key values for teaching are rendered (or invisibilised) within the AI generated image. This task involves morally imaginative thinking, as it asks students not only to consider the values presented in image at hand, but to expand their thinking by envisioning how these values could be further refined and enhanced. This study involves multiple theoretical concepts from visual pedagogies (White, 2020), moral philosophy (Murdoch, 1998), AI image generation and imagination (Manu, 2024), and AI in higher education (Lin & Zhang, 2024), which guides the thematic analysis of the data. The presentation will expand upon the underpinning theoretical and conceptual framework and present some emergent findings to promote audience discussion.

Submitted by: Andrea  
Delaune, University of Canterbury



Pepa 17  
Session: 2 - 4.20 to 4.50pm - 303-G23  
SIG: Early Childhood Education

Monica Cameron  
Te Rito Maioha - Early Childhood New  
Zealand

Keywords: Assessment; Early Childhood Education

### Assessing Four-Year-Old Children's Learning - a comparison 10 years on

Assessment plays a fundamental role in the teaching and learning process, and so what teachers know and do regarding assessment is a key responsibility of their everyday teacher practice (Patterson & Fleet, 2024). In 2015 data were collected as part of a study exploring early childhood teachers' assessment practices, purposes and knowledge in relation to four-year-old children's learning (Cameron, 2018). Findings from the original study suggested that teacher's knowledge of assessment was somewhat constrained, with a narrow range of assessment tools being used to attend to a limited range of purposes. Given that a decade has now passed, and some professional supports relating to assessment have been forthcoming in the form of Kōwhiri Whakapae, it was decided to repeat the nationwide online survey. Survey questions remained predominantly the same, utilising qualitative and quantitative formats, to gather data relating to teachers' assessment purposes, practices and knowledge. Data analysis then involved both thematic and statistical analyses. This presentation will outline key similarities and differences between the two data sets, reporting on how assessment practices, purposes and knowledge have evolved. This presentation provides a snapshot of assessment in the ECE sector to prompt further consideration of this important element of teacher practice.

Submitted by: Monica Cameron, Te Rito  
Maioha - Early Childhood New Zealand

Pepa 18  
Session: 8 - 11.35am to 12.05pm - 303-G23  
SIG: Early Childhood Education

Deborah Widdowson  
University of Auckland

Rebecca Jesson  
University of Auckland

Naashia Mohamed  
University of Auckland

Keywords: multilingualism, storytelling, early childhood education

### Co-constructing Stories with Children and Families: A Dialogic Model for Multilingual Early Childhood Education

As early childhood settings become increasingly diverse, educators face a pressing responsibility to create learning environments that not only respond to, but actively sustain, children's home languages and cultural identities. Stories hold both developmental and pedagogical potential, engaging children's attention and emotions while transmitting cultural values, meanings, and identities through dialogue (Bakhtin, 1981). As storytelling is a familiar practice in many homes, stories offer powerful opportunities to connect home and educational worlds. However, existing literature lacks sufficient guidance on how to meaningfully co-construct stories with multilingual families in ways that centre their knowledge, languages, and experiences. This presentation introduces a conceptual model for story co-construction grounded in sociocultural theory and culturally sustaining pedagogy. The model advances existing approaches by positioning children and families as active participants in story co-construction, bridging home and educational spaces. It also challenges deficit-oriented assumptions and affirms multilingualism as a resource. In this presentation we outline the core principles and key components of the model and discuss systemic considerations for the model to be effectively implemented. Centring the voices and agency of multilingual families in the storytelling processes opens new possibilities for supporting language, culture, and belonging in early years practice and research.

Submitted by: Naashia  
Mohamed, University of Auckland



Pepa 19  
Session: 9 - 1.50 to 2.20pm - 303-G23  
SIG: Early Childhood Education

Dr Tracy Dayman  
Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha |  
University of Canterbury

Natasha Kibble  
The Children's Garden

Co-authors: B. Russell, J. Price, R.  
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Keywords: Critical visual lenses, visual representations, ECE

### Critical lenses for 'seeing' learners in inclusive ECE assessment

While images feature strongly in ECE assessments, little attention has been given to how and why they are used or how learners are 'seen' as a consequence. In the first year of their two-year TLRI project kaiako, with researchers, set out to carefully and critically interrogate their visual representations of learners. A critical visual framework for analysis, bringing together intersecting principles of i) effective visual literacies and ii) high quality assessment, was co-designed - based on a cumulative series of transdisciplinary readings and associated provocations. Key questions were generated concerning 'what to see', 'how to see', 'who to see' and 'with whom to see', and why. The framework was then put to work in codifying and then analysing existing and potential ways of seeing and representing young learners. Image-elicited interviews with whanau, video tours with Tamariki, video of assessment processes, alongside an internal audit of existing assessment practices - as data - enabled teachers 'see' what had previously been overlooked or marginalised, in order to advance more inclusive representations of learners.

Submitted by: Tracy Dayman, Te Whare  
Wānanga o Waitaha | University of  
Canterbury



Pepa 20  
Session: 3 - 10.05 to 10.35am - 303-G23  
SIG: Early Childhood Education

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Keywords: Oral language acquisition and competency; Pacific heritage children; teacher practice

**Designing a tool to strengthen teachers' practice in supporting oral language acquisition and competency for children from Pacific heritages in New Zealand early childhood settings: A multiple case study design.**

Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 2017) highlights oral language acquisition and includes the goals of supporting young children's language, identity, and culture. Si'ilata's (2019) Va'atele Framework uses a double-hulled deep-sea canoe metaphor to illustrate how children's home languages, literacies, cultures and worldviews can be recognised alongside those of the educational setting. Critical to this study is understanding that Pacific children's oral language learning is inseparable from home languages, literacies, and cultures which is integral to teachers' effectiveness in supporting language. This TLRI-funded project focusses on teacher-child interactions that support children's oral language learning, including in their home language, using a multiple case study design. Our partners include two Pacific Language Nests and two kindergartens. It draws on Pacific values and methodologies to strengthen the opportunities for researchers, teachers and whānau develop to effective practices that support Pacific children's oral language. This presentation discusses the development of a project specific tool that draws on Luafutu-Simpson's (2011) Fale Tele model. This tool is designed to strengthen teacher practices that support oral language acquisition for Pacific learners in these settings. The complexities weaving Pacific cultural values and traditional practices into the research process are explored, along with implications for policy and practice.

Submitted by: Sue Cherrington, Te  
Herenga Waka Victoria University of  
Wellington

Pepa 21  
Session: 4 - 10.55 to 11.25am - 303-G23  
SIG: Early Childhood Education

Mengran Liu

Keywords: Critical policy analysis, Quality, Early childhood education

### **Discursive Shifts and Power Dynamics in Chinese Early Childhood Education Quality Policy**

Understanding government expectations and definitions of high quality in early childhood education and care (ECEC) is important and influences the development of ECEC services and the experiences of children and families. In China, efforts to improve ECEC quality have largely relied on standardized assessment tools developed by scholars, often privileging external measurement over practitioner judgment. Yet few studies have systematically tracked how official policy documents have redefined "quality" over time, and what these shifts mean for assessment practice, practitioner agency, and local implementation. This study analyses the discourse of "high quality" in eight Chinese policy documents on ECEC issued between 1989 and 2024. Our analysis adopts a genealogical and critical policy lens to illuminate how these official documents have constructed and revised what counts as "quality" over time under the influence of international quality discourses. Drawing on Foucault-inspired approaches to discourse, we examine policy texts across three phases. The initial phase emphasised administrative compliance, which evaluated quality based on the government's ranking systems. The second phase reflects international policy borrowing: policymakers imported foreign concepts (e.g., child-centred pedagogy, quality-rating frameworks) that introduced outcome-oriented language into Chinese policy. The most recent phase focuses on constructing quality based on local contexts, acknowledging the value of self-evaluation led by practitioners. Our findings highlight how "high quality" has been shaped by evolving educational values, approaches to quality assessment, and the interplay of government, experts, and practitioners. We follow by discussing and elaborating on the key tensions and power dynamics in the Chinese ECEC quality discourse.

Submitted by: Mengran Liu, Yew Chung  
College of Early Childhood Education



Pepa 23  
Session: 4 - 11.25 to 11.55am - 303-G23  
SIG: Early Childhood Education

Carmen Dalli  
Institute for Early Childhood Studies, Te  
Herenga Waka Victoria University of  
Wellington

Keywords: early childhood policy; early childhood regulatory review; pay parity moratorium

### Early childhood education and care policy in 2025: Who is "getting a fair go"

2025 may well go down in history as a watershed year for early childhood policy in Aotearoa New Zealand. In this paper I review the big issues that have preoccupied the early childhood sector during the current year: the regulatory review; the pay parity moratorium; the funding review; and the Family Boost policy. I discuss the issues in the context of the sector's ongoing quest for systemic professionalism and quality provision with a view to answering the question: who is getting a fair go through the current policy settings?

Submitted by: Carmen Dalli, Institute for  
Early Childhood Studies, Te Herenga  
Waka Victoria University of Wellington



Pepa 25  
Session: 8 - 12.05 to 12.35pm - 303-G23  
SIG: Early Childhood Education

Jane Taylor  
An-Nur Childcare Centre

Crystal Chen  
An-Nur Childcare Centre

Naashia Mohamed  
University of Auckland

Keywords: multilingualism, storytelling, identity

### Exploring Language, Identity, and Belonging Through Storytelling in an ECE Centre

Children's self-told stories make their voices visible, offering insights into their lived realities, cultural knowledge, and imagined worlds. Early childhood pedagogy that affirms children's languages and cultures can create space for these stories to nurture belonging and encourage self-expression. In this teacher-led inquiry, grounded in sociocultural theories of learning and identity, we explore how storytelling reveals both children's emerging language and literacy abilities and their developing sense of identity. Children aged 3–5 years in a culturally and linguistically diverse early childhood education (ECE) centre were invited to share stories of their own choosing. Critical Content Analysis of the transcribed stories examined language use, narrative structures, and the ways children drew on family, cultural knowledge, and imagination to express themselves. In this presentation, we focus on ten stories that illustrate how children demonstrated narrative competence while making visible their identities and relationships. Findings highlight the agentic role of children in meaning-making and show how intentional storytelling practices can foster inclusive, strengths-based literacy and identity work in ECE settings.

Submitted by: Naashia  
Mohamed, University of Auckland



Pepa 26  
Session: 2 - 3.20 to 3.50pm - 303-G23  
SIG: Early Childhood Education

Jackie Solomon  
Open Polytechnic

Fleur Hohaia-Rollinson  
Te Rito Maioha

Derek Hartley  
Open Polytechnic

Kerry Purdue (Open Polytechnic), Erin  
Hall (Universal College of Learning),  
Donna Williamson-Garner (Open  
Polytechnic)

Keywords: Neurodiverse kaiako, early childhood education, inclusion

### Finding our place - the experiences of neurodiverse kaiako in ECE

This presentation explores the positive and negative experiences of neurodiverse kaiako (teachers with autism and ADHD) in the early childhood education (ECE) sector in Aotearoa New Zealand. While neurodiverse kaiako possess valuable strengths, they often face significant stigma, misconceptions, and barriers while learning and teaching in early childhood contexts. Using a social constructionist theoretical framework and qualitative methodology, a research project was conducted in 2025 which investigated the experiences of kaiako with disabilities in ECE. Data was gathered through an open-ended online survey and semi-structured online interviews. Neurodiverse respondents accounts were analysed using reflective thematic and discourse analysis. Key findings from the research highlight both the rich contributions neurodiverse kaiako bring to the teaching profession (such as empathy, creativity, and a deeper understanding of diverse relational dynamics) and the challenges they face, including discrimination, limited understanding, and inadequate workplace accommodations. This presentation will highlight recommendations for promoting connections, responsibilities and futures, including adopting a strengths-based approach, identifying and eliminating barriers, providing appropriate accommodations, and fostering inclusive, affirming workplace cultures and environments. This research calls for greater recognition of neurodiverse kaiako as valuable contributors to the ECE profession and urges sector-wide commitment to inclusive practices.

Submitted by: Jackie Solomon, Open  
Polytechnic

Pepa 28  
Session: 6 - 4.05 to 4.35pm - 303-G23  
SIG: Early Childhood Education

Kathleen Keisha Constantino  
University of Auckland

Keywords: Decolonial education; Philippines; Knowledge transmission

### Intergenerational Knowledge Transfer as Decolonial Praxis in Filipino Early Childhood Education

This paper is based on a literature review that examines intergenerational knowledge transfer as an implicit form of decolonial resistance suitable for Filipino early childhood education (ECE). Filipino scholars avoid using the term "decolonial". However, their work embeds decolonial principles, suggesting a distinct approach to decoloniality through knowledge transmission rather than explicit decolonial labels. The review maps the literature on the historical and neocolonial impacts on Philippine ECE, highlighting how familial and community-based knowledge transfer can be interpreted as a counter-hegemonic force. From this, I propose a conceptual framework termed "Embedded Decoloniality" to theorize how intergenerational practices can quietly dismantle colonial structures through everyday acts of cultural preservation. I conclude this review with opportunities for research that could inform practice, such as centering everyday acts of cultural preservation as meaningful decolonial work and culturally grounded resistance. This paper aims to contribute to decolonial theory by suggesting that decolonial praxis can manifest through relational ontologies. Particularly in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, the paper will focus on the Embedded Decoloniality to offer a framework to reconceptualize family and whānau involvement as "kinship co-teaching" and to promote the authentic integration of traditional knowledge into formal ECE settings which speaks directly to NZ's bicultural imperatives and its goal to honor different ways of knowing rooted in specific cultural geographies.

Submitted by: Kathleen Keisha  
Constantino, University of Auckland



Pepa 29  
Session: 7 - 10.05 to 10.35am - 303-G23  
SIG: Early Childhood Education

Raella Kahuroa  
University of Waikato

Keywords: critical inquiry; early childhood

### Locating the critical landscape: Finding our way into critical inquiry with young children

This paper foregrounds the metaphor of landscape as a way to support early childhood teachers to orient themselves to the conceptual and ethical terrain of critical inquiry with young children. Drawn from my doctoral research with four early childhood teachers undertaking critical inquiries, the metaphor of a critical landscape emerged as a pedagogical and conceptual tool that supported teachers to locate a starting point for their respective inquiries. The metaphor reflects the cultural, political, and economic contexts in which critical work is situated, while also acknowledging the shaping forces of place, time, and lived experience. In the Aotearoa New Zealand context, the metaphor invites teachers to see critical inquiry as a movement through lived space: continually contextual, relational, and responsive. Building on McLaren's (2015) spatial metaphors and Freire's (1970/2018) work in critical pedagogy, I propose the critical landscape metaphor as an accessible entry point into complex theory. Through examples from the study, I show how metaphor can serve as a bridge between theory and practice, assisting teachers to conceptualise their positioning and develop inquiries grounded in their specific communities. This approach supports the broader project of making critical inquiry more visible, navigable, and usable within early childhood education in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Submitted by: Raella Kahuroa,.

Pepa 31  
Session: 5 - 2.15 to 2.45pm - 303-G23  
SIG: Early Childhood Education

Maria Cooper  
Waipapa Taumata Rau - University of  
Auckland

Kiri Gould  
Waipapa Taumata Rau - University of  
Auckland

Jeanne Teisina  
Akoteu Kato Kakala

Teachers from Akoteu Kato Kakala and  
A'oga Fa'a Samoa

Keywords: Leadership, Pacific ECE, Place

### Place-honouring leadership: Valuing notions of place in Pacific ECE in Aotearoa

This presentation explores notions of place in Pacific early childhood leadership. Drawing from talanoa (open talk) with Samoan and Tongan teaching teams and families in two Pacific ECE settings, we consider the many ways place is not just a backdrop for leadership, but an active and shaping force. Our TLRI research collaboration shows that place holds emotional, spiritual, and genealogical meanings for leadership. Based on Cresswell's (2004) concept of place as a way of understanding, we see each ECE setting as a 'world of places' layered with meaning, relational and storied, and embedded in stories of migration, cultural resilience, and intergenerational care. Each setting is also a place of identity and belonging, where cultural values and knowledge are lived and passed on to children. In these settings, leadership practices are acts of place-honouring, shown through nurturing language, spirituality, community, valuing cultural artefacts, and offerings of love 'lofa and 'ofa. Our exploration allows us to reflect on what it means to lead from and with place, inviting a rethinking of educational leadership, its responsibilities, relationships, and the important place of Pacific ECE settings within the communities they serve.

Submitted by: Maria Cooper, Waipapa  
Taumata Rau - University of Auckland



Pepa 32  
Session: 9 - 2.20 to 2.50pm - 303-G23  
SIG: Early Childhood Education

Rachel Dennee  
Te Herenga Waka: Victoria University of  
Wellington

Sarah Probine  
Te Wānaga Aronui o Tāmaki Makau  
Rau: Auckland University of Technology

Keywords: infants and toddlers, visual arts, materials

### Planting the Seed: Early Encounters with Art and Materials for Infants and Toddlers

This presentation shares findings from a current study investigating how visual arts pedagogy can be meaningfully integrated into early childhood settings for infants and toddlers. Focusing on material exploration, the research highlights how encounters with visual arts materials can support rich, sensory learning for the youngest learners. Drawing on data from four high-quality centres, the study explores how kaiako intentionally plan for sustained engagement with materials. Findings highlight the importance of attuned care, teacher research, organisational conditions, and pedagogical documentation in enabling meaningful arts experiences. The research argues that when teachers understand the value of the visual arts and advocate for their place in the curriculum, they support infants and toddlers' creativity, communication, agency, and emerging identities. A feature of the research was a curated exhibition showcasing infants' and toddlers' visual arts exploration. As both a dissemination and advocacy tool, the exhibition helped communicate the cultural and educational significance of the arts to teachers, whānau, and local communities. Documentation panels from the exhibition will be available for viewing during the presentation.

Submitted by: Sarah Probine, Te Wānaga  
Aronui o Tāmaki Makau Rau: Auckland  
University of Technology



Pepa 33  
Session: 6 - 4.35 to 5.05pm - 303-G23  
SIG: Early Childhood Education

Roberta Carvalho  
University of Otago

Keywords: localized curriculum, transformative practice, bi-culturalism

### Reshaping bi-cultural and local curriculum - a case study from a community of practice

"Reshaping bi cultural and local curriculum - a case study from a community practice" presents the findings of a Masters thesis exploring the work of a team of early childhood kaiako within a community kindergarten who wanted to further develop their bi-cultural practices, providing support for children's rights to experience bi-cultural curriculum in early childhood education (ECE). We used Engeström's Developmental Work Research (DWR) and 'change lab' method - an interventionist research practice, as the framework for kaiako to systematically and collaboratively scrutinize and transform their bi-cultural practice. DWR provided time and space for kaiako to engage in their localized curriculum and focus on the bi-cultural practices that made sense to them. The findings I will share in this presentation explain how the team of kaiako worked alongside the kindergarten community to localise teaching and learning experiences, responding to the diverse nature of their setting. As a result, kaiako were able to create and sustain an environment where mātauraka me te reo Māori were genuinely part of the curriculum and where children's languages, identities and cultures were supported to blossom.

Submitted by: Roberta  
Carvalho, University of Otago

Pepa 34  
Session: 2 - 3.50 to 4.20pm - 303-G23  
SIG: Early Childhood Education

Tahera Afrin  
Senior Lecturer, Unitec

Keywords: Neurodiversity, Early Childhood Teacher Education, Consciousness-raising

### Rethinking early childhood teacher education for neurodiverse tamariki

A growing body of research seeks to understand and influence teachers' work with neurodiverse tamariki in the context of Early Childhood Education (ECE) (Schmidt et al., 2020; Sharma, 2023; Tupou et al., 2023). However, 'inclusion' within the early childhood teacher education (ECTE) context is shaped through a cultural lens (Colvin et al., 2012; Heng et al., 2019; Jenkin & Clark, 2013). This qualitative study aims to investigate how ECTE in Aotearoa New Zealand equips student teachers with the capabilities, mindsets and strategies to work with neurodiverse tamariki. From a social constructivist orientation, purposive sampling is used to form a Consciousness-Raising (CR) group with ECTE professionals and neurodiversity advocates. The research tools include focused conversations, reflective interviews and a research journal. While the project is at the beginning of maturity, concepts from Critical Disability Studies, such as stigma, normalcy, the real child and other realities, are analysed within the contradictions of 'personal' and 'professional'. The planned outputs impacting the teaching, administration, research and policy praxis of ECTE concerning the preparedness for neurodiverse tamariki are indicated.

Submitted by: Tahera Afrin, Senior  
Lecturer, Unitec



Pepa 35  
Session: 7 - 10.35 to 11.05am - 303-G23  
SIG: Early Childhood Education

Sarah Probine  
Te Wānaga Aronui o Tāmaki Makau  
Rau: Auckland University of Technology

Yo Heta-Lensen  
Te Wānaga Aronui o Tāmaki Makau  
Rau: Auckland University of Technology

Jo Perry  
Manukau Institute of Technology

Joanne Alderson, Open Polytechnic

Rachel Burke  
Te Whare Wananga o Waikato: The  
University of Waikato

Keywords: children's inquiry; place; unhurried pedagogies

### Starting Where Your Feet Are: Supporting Localised Inquiry in Early Childhood Education

This presentation explores the next phase of a current research project focused on children's inquiry in early childhood settings in Aotearoa New Zealand. Building on the first two phases of this project, we share insights into the philosophical, pedagogical, and practical conditions that support children's inquiry-based learning in diverse early learning communities. A key finding from our research is that inquiry, as a pedagogical approach, offers rich opportunities to connect with place and engage meaningfully with Indigenous knowledges. When kaiako begin within their located contexts, stories, and community aspirations, they are able to co-construct inquiries with children that are grounded, relational, and culturally responsive. In this way, inquiry becomes not just a method for exploring the world, but a practice of honouring where we stand and who we stand with. Through a synthesis of research findings and practical guidance, we highlight the significance of unhurried pedagogies; the role of leadership in enabling meaningful change; and the need for each setting to develop an inquiry approach that is grounded in its people, values, and whenua. This work contributes to current educational conversations about curriculum responsiveness, teacher agency, and the co-construction of learning alongside children, whānau, and community. We argue that children's inquiry, when anchored in place and supported by intentional professional practice, offers a powerful pathway for enacting a Tiriti-led, relational, and future-facing pedagogy in early childhood education in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Submitted by: Sarah Probine, Te Wānaga  
Aronui o Tāmaki Makau Rau: Auckland  
University of Technology



Pepa 37  
Session: 1 - 1.15 to 1.45pm - 303-G23  
SIG: Early Childhood Education

Amanda White  
NZCER

Sue McDowall  
NZCER

Keywords: ECE, Literacy, Stories

### **Strengthening early literacy: Exploring story interactions in diverse, equity-funded kindergartens**

Strong literacy foundations are critical for learning and development across the lifespan. Stories are an important aspect of literacy through which children learn to make and share meaning with others. Few studies, however, have explored story interactions in culturally and linguistically diverse early childhood education (ECE) contexts in Aotearoa New Zealand. This presentation provides insights from a qualitative case study investigating the everyday ways that children aged 2-5 years shared stories across six equity-funded kindergartens. The study combined sociocultural and semiotic lenses, using observations and interviews with kindergarten leaders, teachers, and whānau as methods. This approach revealed a multifaceted view of story-sharing practices in kindergarten settings, including stories that were shared in diverse, multimodal ways; teachers embedding home stories into their literacy practices; and enablers and challenges encountered by teachers in supporting and sustaining story interactions. Findings from this study contribute new understandings of how children experience story interactions in superdiverse ECE settings. Our insights reinforce the argument that story sharing is a vital pedagogical practice grounded in social and cultural relationships, in which both children and teachers play active, collaborative roles as co-constructors of meaning.

Submitted by: Amanda White, New  
Zealand Council for Educational  
Research (NZCER)



Pepa 38  
Session: 1 - 12.45 to 1.15pm - 303-G23  
SIG: Early Childhood Education

Jenna-Lee Pfeifer  
University of Otago, College of  
Education

Keywords: early childhood education, decolonisation, arts-based educational research

### Supporting decolonising reflexive practice with arts-based inquiry

This research engaged with narrative inquiry and arts-based educational research methods to explore how decolonised pedagogies are understood by ECE kaiako. In this paper I critically examine the potential of such theoretical frameworks for research in ECE. Aotearoa | New Zealand's national ECE curriculum Te Whāriki has been described as a witness to and facilitator of frameworks of decolonisation and resistance. Despite the potential of Te Whāriki to scaffold transformative change, concerns over kaiako cultural competency and ability to enact Tiriti-based pedagogies remain. An emerging body of research calls for the adoption of decolonising pedagogies to address these concerns. Imagining Change, a Master's research project, responded to this call. Three registered kaiako from three different ECE centres in Ōtepoti | Dunedin participated in arts-based reflection and semi-structured interviews as they unpacked their understandings of, and imagined possibilities for, a decolonised, Tiriti-based teaching practice. The artefacts and narrative data were analysed using Textual-Visual Thematic Analysis and revealed how kaiako envisioned their decolonised selves and identified the barriers they perceived in their decolonising journey's. Presenting examples of their imagined, decolonising future selves and practice, I discuss the possibilities that arts-based methods and critical reflections afford kaiako as a decolonising reflexive practice.

Submitted by: Jenna-Lee  
Pfeifer, University of Otago, College of  
Education

Pepa 39  
Session: 4 - 11.55am to 12.25pm - 303-G23  
SIG: Early Childhood Education

Alice Chen Jia  
PhD candidate Waipapa Taumata Rau /  
University of Auckland

Keywords: Teacher leadership, provisionally certificated teachers, early childhood education

### **Teacher leadership: provisionally certificated teachers' informal ways of learning leadership**

Provisionally certificated teachers (PCTs) in early childhood education (ECE) in New Zealand are expected to practise leadership in their everyday teaching according to national policy statements (Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2017). With more leadership research available focused on experienced teachers, we know little about PCTs' lived experiences of learning leadership in their place of teaching. This focus is important because PCTs are not only learning to teach but also navigating the additional challenge of developing leadership skills. Hence, this paper focuses on PCTs' opportunities to learn and develop leadership understanding, skills, and practice. A qualitative case study was undertaken in two ECE settings with four PCTs as main participants. Theories of teacher leadership and leadership as practice (Raelin, 2016) informed data analysis and interpretation. I will share some informal ways in which PCTs learn and develop leadership understanding, skills, and practice. For example, PCTs observe practices enacted by their positional leaders and peers, and reflect on their own practice. Understanding how PCTs learn and develop leadership in their early teaching career contributes to building and supporting PCTs' leadership capacity from day one and helps to meet policy expectations.

Submitted by: Alice Chen Jia, PhD  
candidate Waipapa Taumata Rau /  
University of Auckland



Pepa 40  
Session: 5 - 3.15 to 3.45pm - 303-G23  
SIG: Early Childhood Education

Louise Gorst  
Lecturer - Te Wānanga Aronui o Tamaki  
Makau Rau - Auckland University of  
Technology

Keywords: Leadership, curriculum, teachers' interests

### Teachers' relational curriculum leadership: Connecting people, place, and teachers' interests

In early childhood education (ECE) in Aotearoa, teachers are encouraged to collectively co-create curriculum in response to children's interests. This process is influenced not only by the people involved, but also by the place of teaching and learning. However, the role of teachers' interests and interest-related knowledge often go unnoticed in this process.

This presentation shares initial findings from a qualitative doctoral study-in-progress about the ways teachers co-create curriculum when they bring their own interests and interest-related knowledge into their work with children. The study is underpinned by a relational leadership theory, which focuses on the interactions and relations among groups of people (Uhl-Bien, 2006). This framing and a shadowing methodology, known as "observation on the move", were used to explore teachers' emergent co-ordinations during the process of curriculum creation. This presentation will explore specific examples that identify social processes and practices of leadership (Crevani, 2019) that occur when teachers collectively plan and implement curriculum, drawing on their interest-related knowledge.

The presenter will invite dialogue about how the social processes and practices such as networking and negotiating can help teaching teams use their interest-related knowledge to create curriculum relevant to children, families, and their place of teaching and learning.

Submitted by: Louise Gorst, Lecturer - Te  
Wānanga Aronui o Tamaki Makau Rau -  
Auckland University of Technology

Pepa 41  
Session: 1 - 1.45 to 2.15pm - 303-G23  
SIG: Early Childhood Education

Dr. Sonya Gaches  
Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka University of  
Otago

Angela Hay  
Otago University Childcare Association

Julie Watkins  
Otago University Childcare Association

Keywords: infants & toddlers

### Teaching our youngest learners: Learning dispositions, literacy and mathematics with tamariki under two

This presentation shares findings from research collaboratively undertaken with two ECE kaiako provoked by their concerns that highly structured programmes being used in primary schools and international ece contexts will be proposed for ece in Aotearoa New Zealand. There is a great deal of current public discussion about the work of ECE Kaiako in this country, and about what kinds of instruction are needed for young children to meet the demands of society, especially in language literacy and mathematics (Gould & Cooper, 2024; Ministry for Regulation, 2024). Many suggestions fail to acknowledge the teaching and learning already occurring in ECE programmes every day.

Two kaiako worked with a university researcher, documenting through video stimulated recall discussions, care, teaching, and learning moments, particularly related to learning dispositions, language literacies, and mathematics. Data from two play-learning-teaching episodes are analysed using CHAT to highlight infant and toddler specific pedagogies in action. Challenges and enablers for the pedagogical approaches observed are presented and discussed.

Submitted by: Sonya Gaches, Ōtākou  
Whakaihu Waka University of Otago



Pepa 44  
Session: 7 - 9.35 to 10.05am - 303-G23  
SIG: Early Childhood Education

Joanne Alderson  
Open Polytechnic

Jenny Malcolm  
Open Polytechnic

Elizabeth Polley  
Open Polytechnic

Lucy Woods  
Open Polytechnic

Keywords: ECE, Sleep, wellbeing

### **Understanding Kaiako practices and expectations for sleep in early childhood education settings (ECES) in Aotearoa New Zealand.**

Our research seeks to discover the ways that sleep practices are understood and enacted in ECES in Aotearoa NZ. Sleep is a complex issue concerning the Ministry of Education documents, legislative requirements, centre policies, kaiako responsibilities, whanau requests and tamariki rights, as well as their physical, social and emotional wellbeing. The research team is interested in understanding more about the ways that the social and cultural contexts influence kaiako understanding, expectations, and sleep practices. We have used a nationwide mixed method survey to capture kaiako stories and beliefs about sleep so we can learn more about sleep and rest time discourses (using a Foucauldian analysis) and sleep and rest practices. This presentation will analyze the early findings from the survey data and existing research, in terms of current research and theory. This topic is relevant to those who are interested in learning more about the complexities of sleep in ECE and for those concerned with children's rights, and wellbeing in ECE, Aotearoa NZ.

Submitted by: Joanne Alderson, Jenny  
Malcolm, Elizabeth Polley, Lucy  
Wood, Open Polytechnic

Pepa 46  
Session: 3 - 9.35 to 10.05am - 303-G23  
SIG: Early Childhood Education

Tākuta Rotu Te Uwhikura Mihaka  
Te Arawa, Mataatua, Ngapuhi, Ngai Tahu

Keywords: Oriori, Whakapapa, Mātauranga

### Waiata Oriori in ECE

A waiata oriori is a traditional Māori song, often referred to as a lullaby, that was specifically composed for children of high status or rank within their communities. However, its purpose extends far beyond merely soothing or entertaining a young child. The waiata oriori served as a vital educational tool, imparting knowledge about the child's lineage, cultural heritage, and the history of their people. These songs played an essential role in connecting children to their whakapapa (genealogy), allowing them to understand their place within the world and their responsibilities as future members of their iwi (tribe). The lyrics often contained stories and teachings about their ancestors (tūpuna), reinforcing the importance of familial bonds and cultural identity. From infancy, children were immersed in these chants, which were delivered with deep emotion and significance as part of their early childhood education. The oriori not only celebrated the child's heritage but also instilled a sense of duty and expectation, encouraging them to embrace the values, responsibilities, and wisdom of their elders in later life. This unique blend of nurturing and education highlights the profound cultural significance of waiata oriori in shaping the next generation and preserving the stories of the past. How crucial are oriori in early childhood centres today? Let's explore their significant impact

Submitted by: Tākuta Rotu Te Uwhikura  
Mihaka, Te Arawa, Mataatua, Ngai Tahu.



Pepa 47  
Session: 5 - 2.45 to 3.15pm - 303-G23  
SIG: Early Childhood Education

Sue Cherrington  
Institute for Early Childhood Studies, Te  
Herenga Waka Victoria University of  
Wellington

Carmen Dalli  
Institute for Early Childhood Studies, Te  
Herenga Waka Victoria University of  
Wellington

Judith Loveridge  
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Yuying Xiu  
Institute for Early Childhood Studies, Te  
Herenga Waka Victoria University of  
Wellington

Keywords: early childhood ethical practice; early childhood professionalism; ethical complexities in early childhood

### **What troubles early childhood teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand? A thirty-year cross-sectional study of the ethical complexities of teachers' work**

Early childhood (EC) teachers in Aotearoa NZ first acquired a Code of Ethics in 1995 following a development process that included a national survey sent to a representative random sample of qualified educators from across the sector. In this paper, drawing on the third follow-up study of the original survey, we discuss examples of situations of ethical difficulties recounted by qualified early childhood teachers in contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand. The analysis utilises notions of EC practice as relational work and conceptualises professionalism as complex and embedded in a critical ecology of the profession. We highlight both shifts and similarities in the types of ethical dilemmas and difficult situations reported across the 30-year span of this cross-sectional study, and how teachers respond to them, reflecting changes in the practice and policy contexts of the profession. We argue that teachers would benefit from increased opportunities to engage in discussions about complex situations within their teacher education and professional learning opportunities. Policy settings need strengthening to protect high quality ethical practice.

Submitted by: Carmen Dalli, Victoria  
University of Wellington

Pepa 49  
Session: 8 - 11.35am to 12.05pm - 303-B05  
SIG: Education for Sustainability

John Morgan  
Faculty of Arts and Education, University  
of Auckland

Keywords: Place, climate breakdown, Geography

### Thinking about places while the planet burns: Against Place-based education

This paper critiques the use of 'place' in educational studies, arguing that it often obscures rather than clarifies educational responses to the planetary crisis.

We live at a moment of climate overshoot. The target to keep global temperatures below 1.5 degrees Celsius will be missed.

But Google's ngram viewer shows a sharp rise in books about place-based education since the year 2000, and many who invoke the concept of place locate their work within the field of critical education for sustainability. This conceptual paper uses eco-socialist theory for a materialist analysis of capitalism. The over-reliance of post-structuralist (and more latter decolonial) accounts of place risks 'thinking about places while the planet burns'.

The papers uses geographical discussions of place to argue that place-based education is (1) selective in its use of the concept; (2) resorts to vague spatial metaphors; and (3) favours identity-based politics over an analysis of the forces reshaping the world. Overall, the turn to place has the effect of downplaying the types of educational thinking needed to address the global planetary crisis.

Submitted by: John Morgan,.

Pepa 50  
Session: 1 - 1.15 to 1.45pm - 302-G20  
SIG: Educational Ideas

Raymond Genet

Keywords: Coherence, Consilience, Curriculum, Grace, Panarchy

### An Approach to Curriculum Grace

Solving complex global issues requires interconnection between the sciences and the arts. The New Zealand Curriculum (2007) requires adherence to the Principle of Coherence, urging schools to make 'natural connections' between and within Learning Areas. However, making science and art connections remains rare.

Consilience (Wilson, 1998) unifies knowledge by interpreting the arts as expressions of biological human nature, revealing overlapping patterns between ecosystems and society, and fostering exchanges between the arts and sciences for insight. This doctoral study employed these three functions of consilience to enact the NZC's Principle of Coherence and approach what Bateson (1972) termed 'grace' - a state of oneness with others and nature that forms the foundation of curriculum grace.

A qualitative case study was conducted in a Year 13 French class, where an interdisciplinary unit engaged students with evolutionary interpretations of art and literature. Two learners were examined using conversation analysis, supported by questionnaires, classroom observations, and debrief notes.

Their learning was interpreted through panarchy (Gunderson & Holling, 2002) - an ecological model of interconnected and nested cycles of succession. Insights from Hemingway's Big Two-Hearted River (1925), in which forest regeneration mirrors psychological renewal, informed the analysis. Findings show that panarchy provides a coherent structure for tracing student transformation, illustrating how curriculum grace advances the NZC's Principle of Coherence.

Submitted by: Raymond  
Genet, University of Canterbury



Pepa 51  
Session: 8 - 12.05 to 12.35pm - 303-B05  
SIG: Education for Sustainability

Ekene Francis Okagbue  
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Keywords: World war I & II, Impending World War III, Education Sustainability

### **A Bibliometric Study of Education During the World Wars & implications for Education Sustainability during future conflicts**

War has posed a great challenge to education sustainability. During war schools are shutdown, attacked and causing learners to stop going to schools. It also causes students displacement from their schooling area to another country or at the refugee camp where they may not continue with their education. In order to explore the most relevant countries that contributed to this research topic, etc, a bibliometric study was conducted focusing on first and second world wars. The reason is that the first and second world wars can be easily tracked bibliometrically more than other wars that occurred in the past and ones that are currently ongoing. A search string was designed and used to conduct a search on webofscience (Wos) database, and that yielded 12,656 articles at the initial search. The articles were further screened as follow; document types (Articles), publication year (1956-2024), language (English), and Research areas (History or Education, Educational Research or Literature or Arts Humanities, Other Topics, and Social Sciences or Arts Humanities), and this led to final result of 2,912 (n = 2,912) articles for the analysis. The data was analyzed with Biblioshiny (R software). The results show that the United Kingdom is leading country on scientific publications on this topic with 721 articles, followed by USA with 488 articles, Australia ranks third with 172 articles, etc.

Submitted by: Ekene Francis  
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Studies, Southwest University,  
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Pepa 52  
Session: 7 - 10.05 to 10.35am - 303-B05  
SIG: Education for Sustainability

Sally Birdsall  
University of Auckland

Keywords: Sustainability advocates; learning community; resource development

### Co-designing a resource for developing sustainability advocates

Education for sustainability educators have yet to solve the problem of how to increase the numbers of sustainability advocates – people who can make critically-informed pro-environmental decisions and choices in their everyday lives. A group of formal and informal sustainability educators addressed this problem by co-designing a resource over three workshops. Based on our personal experiences of becoming sustainability advocates and our teaching and learning beliefs and practices, six 'types' of experiences and associated activities to develop sustainability advocates were identified. Story worksheets, conversations and written material were the foundations for the 'types' and activities, leading to the development of our resource – a deck of cards. The cards will be presented during the workshop.

The co-design process built an effective learning community. Hill's factors that contribute to a successful community were used to analyse its efficacy. How each factor contributed will be examined in this workshop. They include: our shared purpose; connections between members due to social presence; positive social interdependence based on collaboration and cooperation; situated learning in a specific context where our shared knowledge was used to analyse, interpret and solve a real world problem; and time availability. Future uses for the cards and implications for other learning communities will also be considered.

Submitted by: Sally Birdsall, University of  
Auckland

Pepa 53  
Session: 9 - 2.20 to 2.50pm - 303-G02  
SIG: Inclusive Education and Community

Necia Billinghamurst  
non-affiliated private practitioner

Keywords: Indigenous languages, identity, multilingual reading

### Connecting children and their homeland through reading in Indigenous languages of Timor-Leste

Global evidence demonstrates that children learn best in languages they know and understand (UNESCO, 2004; 2016). In most cases, these are the languages spoken at home by parents, children, and caregivers, and within local communities. However, an estimated 40% of the world's children attend school in languages they do not speak or understand well (Walter and Benson, 2012). Education in unknown language(s) may reduce a child's cognitive development, academic achievement, sense of self, connection to home and land, and future career opportunities. Based on a 2024 study of an Indigenous language curriculum piloted in 10 pre and primary schools in Timor-Leste, this paper considers the importance of children learning to read in their known language(s) in order to promote both cognitive development for the child and culturally sustaining educational practices for a nation. The paper shares up-to-date data on the benefits of first language and multilingual reading practices situated within a context of strengthening children's connections and responsibilities to their families, their identities and their homelands. This research hopes to share insights applicable to Aotearoa New Zealand and its Pacific neighbours.

Submitted by: Necia Billinghamurst, non-affiliated private practitioner



Pepa 54  
Session: 7 - 9.35 to 10.05am - 303-B05  
SIG: Education for Sustainability

Rachelle Hulbert  
Doctoral student at AUT and Educator at  
Bethlehem Tertiary Institute

Keywords: sustainability professional development

### Embedding Sustainability into Local Curriculum Design as Architects of Hope

This presentation advocates for an urgent, transformative shift in education that holistically embeds sustainability within local curriculum design and teaching practice. Drawing on findings from a participatory action research project in a New Zealand primary school, the study explores how Sustainability Education and Local Curriculum Design (SELCD) Professional Learning and Development (PLD) can empower educators to reframe the curriculum through a sustainability lens. Anchored in the theory of practice architectures, the research examines how PLD structures influence teacher capability to embed sustainability into their pedagogy and curriculum decisions. The study reveals that existing PLD models are often fragmented, inconsistent, and shaped by economic imperatives, which fail to meet the complex demands placed on schools. Instead, the findings support a shift towards bespoke, context-specific, and ongoing SELCD PLD that is: practical and hands-on, oriented towards collective agency and collaboration, designed to challenge dominant narratives, rooted in a pedagogy of hope, inclusive of multiple knowledge systems, conscious of and responsive to systemic constraints. Such professional learning is essential to equip young learners with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to navigate local and global sustainability challenges, and to nurture a future filled with hope, agency, and resilience.

Submitted by: Rachelle Hulbert, Doctoral  
student at AUT and Educator at  
Bethlehem Tertiary Institute



Pepa 56  
Session: 2 - 3.20 to 3.50pm - 303-G02  
SIG: Inclusive Education and Community

Lata Rana  
Unitec Institute of Technology

Yvonne Culbreath  
Unitec Institute of Technology

Tewaiehu Savage  
Unitec Institute of Technology

Keywords: Indigenous knowledge; traditional pedagogies

### Indigenous truths from a narrative framework

Introduction: The paper focuses on teachers' narratives of teaching and learning experiences within early childhood education setting that includes Indian (Bhartiya) Pasifika, and other indigenous communities in early childhood. The presentation largely highlights the significance of understanding indigenous spaces through nurturing relationships. The presentation is about who we are in the teaching and learning space. Methods: The study applied a narrative framework to uncover educators' perceived truths based on their experiences. The data captured the narratives of teachers from an early childhood centre and researchers and educators from a tertiary institute. The thematic analysis of the narratives helped us to understand lived experiences, leading to creating knowledge about diverse traditional pedagogies. Findings and conclusion: We share the findings of the study that help us to understand indigenous spaces. Findings suggest the indigenous cultural values from the Pacific nations, India and other cultures were significant for culturally responsive pedagogy. The data emphasises relationships and making connections were important to be responsive to tamariki's learning and development. The research emphasises the importance of indigenous knowledge to empower children by using cultural referents to transmit knowledge. This research adds to the body of knowledge related to teaching and learning, with special focus on diverse indigenous voices in Early Childhood Education.

Submitted by: Dr Lata Rana, Unitec  
Institute of Technology

Pepa 57  
Session: 4 - 11.55am to 12.25pm - 303-B09  
SIG: Adult & Higher Education

John P. Howse  
Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology

Keywords: Vocational Education and Training (VET), just transitions, practice-theory

**Knowledgeable practice and identifying what's at stake for vocational education and training in just transitions: practice theoretical examples from automotive and electrotechnology engineering**

Understanding diverse forms of knowledge is crucial in vocational education and training (VET) given its intrinsic connection to work and the varied ways knowledge is conceptualised across occupational fields. This paper introduces normative knowledge practice (Hordern, 2024) as a framework to identify the collectively valued occupational knowledge essential for expanding VET's purpose beyond economic goals and highlighting its role in social equality and environmental sustainability for a just transition. Using a practice-theoretical lens grounded in two ethnographic case studies of automotive and electrotechnology engineering, the paper explores how practice architectures (Kemmis 2022) influence knowledgeable practice. In the automotive landscape, knowledgeable practice is conditioned by the ongoing development of vehicle components upstream from the workshop but highlights the role technicians have in maintaining the safe and efficient performance of components according to design specifications. Conversely in the electrotechnology landscape, knowledgeable practice is informed by the evolving standardisation of electrical technologies, their integration into the built environment and the regulatory frameworks designed to manage risk. This research offers empirical insights into how practices can change and VET's potential as a catalyst for change among educators and learners while raising critical questions about VET's current and aspirational role in achieving social equality and environmental sustainability goals.

Submitted by: John P. Howse, Toi  
Ohomai Institute of Technology



Pepa 60  
Session: 8 - 12.35 to 1.05pm - 303-B05  
SIG: Education for Sustainability

Avril Maxwell  
Te Rito Maioha ECNZ

Debbie Woolston  
Te Rito Maioha ECNZ

Fleur Hohaia-Rollinson  
Te Rito Maioha ECNZ

Keywords: education for sustainability, pillars of sustainability, multi-pillared approach

**Pillars of Sustainability: Exploring ECE teachers' understandings and practices of Education for Sustainability (EfS) in Aotearoa New Zealand.**

The need for a broader sustainability focus in ECE (one that encompasses a focus on more than the environment) is critical to support connections between place and people and encourages a collective responsibility to sustaining the natural world, all living things and the planet. To continue critical conversations with teachers and increase visibility and awareness of EfS in ECE in Aotearoa New Zealand, a research project exploring ECE teachers current understanding and practices of EfS in relation to the pillars of sustainability (environmental, social, cultural and economic) was conducted. Data was collected using an anonymous online survey to collect quantitative and qualitative data. The results have been examined using thematic analysis. The findings were encouraging and highlight that a wide range of ECE settings in various geographical areas in Aotearoa New Zealand are embedding EfS in their practice, and promoting sustainable practices reflecting all four pillars of EfS. To support connections and collective responsibilities that sustain the planet, it's systems and all living things, the researchers recommend continued efforts to support a multi-pillared approach in EfS, making EfS explicit rather than implicit in the ECE curriculum Te Whāriki (2017) and that indigenous knowledge and pedagogies become part of everyday EfS practice.

Submitted by: Fleur Hohaia-Rollinson, Te  
Rito Maioha Early Childhood New  
Zealand



Pepa 61  
Session: 2 - 3.20 to 3.50pm - 303-G01  
SIG: Education Policy

Janet S Gaffney  
Waipapa Taumata Rau |The University of  
Auckland

Keywords: Aotearoa, historical narrative, literacies

### **A Moment in Time in Aotearoa: The Land, Place and Space of Literacy Innovation**

Aotearoa New Zealand was a catalyst for paradigmatic shifts in early literacy teaching and learning in and beyond Aotearoa. For a moment in time (1962-1989), curriculum innovations flourished in this unique societal, cultural and educational space. This historical-narrative study makes visible the contextual structures that supported the development of a strong and cohesive approach to early literacy. The in-depth deconstruction and reconstruction of historical sources and video-recorded interviews of key individuals has led to a deep understanding of this place, this space and peoples. Their voices speak to literacy issues we grapple with today. The intent is not to replicate or glorify the past but to use the understandings to drive the creation of bold literacy innovations. The overarching theory of change derived from the analysis is critical, coherent, child-centric and contextualised structures of support are needed to sustain collaborative, relational, iterative innovations in systems. This statement provides guidance for future educational design and is supported by six-layered thematic findings. These findings align with the inspirational vision for the original Te Mātaiaho "bringing what is beyond the horizon to shore" (Ngata, 2022) to sustain rangatahi's aspirational growth. We carry the responsibility of weaving knowledges across generations to create imagined futures.

Submitted by: Janet S Gaffney, Waipapa  
Taumata Rau |The University of  
Auckland

Pepa 62  
Session: 3 - 9.35 to 10.05am - 303-G01  
SIG: Education Policy

Marta Estellés  
The University of Waikato

Andrew Doyle  
The University of Waikato

Zara Fraser  
The University of Waikato

Keywords: digital education policy, digital safety education, network ethnography

### **A network ethnography of digital safety education policy actors in Aotearoa New Zealand**

Over the last two decades, digital harm has become a critical concern for national governments, private interests and schools worldwide. Several policies have attempted to minimise this harm via education. Despite not raising much public debate, these policies raise crucial questions for the governing of the online world such as who is responsible for the provision of digital safety (individuals, schools, governments and/or IT industry)? Because of this, there are multiple actors competing to advance the definitions of digital safety education that best aligned their interests. These education policy struggles, however, often take place in 'hidden' spaces beyond the public eye and extend beyond the confines of national frameworks. In this presentation, we will draw upon a network ethnography to examine how private, global actors influence digital safety education policy discourses in Aotearoa New Zealand. The data for this study was collected via an extensive web-audit of policy-related documentary, three requests of information to public authorities and 16 interviews with key actors within the network. The findings show how neoliberal policies have paved the way for tech companies to spread educational discourses that contribute to reinforce narratives of individual responsibility that absolve them from being held accountable of online harm.

Submitted by: Marta Estellés, The  
University of Waikato

Pepa 63  
Session: 6 - 4.35 to 5.05pm - 303-G01  
SIG: Education Policy

Shannon Walsh  
NZEI Te Riu Roa

Kylee Houpapa  
PPTA Te Wehengarua

Keywords: Charter schools, education system, legislation

### **Expensive, unnecessary, and ideological: Charter schools one year in**

In this talk we consider charter schools one year into their reintroduction to Aotearoa New Zealand's education system. Charter schools are publicly funded private schools that are given high levels of autonomy to operate outside the state system. The reintroduction of charter schools to Aotearoa New Zealand included the novel legislative option for public schools to transfer into charter schools. So far, however, there has been far less interest than the government hoped for, with only seven new schools opening in 2025, a further two having signed contracts, while only two public schools have indicated an interest in conversion. This is a far cry from the 15 new schools and 35 conversions the government budgeted for in 2024. We consider the reasons for this lacklustre interest, including funding arrangements and the existing autonomy granted to public schools, as well as what options the government has to further advance the policy such as forced conversions. Finally, we consider some of the questions the charter school debate has opened for future education policy, in particular around special character schools and supporting educational innovation.

Submitted by: Shannon Walsh, NZEI Te  
Riu Roa



Pepa 64  
Session: 6 - 4.05 to 4.35pm - 303-G01  
SIG: Education Policy

John O'Neill  
Massey University

Darren Powell  
University of Auckland

Keywords: state schooling, structural reform, fragmentation

### Fragmentation, segregation, self-determination, differentiation, and privatisation in state schooling in Aotearoa

Since the mid-20th century, state schooling has commonly been regarded as a public good and a universal right. The ideal of state schooling, with neighbourhood catchments, common curriculum and formula-based funding promises greater equity and upward socio-economic mobility for disadvantaged groups. Beginning in the 1970s and accelerating through the 1980s and 1990s the ideal and its promises have been subject to constant doubt and calls for change. In Aotearoa, these calls resulted in a highly decentralised, quasi-market oriented local version of structural reform, although some decision rights that were originally devolved to school boards have been fully or partially recentralised in the decades since. 'Tomorrow's Schools' was established and is maintained today via a contradictory mix of market liberal and new public management ideologies intended to make the system more responsive to families and more efficient for taxpayers. The last four decades have also seen a cultural turn, resulting in a cacophony of demands from minoritised groups in society for greater distributive, recognitive and participatory justice for their members. Such demands reject the principle of one state schooling system for all. In this critical policy scholarship paper, we analyse the shape of the state schooling system that has emerged since 1989 in terms of its defining trends towards fragmentation, segregation, self-determination, differentiation, and privatisation.

Submitted by: John O'Neill, Massey  
University



Pepa 66  
Session: 4 - 11.25 to 11.55am - 303-G01  
SIG: Education Policy

James van Schie  
University of Auckland, MPP Student

Dr Jo Smith  
University of Auckland, Supervisor,  
Faculty of Education

Keywords: Attendance Policy, Schools

### Government Policy Responses to Declining Student Engagement at School in Aotearoa New Zealand

This study investigates the implementation of school attendance policy in Aotearoa New Zealand, comparing the approaches of the previous Labour government and the current National-led government. Using the document analysis method (Bowen, 2009), the study applies McDonnell and Elmore's (1987) typology of policy instruments—mandates, inducements, capacity building, and system change—to examine how each government has sought to address declining student attendance. The research also evaluates the alignment of current policy with the recommendations of the 2022 Parliamentary Inquiry into Student Attendance in order to better understand the previous and current approaches.

Findings reveal a marked shift from the previous government's emphasis on inducements and capacity building toward the current government's mandate-driven strategy. This includes legislative amendments, compulsory Attendance Management Plans, and centralised prosecution processes. While the current policy aligns with many operational recommendations of the Inquiry, it only partially adopts those related to equity, inclusion, and Māori-led solutions.

While the current strategy may improve compliance, its limited attention to structural causes of poor attendance may hinder long-term effectiveness. Recommendations are offered to enhance policy coherence and implementation.

Submitted by: James van  
Schie, University of Auckland, MPP  
Student

Pepa 67  
Session: 9 - 1.50 to 2.20pm - 303-G01  
SIG: Education Policy

Fabia Zanchi

Keywords: Gender equity, Technology education, Enrolment trends

### **Making Inequities Visible: A Decade of Gender Disparities in New Zealand Technology Education and Implications for Policy**

Despite decades of policy reform and curriculum development, technology education in Aotearoa New Zealand continues to reflect persistent gender disparities that limit student opportunity, leading to a loss of talent in related industries. This negatively affects all genders and is especially visible in materials-based technology subjects, where the cultural associations of artefacts significantly shape how these learning areas are constructed and experienced. Despite widespread recognition of gender disparities in STEM, few studies explore enrolment patterns at the subject-specific level in technology education. This research responds to that gap by analysing national secondary enrolment data from 2014 to 2024 to better understand how gender, school type, and region intersect within technology subjects. Results from a descriptive analysis highlight consistent enrolment gaps by gender, confirming patterns of inequity that echo a long history of gendered curriculum structures that remain embedded in current practice. This evidence provides a policy platform for addressing equity in subject choice and curriculum messaging. The study also discusses the limitations of current data structures and their implications for monitoring inclusion and equity. By making these patterns visible, the research contributes to broader policy conversations on curriculum futures, inclusive education, and alignment with Sustainable Development Goals 4 and 5.

Submitted by: Fabia Zanchi, The  
University of Auckland

Pepa 68  
Session: 2 - 3.50 to 4.20pm - 303-G01  
SIG: Education Policy

Marta Estellés  
The University of Waikato

Keywords: new nationalisms, curriculum policies, Aotearoa New Zealand

### New nationalisms and curriculum policies in Aotearoa New Zealand

The ways in which contemporary school curriculum policies and practices reinforce national narratives and boundaries have often gone unnoticed under “the spell of globalisation” (Tröhler et al., 2021, p. 7). The role of nationalisms, however, should not be underestimated in a world dominated by nation-states. In this presentation, I explore New Zealand recent curriculum policies under two novel forms of nationalisms; i.e., ‘progressive’ (Estellés, under minor revisions) and ‘cosmopolitan’ (Yemini et al., 2021) embraced by the Sixth Labour and National governments respectively. After locating these two forms of nationalism in historical perspective, I examine their imprint in the curriculum reforms of Te Mātaiaho (both the ‘refresh’ by Labour and the ‘rewrite’ by National). The findings show how national/global boundaries and narratives become key sites of ‘curriculum wars’ (Kliebard, 1987). For Labour, the focus on the national (and move away from the global) is presented as a pathway towards decolonialisation and the identity politics project. For the National-led government, the embracement of the global is seen as key to move away from ‘tribalism’ and to increase the economic competitiveness of the nation. The presentation concludes with a reflection on the problematic implications of these new nationalisms for social justice

Submitted by: Marta Estellés, The  
University of Waikato



Pepa 69  
Session: 9 - 2.20 to 2.50pm - 303-G01  
SIG: Education Policy

Margot Quinn  
University of Auckland

Keywords: Queer theory, Curriculum, Pedagogy

### Questioning the Exclusion of LGBTQIA+ Identities in Aotearoa Curriculum Reform

This paper analyses the erasure of LGBTQIA+ identities from Ministry of Education documents in Aotearoa New Zealand, focusing on recent curriculum reforms and the removal of the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) guidelines from the Ministry's website. Drawing on queer theory, feminist poststructuralism, and Kaupapa Māori methodology, this study uses document analysis to examine how official policy shifts reflect growing political pressure from neoconservative lobby groups. Key findings include the strategic omission of terms such as 'gender diversity' and 'sexual orientation' from revised documents, and a move towards ambiguous language that obscures LGBTQIA+ inclusion. These changes are shown to be ideological, rather than neutral, contributing to the silencing of diverse identities and the reinforcement of heteronormative frameworks within schooling. The paper argues that such erasures have material consequences for student wellbeing and educational equity. It concludes by urging curriculum developers and policymakers to actively resist exclusionary pressures and instead uphold inclusive, affirming frameworks that support all ākonga; particularly those most often rendered invisible.

Submitted by: Margot Quinn, University  
of Auckland



Pepa 70  
Session: 8 - 11.35am to 12.05pm - 303-G01  
SIG: Education Policy

Dr Melanie Drake  
AUT

Dr Maryanne Macdonald  
AUT

Assoc. Professor Ruth Boyask  
AUT

Keywords: community engagement, democracy, school governance

### Scoping community engagement in the context of Tomorrow's Schools in Aotearoa New Zealand, 2009 - 2024

This scoping review explores the extent, nature, and limitations of democratic school-community engagement within Aotearoa New Zealand's radically devolved, self-managing school system. It focuses on whether communities can effectively voice concerns, contribute knowledge, and participate in resolving issues under the Tomorrow's Schools (1989) framework.

Although this model promised greater community involvement in school governance, its mechanisms for engagement have largely eroded or shifted toward compliance. The review synthesises scholarly and grey literature from 2009 to 2024, aiming to identify spaces where meaningful community participation has emerged despite systemic constraints. It examines how community engagement is defined in policy and research, the scope and quality of existing studies, and the nature of engagement activities observed in schools.

The conceptualisations of community engagement found through the review describe a continuum of practices. Applying this continuum reveals school-community engagement generally ranges from basic information-sharing to limited shared decision-making, with genuine democratic involvement remaining rare. Engagement also varies across communities. The review shows that as education policy has begun to focus on Māori and Pasifika community engagement, research and practice have improved. Some other groups, such as immigrant, disability or faith groups, are still invisible in both policy and research.

The study calls for a critical reappraisal of the concept of community engagement, urging a redefinition of who constitutes the community, who should be engaged, and how engagement can support democratic school governance.

Submitted by: Ruth Boyask, AUT



Pepa 71  
Session: 5 - 2.15 to 2.45pm - 302-G20  
SIG: Educational Ideas

Farid Ullah Khan (Presenter)  
Faculty of Arts & Education, University of  
Auckland

Joanna Smith (Author)  
Faculty of Arts & Education, University of  
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Frauke Meyer (Author)  
Faculty of Arts & Education, University of  
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Keywords: Kingdon, Agenda-Setting, Girls' Education Policy, Pakistan, Malala Yousafzai, Kingdon-Khan Model, Social Stream, Policy Analysis, Public Policy, Education Policy

### **Social Media and Agenda-Setting in Non-Western Contexts: Applying the Kingdon-Khan Model to Girls' Education Policy in Pakistan**

This study applies the Kingdon-Khan Model (KKM) to assess whether the shooting of Malala Yousafzai in 2012 catalyzed the agenda-setting process for girls' education in Pakistan. Expanding Kingdon's (1984) Multiple Streams Model (MSM), the KKM introduces a Social Stream, alongside the traditional Problem, Policy, and Political Streams, to account for the influence of digital media, public discourse, and transnational advocacy. Using a qualitative case study method, the study analyzes 148 documents coded in NVivo, spanning 2012–2024, including parliamentary debates, election platforms, policy reports, newspaper articles, and Twitter (X) data. Findings indicate that Malala's shooting acted as a focusing event that repeatedly opened policy windows, drawing attention to systemic inequalities in girls' education.

The utility of the KKM extends beyond this case, offering a robust analytical framework for the Aotearoa New Zealand context, where the 'Social Stream' is a dominant force in public discourse. The model is directly applicable to understanding how political leaders act as policy entrepreneurs, using digital media to shape debates on key national issues. A pertinent local example is the way former Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern utilized social media to foster direct public engagement on social and educational well-being, effectively coupling public sentiment (Social Stream) with political action (Political Stream) around wellbeing and inclusivity (Problem Stream). For New Zealand educators and policymakers, the KKM provides a critical tool to deconstruct how international focusing events influence local curricula, student well-being, and policy priorities. This is vital for supporting Aotearoa's mokopuna to critically engage with and make sense of the world events they encounter online.

In the spirit of "Ko te manu e kai ana i te miro, nōnā te ngahere; ko te manu e kai ana i te mātauranga, nōnā te ao" (The bird that partakes of the miro berry owns the forest; the bird that partakes of knowledge owns the world), this study affirms the utility of the KKM in capturing the influence of social media in contemporary policy processes.

Submitted by: Farid Ullah Khan; Jo  
Smith; Frauke Meyer, Faculty of Arts &  
Education, University of Auckland



Pepa 72  
Session: 2 - 4.20 to 4.50pm - 303-G01  
SIG: Education Policy

Christopher Burns  
University of Auckland

Keywords: history education, curriculum enactment, education policy

### Teachers' critical curriculum competence and the politics of curriculum reform

This paper examines teachers' critical engagement with the Aotearoa New Zealand's histories curriculum and the effect of the change of government in late 2023. I draw on ethnographic research with a single Social Sciences department to explore some of the tensions that emerge when teachers' journey to provide transformative history education meets a government emphasis on linear notions of curriculum implementation that devalue the expertise of practicing teachers. The teachers describe a challenging, rewarding, and ongoing process of working with the histories curriculum to improve New Zealand history education. The teachers' voices provide some insight into the ways the most challenging aspects of curriculum enactment can be a source of professional pride and enjoyment. Teachers' enjoyment of the challenging and critical aspects of curriculum enactment are used to build on theoretical frameworks that have been developed to examine teachers' curriculum competence or efficacy.

Submitted by: Christopher  
Burns, University of Auckland

Pepa 73  
Session: 6 - 5.05pm to 5.35pm - 303-G01  
SIG: Education Policy

Huidan Niu  
IPU New Zealand

Keywords: Tomorrow's Schools Review, Educational equity, Decentralisation

### **The Equity Paradox: Why the 2018 Tomorrow's Schools Review Fell Short of Transforming New Zealand's Education System**

This study examines why New Zealand's 2018 Tomorrow's Schools review fell short of delivering its promised transformative equity reforms, despite proposing ambitious measures such as regional Education Hubs and needs-based funding. Drawing on elite interviews with key participants and integrating policy implementation theory with institutional analysis, the research reveals how political caution, bureaucratic resistance, and entrenched path dependencies diluted the reform's equity ambitions. Findings show that advantaged stakeholders, particularly high-decile schools, successfully framed structural changes as threats to local autonomy, while the Ministry of Education's integration of reform proposals into existing bureaucratic routines further constrained their transformative potential. The study highlights a central paradox of devolved education systems: although intended to empower local schools and communities, they often reinforce inequality by privileging well-resourced institutions. Situating these dynamics within the broader context of global neoliberal education reforms, the analysis provides theoretical insights into the interplay of power and policy design, along with practical implications for future equity-oriented reform. The research underscores the need to move beyond incrementalism and confront the structural forces that sustain educational disadvantage under decentralised governance.

Submitted by: Huidan Niu, IPU New Zealand



Pepa 74  
Session: 8 - 12.05 to 12.35pm - 303-G01  
SIG: Education Policy

Taylor Hughson  
Te Herenga Waka | Victoria University of  
Wellington

Keywords: policy; England; externalisation

### The politicisation and externalisation of education policy making: Lessons from England for Aotearoa

The way education policy is made is changing. In post-war Westminster-style democracies, the norm was for politicians set a policy direction and then for public servants to undertake much of the detailed policy making work, in consultation with relevant representatives from a given sector. However, since the 1980s, two key shifts have increasingly marked the policy making landscape in Westminster systems. Firstly, politicians have exerted increasing amounts of control over the process. Secondly, policy making has been increasingly externalised, that is, external actors (think tanks, NGOs and others) have come to play a much larger role, in place of public servants. This paper provides a case study of these trends by examining the development of two key policies in England between 2019 and 2024: The Early Career Framework and the ITE Core Content Framework. It will show how political control and externalisation do enable sometimes-necessary paradigmatic change, but often at the expense of producing nuanced, balanced policies. The implications of this case study for Aotearoa will be explored, as it appears our own education policy making is (perhaps somewhat belatedly) beginning to follow these two trends.

Submitted by: Taylor Hughson, Te  
Herenga Waka | Victoria University of  
Wellington



Pepa 76  
Session: 3 - 9.05 to 9.35am - 303-G01  
SIG: Education Policy

Yan Xie  
University of Auckland

Jo Smith  
University of Auckland

Maree Davies  
University of Auckland

Keywords: Critical thinking, education ideology, context of influence

### Tracing Critical Thinking in Chinese Education Reform: A Dual Analysis of Official Discourse and Academics Perspectives

This study examines the ideological construction of critical thinking (CT) within China's national education reform discourse, where CT has been formally embedded since 1999 under the quality-oriented education agenda. The objective is to explore how CT is conceptualised and operationalised by key policy actors, including national authorities and educational experts. Despite its growing prominence, CT remains ambiguously defined and unevenly implemented. Drawing on Ball et al.'s policy cycle theory—specifically the context of influence—this research analyses public speeches, national education conference reports, and academic interviews to uncover three ideological layers: official narratives, expert interpretations, and internal debates within the expert community. The findings reveal a dominant utilitarian framing by national authorities, positioning CT as a tool for economic growth and political stability. In contrast, educational experts advocate for a humanistic, learner-centred approach that emphasises individual development. However, fragmentation within the academic community further complicates CT's pedagogical integration. The study concludes that these ideological tensions and conceptual ambiguities limit CT's transformative potential in Chinese education reform. It calls for clearer conceptual alignment and stronger collaboration among policy actors to enhance CT's role in fostering holistic educational outcomes.

Submitted by: Yan Xie, University of  
Auckland



Pepa 77  
Session: 2 - 3.20 to 3.50pm - 302-G20  
SIG: Educational Ideas

Andrew Thompson  
Selwyn College

Keywords: Classroom management, citizenship, curriculum

### **Conscience via conduct: Exploring the lineage of classroom behaviour management**

This presentation examines how classroom management, and the teaching of behaviour is strongly linked to the notion of citizenship. The student learns habits in the classroom, which are intended to inform their future selves with regard to civil conduct. I will explore how this process of habituation through conduct is expressed in practical teaching guides, such as Tom Bennett's work, then trace its lineage to early Enlightenment thought on governing citizens. I will then analyse the tension inherent in guiding students towards self-governance with an understanding that democratic citizenship is increasingly on shakier ground. I will explore these ideas in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand through a discussion of curriculum change, and its effect on the role of the teacher in managing student behaviour and developing conscience.

Submitted by: Andrew  
Thompson, Selwyn College

Pepa 79  
Session: 4 - 10.55 to 11.25am - 302-G20  
SIG: Educational Ideas

Karen Finn  
Auckland University of Technology Te  
Wānanga Aronui o Tāmaki Makau Rau

Keywords: Decolonisation, Secondary schooling, Teaching

### Teachers travelling a decolonisation journey

This presentation conceptualises teachers' decolonisation journeys as a poutama. The poutama was created during my PhD research investigating Aotearoa New Zealand secondary school geography teachers' decolonisation journeys towards mana ōrite mō te mātauranga Māori and Te Tiriti-based partnership. Applying decolonising methodologies, I collected data through focus groups, an interview and a demographic questionnaire and analysed the data using reflexive thematic analysis. In this presentation I share features of each kaupae on the poutama and suggest how geography teachers may move between kaupae as they decolonise themselves and their curricula, pedagogies, and relationships with Māori. I discuss teachers' and my own need for greater partnership with Māori, learning of mātauranga Māori, and self-reflexivity to move forward on decolonisation journeys. This research aimed to help teachers who are non-Indigenous, like me, to share responsibility for incorporating mātauranga Māori into school curricula. The findings offer implications for teachers' praxis, initial teacher education, and educational policy. The presentation adds to international and localised discussions of decolonising and Indigenising curricula, and questions how non-Indigenous teachers can safely engage with Indigenous knowledges alongside Indigenous peoples

Submitted by: Karen Finn, Auckland  
University of Technology Te Wānanga  
Aronui o Tāmaki Makau Rau



Pepa 80  
Session: 3 - 9.05 to 9.35am - 302-G20  
SIG: Educational Ideas

Victoria Mondelli  
University of Missouri

Keywords: Educational games; active-learning; instructional design

### The ALLURE of Play: Designing Games and Active-Learning Exercises

Higher education has faced seismic shifts and disruptions, challenging educators to find new ways to engage students. Game-based learning (GBL) fosters active learning and community belonging. The ALLURE of Play game design method will disrupt our old ways of teaching by introducing the facilitator's set of research-based principles for deep learning, engagement, assessment, and accessibility. The ALLURE method guides participants in building pen-and-paper, non-digital, innovative learning activities. The method begins by solving student learning bottlenecks and then implements playful, research-based strategies that tap into students' cognitive, emotional, and social needs.

Submitted by: Victoria  
Mondelli, University of Missouri



Pepa 81  
Session: 3 - 9.35 to 10.05am - 302-G20  
SIG: Educational Ideas

Frances Kelly  
University of Auckland

Kirsten Locke  
University of Auckland

Molly Mullen  
University of Auckland

Keywords: teachers' colleges, universities, creativity

### The lost ontology of teachers' colleges: a local history of a missed opportunity in Aotearoa New Zealand

Teachers' Colleges in New Zealand have disappeared and along with them an ontology of a particular kind of higher educational institution that had creativity at its core. The major educational report in 1987 that reshaped New Zealand education along more managerial lines, Tomorrow's Schools, legislated for the training of teachers to be contestable (allowing private actors to enter the scene) alongside a contradictory agenda for "professionalisation" that precipitated all teacher education colleges to amalgamate with their geographically adjacent university. This paper speaks to the theme of the conference to consider the place of education by engaging with the ontology of teachers colleges. We contend that, for a time in New Zealand at least, teachers colleges were places of creative energy and boundary pushing in knowledge and the arts. In our recent research, we engage with accounts of the development of the arts in New Zealand and found they generally overlook the radically creative education that was happening in the teachers' colleges in the mid-twentieth century. The colleges were a place where, for example, a person might enter intending to be a science teacher and emerge as one of the country's leading artists – as in the case of Len Castle. After time in the archives researching mid-century educational experiments linked to teachers colleges we have begun to realise that the implications of this observation are more significant than we initially thought. We have come to see that the Teachers' Colleges in mid-century New Zealand were more radical than the universities because of their ontological basis in a locally inflected version of pragmatist philosophy and progressivism drawn from educational thinkers such as John Dewey and Percy Nunn that did not separate creative expression from knowledge production and which valued the professionalism of teacher judgement at its core. Central to what we are calling the ontology of the teachers colleges is an understanding of the place of creativity in a social democracy. By looking deeply at the ontology of the mid-century teachers colleges in New Zealand we can see there has been a missed opportunity for the richly creative pedagogy that informed and infused their educational approach to transform the university. Nonetheless, the possibility of such a transformation of the university could still be viable – if the spirit of the colleges could be revived to enliven, for example, our own institution's new faculty combining the former faculties of Arts, Creative Arts and Education.

Submitted by: Kirsten Locke, University of Auckland

Pepa 82  
Session: 2 - 3.50 to 4.20pm - 302-G20  
SIG: Educational Ideas

Daniel Tupua Siliva  
Pacific Advance Secondary School

Keywords: AI-Ancestral Intelligence, ai-artificial intelligence, education

### **The Rise of AI (Ancestral Intelligence) Ancestral Intelligence and Education: Living the Questions of Remembering**

This presentation draws from PhD research exploring foundational questions about Ancestral Intelligence (AI): What is Ancestral Intelligence? Where does it reside? How can we come to know it? Why does it matter? What could education become if grounded in AI? In response to the call to "work from where we are," this research is situated within Aotearoa's political and historical realities while drawing on broader Indigenous cosmologies. As a Samoan researcher, I engage relational methodologies such as Talanoa, embodied storytelling, and phenomenological encounter to explore how AI is lived across Pacific and Indigenous knowledge systems. Samoan concepts like mai le pō i le malamalama (from darkness to light) and teu le vā (nurturing relational space) shape an approach that resists extractive academic practices. Instead, the work emphasises co-creation through relationship and ceremony. It challenges educational models based on linearity, individualism, and disconnection from place. Education grounded in Ancestral Intelligence offers pathways to restore learning as relational ceremony, where knowledge emerges through connection to land, ancestors, and community rather than extraction. As artificial intelligence emerges in education, grounding ourselves in Ancestral Intelligence will also allow us to utilise this technology ethically rather than be utilised by it.

Submitted by: Daniel Tupua Siliva, PhD  
(Educational Philosophy), Massey  
University - Candidate (First Year) 2025

Pepa 83  
Session: 2 - 4.20 to 4.50pm - 302-G20  
SIG: Educational Ideas

Galina Grudina  
Whitireia & WelTec

Minjie Hu  
Whitireia & WelTec

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Information technology, role of AI tools

### **The Role of Artificial Intelligence Tools for Teaching and Learning Information Technology and Computing in Tertiary Education: A Systematic Literature Review**

Nowadays, Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools have been widely used in our life, including manufacturing, health, security, and especially in education. Although various AI tools are used in tertiary education, there is a lack of studies discussing the factors that influence their effective application and popularization. The purpose of this research is to investigate the influences of AI tools on studying Information Technologies and Computing in tertiary education. It is significant because AI tools have become an inevitable part of the educational sphere, transforming the traditional strategies of teaching and learning. Through a systematic literature review (SLR) approach, 42 peer-reviewed research papers on the role of AI tools in tertiary education were examined. Twenty-three roles were identified and categorized as roles in learning, teaching, and administration. Additionally, twenty-four factors influencing AI tools implementation were identified and categorized as: factors depending on educators, learners, and administrators, plus technical factors, and social and ethical factors. The study revealed the current AI tools that are used for various areas of teaching and learning. It also revealed the role of AI tools for different participants in the educational process. Moreover, it discovered the factors influencing the implementation of AI tools in tertiary education.

Submitted by: Minjie Hu, Whitireia &  
WelTec

Pepa 84  
Session: 1 - 12.45 to 1.15pm - 302-G20  
SIG: Educational Ideas

Dr. Sharuda Saeed  
University of Waikato

Keywords: Social Studies Education, Bilingual Instruction, Language and Identity

### The Role of Language in Social Studies Education: Perspectives from Maldivian Primary Teachers

The research explored how Maldivian primary teachers reflect on the medium of instruction in Social Studies and how it shapes pedagogy and students' connections to culture and identity amid globalisation. English is the designated medium of instruction. Focusing on Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, the study examined teachers' perspectives on language use while balancing curriculum demands, cultural relevance, and students' engagement. Data were collected remotely from ten teachers in Malé schools via a questionnaire, with additional insights from four teachers through reflective narrative texts and interviews. Thematic analysis was applied in this study. Findings show teachers face challenges in balancing English as the medium of instruction with the need to teach culturally relevant content in Dhivehi. These challenges include students' difficulty in understanding English content and teachers' efforts to make lessons relevant to students' lives within curriculum demands. Key implications include supporting teachers to balance English and Dhivehi in Social Studies, encouraging research and professional development on effective bilingual teaching. The study advocates for bilingual teaching that values Dhivehi alongside English, and highlights the interconnectedness of language, resources, pedagogy, and identity to inform policy and reform improving Social Studies education in K1 and K2 classrooms in the Maldives.

Submitted by: Dr. Sharuda  
Saeed, University of Waikato



Pepa 85  
Session: 4 - 11.25 to 11.55am - 302-G20  
SIG: Educational Ideas

Priya Gain  
Te Puna Wānanga, University of  
Auckland

Christian McDonald  
Taipa Area School

Keywords: marae, a/r/tography, decolonisation/indigenisation

#### **Tuhituhi Tonu: Arts-based educators working across settler-indigenous difference**

The paper will share doctoral research work located at the intersections of decolonisation/indigenisation and arts education. Together Priya and Christian (Ngāti Kahu) will share the story of 'Tai Orooro Tai Auaha', a ngā toi Māori focused, noho marae based educational initiative in Te Hiku o Te Ika, the far north region of Aotearoa. Christian will speak to the vision and evolution of the kaupapa since 2018, as a lead kaiako of the place-based educational initiative. Priya will speak to the research strand that evolved in relationship with the kaupapa. She will share how a/r/tography, as a methodology, supported her, as a non-indigenous researcher, to respond to the orooro (vibrations), mauri (vitality), auahatanga (creativity) and mana (dignity and authority) of marae learning contexts. Two noho marae wānanga held at the University of Auckland were a key part of the research process and enabled new thinking around research dissemination and the place of university marae to support non-indigenous researchers' engagements with Māori communities. The disposition to haututū (to explore through active play and experimentation), at the heart of the marae based pedagogies shared in this research, was found to support decolonising and indigenising education along with new forms of response-ability.

Submitted by: Priya Gain, Te Puna  
Wānanga, University of Auckland



Pepa 86  
Session: 4 - 11.55am to 12.25pm - 302-G20  
SIG: pasifika Caucus

Shweta Sharma  
University of Canterbury

Keywords: Karmabhūm, mathematics education, Tangata Tiriti

### **Karmabhūm as a guiding principle for becoming Tangata Tiriti: connections and responsibilities**

In this presentation, I draw on the Indian concept of Karmabhūm to critically reflect on my work as a mathematics educator in Aotearoa, exploring the connections and responsibilities I have as a Tangata Tiriti. In Indian tradition, karma means action or deeds, and bhūmi means land or space. Thus, Karmabhūm refers to the land of action or deeds. The research question guiding this presentation is: How does the construct of Karmabhūm influence my teaching practices and shape my responsibilities as a Tangata Tiriti mathematics educator in Aotearoa? I present examples from my teaching in a mathematics education course within an Initial Teacher Education programme for critical reflection, exploring how the concept of Karmabhūm might inform the ethical and pedagogical choices I make when teaching mathematics in Aotearoa New Zealand, while remaining grounded in Tangata Tiriti commitments and the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. This presentation is an invitation to seek feedback and extend the conversation on exploring the role of mathematics education as an ethical space with responsibilities and obligations for honouring Te Tiriti in mathematics education.

Submitted by: Shweta  
Sharma, University of Canterbury

Pepa 87  
Session: 5 - 2.45 to 3.15pm - 303-B11  
SIG: Educational Leadership

Yi-Mei Huang  
Whitireia And WelTec

Keywords: Knowledge management, organizational growth, PRISMA systematic literature review

### A Knowledge Management Strategy for Connecting Organisational Growth with Learning Futures

Knowledge management has significantly impacted on organisations long-term growth. However, the effective ways of knowledge sharing and learning in improving organisational performance is still underdeveloped. This study investigates ways of managing both explicit and tacit knowledge to be effective when using knowledge sources within organisations. A qualitative PRISMA systematic literature review was employed for this study, the findings suggest that technologies such as content management systems (CMS), databases, and collaboration platforms, along with the promotion of collaboration and mentorship, can significantly enhance the organization, storage, and sharing of both explicit and tacit knowledge. Furthermore, it is recommended that organizations implement comprehensive training programs that emphasize both the technical aspects of knowledge management systems and the importance of knowledge sharing to address the challenge of lack training within organizational settings. The study contributes to knowledge by providing a comprehensive understanding of ways to leverage knowledge and learning within organizations to achieve long-term success.

Submitted by: Yi-Mei Huang, Whitireia  
And WelTec



Pepa 88  
Session: 4 - 10.55 to 11.25am - 303-B11  
SIG: Educational Leadership

Manqi (Mikki) Shi  
Faculty of Arts and Education, The  
University of Auckland, Auckland, New  
Zealand

Keywords: professional learning communities, middle leadership, TRG leadership

### Balancing Middle leaders' perception and Autonomy in Chinese Secondary Schools

This qualitative multi-case study investigates how Teaching Research Groups (TRGs) leaders in Chinese secondary schools conceive and enact instructional leadership. Grounded in both leadership and Professional Learning Communities theory, this study contributes to the emerging international discussion on how middle-tier leaders help translate school-wide goals into instructional practices within school-based management. International studies have indicated that middle leaders in secondary schools play a pivotal mediating role, translating principals' school-level objectives into teachers' instructional practices (De Nobile, 2018; Shaked, 2023), while cultivating a culture of professional learning with the teachers that report to them. These approaches support middle leaders in actualising school-wide goals, fostering continuous professional growth, while promoting collaborative inquiry and shared accountability among teachers (Admiraal et al., 2021). This study was conducted in three different schools (urban, semi-rural, and rural) based on their geographical location. Data was collected through TRG meeting observations and semi-structured interviews with TRG leaders, teachers, and their senior leaders. Initial findings suggest that most TRG leaders identify themselves primarily as coordinators rather than leaders, while key curricular and resource decisions remain centralised with senior administrators, sharply constraining TRG autonomy.

Submitted by: Manqi (Mikki) Shi, Faculty  
of Arts and Education, The University of  
Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand

Pepa 89  
Session: 4 - 11.25 to 11.55am - 303-B11  
SIG: Educational Leadership

Channy Meng  
The University of Auckland

Frauke Meyer  
The University of Auckland

Deidre Le Fevre  
The University of Auckland

Keywords: Principals, Trust, Leadership Practices

### **Cambodian principals' perceptions on leadership practices that help or hinder trust in schools**

International research reveals that trust is essential for effective schools (Browning, 2020; Fox et al., 2015; Jawahar et al., 2019). However, little research has explored perceptions of trust in non-Western schooling contexts. This research explores Cambodian primary school principals' perceptions of the importance of trust in their schools and leadership practices that help or hinder trust building. This qualitative interview study involved six Cambodian principals purposively selected from three public and three private schools in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Key findings indicate that Cambodian principals define trust as the confidence that a person has in another person to behave or act based on expectations without harm. Trust is viewed as a reciprocal catalyst that can positively influence cooperation, collaboration, and risk-taking. Findings show differences from Western research regarding leadership practices that build trust. For example, principals see setting directions, advocacy, and empowerment as important in building trust, and hierarchical control and emotional disconnection as factors hindering trust. Cultural aspects that might affect perceptions of trust will be discussed. The study aims to provide a discussion on the contextual and potential cultural differences in perceptions of trust in schools.

Submitted by: Channy Meng, The  
University of Auckland



Pepa 90  
Session: 7 - 9.35 to 10.05am - 303-B11  
SIG: Educational Leadership

Professor Carol Mutch  
The University of Auckland

Shannon Walsh  
NZEI

Keywords: educational leadership, schools and centres, disaster response and recovery

### **Cyclone Gabrielle two years on: Is anyone listening?**

As we put this abstract together, the schools in Nelson and Tasman have been hit hard by yet another unprecedented rain event. From our research with post-Cyclone Gabrielle school and centre leaders, we know exactly how those in Nelson-Tasman will be pivoting from being educational leaders to crisis managers. From the early weather forecasts, they will have been planning for possible eventualities. When the rain hit, they will have been working tirelessly to protect their schools and centres and to support their staff and families. When there was a break in the weather, they will have been planning for a return to school, however that might look. It is only two years since Cyclone Gabrielle struck and there were many lessons learned from that time, yet it appears that with each new event, we start all over again. This presentation draws from our site visits and semi-structured interviews in 2023 and 2024 with 10 small rural school leaders in Hawkes Bay and Tairāwhiti to provide a glimpse into their experiences. The interviews were analysed through thematic and narrative analysis. We then outline a set of recommendations for emergency management, education agencies, principal preparation programmes and leaders themselves so that we can be proactive and not just reactive when the not-so-unexpected happens.

Submitted by: Professor Carol  
Mutch, The University of Auckland



Pepa 91  
Session: 5 - 2.15 to 2.45pm - 303-B11  
SIG: Educational Leadership

Dr. Mark LaVenía  
University of Canterbury

Rachael Robertson  
University of Canterbury

Dr. Kris LaVenía  
University of Canterbury

Professor Gail Gillon  
University of Canterbury

Keywords: Leadership discourse; Structured literacy; Relational leadership

### **Discourse at the intersection of place and relationship: Supporting Aotearoa New Zealand's national implementation of structured literacy across school contexts**

This study explores how relational dynamics and contextual factors shape leadership discourse during the implementation of structured literacy in Aotearoa New Zealand schools. Following the Ministry of Education's mandate for all state schools to adopt a structured literacy approach alongside a significantly modified English curriculum, over 2,500 participants—including 500 school leaders—have enrolled in Better Start Literacy Approach professional learning and development. The Ministry-funded PLD comprises three full-day workshops and eight one-hour online community of practice meetings.

This study aims to identify the discourse strategies leaders use to frame and steer the change process, and examine how these strategies vary across roles, regions, and school contexts. We conceptualise discourse as the focus and framing leaders bring to issues to make sense of them and mobilise change, with particular attention to relational discourse that emphasises trust, reciprocity, and whanaungatanga. Adopting an organisational discourse analysis tradition within a grounded theory approach, the study will draw on semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of Literacy Leadership participants (principals, teacher leaders, cluster leaders), complemented by observations of workshops and online interactions.

Preliminary insights suggest leaders' discourse often foregrounds structure (time constraints), relationship (positional authority), pedagogy (beliefs about suitability), and achievement (ability expectations). Framed by literature on professional learning communities, relational trust, and leadership as situated practice, the study will contribute evidence to contested debates on literacy reform and offer insight into how place and relationship moderate system-wide change. Findings will inform leadership PLD design and help policymakers balance national goals with local realities.

Submitted by: Dr. Mark  
LaVenía, University of Canterbury

Pepa 92  
Session: 1 - 1.15 to 1.45pm - 303-B11  
SIG: Educational Leadership

Khandker Din Mohammad

Keywords: Primary School, Leadership, Community engagement

### Enablers for Effective Primary School Leadership in Bangladesh

This study explores the key enablers that support school leaders' effective leadership in primary schools in Bangladesh, a context identified by centralised governance, resource constraints, political influence and ongoing educational reform. This study followed a qualitative method based on changed theory (Salahuddin, 2016). Qualitative data were drawn from interviews and focus group discussions, shadowing with principals, teachers, and local education officers (UEO) in two nationally awarded government primary schools. The study identifies enabling factors that support principals in effective leadership practice. These findings expose that prenatal positive attitudes, effective communication and motivational capacity, commitment and vision, and community engagement are crucial in enabling principals to improve teaching-learning, student outcomes and overall school improvement. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of relational leadership, socio-cultural responsive practices, and distributed leadership in promoting collaborative school environments. Despite structural constraints, the research suggests that when primary school principals are empowered and continuously supported, they can become agents of sustained school improvement. The study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on primary school leadership in the South-Asian context and offers practical insights for policymakers, primary educators, and development partners aiming to support primary school leadership in Bangladesh.

Submitted by: Khandker Din  
Mohammad, School of Education,  
Victoria University of Wellington



Pepa 93  
Session: 2 - 3.20 to 3.50pm - 303-B11  
SIG: Educational Leadership

Mengnan Li  
New Zealand Council for Educational  
Research

Keywords: Aspirations for Principalsip, School Culture, Teaching Beliefs

### Findings from National Survey of Schools: Aspirations for Principalsip - The Role of School Culture and Teaching Beliefs

This study draws on data from the 2024 national survey of primary schools to examine how school leadership practices indirectly shape teachers' interest in becoming a principal. Main findings from the 2024 national survey will be presented first, which covers a wide range of topics. Among them, one key finding shows that newer teachers are more open to leadership roles. This highlights the need to understand what school-level conditions might help sustain leadership aspirations throughout a teacher's career. Using structural equation modelling, the analysis shows that strong leadership practices (reflected in school culture, collaborative relationships, and professional learning and development) positively predict teachers' autonomy, job satisfaction, and confidence in teaching the updated New Zealand Curriculum and about diversity. These two confidence-related beliefs, in turn, statistically significantly predict teachers' interest in principalsip. The model illustrates a meaningful pathway: a positive school culture shaped by school leadership, can enhance teachers' professional beliefs and experiences, ultimately supporting their leadership aspirations. These findings underscore the importance of school conditions and teacher capability-building in fostering sustainable leadership pathways. Research Questions 1. What school- and teacher-level factors are associated with interest in becoming a principal? 2. How do school leadership practices influence teachers' leadership aspirations through its impact on school culture and teaching beliefs?

Submitted by: Mengnan Li, New Zealand  
Council for Educational Research

Pepa 94  
Session: 1 - 1.45 to 2.15pm - 303-B11  
SIG: Educational Leadership

Jay Hikuleo Ikiua

Keywords: .

**From the Land, the Sea and into the classroom: Rethinking Education Delivery using indigenous pedagogies for Community Development in Nauru.**

In 2019 I submitted a social work article for publication that shared the positive learning experiences and outcomes of Māori and Pasifika students studying the Bicultural Social Work Degree at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa. The knowledge I gained strengthened my belief that eurocentric models suppress indigenous ways of knowing. In 2022, whilst delivering the Community Development Course Level III and IV on Nauru. I witnessed first-hand how a Western institution was ignorant of local student's realities, cultural values and knowledge, preferring their own dominant pedagogies.

This presentation draws on critical pedagogy (Freire, 1996), Kaupapa Wānanga model (Kingi, 2010; Huinia, 2009) Talanoa (2006) Kakala (1997) and my own Niue cultural lens to reflect how cultural pedagogies that were 'off script' enabled student success. My reflections, classroom observations are used to illustrate both the limitations of Eurocentric curricula and the transformative practice when cultural values are implemented.

This presentation poses the critical question, "If Nauru had full autonomy over Education curricula design. Would cultural values take precedence, or the dominant discourse remain?"

These insights offer pathways for practitioners. To rethink educational practices, by bringing the culture of their learners into the classroom that are beneficial for learners in creating stronger families, communities and country.

Submitted by: Jay Hikuleo Ikiua,.

Pepa 95  
Session: 1 - 12.45 to 1.15pm - 303-B11  
SIG: Educational Leadership

Dr Peggy Burrows  
Haeata Community Campus

Keywords: Leadership, Equity, Indigenous

**Hear My Voice: Equity in education for indigenous learners using a te ao Māori framework.**

As an educational leader in Aotearoa/New Zealand I am interested in the power of student voice in shaping educational paradigms. In 2020, having completed a PhD research study on the impact colonisation on indigenous Māori students' achievement, I accepted the position of principal of Haeata Community Campus. As a practice-based researcher I wanted to explore the impact student voice has on creating authentic and safe learning environments for Māori students who are marginalised within our education system. This presentation is designed to draw on the evidence around the impact amplifying learner voices has in creating and fostering authentic and positive change within our education system. I posit here that understanding the moral imperative of listening to and acting upon diverse voices, marginalised voices, professional voices and the voices of our tāwhiri underpins the way forward if agentive change is to occur for Māori students. The development, understanding and discourse around the discovery of such new knowledge provides a roadmap for positive change in education and contributes to the discourse of equity.

Submitted by: Dr Peggy Burrows, Haeata  
Community Campus



Pepa 96  
Session: 7 - 10.05 to 10.35am - 303-B11  
SIG: Educational Leadership

Beth Germaine  
University of Auckland

Frauke Meyer  
University of Auckland

Keywords: Leadership, perceptions of risk, ANZH

### Leaders Navigating Perceptions of Risk in Curriculum Change

This study investigates how primary school principals navigate and respond to the emotional complexities that often accompany curriculum change processes, focusing on the implementation of the Aotearoa New Zealand's histories (ANZH) curriculum, mandated in 2023. Curriculum change necessitates shifts from familiar to unfamiliar practices, which can challenge teachers' professional identities and evoke feelings of uncertainty and vulnerability. Drawing on 'perceptions of risk' as a theoretical framework, this qualitative study explored how four principals interpreted and managed both their own and their staff's emotional responses during the change process. Findings suggest that principal confidence, agency, and optimism act as buffers against perceived risk, helping create a sense of certainty amid the complexity of change. Principals played a pivotal role in implementing the Aotearoa New Zealand's histories curriculum by promoting professional learning, managing the pace of change, and demonstrating credible leadership' ctions that reduced uncertainty and supported effective curriculum implementation. While based on a small, self-selected sample, the study offers valuable insights into leadership practices that foster emotionally safe environments for educational change.

Submitted by: Beth Germaine, University  
of Auckland

Pepa 98  
Session: 6 - 4.05 to 4.35pm - 303-B11  
SIG: Educational Leadership

Dr Therese Ford  
Te Akatea Māori Principals and Leader  
Incorporated

Keywords: Māori education, decolonisation, school leadership, equity, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, culturally responsive pedagogy.

### Leading Critical School Reform: Decolonising Praxis for Māori Educational Success

Persistent education disparities between Māori and Pākehā students in Aotearoa is rooted in colonial policies that historically advantaged Pākehā. Despite the promises of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, these disparities have perpetuated intergenerational disadvantage for Māori. This research examines the leadership praxis of two Pākehā principals who successfully fostered Māori student success "as Māori." Using culturally responsive methodologies and mixed methods across two in-depth case studies, the study highlights the transformative power of authentic, bidirectional relationships with mana whenua and whānau Māori. These relationships enabled principals to critically understand local pre-colonial iwi histories and collaboratively respond to the implications of colonisation. The findings challenge the prevailing monocultural, monolingual, and unidirectional nature of New Zealand's education system. The thesis proposes a decolonising model of critical school reform, offering a framework for implementation and evaluation. It argues that honouring the Te Tiriti o Waitangi necessitates an equity-focused response, where power-sharing relationships, critically led by principals alongside Māori communities, are paramount to realising Māori potential and ensuring all children thrive.

Submitted by: Dr Therese Ford, Te  
Akatea Māori Principals and Leader  
Incorporated



Pepa 99  
Session: 5 - 3.15 to 3.45pm - 303-B11  
SIG: Educational Leadership

Angelina Moore  
University of Canterbury

Keywords: AI, Activity Theory, Primary

### Navigating AI Literacy through Activity Theory: A Sociocultural Lens on Primary Education in Aotearoa

As artificial intelligence (AI) becomes more prevalent in daily life, there is an urgent need to understand how young learners are being supported to navigate its opportunities and risks. In Aotearoa New Zealand, the integration of AI literacy in primary classrooms remains uneven and under-researched. This presentation explores how Activity Theory can be used as a conceptual framework to examine the sociocultural dynamics shaping how AI literacy is taught in this context (Artemova, 2024; Karanasios et al., 2021). By analysing the activity systems in which teachers operate - including tools, norms, community, and curriculum - Activity Theory reveals the complexities, tensions, and responsibilities educators face. Aligned with the conference theme Place in Education: Connections, Responsibilities, and Futures, this conceptual paper situates AI literacy within the unique cultural, curricular, and ethical landscape of Aotearoa. It highlights how teachers' work is shaped by bicultural obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Karaka-Clarke, 2025; Kukutai, 2024), emerging national curriculum changes, and the responsibility to prepare students for digitally mediated futures (MacCallum et al., 2023). This study contributes insights to support more equitable grounded, and future-focused teaching practice.

Submitted by: Angelina Moore, University  
of Canterbury



Pepa 100  
Session: 5 - 2.15 to 2.45pm - 303-B07  
SIG: Learning Environments

Kwabena Nifa Kurankye  
Massey University, Institute of  
Education.

Dr Brian Tweed  
Massey University, Institute of  
Education.

Keywords: Pedagogical leadership, Distributed form, Actor Network Theory

### Leadership in Learning Ecosystems: Tracing Non-Human Actors in Pedagogical Practice.

This study explores the role of non-human aspects of the environment in a secondary school to Pedagogical Leadership (PL). For this study, the school is conceptualized as a network of actors with PL distributed across this network. The study took place in a secondary school in Ghana. I adopted ethnographic design, using interviews and observation as medium for data collection. Actor Network Theory (ANT) is the theoretical framework supporting this study. ANT argues that human (people) and non-human actors (artifacts) share equal agency in an organisation or community and there is a direct relation between people and artifacts in a community. Human and non-human actors assemble together to ensure effective functioning of a community. This presentation will demonstrate how PL is distributed across the actors of the network in a school community, that is the human, non-humans, machines and inanimate objects in the environment. This study found that intangible factors such as history and values are part of the network and play a role in PL and thus PL moves beyond just academic performance.

Submitted by: Kwabena Nifa  
Kurankye, Massey University, Institute of  
Education. Manawatu campus.



Pepa 101  
Session: 7 - 10.35 to 11.05am - 303-B11  
SIG: Educational Leadership

Dr Megan Welton

Keywords: Educational change, Coherence, Paradoxical Thinking

### Rethinking coherence in educational change: Embracing its contradictory tensions

Coherence associated with gathering, connecting, and coordinating is critical for systemic change in schools. This study develops a conceptual framework for coherence during educational change. While existing coherence frameworks guide leaders on its practices and conditions, I argue that they inadequately capture the dynamic and tension-filled lived experience of coherence-strengthening through change, particularly for equity. Coherence is examined in three empirical cases of New Zealand secondary schools engaged in organisational change over 18 months. Data were collected through interviews, observations of change forums, and change artifacts to understand what helped and hindered each school in advancing coherence as they introduced change. Findings revealed that schools adopted many of the practices associated with coherence, but coherence stagnated. Closer examination revealed that schools struggled to balance contradictory tensions inherent in strengthening coherence through change (e.g. how to build capability for tomorrow and deliver for students today; how to involve diverse collaborators and promote shared goals). The study proposes a tension-based coherence framework with significant implications for leading and organising educational change in complex, equity-focused contexts.

Submitted by: Dr Megan  
Welton, University of Auckland

Pepa 102  
Session: 4 - 11.55am to 12.25pm - 303-B11  
SIG: Educational Leadership

Jo Ward  
Te Rito Maioha

Keywords: Belonging, leadership.

### The importance of leadership in fostering a sense of belonging.

Leaders play a pivotal role in fostering a sense of belonging for kaiako, and have a responsibility of facilitating shared understandings, the creation of inclusive cultural environments, and the removal of barriers with their ECE centre (Pesonen et al., 2021). According to Te Whāriki, it is the responsibility of leaders to promote a centre-wide culture of acceptance, where diversity is actively recognised and valued as foundational to a sense of belonging (MoE, 2017). This is essential as a sense of belonging is fundamental for kaiako effectiveness, and a lack of belonging can result in social anxiety, health problems, lack of engagement, isolation, depression and feelings of reduced job satisfaction (Alesech & Nayar, 2021). This presentation is based on research into the importance of belonging for kaiako from minority cultures in Tamaki Makaurau. It employed a phenomenological research methodology within an interpretive paradigm to interview six kaiako about their experiences of belonging within their ECE centres. Thematic analysis of the data reveals that a sense of belonging is crucial for kaiako, and the role of an effective leader can have a lasting impact on the sense of belonging. Furthermore, the study found that the leader's expectations were reflected by the team, highlighting the critical role of inclusive leadership in shaping a supportive and cohesive environment. This presentation explores key leadership attributes that foster a sense of belonging, why this is important and some practical ways to ensure all kaiako experience belonging in the ECE workplace.

Submitted by: Jo Ward, Te Rito Maioha



Pepa 103  
Session: 2 - 3.50 to 4.20pm - 303-B11  
SIG: Educational Leadership

Andrea Driver  
Te Rito Maioha ECNZ

Keywords: Leadership development, personal experiences, intentional leadership practice

### The influence of personal experiences on leadership practice

When exploring the complexities of leadership, it is recognised that leadership practice is shaped by significant personal and professional experiences (Cooper et al., 2023; Priest & Seemiller, 2018). With this in mind, this presentation will showcase research that explores how leaders make connections between their personal experiences and their leadership practice. Using the Whatu metaphor (Hiha, 2015) as a philosophical framework, alongside Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 2005), the research explores the idea that leaders do not leave their personal experiences, beliefs and values at the door when they enter leadership roles. Using a qualitative case study methodology within the bounded context of a three-part leadership development programme, data were gathered through pre, post and workshop feedback survey. Currently in its early stages, this research highlights how leaders explore their personal experiences, making links to their leadership practice through activities including critically reflective journaling. The presenter will share the findings from the current study, revealing how leaders used their learning during the three-part leadership development programme to enhance their intentional leadership practices and self-awareness, gained through investigating their own personal experiences.

Submitted by: Andrea Driver, Te Rito  
Maioha Early Childhood New Zealand



Pepa 104  
Session: 2 - 4.20 to 4.50pm - 303-B11  
SIG: Educational Leadership

Dr Joanne Walker  
University of Canterbury

Keywords: coaching, mentoring, professional development

### What's hot in literacy? BSLA Coaching and Mentoring exemplars

Professional learning and development (PLD) opportunities for practicing educators have been identified as a critical factor in improving literacy outcomes over the next decade (ILA, 2020). The Better Start Literacy Approach (BSLA), an evidence-based classroom literacy approach for 5-12 year-olds, currently implemented at scale across New Zealand, aims to strengthen literacy specialists' capacity to coach and mentor teachers through targeted PLD and support. Qualitative, descriptive case studies profile the experiences and perceptions of six effective Literacy Specialists. Their reflections highlight what successful mentoring looks like, the impact of their work, key enablers, challenges and lessons learned. The study design and data analysis drew on James et al. (2022) Five Factor Model of mentoring and educative mentoring characteristics within the Education Council Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring and Mentor Teachers (2011). Common themes emerged from semi-structured, individual interviews, documentation and practice snapshots, showing the wide-ranging impact of their mentoring: enhancing teacher knowledge and literacy practice, improving student achievement, strengthening whānau understanding and engagement, supporting school leaders, and fostering cross-school collaboration. Findings also emphasise the importance of personal attributes and practices such as relationship-building, literacy expertise, differentiating, and problem-solving.

Submitted by: Dr Joanne  
Walker, University of Canterbury



Pepa 106

Session: 3 - 10.05 to 10.35am - 303-G02

SIG: Inclusive Education and Community

Rajesh Ram  
Manukau Institute of Technology

Cris Lynch  
Diocesan School for Girls

Keywords: Second chance education, cultural capital, lived experience, experiential learning

**Unveiling invisibility: the lived experiences of former students at New Zealand's second chance education secondary school.**

This paper examines the lived experiences of former students who attended a second chance education (SCE) secondary school in New Zealand. This study contributes to contemporary debates on educational equity and the role of alternative schooling in addressing systemic barriers. The objective was to understand how alternative educational environments can re-engage youth marginalized by mainstream schooling. School A (pseudonym), like charter schools in New Zealand, was established in collaboration with a local tertiary education provider and secondary schools in South Auckland, to re-engage students who have become disengaged from conventional school settings.

This research used a narrative inquiry to explore the educational journeys of eight former students. Using in-depth, semi-structured interviews, and thematic analysis, we constructed the personal narratives of participants, mapping their transitions from primary to intermediate and secondary school. This approach allowed us to understand how they made sense of their experiences, including the sociocultural and socioeconomic factors that contributed to their sense of invisibility in mainstream education. Applying Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, we reveal how institutional norms often fail to recognize the diverse forms of capital students bring to the classroom.

Our findings show that School A's practices, such as addressing teachers by first names and emphasizing hands-on learning, helped students validate their existing cultural capital and fostered a sense of belonging. The study concludes that by creating inclusive environments to support disengaged youth, SCE schools can transform educational trajectories. These findings have significant implications for informing teacher education and policy, ultimately helping more students become active and responsible citizens.

Submitted by: Rajesh Ram, Manukau  
Institute of Technology, School of  
Education and Social Work



Pepa 107  
Session: 4 - 11.55am to 12.25pm - 303-G02  
SIG: Inclusive Education and Community

Mr. Tambi Tabe Nelson  
Let's Talk International Language  
Institute, Udon Thani, Thailand.

Keywords: Place-based education, Inclusive pedagogy, Intercultural storytelling

### **“Mapping Our Voices: A Place-Based Storytelling Strategy for Inclusive English Language Classrooms in Thailand”**

This presentation introduces Mapping Our Voices, a place-based storytelling strategy used in English language classrooms with students from early childhood to secondary levels in Thailand. The approach invites learners to explore what "place" means through personal stories, family histories, and local environments. It combines multilingual storytelling with English language development. Using Indigenous and postcolonial perspectives that focus on land, identity, and community, students engage in creative activities like neighborhood mapping, oral histories, photo walks, and digital story creation. These activities help learners connect English with their cultural and geographical contexts. They begin to see language as a tool for belonging, not just for communication. Mapping Our Voices promotes inclusion by valuing all students' voices, especially those from marginalized or multilingual backgrounds. It encourages critical thinking, empathy, and more meaningful engagement with language. This session will share examples of student work, reflections on classroom impact, and practical ways to use the strategy across different age groups. The presentation directly addresses the 2025 NZARE theme by framing English learning as both a personal journey and tied to place.

Submitted by: Mr. Tambi Tabe  
Nelson, Let's Talk International Language  
Institute, Udon Thani, Thailand.

Pepa 108  
Session: 9 - 1.50 to 2.20pm - 303-G02  
SIG: Inclusive Education and Community

Kate McAnelly  
The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand

Michael Gaffney  
University of Otago

Keywords: inclusive practice, teachers, children's rights

### **Ahakoia he aha te rākau he hua kei roto: Reviewing the Teaching Council's draft Inclusive Teaching Practice Guidance through a children's rights oriented lens**

All tamariki and rangatahi in Aotearoa New Zealand should be able to enjoy an equitable, inclusive education. Policy guidance within Aotearoa New Zealand has more recently moved in this direction. The purpose of this paper is to explore a new framework provided by the Teaching Council (2025), the Inclusive Teaching Practice Guidance (ITPG), which frames inclusive teaching practice as kaiako having an open heart, an open mind and open arms. This speaks to an ethic of caring, a desire for understanding, and a commitment to flourishing. This orientation is suggestive of a children's rights orientation to practice, however the ITPG itself makes very little reference to rights. We use our own framework of Tūranga mō ngā Mokopuna (2019) to conceptually review how the ITPG might support active participation. A strength is that the ITPG uses child voice to orient us to their experiences. The downside is that there is no compulsion to use the guidance. So it would seem that the ITPG might support children's rights, but a lack of explicit emphasis on this kaupapa will likely mean kaiako are unsure about adopting such an orientation in their practice. Until this happens, we know that not all tamariki and rangatahi will realise their right to feel safe, secure and seen as learners and citizens of the world.

Submitted by: Kate McAnelly, The Open  
Polytechnic of New Zealand



Pepa 109  
Session: 2 - 4.20 to 4.50pm - 303-G02  
SIG: Inclusive Education and Community

Donna Williamson-Garner  
Open Polytechnic

Kerry Purdue  
Open Polytechnic

Erin Hall  
UCOL

Jackie Solomon (Open Polytechnic);  
Fleur Hohaia-Rollinson (Te Rito Maioha  
ECNZ); Derek Hartley (Open  
Polytechnic);

Keywords: Disabled kaiako; early childhood education; strengths and benefits

### **Disabled kaiako - why they choose teaching: Connections, responsibilities and futures**

This presentation explores why disabled kaiako choose early childhood education (ECE) teaching and the strengths and benefits they bring to teaching. Using a social constructionist theoretical framework and qualitative methodology, a research project was conducted in 2025 which investigated the experiences of kaiako with disabilities in ECE. Data was gathered through an open-ended online survey and semi-structured online interviews. We received fifty-four responses from student kaiako and kaiako with disabilities. In addition, eleven interviews were completed with disabled kaiako. Respondents accounts were analysed using reflexive thematic and discourse analysis. Key findings from the research highlight that disabled kaiako choose ECE teaching to make a positive difference. They feel they can promote inclusion within educational settings by helping to challenge and change dominant negative stereotypes about disability. They are empathetic and positive towards teaching children with disabilities and often act as effective advocates for them and their families. As well as this, they contribute to diversity within the teaching profession and ensure that children have positive role models to learn from and alongside. This presentation will highlight the richness of the contributions that disabled kaiako bring to ECE and makes recommendations for promoting connections, responsibilities and futures. By understanding what draws disabled kaiako to the profession and valuing the capabilities they bring, the ECE sector can better support their learning and teaching journey, professional identities and inclusion.

Submitted by: Kerry Purdue, Open  
Polytechnic



Pepa 110  
Session: 1 - 12.45 to 1.15pm - 303-G02  
SIG: Inclusive Education and Community

Rosemary Erlam  
University of Auckland

Keywords: linguistic diversity, in-service education

### Empowering learners from all language backgrounds for academic success

Teachers in all contexts in Aotearoa have students in their classrooms from diverse language backgrounds who are not only learning curriculum content, but are, at the same time learning the language of this curriculum. This presentation examines the reported impact of in-service teacher education program which aimed to give the teacher participants in the study (n=11) the skills to empower learners from all language backgrounds to succeed. Among the key aims of the program was a focus on having teachers understand the importance of helping students to develop and sustain their heritage languages, another was a focus on equipping teachers to recognise and address potential inequities in their instructional contexts. The presentation draws on coursework and interview data where teachers recount changes in practice resulting from their learning. One key change, reported by all but one teacher, was the implementation of a culturally responsive pedagogy that nurtures the identities, experiences and funds of knowledge that all learners bring to the classroom. The presentation considers how the program may continue to empower teachers to confront "cultural scripts, contribute to meaningful school reform" (Teemant, 2020, p. 87) and explores what aspects of the program appear to have facilitated learning and change.

Submitted by: Rosemary  
Erlam, University of Auckland

Pepa 111  
Session: 8 - 12.05 to 12.35pm - 303-G02  
SIG: Inclusive Education and Community

Ashleigh Fox  
University of Auckland

Binh Tran  
University of Auckland

Keywords: engineering, women, motivation

### Evaluating the impact of an Engineering Holiday Camp on young women's career choices

Since 2022, Women in Engineering at the University of Auckland have hosted an annual Holiday Camp for high school women across New Zealand. To assess its impact, we employed a mixed-methods design beginning in 2023, integrating quantitative survey data with qualitative interviews and focus groups involving participants aged 16-18. Our longitudinal study investigates the camp's influence on participants' career aspirations, motivations and perceptions of engineering. Findings from 2023 and 2024 cohorts indicate increased awareness of engineering pathways, enhanced STEM self-efficacy, and greater motivation to pursue engineering-related opportunities post-camp. Framed by Esbroeck et al.'s (2004) dynamic model of career choice development, we argue the camp functions as a targeted career intervention: facilitating self-exploration, exposure to engineering environments, and meaningful engagement with current students, academics, and industry professionals. The positive emotions generated by their Camp experience helps to establish Engineering as something for participants to return to as part of the cyclical nature of this decision-making model. Our findings highlight the potential of short-term, immersive programs to influence career decision-making among underrepresented groups, as well as the need for continued re-engagement with the target audience to maintain positive connections to a future engineering career pathway.

Submitted by: Ashleigh Fox, University of  
Auckland



Pepa 112  
Session: 1 - 1.45 to 2.15pm - 303-G02  
SIG: Inclusive Education and Community

Jess Love  
University Of Canterbury, Faculty of  
Education (EdD Student)

Keywords: Disability, Voice, Transition to Adult Life

### **My Voice Matters! Did School Set Me Up for Success? A Critical Look at How Schools Prepare Disabled Students for Adulthood.**

Transition from school to adult life is a pivotal life phase yet disabled learners face significant barriers. This doctoral research explored how schools prepare learning disabled students for adulthood, from the perspective of disabled young adults themselves. It investigated factors that ten disabled young adults identified as supporting successful transition to adult life. Interviews were centered in narrative inquiry within a social constructionist paradigm, and were adapted using augmentative alternative communication, visuals, and support people. This ensured the participation of those with low or non-verbal communication, as their voices have often been excluded from research. Findings highlighted tensions between independence and support, limited involvement in planning, the importance of key relationships, systemic gaps, and strong aspirations for meaningful work and belonging.

The study advocates that transition planning should be co-designed with disabled learners and their whānau. Community connections and clear pathways to employment must be prioritised to ensure equitable, purposeful transitions. It speaks to the conference theme Toitū te whenua, toitū te tangata, showing how connection to community and place can support flourishing futures. This study calls for collective responsibility to reimagine transition, hear young people's voices, create inclusive pathways, and support disabled learners to access services within their community.

Submitted by: Jessica Love, University  
Of Canterbury, Faculty of Education

Pepa 113  
Session: 8 - 12.35 to 1.05pm - 303-G02  
SIG: Inclusive Education and Community

Marta Estellés  
The University of Waikato

Keywords: safety discourses, neoliberalism, New Zealand schools

### Neoliberalism and psychopolitics: An ethnographic study of safety discourses in New Zealand schools

Over the last few decades, the notion of safety has become increasingly pervasive to discuss educational issues as varied as road safety education, student emotional well-being, the teaching of controversial issues and the inclusion of students from minority groups. There has been, however, little interrogation on how this pervasive notion influences education practices at schools. In my previous work, I have located the rise of safety discourses in education within the broader historical development of neoliberalism and its efforts to individualise social affairs using what philosopher Byung-Chul Han (2017) calls 'psychopolitics'. Drawing on this work, the presentation introduces an ethnographic inquiry with four secondary schools in Aotearoa New Zealand on how they promote safe learning environments. The study included interviews and focus groups with 4 principals, 17 teachers and 52 students, analysis of school policy documents, field notes, newsletters, social media posts and photographs of school visits. The data shows how safety issues are framed as problems of the psyche that lead to the avoidance of any potential conflict, the use of therapeutic techniques and other 'psy' measures, including the cultivation of feelings of belonging. The presentation concludes with a discussion on the implications for critical education.

Submitted by: Marta Estellés, The  
University of Waikato

Pepa 114  
Session: 1 - 1.15 to 1.45pm - 303-G02  
SIG: Inclusive Education and Community

Anna Dinneen  
University of Waikato / Tuakau College

Keywords: SENCO, Special Education, Secondary schools

### Recognising SENCOs in New Zealand Secondary Schools

Special Education Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) in New Zealand secondary schools are responsible for supporting up to 30% of students with additional learning needs, numbering over 700, mostly in larger schools. Despite this, there is no formal training, funding, or nationally defined role description for SENCOs. Furthermore, research into the experiences of SENCOs, specifically in secondary schools, is notably absent. This research has addressed that gap by exploring the experiences of SENCOs through a two-phase, constructivist research design. An initial survey of North Island-based secondary school SENCOs established a baseline understanding of the role. This was followed by in-depth case studies involving nine interviews with three SENCOs over 18 months. Using Relational Agency as a theoretical lens, the research highlights how school leadership and professional relationships influence SENCOs' sense of success and identity in the role. Findings reveal a role marked by emotional strain, extended hours, and increasing complexity due to the broadening scope of special educational needs. This presentation will summarise the research's nine recommendations for school leaders and the Ministry of Education, including a redefinition and renaming of the SENCO role to better reflect its demands and critical function in inclusive education.

Submitted by: Anna Dinneen, University  
of Waikato / Tuakau College



Pepa 115  
Session: 3 - 9.05 to 9.35am - 303-G02  
SIG: Inclusive Education and Community

Kayleen Clark-Howard  
Massey University

Keywords: Inclusion, human development

### Reimagining human development within an inclusive paradigm.

Inclusive education is a philosophy underpinned by human rights and embedded in inclusive values which proactively supports all learners. Traditional, normative, western human development theories focus on predictable ways people develop over time while norms and standards sift and sort learners. Secondary schools which offer prescribed pathways according to 'ages and stages' can lead to a one-size-fits-all approach. My PhD research sits at the intersection of inclusive education and human development in a secondary school context in Aotearoa. Using a mixed method, sequential, explanatory design, data was collected to critique the role that secondary teachers' and pre-service teachers' understandings of human development play in including and excluding students to inform a human development framework which supports inclusive education. Valid survey responses were collected from 181 secondary teachers and 52 pre-service secondary teachers. Thereafter, 12 teachers and six pre-service teachers were interviewed. Findings show that normative approaches of human development theories seen in streaming and standardised assessments lead to systems which exclude. Furthermore, findings show that while inclusive education is valued, barriers to inclusive education exist. Therefore, I propose that norms-based, socially constructed, western human development theories, which are deeply embedded in secondary school systems, are not aligned with inclusive education.

Submitted by: Kayleen Clark-Howard, Institute of Education, Massey University



Pepa 116

Session: 3 - 9.35 to 10.05am - 303-G02

SIG: Inclusive Education and Community

Dr Mariko Francis  
RMIT University

Dr Elise Waghorn  
RMIT University

K2LD Architects

Keywords: inclusive education, complex learner profiles, teacher education

### **Sensing Inclusion: Strengthening pre-service teacher education for students with complex learning profiles**

This study investigates how pre-service teachers (PSTs) and university-based academic educators in early childhood and primary Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programs conceptualise, engage with, and are supported to implement sensory and STEAM-based pedagogies—approaches with known benefits for students with complex learning profiles. Drawing on a mixed-methods design, the research explores PSTs' preparedness, confidence, and perceived competence in applying inclusive, hands-on approaches within diverse classrooms prior to their placements. The study addresses a notable gap in the literature regarding how these pedagogical frameworks are embedded within ITE coursework and practicum experiences. In doing so, it responds directly to national and state policy imperatives, including Australia's Disability Strategy, Victoria's Disability Inclusion (DI) reform, and the NCCD. These frameworks highlight the ethical and professional responsibility of teacher education to build inclusive, strengths-based practices that respond to learner variability from the outset. This research contributes to a growing evidence base that supports sensory and STEAM-based pedagogies as critical enablers of equitable learning. It offers insights into how ITE programs can better cultivate inclusive mindsets, strategies, and professional identities in future teachers. The project outcomes will contribute to ongoing efforts to ensure that all learners, especially those with complex needs, are supported by prepared, reflective, and responsive educators.

Submitted by: Dr Mariko Francis, RMIT  
University

Pepa 117  
Session: 8 - 11.35am to 12.05pm - 303-G02  
SIG: Inclusive Education and Community

Ampersand Pasley  
University of Auckland

Moana Murray  
University of Waikato

Keywords: trans, irawhiti Takatāpui, sexualities education

### Trans and Irawhiti Takatāpui Educational Worlds: Imagining Decolonisation through Wānanga

Despite the New Zealand Curriculum (2007) commitment to non-discrimination, there is a long history of policy and practice perpetuating colonialities of gender (Lugones, 2007; Kerekere, 2017; Hamley & Doyle, 2023) that demonstrably undermine trans and irawhiti takatāpui students' education (Ellis & Bentham, 2021; Fenaughty et al., 2021). The present Marsden-funded kaupapa involves wānanga with 10 trans and irawhiti takatāpui taiohi (young people) to reimagine what the (relationships and sexuality) curriculum might look like if it supported them to flourish. Facilitated by the investigators, taiohi were given creative control over wānanga, including engaging in kōrero (conversation), raranga (weaving), mapping, creative practice, and kapa haka, to facilitate ako (Mika, 2017). A Matike Mai framework (Mutu, 2016) informed the researchers' approach with tangata whenua and tauwiwi participants. The decolonising potential of wānanga is evident in their capacity to become whatever the taiohi needed them to be, providing an exemplar of a relational sexualities education that emerges with learners' needs, undermining educational colonialities of gender by refusing to be held to pre-conceived norms. The wānanga were still to be conducted at the time this abstract was submitted, so the findings presented will be hot off the press.

Submitted by: Ampersand  
Pasley, University of Auckland

Pepa 119  
Session: 4 - 10.55 to 11.25am - 303-G02  
SIG: Inclusive Education and Community

Russel Dunn  
Tāmaki College

Suzanne Trask  
University of Auckland Liggins Institute

Keywords: learning for social innovation; community partnerships; equity and social justice

### **We make the road by walking': Implementing Akomanga Kaihanga (Learning for Social Innovation) at Tāmaki College**

When education is connected to real-world contexts and informed by principles of equity and social justice, young people are more likely to experience what can be described as 'learning that matters.' That is, learning that enables them to apply knowledge and skills in ways that contribute to social good and deepen their sense of agency and purpose, as learners and members of society. This presentation shares insights from Akomanga Kaihanga: Learning for Social Innovation, an initiative developed by senior leadership at Tāmaki College. Akomanga Kaihanga supports students to collaborate with community partners to co-design and contribute to real-world actions to enhance communities. Drawing on a research-practice partnership, we examine key decision points in establishing the initiative, the pedagogical and operational challenges encountered, and early student learning outcomes. Insights from staff, students, and community partners highlight both the promise and complexities of sustaining the initiative. We reflect on how local issues and student and whānau/community funds of knowledge shaped students' actions. Progress has been achieved by continuous reflection and adaptation, and work is ongoing; we continue to 'make the road by walking'.

Submitted by: Suzanne Trask, University  
of Auckland Liggins Institute



Pepa 120  
Session: 4 - 11.25 to 11.55am - 303-G02  
SIG: Inclusive Education and Community

Sophia Li  
Manukau Institute of Technology

Keywords: academic hierarchy, symbolic violence, equity

### **You Don't Look Like a Senior Lecturer: Symbolic Violence and the Postcolonial Politics of Misrecognition in Higher Education**

This autoethnographic paper explores the lived experience of symbolic violence in the academic field, drawing on Bourdieu's theory of capital and misrecognition, and postcolonial perspectives on institutional power. As an immigrant academic working in Aotearoa New Zealand, I reflect on a moment at an education symposium when my professional title was publicly downgraded without consultation. A seemingly minor error revealed a deeper structure of epistemic misrecognition. Through narrative fragments and critical analysis, I examine how intersecting markers of marginality, including migration status, field of practice, institutional location, age, and potentially gender, race, and accent, shape how academic legitimacy is granted or erased. This paper argues that these small acts of erasure are not incidental but symptomatic of colonial logics that continue to shape who is seen, heard, and named within the academy. Positioned at the intersection of autoethnography and postcolonial critique, the presentation offers a counter-narrative to dominant academic discourse by foregrounding lived experience as data. It invites a rethinking of how professional identity, institutional recognition, and academic justice are negotiated in spaces still shaped by hierarchies of knowledge.

Submitted by: Sophia Li, Manukau  
Institute of Technology

Pepa 121  
Session: 6 - 4.05 to 4.35pm - 303-B07  
SIG: Learning Environments

Keywords: Flexible learning spaces, teacher identity, actor-network theory

**"It was like I was a reliever the whole year": Exploring teachers' sense of identity within a flexible learning space**

Flexible learning spaces (FLS) are intended to provoke different ways of teaching and learning, freeing teachers from the constraints of traditional classrooms (Deed & Lesko, 2013). In exploring the pedagogical possibilities afforded by the spaces, teachers are required to reconceptualise their role within the learning environment (Bolstad et al., 2012). However, the irregularity of these spaces and the subsequent rethinking of teachers' roles can be unsettling, leading teachers to question their identity within the learning space. This presentation explores the experiences of teachers negotiating their changing sense of identity within a FLS. Using data from a doctoral study focusing on the work of English teachers in one secondary school in Aotearoa New Zealand, the study used semi-structured interviews and classroom observations to explore teachers' experiences of working within a FLS. Analysing the data through the lens of actor-network theory reveals that specific actors within the learning environment served to destabilise teachers' sense of identity, while other actors supported teachers to return to conventional teaching practices in their attempts to re-establish their centrality within the learning space.

Submitted by: Lynne Connor, University  
of Canterbury



Pepa 122  
Session: 8 - 12.35 to 1.05pm - 303-B07  
SIG: Learning Environments

Dr John Milne  
AUT

Dr Ruth Boyask  
AUT

Dr Ross Bernay  
AUT

Keywords: Reading engagement, reading environments,

### Children's Navigation of Reading Environments and the Presentation of Engagement

At a time of concern about the reading proficiency of young people in Aotearoa New Zealand, addressing factors that contribute to choosing to read for pleasure is an often-overlooked strategy. We are interested in the features of environments—people, things, and spaces—that affect the quality of reading engagement. Choosing to read is a strong predictor of reading achievement.

This paper reports on a study of children's engagement with reading across multiple environments, such as grandma's house, school libraries, classrooms, and outdoors. Our investigation was guided by two broad questions: How do children or learners/ākonga engage in reading in and outside of educational settings? What affects and is affected by these engagements?

Data were collected with 10 educational institutions through observations, interviews, and children's drawings of their favourite reading contexts. Participants ranged from early childhood to junior secondary age, along with the adults they engage with. A thematic approach was used to analyse the data, and here we are using a mapping analogy to interpret inter-relationships between children, environments, reading objects, and other people.

We found that reading environments have physical, social, and affective characteristics that shape engagement. Learning how children navigate these environments provides a compass to guide what each setting might learn from another. Ensuring environments support choosing to read is one way to address achievement concerns and promote the wider benefits of reading for pleasure.

Submitted by: Dr John Milne,AUT

Pepa 123  
Session: 5 - 2.45 to 3.15pm - 303-B07  
SIG: Learning Environments

Dr Elise Waghorn  
RMIT University

Dr Mariko Francis  
RMIT University

Keywords: Teacher Preparation, Sensory and STEAM Education, Inclusive Pedagogy

### **Embodied Futures: Investigating Inclusive Sensory and STEAM Pedagogies in Initial Teacher Education**

This project investigates how pre-service teachers (PSTs) and Initial Teacher Education (ITE) staff understand, experience, and engage with sensory and STEAM-based pedagogies in early childhood and primary education programs. Drawing on inclusive education principles and the values of connection, responsibility, and pedagogical imagination, this study explores the integration of creative, embodied practices in ITE as a response to the increasing complexity of contemporary classrooms. Using a mixed-methods design, the research examines how PSTs perceive their preparedness and identity development in relation to inclusive sensory and STEAM strategies, and how educators support or constrain these practices through coursework and mentoring. The project is grounded in the SDGs, particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and takes seriously the responsibility of ITE programs to foster equitable and imaginative teaching futures. Theoretically, it draws on social constructivist and embodied learning frameworks to highlight the pedagogical significance of sensory and creative modalities. Findings contribute to international debates about teacher readiness, inclusive pedagogies, and the future of ITE. Results from surveys and staff interviews will inform curriculum redesign and generate practical resources, supporting the development of diverse, capable, and reflective educators ready to meet the needs of all learners.

Submitted by: Dr Elise Waghorn, RMIT  
University



Pepa 124  
Session: 5 - 3.15 to 3.45pm - 303-B07  
SIG: Learning Environments

Lorraine Sands

Keywords: assessment, dispositions, working theories

### **How might learning stories enable children to relive their experiences and stretch possibility thinking: A narrative inquiry**

In this paper, I draw on my PhD research examining what learning emerged for a heterogeneous community immersed in Te Taiao and what contributed to the emergence of this learning. The research community included, mokopuna, whānau, and kaiako in an early childhood setting and tamariki, whānau, and kaiako from a Whakatō te Kākano kura. The study builds a picture of ako comfortable with ambiguity (Davis & Butler-Kisber, 1999) and multiple story lines. It emphasises dialogic storytelling to align the particularity of learning experiences within a sense of community. Repeated encounters in Te Taiao opened possibilities for engagement in relational, multidimensional, holistic, and collaborative learning. The research is embedded in a sociocultural paradigm that views learning as situated, relational, and co-created (Noddings, 2013). The study uses narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2016) to explore alternative paradigms (Moss, 2018), including innovative reconceptualising of connections with communities, and posthuman concepts of relational living (Murriss, 2016). Learning story field texts, written to track learner progress in dynamic, contextually situated ways, enabled mokopuna, whānau, and kaiako to revisit, review, and reinterpret learning in light of living through those experiences (Gunn & Gasson, 2017). Learning story field texts supported children to re-engage with the dispositionally focused, working theory investigations that emerged as children explored possibility thinking (Carr & Lee, 2019) in a heterogeneous community that privileged agentic, mana-infused learning. The ako is this community offers a resistance story (Moss, 2018) to dominant neoliberal concepts of learning and teaching.

Submitted by: Lorraine Sands, Waikato University



Pepa 125  
Session: 6 - 4.35 to 5.05pm - 303-B07  
SIG: Learning Environments

Shweta Sharma  
University of Canterbury

Himasha Gunasekara  
Lincoln University

Keywords: Distance learning, Mathematics, Teacher education

### Impact and affordance of digital tools on distance students' learning of mathematics practices

With the increased push towards providing flexible online learning opportunities to students in current times, this study aims to explore the affordances and impact of LEARN-embedded digital tools on supporting ITE students' engagement and their mathematical practices of explaining, representing, and justifying in a distance delivery mode. Student engagement can be understood as the efforts and energy students put into their learning community, contributing to their academic experience through active participation in tasks and interactions with peers and teachers, thereby creating a sense of belonging and membership that leads to overall achievement (Bond & Bergdahl, 2022). Mathematics education research informs us that using interactive technologies, such as Padlet, promotes social and collaborative engagement among students (Getenet et al., 2022), as evidenced by enhanced collaboration with teachers and peers while building shared knowledge and seeking help. However, the use of digital tools in supporting ITE students' engagement and learning of mathematical practices, such as explaining, representing, and justifying, in a distance-delivered context requires further exploration. This study employs a mixed-methods approach and gathers data through surveys and online observations, followed by a focus group discussion. In this presentation, we will share insights into the affordances (or lack thereof) of digital tools in supporting ITE students' learning of mathematical practices of explaining, representing, and justifying as they engage in a mathematics education course as distance students.

Submitted by: Shweta  
Sharma, University of Canterbury



Pepa 126  
Session: 8 - 11.35am to 12.05pm - 303-B07  
SIG: Learning Environments

Dr. Sabina Rehman  
Ormiston Senior College; The University  
of Auckland

Keywords: Talanoa, learning, listening

### **Talanoa is for everyone: the role of speaking in the educational environment of New Zealand**

Talanoa is for everyone. The main focus of this paper is to discuss how talanoa can be used to enhance the educational achievements of our students. While academic goals are mostly aimed at communication through writing or reading, the role of speaking and sharing ideas verbally in a safe and inclusive space can go a long way in building a learning environment which supports each and every learner.

Talanoa is the Pacific strategy of sharing ideas through discussion and active listening. While talanoa is rooted in Pasifika culture and values, it works for every individual. There is an element of catharsis as well as empathy which brings to the listener and the speaker a culturally responsive relationship. This paper aims to discuss the concept of talanoa, its strengths and its application to our educational and socio-cultural environment.

This paper takes up existing research and scholarly observations as well as personal experience to form the foundation of a discussion which highlights the importance of talanoa as a philosophy, a teaching strategy and a culturally responsive pedagogy. The paper draws upon recent research, including Taleni (2017) and Cunningham & Jesson (2021), which focus upon the role of talanoa in students' academic achievement. This talk aims to amplify the importance of talanoa in academic programmes and its practical implementation in an educational setting.

Submitted by: Dr. Sabina  
Rehman, Ormiston Senior College; The  
University of Auckland



Pepa 128  
Session: 2 - 3.50 to 4.20pm - 303-G14  
SIG: Māori Caucus

Sharyn Heaton  
Massey University, Kai Tahu,  
Muaūpoko, Te Arawa, Tainui/Waikato,  
Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō, Rangitāne ki  
Wairau

Marie Bramley  
Hillcrest Normal School

Andy Peart  
Hillcrest Normal School

Ngaia Mason  
Ngāti Awa

Keywords: Mātauranga Māori, integrated curriculum, teacher voice

### Celebrating the highlights of incorporating Mātauranga Māori into an integrated curriculum

This TLRI project, Tukua te Mātauranga marautanga kia rere, celebrates the highlights of integrating Mātauranga Māori into a localised, integrated curriculum in an English-medium primary school. Through wānanga, photo-elicitation interviews, and practitioner-led inquiry, the research captures narratives of experience from pouako, ākonga, whānau, and iwi/hapū. Meaningful progress has occurred due to positive leadership engagement, collaborative planning, and iwi/hapū consultation. The research highlights the importance of kaupapa Māori-informed teaching, the role of iwi/hapū in localised curriculum design, and the emergence of identity-affirming learning experiences for ākonga Māori. Findings can contribute to theory and practice around curriculum innovation, pedagogical change, and the authentic enactment of mana ōrite mō te Mātauranga Māori. This work contributes to national educational priorities by supporting equitable, culturally grounded curriculum approaches that centre Māori knowledge and learners.

Submitted by: Sharyn Heaton, Kai Tahu,  
Muaūpoko, Te Arawa, Ngāti Kuia,  
Rangitāne



Pepa 129  
Session: 4 - 10.55 to 11.25am - 303-G14  
SIG: Māori Caucus

Tapuraka Rikihana  
Mount Maunganui Intermediate

William Paki  
Mount Maunganui Intermediate

Pania Te Maro  
Massey University

Raewyn Eden  
Massey University

Keywords: Toi Māori, mathematics, mokopuna voice

**"There's a different vibe in here"** □

In this presentation we will focus on Toi Māori as a gateway to rich learning in wahanga ako, particularly in mathematics. We have been in education all our lives, but where we are now is different, it has what one of our mokopuna described as, "a different vibe." Marae concepts and whakapapa are central to what we do, how we do it, and why. We are partners in a project that uses kaupapa Māori research methodology to establish the value of Mātauranga Māori in education. We see this as a way to engage our mokopuna with kaupapa, and equip them with ways to make sense of whatever knowledge they are engaging in, no matter what the context. Using Ngā Pou e Whā from Te Tamaiti Hei Raukura as a framework, and highlighting the taonga we draw on, we will use voices of our mokopuna to share stories about "what's going on in here?"

Submitted by: Raewyn Eden, Massey  
University

Pepa 130  
Session: 3 - 9.05 to 9.35am - 303-G14  
SIG: Māori Caucus

Nicola Bright  
NZCER

Keywords: Histories, identity, curriculum

### **Aspirations to action: Aotearoa New Zealand's histories in localised curriculum**

Since 2023, schools and kura have been required to teach Aotearoa New Zealand's histories in the New Zealand Curriculum and Te Takanga o te Wā in Te Marautanga o Aotearoa. This significant curriculum development followed years of advocacy for better and more consistent teaching of our local and national histories, especially hapū and iwi histories and histories of colonisation (Ball, 2020; L. Bell, 2020; Leaman, 2019). Our research explored the significance of the new curriculum content for Māori and tauwiwi from the perspectives of more than 50 school leaders and teachers, 52 whānau members and 92 ākonga. Our thematic analysis shares their experiences, aspirations, and concerns about teaching and learning the histories of Aotearoa. We found that the curriculum was seen as long-awaited affirmation of the value of Māori histories in schools. Participants saw the potential of the curriculum to support transformative education that interrogates the impacts of colonisation while supporting hapū and iwi to reclaim the telling of their histories. The positive impacts of this curriculum for ākonga are being seen in their deeper understanding of personal and collective identities and their ability to think critically about the past to help understand the present and plan for the future.

Submitted by: Nicola Bright, NZCER

Pepa 131  
Session: 4 - 11.25 to 11.55am - 303-G14  
SIG: Māori Caucus

Hazel Abraham  
Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Tuwharetoa

Keywords: Māori digital futures

### Empowering Māori Futures in Tech: The Te Ao Hāngarau Māori Podcast

The Te Ao Hāngarau Māori podcast series is a bold, community-led initiative that amplifies Māori voices and leadership in reshaping Aotearoa New Zealand's tech sector. Co-created with Māori industry leaders, educators, alumni, and rangatahi, this research empowers Māori communities to define their own futures in technology and education. Grounded in Kaupapa Māori principles and podcast ethnography, our methodology centres Māori ways of knowing and being. Through in-depth interviews, interactive wānanga, and anonymous surveys, we engaged with stakeholders across three schools at Auckland University of Technology (AUT): Science, Engineering and Computer Mathematical Sciences, and Future Environments. Data collection honoured tikanga Māori, ensuring cultural integrity and relational accountability. Our findings affirm podcasting as a transformative medium for e-whanaungatanga building digital relationships that transcend geographic and institutional boundaries. The podcast has become a dynamic platform for collective reflection, knowledge exchange, and strategic action. It strengthens pathways for rangatahi into STEAM fields and challenges the tech sector to embrace Māori innovation and leadership. This work reclaims space for Māori in digital futures, aligning with the NZARE 2025 theme: Place in Education - Connections, Responsibilities, and Futures. It is a call to action for equity, sovereignty, and enduring transformation in education and technology.

Submitted by: Hazel Abraham, Ngāti  
Awa, Ngāti Tuwharetoa



Pepa 132  
Session: 3 - 9.35 to 10.05am - 303-G14  
SIG: Māori Caucus

Keita Durie  
Te Wāhanga, New Zealand Council for  
Educational Research

Hinemaia Kupenga-Keefe  
Te Wāhanga, New Zealand Council for  
Educational Research

Melissa Denzler  
Te Wāhanga, New Zealand Council for  
Educational Research

Arihia Stirling  
Te Kura Māori o Ngā Tapuwae

Keywords: Leadership, whānau, rangatiratanga

### Mana Māori Motuhaketanga | Māori Leadership in Kaupapa Māori Education Settings

This research, led by Te Wāhanga (NZCER), shares the lived experiences of Pou Māori (leaders) in kaupapa Māori education settings. Pou Māori include tumuaki, kaiako, ākonga, whānau, and graduates, highlighting the collective nature of leadership and the importance of all voices. The research focuses on Mana Māori Motuhaketanga, a concept of leadership shaped in Māori traditions, values, and collective aspirations. This leadership approach emphasises rangatiratanga, collective responsibility, and the wellbeing of people and communities. Insights were gathered through whakawhiti kōrero with Pou Māori to understand how mana Māori motuhaketanga is defined and realised in these educational contexts. The research explores the conditions, principles, and practices that nurture Pou Māori, as well as the opportunities and challenges they face. The findings highlight leadership practices that make a difference in kaupapa Māori education and aim to support whānau considering this pathway for their tamariki. The research also provides insights that can strengthen future approaches that align with Māori values and aspirations

Submitted by: Keita Durie, Te Wāhanga,  
New Zealand Council for Educational  
Research



Pepa 134  
Session: 7 - 9.35 to 10.05am - 303-G14  
SIG: Māori Caucus

Timu-o-te-rangi Niwa  
Massey University (Te āētiawa, Taranaki  
Tā«turu, Te Whānau-ā-Apanui, Te  
Whakatōhea, Ngāti Manawa)

Keywords: Whakapapa, Māori, policy

### **Prioritising Whakapapa: Drawing from Kaupapa Māori and Policy Enactment Theories to Reframe the Role of Teachers in Implementing Change.**

Drawing from the theoretical tools of Kaupapa Māori and policy enactment, this paper seeks to critique the often taken-for-granted, instrumentalist view of policy implementation within New Zealand primary schools. From such a perspective, a linear approach is normalised as how policy best travels, from government to school leaders, to teachers and then on to students. This chain of 'natural' events has often posited teachers as 'mere ciphers who implement' (Ball, Maguire & Braun, 2012; p. 15). Two key issues arise from this perspective. Firstly, teachers are often discursively narrativised as 'the problem' in need of being 'fixed'. From a Kaupapa Māori and policy enactment theoretical perspective, focusing on individual teachers negates a broader and contextual rendering of the entire policy process. Secondly, within the current neoliberal education climate, such an entitled framing of teachers demands a deeply rooted colonial belief that all things entail a pure moment of representation (Mika, 2015a). It is preferred that drawing from Kaupapa Māori theory offers not only a rupturing and destabilising of such an instrumentalist and colonising Gaze (Mika & Stewart, 2016) of teachers, but it has the power to propel us toward whakapapa (Mika, 2014), moving away from 'blaming the teacher' to a fostering and nurturing of 'relational responsibility' (Hoskins, 2012; p. 92).

Submitted by: Timu-o-te-rangi  
Niwa, Massey University



Pepa 136  
Session: 6 - 4.05 to 4.35pm - 303-G14  
SIG: Māori Caucus

Kiri Batty  
Ministry of Education

Rachel Cann  
Ministry of Education

Keywords: teacher workforce

### Understanding the Kaupapa Māori, and Māori Medium Teaching Workforce: Insights from the KMMMTS Project

This presentation shares insights from the Kaupapa Māori, and Māori Medium Teacher Supply (KMMMTS) project, a strategic initiative designed to illuminate the unique dynamics of the Māori medium teaching workforce. The project aims to enhance visibility of workforce trends, support evidence-based planning, and inform future-focused policy. The presentation will explore key differences between the Māori medium and English medium teaching workforces, including immersion levels, training pathways, and regional disparities. It will also highlight the role of iwi, regions, and school type in shaping workforce realities. The project foregrounds the responsibilities of the education system to uphold te Tiriti o Waitangi and support Māori-led solutions. Early findings reveal significant gaps in trained teacher supply and underscore the need for targeted, place-based responses. Future work will focus on refining supply projections, linking ITE pathways to workforce entry, and supporting leadership. Aligned with the conference theme, this work asserts that a thriving educational future for Māori requires equitable access to preferred educational pathways, which includes the revitalisation of te reo Māori.

Submitted by: Rachel Cann, Ministry of Education

Pepa 137  
Session: 7 - 10.05 to 10.35am - 303-G14  
SIG: Māori Caucus

Melinda Webber  
Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of  
Auckland

Maia Hetaraka  
Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of  
Auckland

Seelena Micklejohn-Whiu  
Auckland University of Technology

Katie Fitzpatrick  
Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of  
Auckland

Keywords: hauora, Mātauranga-tuku-iho, Te Tai Tokerau

### Using Te Tai Tokerau learning frameworks to inform and improve mental health education in schools

Māori children and young people in Aotearoa experience poorer mental health outcomes as a result of elevated exposure to intersecting and cumulative risks, generations of systematic constraints, and poorer access to culturally appropriate health, social, and educational opportunities. This study examines what Māori communities in Te Tai Tokerau are doing to support their own mental health and wellbeing through the facilitation of community-led hauora wānanga. Little is known about the direct impact of these hauora wānanga on Māori health, including how they work to achieve Hohou te Rongo (the restoration of hauora Māori), support mental health, and have an enduring impact on the ways Māori live well as Māori. This project "Te Unaunahi" addresses this gap in health by identifying and describing Te Pou Eke (the pedagogical tipping points) in these wānanga, documenting impacts on the health of practitioners and participants, and translating these into improved practices for mental health education in schools and universities. In this presentation we outline the design of our current HRC-funded project and the preliminary findings from research conducted alongside a number of Tai Tokerau communities. We discuss some of the mental health improvements that occur when pia (students) learn about Te Unaunahi, and through the tikanga (protocols) and Mātauranga tuku iho (ancestral knowledge) related to it. We will also present Tēnei te Pou - an analytical framework used to evidence the transformational potential of learning which enables Māori to restore and heal themselves.

Submitted by: Melinda Webber, Ngāti  
Whakaue, Ngāti Hau, Ngāpuhi, Ngāti  
Hine, Ngāti Kahu



Pepa 138  
Session: 2 - 3.20 to 3.50pm - 303-G14  
SIG: Māori Caucus

Rhandell Tangaere  
Master of Education (ECE) Te Rito  
Maioha Early Childhood New Zealand

Keywords: Transition, Te kōhanga reo, Kura Kaupapa Māori

### Ways of knowing, being and doing when transitioning from te kōhanga reo to a kura kaupapa Māori setting

Masters Thesis: This study explored what te ao Māori skills support kaiako (teacher) when transitioning a tamaiti (child) and their whānau (family) from te kōhanga reo to kura kaupapa, and what support (including resources) could further enhance te ao Māori skills when transitioning a tamaiti and their whānau. Because the transition from te kōhanga reo settings to kura kaupapa has not been well researched, this rangahau (research) aims to shed emerging light on the skills and support required for kaiako and whānau for successful transition to occur. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews which was informed by qualitative methodologies. The participants involved included: two te kōhanga reo kaiako, two kura kaupapa kaiako and two whānau of tamariki (children) who have just transitioned. Within the interviews, the participants shared their perspectives on successful transition for Ngāti Kahungunu whānau, hapū and iwi. Te ao Māori is the paradigm that underpins this rangahau, underpinned by kaupapa Māori methodology as well as ethnographic research. Together, the participants shared ways of knowing, being and doing when transitioning from te kōhanga reo to a kura kaupapa Māori setting.

Submitted by: Rhandell Tangaere, Master  
of Education (ECE) Te Rito Maioha Early  
Childhood New Zealand)

Pepa 139  
Session: 7 - 9.35 to 10.05am - 303-B09  
SIG: Mathematics & Statistics/Pāngarau Education

Megan Clune  
The University of Auckland

Keywords: mathematics, modelling, game

### Adopting a gameful approach for young learners' development of mathematical modelling sub-processes

With the rapid rise of digital technologies, we now find ourselves in a ludic (playful) era, unlike any period in history. The widespread presence of games in contemporary society has reshaped our thinking, influenced our norms, values, and behaviours to become increasingly gameful (Stenros et al., 2007). In 2015, Zimmerman contended that gaming and game-playing should be central components of how we learn and game-based learning is now ubiquitous in classrooms. I argue for the adoption of gameful systems in ludic learning environments. In the context of mathematics education, I define a gameful system as one that centres mastering the mathematics, within the game, as the primary motivator of gameplay. My recent research used a gameful system (in the form of a digital escape game) to prompt students' use of mathematical processes, in particular mathematical modelling. Mathematical processes are core components of Te Mātaiaho|The New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2024), however, mathematical modelling (as a special form of problem solving [English, 2006]) is not explicitly stated in the Years 0-8 phases. Using an activity theory-informed analysis model, my findings suggest that intentional gameful environments may support students' use of modelling sub-processes well before they are required within the curriculum, potentially benefitting later learning.

Submitted by: Megan Clune, The  
University of Auckland



Pepa 140  
Session: 8 - 11.35am to 12.05pm - 303-B09  
SIG: Mathematics & Statistics/Pāngarau Education

Kim Locke  
University of Auckland

Keywords: international students; positioning theory; mathematical identity

### Enabling collaborative identities for international students in first-year mathematics

In this study, I use positioning theory to explore positions available to four international students in the weekly tutorials that formed part of their first-year mathematics course. Findings show that the position of English-speaking collaborator was not regularly accessible, while that of independent student or Chinese-speaking collaborator were more commonly available. I further show how the same international students readily positioned themselves as English-speaking collaborators during voluntary weekly workshops designed to support mathematical language development and collaborative competencies for first-year international students. Comparing these two mathematical contexts illuminates the characteristics of each setting that were strongly influential in the positioning of these foreign students. This understanding will help university mathematics departments structure tutorials in ways that might enable collaborative mathematical identities for international students.

Submitted by: Kim Locke, University of  
Auckland



Pepa 141  
Session: 8 - 12.05 to 12.35pm - 303-B09  
SIG: Mathematics & Statistics/Pāngarau Education

Lisa Darragh  
University of Auckland

Jude MacArthur  
University of Auckland

Jules Coup  
University of Auckland

We may also have various teacher  
participants in our project - TBC

Keywords: Inclusive mathematics teaching; Universal Design for learning; Lesson study

### **Inclusive mathematics teaching - a UDL approach**

Inclusion is an area of strategic importance in Aotearoa New Zealand and internationally. Nonetheless, research still points to the exclusion of children with disabilities from quality learning opportunities, particularly in mathematics. Teaching through inclusive pedagogies, by contrast, supports teachers to plan for and teach all children from the outset; however, we know little about how teachers may apply these approaches to their teaching of mathematics. Our presentation shares the results from the first year of a TLRI project "Inclusive mathematics teaching: A UDL lesson study approach." We demonstrate how the journey towards inclusion looks different in different contexts and for different teachers. We also share the common challenges teachers face and some of their solutions. Universal design for learning provided a fruitful starting place when planning for inclusion, yet there were conflicts when trying to balance the demands of the new curriculum and attempting to adhere to the 'standardised maths' programmes adopted by schools. We argue that teachers need support to be agentic professionals in their planning for inclusive mathematics and that such support has become even more critical in these challenging times.

Submitted by: Lisa Darragh, University of  
Auckland



Pepa 142  
Session: 6 - 4.35 to 5.05pm - 303-B09  
SIG: Mathematics & Statistics/Pāngarau Education

Pania Te Maro  
Te Kura o te Mātauranga, Massey  
University

Keywords: Mātauranga Māori, Mātauranga mathematics, Knowledge system interface, wānanga,

### Mātauranga Māori and Mātauranga Mathematics Talking to Each Other

Findings from my "PhD Mai i ngā rā o mua. Dialectical and knowledge-power relations in the interactions of kura and maths education" (2019) led me to the notion that if we were to base our teaching and learning on Mātauranga Māori as a separate knowledge system to Mātauranga mathematics, then it would be more likely that mokopuna would be able to see where both knowledge systems would interface, and where they would be completely different. Through kaupapa Māori research that is reliant on wānanga to gather data, it has come to light that kaiako know how to weave together Mātauranga from two different systems to support mokopuna learning of ways of doing and being that are important to both knowledge systems without interrupting one for the other. In this presentation, I will provide some background to the and/and thinking that is necessary to work two knowledge systems together, and some examples of how I have witnessed the and/and mindset working.

Submitted by: Pania Te Maro, Te Kura o  
te Mātauranga, Massey University

Pepa 143  
Session: 8 - 12.35 to 1.05pm - 303-B09  
SIG: Mathematics & Statistics/Pāngarau Education

Raewyn Eden  
Massey University

Linda Bonne  
Victoria University of Wellington

Joanna Higgins  
Victoria University of Wellington

Keywords: emotion, social solidarity, mathematics

### Mathematics learning environments as emotionally safe places: Classroom interactions matter

A focus on cognition in learning experiences risks obscuring the importance of attending to the range of emotions in mathematics classrooms. Taking a sociology of emotions perspective, we have used an event-oriented social inquiry approach to identify salient characteristics in primary and preservice mathematics settings. We have employed multiple methods, including classroom transcripts, cogenerated dialogues (cogen), an interactive response card system (clickers), one-to-one interviews, email conversations, and the research team's reflexive conversations. Participants have included a class of 34 of 10- to 13-years-olds, and a class of 43 pre-service teachers. Looking across our body of research, we have highlighted the importance of the emotional dimensions of classroom interactions within mathematics learning environments. Using social solidarity as a window into the qualities of emotionally safe learning environments, we explore connections interwoven through individual and collective experiences. Specifically, we illustrate three aspects of social solidarity: ritual objects, being-in/with others, and collective empathy. An enduring question remains: How can teachers become more aware of classroom interactions that are critical to emotionally safe learning environments?

Submitted by: Raewyn Eden, Massey University



Pepa 144  
Session: 9 - 1.50 to 2.20pm - 303-B09  
SIG: Mathematics & Statistics/Pāngarau Education

Amitrajit Sarkar  
Ara Institute of Canterbury

Shweta Sharma  
University of Canterbury

Keywords: proof of concept, artificial intelligence, numeracy

### Proof of concept for a Personalised Numeracy AI Tutor: Integrating pedagogy with AI

This study introduces a proof-of-concept "Buddy Numeracy AI chatbot" designed to provide upper primary students with tailored, step-by-step formative feedback to support their numeracy skills. Rather than giving answers directly, the chatbot uses prompts to guide students' thinking and problem-solving. The need for such an approach arises from recent national and international assessments, which show New Zealand students' mathematics performance has been static at Year 5 (TIMSS 2018–2023) and declining by age 15 (PISA 2022), with persistent weaknesses in the number domain. In response, the New Zealand Government has announced plans for a national numeracy test in Year 2, increasing the urgency for innovative, individualised support in numeracy learning. At this stage, the chatbot is in the design phase and has not yet been trialled with school learners. The presentation will outline its intended features, allow audience to interact with the Chatbot, and seek feedback from the education community to inform its development.

Submitted by: Shweta  
Sharma, University of Canterbury



Pepa 145  
Session: 7 - 10.35 to 11.05am - 303-B09  
SIG: Mathematics & Statistics/Pāngarau Education

Huixin Gao  
University of Auckland

Anna Fergusson  
University of Auckland

Tanya Evans  
University of Auckland

Keywords: Student explanation; Mathematics education; Systematic literature review

### Student explanation in tertiary mathematics and statistics education: A systematic literature review

With growing emphasis on active learning in tertiary education and persistent challenges in mathematics and statistics achievement, student-generated explanations have emerged as a promising pedagogical strategy requiring systematic investigation. This literature review examines three explanation methods: Self-Explanation (SE), Peer Explanation (PE), and Explanation to Fictitious Others (EFO). Following the PRISMA protocol, we analyzed 45 studies published between 2014-2024, spanning undergraduate and graduate mathematics and statistics courses. Our synthesis reveals distinct characteristics and mechanisms: SE benefits from training and scaffolds such as prompts; PE operates through direct peer interaction in collaborative settings; and EFO leverages teaching expectancy effects without requiring prompts. In the cognitive domain, strong evidence supports SE's positive impact on conceptual and procedural knowledge, though effectiveness diminishes with material complexity and low prior knowledge. EFO shows promising effects, especially when delivered via video, possibly due to social presence and activated teaching expectancy. No PE studies used sufficiently controlled designs to isolate causal impact. In the affective domain, preliminary evidence suggests both PE and EFO can enhance learner motivation, with indications that PE may improve confidence among female students in specific contexts. These findings highlight the need for method-specific implementation strategies and suggest that explanation type should be matched to learning context, student characteristics, and desired outcomes.

Submitted by: Huixin Gao, University of  
Auckland

Pepa 146  
Session: 9 - 2.20 to 2.50pm - 303-B09  
SIG: Mathematics & Statistics/Pāngarau Education

Parmeshwar Mohan  
St Patrick's College, Wellington

Deepa Chand  
Victoria University of Wellington

Rebecca Harrop  
Victoria University of Wellington

Keywords: Numeracy, learning intentions, success criteria, action research, PLD

### The Role of Learning Intentions and Success Criteria in Enhancing Student Numeracy

Learning intentions and success criteria are widely recognised as essential components of effective teaching and learning. This study employed an action research methodology in a Year 9 classroom in New Zealand to investigate how learning intentions and success criteria can support teachers in enhancing students' numeracy skills. The findings indicate that learning intentions should clearly articulate what students are expected to learn, rather than focusing solely on tasks or activities. Success criteria must be explicitly linked to the learning intentions and be specific, measurable, and achievable. When clearly understood and implemented by teachers, well-defined learning intentions and success criteria can significantly contribute to the development of numeracy skills. The study also identifies two key practices for improving numeracy teaching: first, teachers need to recognise the importance of using learning intentions and success criteria to provide clarity and focus; second, these elements should be embedded into lesson planning and delivery to foster more purposeful learning experiences. The study concludes by recommending targeted professional learning and development (PLD) for mathematics and numeracy teachers to strengthen their confidence and competence in using learning intentions and success criteria effectively.

Submitted by: Parmeshwar Mohan, St  
Patrick's College Wellington



Pepa 147  
Session: 7 - 10.05 to 10.35am - 303-B09  
SIG: Mathematics & Statistics/Pāngarau Education

Anna Fergusson  
University of Auckland | Waipapa  
Taumata Rau

Anne Patel  
University of Auckland | Waipapa  
Taumata Rau

Camilo Lopez  
University of Auckland | Waipapa  
Taumata Rau

Keywords: statistics education, proportional reasoning, creativity

### **Towards structured creativity in task design: Using student-defined categorical data constructed from images to support development of proportional reasoning**

Categorical data are often taught as objective measurements, and greater focus is needed on the creative and subjective human dimensions of data construction. Images offer an engaging context for teaching and can reveal personal and diverse perspectives on what is considered "noticeable". The purpose of our study was to better understand how using categorical data constructed from images could support development of proportional reasoning. Using a custom web-based application, students were guided through an investigative task where they accessed images of movie posters based on a keyword of their choice, defined new categorical variables such as gender diversity, and used different representations to reason about likely features of movie posters based on proportions. Data from over 600 introductory statistics students was analysed using a mixed-methods approach. We combined qualitative document and thematic analysis with quantitative approaches, in order to capture both the diversity and reasoning behind students' selection and construction of categorical variables, and to evaluate the accuracy of their data representations and proportional reasoning-based statements. Results indicate that the task promoted creativity and diversity in how students "see data" and that the structure of the task supported a wide range of learners to develop their proportional reasoning skills

Submitted by: Anna  
Fergusson, University of Auckland |  
Waipapa Taumata Rau



Pepa 148  
Session: 9 - 2.50 to 3.20pm - 303-B09  
SIG: Mathematics & Statistics/Pāngarau Education

William Paki  
Mount Maunganui Intermediate

Tapuraka Rikihana  
Mount Maunganui Intermediate

Pania Te Maro  
Massey University

Raewyn Eden  
Massey University

Keywords: Toi Mokopuna, tohu (symbols), stories

### What's the story?

In this presentation we will focus on Toi Mokopuna and how mokopuna experience authentic and purposeful learning in wahanga ako, particularly in mathematics. Marae concepts and whakapapa are central to what we do, how we do it, and why. In the marae context, tohu (symbols) are used to tell stories about the world; likewise mathematics tohu should be used to tell stories about the world. We are partners in a project that uses kaupapa Māori research methodology to establish the value of Mātauranga Māori in mathematics education. We see that forefronting Mātauranga Māori engages our mokopuna, and equips them to make sense of mathematics in ways that serve them and their communities. Using Ngā Pou e Whā from Te Tamaiti Hei Raukura as a framework, and highlighting the taonga we draw on, we will use the voices of mokopuna to share our stories including examples of the ways in which tohu serve as a bridge from mātauranga Māori to mātauranga mathematics.

Submitted by: Raewyn Eden, Massey  
University



Pepa 149  
Session: 4 - 10.55 to 11.25am - 303-B07  
SIG: Pasifika Caucus

Emma Packham  
University of Waikato

Keywords: Kiribati, Identities, Language Camp

### A Case Study of Kiribati Identity Through Language Camp Participation

"Taeka n Rabakau: Kateira ma rabakaura bon kinaakira" - Our culture and knowledge are our identity (Kiribati proverb). The first Kiribati immigrants arrived in Aotearoa, New Zealand, in the early 1970s, establishing the original Kiribati Group, which included expatriates and foreign volunteers who married I-Kiribati women. Unique to this group was its dual or multiple I-Kiribati cultural identities, as well as those in the diaspora. As the group expanded to include other categories of Kiribati immigration, subgroups formed, including the Ueen Kiribati Cultural Group. However, maintaining the I-Kiribati language, culture, and identity became challenging because English is the primary language spoken in NZ schools. In response to this, Ueen Kiribati launched Kiribati Language Camps in 2022, 2023 and again in 2025 to reconnect youth with their identity through workshops led by I-Kiribati elders. The overarching purpose of this study was to determine the benefits and potential impact of a Kiribati Language Camp for its participants. The central research question guiding it was: How does participation in the Kiribati Language Camp reinforce participants' sense of cultural identity? This study aimed to develop effective strategies for cultural and language revitalisation. These strategies hoped to strengthen cultural identity and enhance the cultural confidence of the Ueen Kiribati Cultural Group through planned workshops and immersive camp experiences. Broader implications of this study may support Pacific communities living in the diaspora, as well as Aotearoa, New Zealand-born Pacific Peoples who maintain strong cultural ties.

Submitted by: Emma  
Packham, University of Waikato



Pepa 150  
Session: 4 - 11.25 to 11.55am - 303-B07  
SIG: Pasifika Caucus

Ella Fifita Hausia  
Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of  
Auckland

Keywords: Tongan secondary students, Business Studies, Loto.

**Fekumi ki he loto'o e fanauako'i he Lesoni Pisinisi: Exploring the heart and mind of Tongan students in the context of Business Studies.**

Mo'unga ki he loto (the strength of a Tongan lies within) reflects a profound cultural truth for Tongans in Aotearoa New Zealand. In Tongan, loto most commonly means heart, literally and metaphorically. The study explores the phenomenon of loto (heart, mind, and desire) within the entrepreneurial thinking of Tongan secondary students. In a system where Western paradigms determine the teaching and learning of Business education, this research offers critical insights into how loto can reframe students' experiences in Business Studies. The study builds on a small subset of studies that explored aspects of loto in education and public service contexts that contributed to advancing Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies. Guided by Tā-Vā theory, the study draws on Talanoa and the Kakala Research Framework as theoretical lenses and methodological approaches to embed the study in Tongan perspectives, values, and ethics. Preliminary findings suggest that loto, as a relational compass, expresses students' and families' desired outcomes in learning. Perceptions of Business Studies and family expectations influence students' loto, shaping how they engage with their education. The analysis is yielding a new continuum that reflects the complexities of these Tongan students' loto within Business Studies. Thus highlighting the possibilities for culturally responsive pedagogy and curriculum development in Business education.

Submitted by: Ella Fifita Hausia, Waipapa  
Taumata Rau | University of Auckland

Pepa 151  
Session: 4 - 11.55am to 12.25pm - 303-B07  
SIG: Pasifika Caucus

Saia Sisitoutai  
University of Auckland, student

Keywords: Koloa, Lotu, Leadership

### **Koloa and Leadership: Transforming Educational Practice through Tongan Lotu-based Insights**

This paper examines koloa (cultural wealth) and lotu (spirituality) as core Tongan concepts with the potential to transform educational leadership practice in Aotearoa New Zealand. Grounded in Pacific Indigenous knowledge, it offers a theoretical framework for culturally sustaining leadership that actively challenges colonial legacies and responds to ongoing educational inequalities faced by Pasifika learners. Drawing on Pacific scholarship, the paper defines koloa as communal knowledge, values, and intergenerational responsibilities, and lotu as the ethical and spiritual foundation guiding leadership practice. By placing emphasis on relationality (vā), respect (faka'apa'apa), humility (loto tō), and loyalty (mamahi'i me'a), koloa- and lotu-informed leadership critiques Eurocentric, individualistic models and proposes a culturally responsive alternative rooted in a Tongan worldview. It argues that these Indigenous frameworks can reshape curriculum design, school culture, community partnerships, and decision-making in ways that genuinely honour Pasifika identities and knowledge systems. Ultimately, the paper calls on educational leaders to embrace Pacific perspectives as critical, transformative resources for addressing inequity and fostering culturally sustaining schooling in Aotearoa. By valuing the richness of Tongan and Pacific epistemologies, this theoretical contribution supports decolonising educational practice and affirms that meaningful change requires leadership committed to living out the wealth of Indigenous cultural and spiritual traditions.

Submitted by: Saia Sisitoutai, University  
of Auckland, student



Pepa 152  
Session: 2 - 3.20 to 3.50pm - 303-B07  
SIG: Pasifika Caucus

Katie Arihia Virtue

Keywords: Māori Pacific Identity

### Mixed Māori/Pacific Identities: The Impact of Education

Mixed Māori/Pacific heritage is a fast-growing demographic in Aotearoa. My PhD research explores these cultural intersections and the impact that navigating Aotearoa's education system has had on these mixed cultural identities. As a Māori (Te Arawa)-Tongan (Mo'unga'one, Lau) mother, doctoral student, educator, and aspiring academic, I start by briefly drawing on my own educational experiences and describing how these have shaped my career path and inspired me to embark on this doctoral journey. In this presentation, I will discuss my chosen methodology, Culturally Responsive Methodologies (CRM). I will illustrate how the metaphor of a double-hulled waka has supported my navigation of multiple cultural spaces during my fieldwork. In this presentation, I share early findings, highlighting emerging themes grounded by the voices of participants who generously shared their stories through talanoa and wānanga.

Submitted by: Katie Arihia  
Virtue, University of Waikato



Pepa 153  
Session: 3 - 9.05 to 9.35am - 303-B07  
SIG: Pasifika Caucus

'Emeline Tu'imana

My kāinga are from Tonga, from the islands of Lofanga, Ha'ato'u, Ha'apai, and the villages of Kolonga, Kolomotu'a, Halafo'ou, Tongatapu. I'm also located in Māngere, the heart of Tāmaki.

Keywords: vā , Tā -vā philosophy, Indigenous relationality

### **TauhivāFonua: Navigating Indigenous Relationality with Land through a Tongan Lens.**

What does it mean to be in vā (Indigenous relationality) and tauhivā (vā activation) with land? This presentation centres Tongan knowledge and positions land as fonua, a living system that sustains vā and provides a home for birth, life, and death. Fonua holds layered meanings—land, womb, people, culture, and grave—embodying a genealogy of continuity. Drawing from Tā-Vā (time-space) Indigenous philosophy, I offer a reimagining of education shaped by relational complexity and intergenerational responsibility. This paper explores how tauhivā with fonua is continually realigned in response to shifting obligations, generational changes, and institutional pressures disconnecting learners from vā with land. These tensions are further examined through ta'okete and tehina (elder-younger) sibling roles. In Aotearoa, Māori are tangata whenua, holding the ta'okete role in spatial and ancestral terms. As tehina, Pacific peoples, including Tongans, carry a sacred responsibility to affirm Māori tino rangatiratanga through humility and reciprocity. Yet oral histories also position Pacific peoples as ta'okete, called to nurture community and care for mokopuna. Pacific youth born in Aotearoa increasingly carry diverse genealogies, and they reweave complex ties with fonua. This paper contributes a mana-enhancing, Indigenous-centered educational philosophy that honours vā and supports culturally grounded futures.

Submitted by: 'Emeline  
Tu'imana, Doctoral candidate at the  
University of Auckland.



Pepa 154  
Session: 3 - 9.35 to 10.05am - 303-B07  
SIG: Pasifika Caucus

Rev Dr Pennie Vaione Togatama  
Manukau Institute of Technology -  
School of Education

Keywords: Autoethnography, Pasifika, Relationality

### Vahaloto: Through my brown eyes

Vahaloto is the Niuean concept that encompasses relational time and space bringing connections with people, to the land and to nature. My doctoral journey revealed aspects of my Self that I never knew existed nor understood until those moments occurred. My thesis challenges readers to consider the spiritual norms of our ancestors and how they can influence and impact who we are as researchers and as educators. My presentation is a narrative that invites you to travel both worlds from a Niuean perspective, born and bred in Aotearoa-New Zealand, to further understand how and why Niueans pursue and achieve doctoral degrees.

Submitted by: Pennie Vaione  
Togatama, Manukau Institute of  
Technology - School of Education

Pepa 155  
Session: 3 - 10.05 to 10.35am - 303-B07  
SIG: Pasifika Caucus

Fuapepe Rimoni  
Samoan

Keywords: policy, Pasifika Education, Pacific students

### Why focus on Pasifika Values?

Educational policies that support teachers in serving learners disadvantaged by cultural marginalisation are urgently needed to inform education systems globally. This presentation examines a study exploring perceptions of Pacific cultural values embedded in New Zealand education policy, aimed at improving outcomes for learners of Pacific heritage. Participants included early childhood, primary, secondary, and tertiary educators of both Pacific and non-Pacific backgrounds. Data collection involved interviews and classroom observations. Findings reveal that Pacific values were more deeply understood, felt, and enacted by Pacific teachers than by their non-Pacific peers. These differences are examined through the lens of culturally sustaining pedagogy and the Fonofale model' holistic Pacific health and wellbeing framework. The study underscores the importance of embedding cultural values meaningfully within teaching practice, particularly when these values are central to education policy. Implications suggest that both initial teacher education and ongoing professional development must equip educators with working understandings of cultural values as lived and experienced by the communities they aim to serve. This presentation contributes to the literature by demonstrating how culturally grounded models can help teachers interpret and implement policy in ways that honour and respond to the cultural identities of their learners.

Submitted by: Fuapepe Rimoni, Victoria  
University of Wellington - Te Herenga  
Waka



Pepa 158  
Session: 1 - 12.45 to 1.15pm - 303-B05  
SIG: Quantitative Studies in Education

Valerie Sotardi  
University of Canterbury

Keywords: learning environment; achievement; classroom control

### **How is School Climate Associated with Mathematics Achievement? Evidence from New Zealand Secondary Students in PISA 2022**

This study examines how student- and peer-level perceptions of school climate are associated with mathematics achievement among New Zealand secondary students, drawing on data from the 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). Multilevel models were estimated with students nested within schools ( $N = 4,347$ ; 167 schools), incorporating multiple imputation and plausible values. At the student level, more positive teacher–student relationships and stronger feelings of safety were linked with higher mathematics scores, while bullying, very high belonging, and heightened perceptions of risk were linked with lower achievement, often in non-linear patterns. At the peer level, schools with higher average safety and lower bullying tended to report stronger performance, with evidence of quadratic associations for collective safety perceptions. Additional analyses suggested that school climate–achievement associations varied across schools, with teacher–student relationships particularly salient in lower-achieving contexts. Findings underscore the importance of examining both individual and collective climate, as well as contextual variability, in understanding student outcomes.

Submitted by: Valerie Sotardi, University  
of Canterbury

Pepa 159  
Session: 3 - 9.05 to 9.35am - 303-B05  
SIG: Quantitative Studies in Education

Kaitlin Riegel  
University of Auckland

Keywords: digital assessment; mathematics education; scoping review

### Digital assessment in mathematics: A scoping review on student responses

Digital assessment (DA) has become increasingly common for a multitude of reasons, including automated question-generation, marking, and feedback, as well as flexibility and scalability. The rise in prevalence of and innovation in DA necessitates an updated investigation into how students engage with these systems. I conducted a scoping review (PRISMA-ScR) and examined 93 studies with findings on student responses to DA in mathematics education. Most of the studies investigated formative DA, which cumulatively demonstrate it is an effective and positively experienced tool to facilitate distributed practice. Specific approaches to support student engagement are identified. There are fewer studies on how summative DA and paper-and-pencil assessment (PPA) impact student responses. While mixed-findings remain on how these approaches relate to performance, PPA appears to be the preferred summative method for most students, who have ongoing concerns around academic integrity, marking, and transparency. Promising features of DA are identified, such as accessibility tools, adaptive feedback, and interface design, but require further study. The review finds that earlier concerns about digital literacy and computer self-efficacy may no longer play a significant role. However, most research has focused on undergraduate students in Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich, and Democratic (W.E.I.R.D.) countries, with less attention paid to school-aged learners or international equity.

Submitted by: Kaitlin Riegel, University of  
Auckland



Pepa 160  
Session: 4 - 10.55 to 11.25am - 303-B05  
SIG: Quantitative Studies in Education

Ying Wang  
University of Auckland

Eleanor Hawe  
University of Auckland

Gavin Brown  
University of Auckland

Keywords: Teachers' conceptions of assessment, Inventories comparison, Structural equation modeling (SEM)

### Do they measure the same thing? A Comparative Analysis of Teacher Conceptions of Assessment Inventories in China

Teachers' conceptions of assessment (TCoA) influence how they interpret, implement, and respond to assessment policies. Multiple different inventories have been developed to measure TCoA from diverse perspectives. However, it remains unclear whether these instruments capture the same underlying constructs with different terminology or actually reflect different constructs. This study examined the interrelationships among three inventories widely used in China: the Approaches to Classroom Assessment Inventory (ACAI, 2022), the Chinese Teachers' Conceptions of Assessment Inventory (C-TCOA, 2011), and the Teacher Formative Assessment Literacy Scale (TFALS, 2022). Using a chained design, anonymous survey results from Chinese teachers (N = 519) were analyzed with multitrait-multimethod correlations to assess convergent and discriminant validity, and with structural equation modeling (SEM). Particularly strong positive correlations were found between ACAI's Contemporary dimension and C-TCOA's Improvement and Accountability dimensions, as well as between C-TCOA's Improvement dimension and all 3 TFALS dimensions. In contrast, weak correlations with the C-TCOA Irrelevance factor were evident in both the ACAI and TFALS suggesting it is a distinctive conceptual construct not present in the other two inventories. The findings highlight substantial conceptual overlap despite different terminology indicating possible confusion in the field.

Submitted by: Ying Wang, University of  
Auckland

Pepa 161  
Session: 3 - 9.35 to 10.05am - 303-B05  
SIG: Quantitative Studies in Education

Huayu Gao  
University of Auckland

Keywords: Women in mathematics; Gender-segregated education; STEM pathways;

### Does gender-segregated secondary education shape girls' STEM trajectories? Insights from New Zealand

This research examined the role of single-sex education in shaping girls' engagement with STEM pathways in New Zealand through two complementary studies. Study 1 analysed enrolment data from the University of Auckland (2016–2020), comparing the proportion of female students from single-sex schools across six disciplines: engineering, mathematics, computer science, statistics, business, and psychology. Girls from single-sex schools were markedly overrepresented in engineering (42%) and computer science (40.2%), compared with approximately 30% in the remaining disciplines. Study 2 drew on the 2019 New Zealand TIMSS dataset to investigate motivational mechanisms underpinning girls' STEM participation, grounded in the Situated Expectancy Value Theory. Hierarchical linear modelling showed mathematics confidence to be a robust and consistent predictor of achievement regardless of school gender type. Notably, higher mathematics value was associated with lower achievement in co-educational settings, whereas in single-sex schools the association was more positive, albeit not always statistically significant. This cross-level interaction suggests the academic benefits of valuing mathematics may be contingent on the school context, with co-educational environments offering less supportive conditions for translating value into performance. Collectively, the findings indicate single-sex schooling may foster more favourable academic trajectories for girls in STEM.

Submitted by: Huayu Gao, University of  
Auckland

Pepa 163  
Session: 4 - 11.55am to 12.25pm - 303-B05  
SIG: Quantitative Studies in Education

Robyn Caygill  
Ministry of Education

Keywords: International, measurement, assessment

**International studies 101: what we can and can't do with the data from TIMSS, PIRLS, PISA and TALIS.**

The first TIMSS international data collection started in 1994, with PISA, PIRLS, and TALIS following in the subsequent years. Analytical techniques have changed markedly since then, with many new products available. But there are some fundamental principles that remain. New Zealand participates in these large-scale studies to provide a kind of health check on the education system. They are not designed to provide a fair assessment of individual students or schools but are designed to give a measure of the system. Misuse and misrepresentation of the data has had negative impacts on both the individuals in the system and on the policy response. This presentation will discuss how to work with the data from the large-scale studies, how to interpret the results, and some of the pitfalls of not paying attention to study design when interpreting the results.

Submitted by: Robyn Caygill, Ministry of  
Education



Pepa 164  
Session: 4 - 11.25 to 11.55am - 303-B05  
SIG: Quantitative Studies in Education

Tanya Evans  
University of Auckland

Anna Fergusson  
University of Auckland

Huixin Gao  
University of Auckland

Keywords: peer assessment, student explanations, mathematics education

### Reclaiming Assessment in the Age of AI: Student-Generated Video Explanations and Peer Assessment

This talk reports on a trial conducted in a large first-year university mathematics course, exploring the use of peer-marking of student-created video explanations as a scalable and pedagogically valuable form of assessment. In response to the growing presence of AI-generated solutions, this approach requires students to create short videos (2-5 minutes) in which they explain their own reasoning, making it harder to rely solely on AI tools. Using the FeedbackFruits platform, each video is anonymously peer-assessed by four classmates using a rubric focused on both mathematical correctness and quality of explanation. Student data indicate strong engagement, with 140 out of 166 students completing regular Explain & Assess assignments over the semester - each submitting 9 videos and assessing 36 videos created by peers. The system requires minimal staff input, promotes academic integrity, and supports the development of mathematical communication skills. With seamless integration into the learning management system, it offers a sustainable, scalable model for formative and summative assessment. Research on the validity and reliability of peer-marking and other results will be presented, subject to approval from the University of Auckland Human Ethics Committee.

Submitted by: Tanya Evans, University of Auckland

Pepa 165  
Session: 3 - 10.05 to 10.35am - 303-B05  
SIG: Quantitative Studies in Education

Minglin Zhou

Keywords: Mathematics Teaching and Learning (MTL), TIMSS/PISA, Empirical research, Core variable extraction, Path mapping, pattern aggregation

### Research on mathematics teaching and learning based on TIMSS and PISA data: A systematic review of trends, empirical focus and methodological reflections

Mathematics teaching and learning (MTL) constitutes a multifaceted system shaped by the interplay of teachers, learners, and educational environments. In recent decades, the availability of international large-scale assessment data, notably from TIMSS and PISA, has spurred a growing body of empirical research. However, a comprehensive synthesis of this literature remains absent. Addressing this gap, the present study systematically reviews 344 empirical studies published between 1999 and 2024 that utilized TIMSS or PISA data. The review outlines trends in data selection, variable usage, and methodological methods using a three-tiered analytical framework: core variable extraction, path mapping, and pattern aggregation. Results indicate a predominant reliance on single-source data, limited application of causal inference, and early-stage integration of emerging algorithms. Predictor variables largely concern student background, motivational beliefs, and teaching practices, while outcome variables are predominantly cognitive. The dominant variable pathway follows a “context/process → learning outcomes” model, with method-driven paths offering promising but underutilized predictive advantages. This study uncovers structural characteristics and blind spots in current MTL research. Implications include guiding future efforts toward cross-dataset integration, enhanced causal modelling, and standardized measurement of non-cognitive constructs.

Submitted by: Minglin Zhou, University of Auckland



Pepa 166  
Session: 1 - 1.45 to 2.15pm - 303-B05  
SIG: Quantitative Studies in Education

Yan Zhang  
University of Auckland

Jason M. Stephens  
University of Auckland

Gavin T.L. Brown  
University of Auckland

Keywords: misconduct, assessment, workplace

### The Role of Peer Misconduct on Assessment Conceptions across School and Workplace Settings in China's Tertiary VET

Previous studies show that students' cheating intentions and behaviours were related to their conceptions of assessment purposes in the school settings. Rooted in social cognitive theory, the present study examined the effect of environmental factors (i.e., perceptions of peer misconduct and perceptions of assessment practices) on personal beliefs (i.e., conceptions of assessment purposes) across both school and workplace settings. Specifically, data from a cross-sectional sample of 1,255 final-year students from China's tertiary VET institutions was analysed using structural equation modelling techniques. The results indicated that peer misconduct perceptions were positive predictors of 1) negative beliefs about assessment (i.e., assessment is irrelevant) ( $\beta = .36$  in school settings and  $\beta = .33$  in workplace settings) and 2) beliefs that assessment was a means of fulfilling obligations to families ( $\beta = .40$  in school settings and  $\beta = .26$  in workplace settings). This study contributes to the literature by confirming previous research on the relations between student's cheating and their perspectives on the purposes and nature of assessment, and by adding new insights into how these association manifest in the workplace settings.

Submitted by: Yan Zhang, The University  
of Auckland

Pepa 167  
Session: 5 - 2.15 to 2.45pm - 303-B05  
SIG: Quantitative Studies in Education

Valerie Sotardi  
University of Canterbury

Keywords: bullying; belonging; academic achievement

### **School Belonging and Bullying as Predictors of Academic Achievement: Evidence from TIMSS 2023 in New Zealand Secondary Schools**

Improving mathematics and science achievement is essential for students' future opportunities and for meeting national educational priorities, yet social-emotional experiences at school strongly shape who succeeds. This study addresses the persistent variation in students' achievement linked to belonging and bullying across school contexts. Using 2023 TIMSS data with Year 9 students, we applied multilevel modelling to examine both individual and contextual effects. Using lmer packages in R, random intercept models showed that demographics, belonging, and bullying significantly predicted outcomes. Allowing effects to vary across schools (random slopes) improved model fit, revealing school-level differences in how belonging and bullying relate to one another. Interaction models indicated that demographic factors also moderated these effects, while peer-level analyses demonstrated that a collective sense of belonging enhanced achievement and buffered the negative impact of bullying. Overall, we report that not only do students' own experiences matter, but the overall climate of the school—how much peers feel they belong and how much bullying occurs—also plays a powerful role in shaping achievement.

Submitted by: Valerie Sotardi, University  
of Canterbury



Pepa 168  
Session: 1 - 1.15 to 1.45pm - 303-B05  
SIG: Quantitative Studies in Education

Rachel Cann  
Ministry of Education

Keywords: day-relief teachers, workforce

### Understanding the day relief workforce in Aotearoa New Zealand

This presentation examines the day relief teaching workforce in Aotearoa New Zealand, using fortnightly payroll data to provide timely, regionally specific insights. The objective is to understand how teacher sickness and leave patterns - especially since COVID-19 - affect the demand for day relief teachers, and how this demand varies across regions and seasons. A dashboard summarising key payroll metrics reveals disparities in regional capacity to cover absences, year-on-year changes in day relief usage, and patterns that align with national flu tracking data. Taking a systems-thinking approach, the analysis explores the relationship between teacher absences and day relief availability, and the broader impact on the education workforce. Findings show that most day relievers also have a main teaching role during the year, and they typically work one to two days a week when working as a day reliever. These insights have informed policy initiatives aimed at strengthening the day relief workforce, ensuring continuity of learning and wellbeing in schools. In line with the conference theme, this work underscores the responsibility of educational systems to respond to health-related disruptions and support sustainable workforce planning. When schools are well-staffed and resilient, they contribute to the wellbeing of communities.

Submitted by: Rachel Cann, Ministry of Education



Pepa 169  
Session: 8 - 11.35am to 12.05pm - 302-G20  
SIG: Science/Pūtaiao Education Research

Sarah Oliveira  
University of Auckland

Keywords: Vaccine-literacy, misinformation, pedagogies

### A Delphi Study - knowledge and competencies for vaccine literacy in teenagers

Vaccine hesitancy is adversely influencing people's health. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the decline in child immunisation rates across New Zealand, as well as recent research, indicates there is a contemporary rise in vaccine hesitancy. In addition, teenage immunisation rates have not yet returned to their pre-pandemic levels. Adolescent social media saturation is evident in young people and may lead to increased exposure to mis- and disinformation that deters them from vaccine acceptance. Vaccine literacy can lead to higher levels of vaccine acceptance. Thus, this research sought to understand the knowledge and competencies required for a person to be viewed as vaccine-literate. The opinions of 16 experts were sought to determine the content of an immunology curriculum for teenagers. Experts consisted of immunologists, virologists, physicians, medical writers, advisors, and secondary and tertiary educators. These experts recommended the inclusion of 4 main areas in teaching immunology which were: the immune system, vaccination, mis- and disinformation, and pedagogical advice. In a 3-phase iterative survey (e-Delphi), experts narrowed the focus of immunology knowledge, competencies, unit structure, and pedagogical strategies for a curriculum. Findings suggest that secondary teachers should aspire to only teach basic immunology and vaccination and explicitly teach myths about vaccines. Experts suggest the use of a variety of tools and teaching methods to engage learners in immunology as well as the use of verified resources for a complicated topic.

Submitted by: Sarah Oliveira, University  
of Auckland



Pepa 170  
Session: 8 - 12.05 to 12.35pm - 302-G20  
SIG: Science/Pūtaiao Education Research

Dr Brent Wagner  
University of Waikato

Keywords: dialogic pedagogy; socioscientific issues (SSI); sharing circles

### Dialogic pedagogy for socioscientific debate: The role of sharing circles in biology education

The controversial use of 1080 poison in mammalian predator control is an environmentally critical issue with implicit social, economic, ethical and cultural dimensions. This paper reports on an innovative pedagogy adapted from talking circles and used as a forum for Year 13 biology students to share items of interest discovered whilst researching the issue part of their NCEA internal assessment.

Convened by the researcher, each circle comprised between five and eight students and took place during a timetabled biology class midway through the research-gathering phase. A total of 25 students at two urban Auckland high schools participated. Students responded to series of open-ended questions to describe their item; explain why they chose it and discuss how it related to their biological and cultural thinking. Each circle session was digitally recorded, transcribed and thematically analysed.

Findings revealed students' understanding of the holistic connectedness of all elements of a healthy environment, Māori involvement in decision making, using culturally appropriate ways to engage and 'listen' to the views of others with aspects of culture, ethics and the affective domain. This was balanced with material students referred to as factual, reliable, trustworthy and bias free.

Circles provided a dynamic space which validated participants' lifeworld experiences through the exercise of 'he mana ōrite mo te mātauranga Māori' (equal status for Māori knowledge). This approach has positive implications for teaching and learning about issues that are of scientific and cultural significance, now and into the future.

Submitted by: Dr Brent  
Wagner, University of Waikato



Pepa 171  
Session: 7 - 10.35 to 11.05am - 302-G20  
SIG: Science/Pūtaiao Education Research

Simon Taylor  
University of Waikato

Brent Wagner  
University of Waikato

Keywords: Key competencies, initial teacher education, teacher voice.

### Exploring the Role of Key Competencies in Secondary Science Curriculum Planning and Pedagogy

Key competencies have been expressed in curriculum planning and teaching in many countries. Yet, teachers conceptualise key competency development in different ways. The purpose of this study was to establish their place and purpose within the science learning area of the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC). Our initial teacher education (ITE) secondary science programme involves pedagogy that conceives the key competencies as analogous to science inquiry thinking and skills processes. With an imminent redesign of the national curriculum, we were eager to explore how ITE student-teachers identify and integrate key competencies into their science inquiry planning decisions. The research also sought student-teacher reflection of how engagement with the competencies might influence their future science teaching and learning. Items for analysis included the way they expressed their understanding of the five key competencies; how specific competencies were planned for; and how these related to science inquiry. This study employed grounded and mixed methods techniques for measuring student-teacher perceptions of key competencies of science curricula in terms of assessment material as qualitative modes. Altogether, 113 scripts were received from 64 student-teachers. The scripts were collated and a series of episodes of analysis was conducted to identify themes, using codes. Findings revealed that developing key competencies with science inquiries can be achieved by intentionally incorporating them into lesson plans and actively teaching them. This paper offers student-teacher perceptions and planning of the key competencies within ITE secondary science curriculum.

Submitted by: Simon Taylor, University of Waikato



Pepa 172  
Session: 7 - 9.35 to 10.05am - 302-G20  
SIG: Science/Pūtaiao Education Research

Carrie Swanson  
AUT

Lynley Tulloch  
AUT

Keywords: Science, environmental and sustainability education, Place-based

### **It's a special place - we're out in nature: Co-designing resources for place-based science education**

This presentation describes the preliminary findings of a collaborative action research study to co-design resources to support primary students' learning on and about a reforested site in Tāmaki Makaurau on Ngātai Whātua Ōrākei land. Eleven participants - which included iwi representatives, educational researchers, practicing primary school teachers, and tertiary science students - took part in the focus group and workshop. The participants were asked how the resources used on the site met the students' educational needs and what additional resources or support for learning were needed to enhance their teaching and students' learning. Audio recordings and co-constructed planning artefacts were analysed thematically. Initial findings suggested that while students enjoyed being onsite and "working as scientists", the resources could be modified for increased impact in a multi-disciplinary sense. Emerging themes highlight the importance of using place-based theory and incorporating the pūrakau, histories and tikanga of the site, and adapting resources for different contexts and age-groups. Resources to support teacher's preparation for the visit and post-site learning are needed. A wider range of electronic and print-based resources could supplement 'hands-on' learning. Widening the range of experiences on the site to utilise sensory engagement and inquiry would be valued.

Submitted by: Carrie Swanson,AUT



Pepa 173  
Session: 8 - 12.35 to 1.05pm - 302-G20  
SIG: Science/Pūtaiao Education Research

Deepa Chand  
Victoria University of Wellington

Parmeshwar Mohan  
St Patrick's College

Rebecca Harrop  
Victoria University of Wellington

Keywords: parental engagement, inquiry learning, culturally responsive teaching, Talanoa

### **Pedagogical approaches that enhance parental engagement in primary science learning**

Parental engagement in primary science education plays a crucial role in enhancing student learning outcomes, yet remains underexplored in Pacific contexts. This study investigates teachers' perceptions of parental engagement within primary science learning spaces, focusing on pedagogical approaches that enhance such engagement. Employing Pacific Research Methodology (PRM), data were gathered through Talanoa, involving twelve primary school teachers' our each from two urban schools and four from one rural school. The duration of each Talanoa lasted for 60-90 minutes. Talanoa was audio recorded, and transcription was made available to participants in subsequent face-to-face meetings. Thematic analysis revealed that inquiry-based learning, culturally responsive teaching, and experiential learning significantly enhance parental engagement. The study highlights the importance of pedagogical approaches that connect home and school learning, offering insights for teachers and policymakers to foster inclusive and culturally responsive parental engagement strategies in primary science education.

Submitted by: Deepa Chand, Victoria  
University of Wellington



Pepa 174  
Session: 9 - 1.50 to 2.20pm - 302-G20  
SIG: Science/Pūtaiao Education Research

Richard Edwards  
Te Rito Maioha

Kerry Lee  
University of Auckland

Ruth Lemon  
TENZ (Technology Education New  
Zealand)

Megan Clune  
University of Auckland

Keywords: technology education, technology education research, Delphi study

### Pointing towards a research agenda for technology education research in New Zealand

A three round Delphi study undertaken by a national group of technology educators in Initial Teacher Education sought to identify trends and issues in technology education in New Zealand. Participants with expertise in technology education were asked to identify what they saw as current trends and issues in technology education, what they thought these might be in five years time, and then also in 10 years time. The three rounds identified a range of important foci that can inform both policy and teacher education. The process also pointed to aspects of technology education in New Zealand that are currently not well understood and that would benefit from research. Some of these relate to recent developments in the field while others reflect ongoing challenges. These potential topics for research are the focus of this paper. They are considered in the light of current and past research and research agendas. It also gives some thought to how such research might be brought into being.

Submitted by: Richard Edwards, Te Rito  
Maioha



Pepa 175  
Session: 7 - 10.05 to 10.35am - 302-G20  
SIG: Science/Pūtaiao Education Research

Sharyn Heaton  
Massey University, Kai Tahu,  
MuaĀ«poko, Te Arawa, Tainui/Waikato,  
Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō, Rangitāne ki  
Wairau

Keywords: waterways, waiora/wellbeing, localised story

### **Te au o te wai, te wai o te au: Reclaiming Mātauranga Māori of water, flow, and identity as pathways to waiora**

This paper presentation explores the relational ontologies between wai (water), au (flow/self), and waiora (holistic wellbeing) within iwi/hapū contexts, and considers the implications of the findings for education in Aotearoa New Zealand. Building on my doctoral work and a HRC grant, this study investigates the correlation between internal (bodily) and external (environmental) flows of wai and their genealogical, cosmological, spiritual, and educational relevance.

Framed by kaupapa Māori theory, and Ngā Āhua, as a Māori centred analytical model, and iwi-led approaches this research highlights how concepts of wai and au can inform culturally grounded science/pūtaiao curricula, waiora/wellbeing education, and taiao/environmental sustainability practices. Through intergenerational mentoring and wānanga, iwi/hapū-led mātauranga indicators of wellbeing are being co-developed about the different flows of water and their centrality to understanding human and ecological health.

For education researchers, this work demonstrates how embedding localised stories and iwi knowledge in pūtaiao/science and waiora/health education can deepen student engagement, affirm identity, and foster collective responsibility for sustaining local waterways, and associated ecosystems. It offers pathways for teachers and researchers to integrate pūtaiao with mātauranga Māori, strengthening culturally responsive pūtaiao/science education in Aotearoa.

Submitted by: Sharyn Heaton, Kai Tahu,  
MuaĀ«poko, Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō,  
Waikato, Te Arawa

Pepa 176  
Session: 1 - 1.15 to 1.45pm - 303-G20  
SIG: Teaching and Teacher Education

Rajesh Ram  
Manukau Institute of Technology

Cris Lynch  
Saint Cuthberts College

Keywords: Second chance education, cultural capital, lived experience, experiential learning

**Unveiling invisibility: the lived experiences of former students at New Zealand's second chance education secondary school.**

This paper examines the lived experiences of former students who attended a second chance education (SCE) secondary school in New Zealand. This study contributes to contemporary debates on educational equity and the role of alternative schooling in addressing systemic barriers. The objective was to understand how alternative educational environments can reengage youth marginalized by mainstream schooling. School A (pseudonym), like charter schools in New Zealand, was established in collaboration with a local tertiary education provider and secondary schools in South Auckland, to re-engage students who have become disengaged from conventional school settings. This research used a narrative inquiry to explore the educational journeys of eight former students. Using in-depth, semi-structured interviews, and thematic analysis, we constructed the personal narratives of participants, mapping their transitions from primary to intermediate and secondary school. This approach allowed us to understand how they made sense of their experiences, including the sociocultural and socioeconomic factors that contributed to their sense of invisibility in mainstream education. Applying Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, we reveal how institutional norms often fail to recognize the diverse forms of capital students bring to the classroom. Our findings show that School A's practices, such as addressing teachers by first names and emphasizing hands-on learning, helped students validate their existing cultural capital and fostered a sense of belonging. The study concludes that by creating inclusive environments to support disengaged youth, SCE schools can transform educational trajectories. These findings have significant implications for informing teacher education and policy, ultimately helping more students become active and responsible citizens.

Submitted by: Rajesh Ram, Manukau  
Institute of Technology, School of  
Education and Social Work

Pepa 177  
Session: 5 - 2.15 to 2.45pm - 303-G20  
SIG: Teaching and Teacher Education

Tanya Gray  
University of Waikato

Jessica Cira Rubin  
University of Waikato

Keywords: writing pedagogy, standardised assessment, teacher learning

### **"A Change in Mindset" Teachers Navigating Standardised Expectations and Appreciative Assessment of Writing and Writers**

Responding to writing is a crucial component of writing pedagogy, with teachers frequently engaging in this as part of their daily teaching practice. However, extensive research indicates that students who are perceived to be at risk of failing or struggling to meet predetermined writing standards typically experience deficit-focused responses to their writing that focus disproportionately on surface features. This study investigated teachers' experiences in a New Zealand Health School as they inquired into an appreciative approach that pushed back on the narrow and predominantly negative responses some students previously received. Through an appreciative lens, all students, irrespective of their health condition or other dimensions of diversity, are positioned as capable and knowledgeable writers. The Health School teachers collaboratively inquired into appreciatively informed strategies, implemented these while discussing shared samples of students' writing, and adopted the new strategies when they responded to the writing of their Health School students (aged 5-19). Evidence was drawn from focus groups, learning inquiry group sessions, and individual interviews, and analysed using thematic analysis. Findings suggest that high-stakes assessments have a powerful effect on how teachers view themselves as teachers and their students as learners. However, findings also indicate that when teachers collaborate to reflect on the perspectives that inform education policies and practices, particularly those around standardised assessments, they become more aware of how these factors may lead them to inadvertently reproduce harmful responses.

Submitted by: Jessica Rubin, Te  
Wānanga Toi Tangata/Division of  
Education, University of Waikato



Pepa 178  
Session: 0 - 1.50 to 2.20pm - 303-G16  
SIG: Teaching and Teacher Education

Mary-Liz Broadley (ECE ITE)  
Te Kuratini Tuwhera o Aotearoa | Open  
Polytechnic

Melissa McMinn (Primary ITE)  
Te Kuratini Tuwhera o Aotearoa | Open  
Polytechnic

Jackie Solomon (ECE ITE)  
Te Kuratini Tuwhera o Aotearoa | Open  
Polytechnic

Lynne Brice (Secondary ITE)  
Te Kuratini Tuwhera o Aotearoa | Open  
Polytechnic

Keywords: Partnership, Associate Teachers, Initial Teacher Education (ITE)

### "Nāu te rourou, nāku te rourou, ka ora ai te iwi" Connecting ITE with ATs for authentic partnerships in teacher education

Authentic partnerships with a clear sense of purpose are identified as a cornerstone of high-quality practical experience in Initial Teacher Education (NZCER, 2017) and an expectation for teacher education providers (Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, n.d.). Associate Teachers (ATs) are important partners across teacher education programmes, providing mentoring and guidance to ākonga in their own settings, yet very little is known about their perspectives, experiences and views in relation to partnership. Anecdotal evidence suggested to our cross-sector research team at the Open Polytechnic that as an ITE provider our existing 'partnership' with ATs in early childhood settings and schools rested on assumptions that may not be valid or well founded. We therefore sought to explore understandings around 'authentic partnerships' from the perspectives of the ATs working alongside our ākonga in ECE and school settings, using an interpretivist paradigm and a social constructivist framework. After an initial survey of ATs, we developed the metaphor of an 'arranged marriage' to discuss with ATs in a series of online focus groups, their perspectives and experiences on how to establish, maintain and grow authentic partnerships as professional colleagues supporting our teacher education ākonga. Findings to date are presented alongside a discussion of the wider implications for ITE providers.

Submitted by: Jackie Solomon, Open  
Polytechnic

Pepa 179  
Session: 6 - 4.05 to 4.35pm - 303-G20  
SIG: Teaching and Teacher Education

Keywords: Intercultural Art Education; Indigenous onto-epistemes; Biodiversity outdoor education; Arts-based Research Methodologies

### **An ecology of experiences with biodiversity: Intercultural and interdisciplinary preservice art education**

The research explores an intercultural and interdisciplinary arts-based model implemented in a teaching programme to support knowledge and care for local biodiversity in Chile. It responds to the decrease of direct experiences with nature and the homogenization of biodiversity in teachers' perceptions. Here, visual arts education could contribute to the revitalization of such knowledge through sensitive experiences with nature and an emphasis on the idea of interdependence. In Chile, the Mapuche onto-episteme of *azmapu* refers to the idea of balance, in which human, non-human, physical, and immaterial forces, and aspects related to the mind, body, and spirit, are interdependent and of equal value. Connecting art teachers' training with Indigenous onto-epistemes could promote the care of diversity beyond humanity. A/r/tography, an arts-based methodology, guides this research through creative methods and theorisations. Through focus groups interviews with the teachers trained in the programme and photographic documentation of their creative processes, the research values the impact of the model on 1) their knowledge of local biodiversity; 2) their sense of agency for caring for biodiversity; and 3) the challenges and possibilities to implement this model in schools. The results show the potential of art education to support sensibility and agency towards environmental issues.

Submitted by: Veronica Garcia-  
Lazo, Pontificia Universidad Católica de  
Chile; Centro de Estudios Interculturales  
e Indígenas (CIIR)

Pepa 180  
Session: 9 - 1.50 to 2.20pm - 303-G20  
SIG: Teaching and Teacher Education

Vijay Bhagwandhin  
University of Auckland

Keywords: Adaptive expertise, reflective practice, professional learning conversations

### Building teacher adaptive expertise using Practice Analysis Conversations

Quality teaching requires teachers develop adaptive expertise (AE). AE involves teachers growing in-depth knowledge and skills to reflect and respond to the complexities of teaching and adapting practice accordingly (Lampert, 2020). AE is a key feature of teacher professional learning in NZ (Le Fevre et al., 2020) and provides the theoretical framework for this study. While post-observation conversations (POC) have long been promoted as a vehicle for growing teacher AE (Beltramo, 2017; Langdon et al., 2012), POC often become observer feedback sessions providing little opportunity for teacher involvement (Timperley, 2012). Four teachers and their two middle leaders in a New Zealand primary school participated in this qualitative study which used an intervention to investigate the influence of Practice Analysis Conversations (PAC) (Timperley, 2009; 2023) on developing AE. Data were collected before and after the intervention and include video-recorded observations, pre-observation sheets, POC transcripts, and individual semi-structured interviews. Data were analysed thematically to illustrate and explain shifts made after the PAC intervention. These findings indicate that PAC was perceived as a catalyst for promoting AE through providing a clear focus and purpose for the observation and conversation, for using valid evidence, co-construction of new practice, and encouraging reflective practice. Findings underscore the necessity for tools such as PAC to be used in POC to grow teacher AE.

Submitted by: Vijay  
Bhagwandhin, University of Auckland

Pepa 181  
Session: 9 - 2.50 to 3.20pm - 303-G20  
SIG: Teaching and Teacher Education

Wendy Carss  
University of Waikato

Linda Clark  
University of Waikato

Pamela Vale  
University of Waikato

Bronwen Cowie  
University of Waikato

Keywords: Programme-level assessment, initial teacher education

### Building towards programme assessment in a Bachelor of Teaching (Primary): Initial steps

Programme-level assessment design is emerging as an approach for ensuring students experience their degree programme as coherent and cumulative. Programme-level assessment aims to support students to connect their learning both horizontally and vertically across their degree so that they develop and demonstrate relevant graduate attributes and professional standards (Bearman et al. 2017; Charlton & Newsham-West, 2024; Van der Vleuten et al., 2012). Building on an analysis of the assessment tasks across the Bachelor of Teaching (Primary) degree, lecturer rationale for assessment task design, and student views of programme assessment connections and coherence, this paper reports on the first stage of a developmental evaluation (Patton, 2008) of the process of developing a shared vision for student graduate attributes and what could constitute evidence of this. It is based on the model for programme assessment developed by Charlton and Newsham-West (2024). Data was generated through an initial workshop with lecturers and school based 'associate lecturers' and interviews with the overall Division/ Faculty leader and program leader. Findings outline the process and challenge of working towards a taken-as shared vision for graduate attributes and how these might be demonstrated and connected across different assessment tasks, within and across papers throughout the programme.

Submitted by: Wendy Carss, University of Waikato



Pepa 182  
Session: 5 - 2.45 to 3.15pm - 303-G20  
SIG: Teaching and Teacher Education

Philippa Nicoll Antipas  
University of Otago, Wellington

Keywords: Assemblage, lines of flight, cartography

### **Cartographies of be(com)ing: Exploring medical educators in their classroom assemblages**

During my job interview for Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka ki Pōneke, it was suggested to me that the educators who teach into our undergraduate medical degree (MBChB) might not see themselves as teachers but primarily as doctors. How do doctors-who-teach (medical educators) understand themselves then? Taking a postqualitative orientation to research and using concept-as-method (Mazzei, 2021), in this study I draw on the Deleuzoguattarian concepts of assemblage, lines of flight, and becoming. To learn more about how our medical educators conceptualise themselves and their practice, I invited five educators to draw a “rich picture” (Armson, 2011) directly after one of their teaching sessions. We then entangled in an intra-view to explore the rich picture – a cartography of be(com)ing – which places them in the assemblage of their teaching context. In doing so, I seek to attune to lines of flight - possible places of disruption - to notice veins of possibility to enhance teaching and learning practices. In this presentation I'll share some of the cartographies and stories of the medical educators and invite you to share what you notice while we collaboratively wonder what teachers in other places and spaces might chart.

Submitted by: Philippa Nicoll  
Antipas, University of Otago, Wellington

Pepa 183  
Session: 7 - 9.35 to 10.05am - 303-G20  
SIG: Teaching and Teacher Education

Kate Rhodes  
University of Waikato

Keywords: Authentic Computational Thinking, Inclusive Digital Education, Girls' Motivation

**Coding in Context: Motivating Girls in Computational Thinking through authentic Technology education.**

Despite increasing calls for equity in digital education, gender disparities in Computational Thinking (CT) persist. This study investigates how contextual and pedagogical factors, particularly the role and place of authenticity, influence motivation for primary school girls in CT learning. Drawing on a constructivist lens and using a three-phase Design-Based Research (DBR) methodology, the researcher collaborated with three teachers to co-design and implement two CT-integrated units. Eighteen girls, aged ten and eleven, participated, with data collected through student-generated drawings, focus groups and Likert-scale questionnaires. Findings highlight that embedding CT within real-world, purpose-driven contexts that emphasise creativity and design, rather than focusing on isolated digital skills or tool use, was a key motivational factor for girls. These results underscore the importance of pedagogical approaches that prioritise meaning-making and learner agency. This research contributes to addressing the gender gap in CT and Computer Science by promoting inclusive, future-focused digital and technology education. Encouraging diverse participation in primary education is critical; without it, algorithmic systems risk being shaped by narrow perspectives, reinforcing bias and limiting innovation.

Submitted by: Kate Rhodes, University of  
Waikato



Pepa 184  
Session: 2 - 4.20 to 4.50pm - 303-G20  
SIG: Teaching and Teacher Education

Fatma James

Keywords: Mental Health, Initial Teacher Education, Responsibility

### Exploring Teacher Responsibility in Mental Health: An ITE Perspective

Drawing on Biesta's (2016, 2022) critique of the 'therapeutic turn' in education, this presentation aims to generate questions that explore the evolving role and responsibility of the teacher in relation to student mental health. It interrogates the implicit expectations placed on teachers to address complex social and emotional issues, expectations that contribute to the ongoing educationalisation of social problems and extend teachers' responsibilities beyond their pedagogical remit.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, the response to children's mental health needs, particularly trauma has led to increasing demands on teachers to act as informal caregivers, despite limited training in therapeutic or counselling practices (Johnson & Ronan, 2014). This response may be disproportionate in that the expectations placed on teachers often exceed the scope of their professional preparation and expertise. The growing emotional labour required of teachers has prompted concern about whether Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes might help in preparing educators for these realities.

This presentation examines the intersection between two key domains: the professional responsibility of teachers to support student wellbeing, and their formal role as educators. It proposes a critical inquiry paradigm that does not offer prescriptive solutions, but instead raises generative questions to prompt academic discourse. For example, how might ITE programmes better equip teachers to navigate the emotional dimensions of their work without positioning them as de facto therapists? In doing so, the article invites reflection on how teacher identity, training, and policy intersect in the context of student mental health.

Submitted by: Fatma James, Fatma  
James, Senior Lecturer, BEd (Primary,  
Pasifika) MIT

Pepa 186  
Session: 9 - 2.20 to 2.50pm - 303-G20  
SIG: Teaching and Teacher Education

Wangying Guo  
The University of Auckland

Maree Davies  
The University of Auckland

Camilla Highfield  
The University of Auckland

Keywords: Teacher agency, Critical thinking, Professional learning communities

### From Policy to Practice: Shifting Teacher Agency through Quality Teaching Rounds in Chinese Junior High Schools

This study explores how junior high school teachers in China developed a sense of agency while participating in a twelve-week professional learning intervention based on an adapted version of the Quality Teaching Rounds (QTR) model (Gore et al., 2003). Situated within Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), the intervention involved collaborative lesson observations, coding, agentic dialogue, and reflective discussion. Drawing on the ecological model of teacher agency (Priestley et al., 2015), the study examines how teacher agency may shift across its iterative, projective, and practical-evaluative dimensions in response to structured professional learning. The research builds on a prior phase that investigated teachers' initial interpretations of the critical thinking component in the 2022 Chinese Language Curriculum. In this second phase, data were collected from eighteen Chinese language teachers across three schools in urban, semi-rural, and rural regions. Participants seemed to develop a growing confidence in applying critical thinking strategies, an emerging awareness of themselves as critical thinkers, and a potentially enhanced sensitivity to their classroom and contextual realities. This study contributes to ongoing discussions on the potential of collaborative professional development to foster teacher agency amid curriculum reform in China and offers a tentative model to inform teacher learning in teaching critical thinking.

Submitted by: Wangying Guo, The  
University of Auckland



Pepa 187  
Session: 4 - 10.55 to 11.25am - 303-G20  
SIG: Teaching and Teacher Education

Fiona O'Connell Jones  
Te Rito Maioha

Richard Edwards  
Te Rito Maioha

Katrina Lee  
Te Rito Maioha

Raewyn Higginson  
Te Rito Maioha

Keywords: Generative AI, Primary, Teaching and Learning

### **Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen-AI) for teaching and learning in primary classrooms: a case study**

This research presents findings from a case study investigating the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen-AI) in a New Zealand primary school classroom, by asking, how is Gen-AI used to support teaching and learning in a New Zealand classroom? In the context of teaching, Gen-AI refers to a class of artificial intelligence systems, including large language models such as ChatGPT and Copilot, that can create new content such as text and images, based on patterns learned from large datasets.

Gen-AI is increasingly being used in classrooms to generate lesson plans, support students with additional learning needs, and develop personalised learning. This initial research aims to explore how primary school teachers are employing Gen-AI to support teaching and learning,

A qualitative case study methodology was adopted, focusing on a single instance of Gen-AI use during a lesson in a Year 4/5 classroom (ages 8-10) in a suburban New Zealand school. Data collection included an initial semi-structured interview with the classroom teacher, which focused on their knowledge and use of Gen-AI to support teaching and learning, as well as their thoughts around the impact on their student's learning.

This was followed by the observation of a lesson designed to use Gen-AI tools, such as Canva's AI design assistant, to create an infographic, and then follow-up interviews with the teacher and a student focus group. The student interviews explored a number of themes, including their overall thoughts on using Gen-AI, as well as how they think it was used in the observed lesson, and how they felt its inclusion supported their learning.

Thematic analysis is underway to identify patterns and insights across the data, and preliminary findings highlight the role of confidence in engaging with Gen-AI. Both the teacher and students demonstrated a limited but functional understanding of Gen-AI, which was sufficient to facilitate meaningful interaction with the technology. Students also exhibited an emerging awareness of ethical considerations, often shaped by external influences such as media, parental, and peer discussions.

The case study approach was adopted as a starting point for further research, which would involve a wider range of teachers, classrooms, lesson types, and Gen-AI tools, to build a more comprehensive understanding of how Gen-AI is being used across different contexts to support teaching and learning, thereby contributing to the growing body of literature on Gen-AI in education.

To support this future research, theoretical frameworks and research tools will need to be developed to guide future investigations around the overlapping spheres of personal, professional, and pedagogical use of Gen-AI. These frameworks should support understanding, not just how Gen-AI is used, but how it can be used educatively. This means moving beyond tool familiarity to intentional, pedagogically sound integration by focussing more directly on the connection between Gen-AI use and actual learning.

Submitted by: Fiona O'Connell Jones, Te  
Rito Maioha



Pepa 188  
Session: 7 - 10.05 to 10.35am - 303-G20  
SIG: Teaching and Teacher Education

Frances Edwards  
University of Waikato

Hoana McMillan  
University of Waikato

Florence Lyons  
University of Waikato

Keywords: Language learning, AI,

### How Generative AI can facilitate teaching and learning languages in New Zealand secondary schools

Educators have been trialling the use of many types of GenAI (e.g. ChatGPT) as teaching, learning, and administration tools within the educational environment. However little research is available that focuses on the use of GenAI in the compulsory school sector in New Zealand, and even less on language learning in New Zealand. Through the use of good prompts Generative AI can allow language teachers and students to develop learning activities that are particularly useful in language teaching settings, helping with language skill development. This project aimed to track how New Zealand teachers of international languages and te reo Māori were using GenAI from a pedagogical perspective, and their perceptions of its effects on their work and on student learning and engagement. This research used a sociocultural framework. Data was collected through recorded workshops and interviews with teacher participants. The findings describe a variety of AI tools and uses that teachers found helpful in their work. It also identifies other potential uses of AI for language teachers and language learners.

Submitted by: Frances  
Edwards, University of Waikato



Pepa 189  
Session: 4 - 11.55am to 12.25pm - 303-G20  
SIG: Teaching and Teacher Education

Philippa Nicoll Antipas  
Researcher, Aotearoa Social Studies  
Educators' Network (ASSEN)

Maria Perreau  
Kaiārahi, Aotearoa Social Studies  
Educators' Network (ASSEN)

Keywords: resources, social studies, professional knowledge

### Interactions between effective social studies resources and primary teachers' professional knowledge

The importance of place as a focus for social studies and Aotearoa New Zealand histories resources is well-understood by primary school teachers. Place plays into their decision-making processes when choosing resources to use with their learners. What is less understood, both in the literature and by teachers, is the framing of place: how place might be used to underpin the conceptual understanding that is required by a knowledge-rich social studies curriculum. In order to better understand the interactions between effective social studies resources and primary school teacher's professional knowledge, Aotearoa Social Studies Educators' Network (ASSEN) has conducted phased qualitative research. We initially inquired into teachers' selection and adaptation of social studies resources alongside a literature review. This led to the creation of a framework for sparking robust professional conversations amongst teachers about what constitutes effective social studies resources and how they can be used when implementing the curriculum. In light of diminishing Ministry of Education support for professional learning and development in primary schools outside of structured literacy and numeracy, ASSEN believes this framework affords teachers the opportunity to metacognitively engage with social studies resources in ways that have the potential to enhance their professional knowledge of the learning area.

Submitted by: Philippa Nicoll  
Antipas, ASSEN

Pepa 190  
Session: 1 - 12.45 to 1.15pm - 303-G20  
SIG: Teaching and Teacher Education

Rachel Borthwick  
Ministry of Education

Keywords: TALIS, wellbeing, teachers

### Is a change as good as a rest? Exploring the wellbeing of New Zealand teachers through TALIS.

The OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) is designed to gather information from teachers and principals on their experiences, professional practices and beliefs, and workplace wellbeing. Among a wide range of topics, TALIS asked teachers of students across Years 1 to 10 about sources of stress, experience of change, supports for wellbeing, job satisfaction, and plans to leave in the next 5 years.

In October 2025 the results from the latest survey will be released. The survey was collected in the middle of 2024, a period that included ongoing impacts from COVID disruptions, changes in curriculum and assessment, and reports of difficult classroom climates.

TALIS asked a random sample of Year 1 to 10 teachers from an independently selected random sample of schools to complete a survey online. Most questions required teachers to select responses. Participation was optional, and 227 principals and 2733 teachers took part.

New Zealand participates in TALIS to generate internationally comparable indicators. These indicators are intended to support policy development based on evidence gathered directly from teachers about their practice. This presentation will discuss the latest findings from TALIS 2024 with a focus on teacher wellbeing, including limitations in the data as a result of an increasing trend of non-participation at the school level. All survey results are embargoed until 2pm October 7, 2025

Submitted by: Rachel Borthwick, Ministry of Education

Pepa 191  
Session: 7 - 10.35 to 11.05am - 303-G20  
SIG: Teaching and Teacher Education

Katie Farrimond  
Unitec

Lee-Anne Turton  
Unitec

Sharnell Aumua  
Unitec

Keywords: GenAI, Learning Design, Innovation

### Miss Honey meets GenAI: Reimagining Reflective Practice in Initial Teacher Education

In an age where Generative AI is reshaping education, our research questions “How do we ensure our assessment practices remain authentic, equitable, and future focused?” In collaboration with learning designers, academic staff in the Bachelor of Teaching (ECE) at Unitec have developed an AI-powered Cogniti chatbot. ‘Miss Honey’ is designed to support our taura with developing skills in reflective practice. Built on the DATA reflection model, ‘Miss Honey’ engages taura with open-ended prompts and personalised formative feedback, nurturing confidence and deepening professional inquiry.

The initial phase of the research focused on developing ‘Miss Honey’ to ensure the support provided is relevant and responsive to taura needs. Early trials were conducted with academic staff, followed by a small group of taura who shared positive feedback through recorded video reflections. This informed iterative improvements to Miss Honey’s design and functionality. The next stage of the research will involve a broader rollout across cohorts to evaluate the impact on learning and taura agency.

This innovative tool models a pedagogically sound, ethically conscious use of GenAI that enhances, rather than replaces, human connection in learning. While GenAI use in assessment remains restricted, our research seeks to understand how we can harness AI to empower learners. This aligns with the Tertiary Education Strategys which calls for inclusive, future-focused innovation that advances learner success. Join us as we explore how thoughtful AI integration can support learner-centred practice in Tertiary Education.

Submitted by: Katie Farrimond,Unitec



Pepa 192  
Session: 2 - 3.20 to 3.50pm - 303-G20  
SIG: Teaching and Teacher Education

Alexandra C. Gunn  
Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka | The University  
of Otago

Roberta Carvalho  
Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka | The University  
of Otago

Sonya Gaches  
Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka | The University  
of Otago

Michael Gaffney  
Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka | The University  
of Otago

Keywords: Preservice teacher education; early childhood education; care(full) teaching.

### Preservice teachers learning about mentors' care(full) teaching.

Our study sought to enrich ECE student teachers' understandings of the professional, ethical, and politically situated decision making of experienced teachers. We took a narrative and interpretivist approach towards documenting teaching moments which were then embellished with teacher interview data for use in teacher education classrooms. Our aim was to collaborate with our ECE-based mentor teachers and to produce local data about care(full) teaching, that would promote discussion, storytelling, and analysis of teachers' political and ethical motives for what they say and do. Recognising the power of narratives and story for shaping professional knowledge, identities, and practices in teaching (Bruner, 1991; Clandinin and Connelly 1996, 2000; Loughran et al 2004), our study foregrounds story as a central tool for teacher educators' promotion of learning about relational-situated teaching, complex ethical decision making, and political choice making in education. By analysing their own mentors' stories, student teachers were encouraged to recall and share their own accounts of care(full) teaching which, in turn, made these available for scrutiny and critical reflection. Our project contributes to teacher education pedagogical knowledge and shapes possibilities for programme design that supports student teachers to articulate their practice and understanding their motives for what they say and do.

Submitted by: Alexandra C.  
Gunn, Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka | The  
University of Otago

Pepa 193  
Session: 2 - 3.50 to 4.20pm - 303-G20  
SIG: Teaching and Teacher Education

Sophia Li  
Manukau Institute of Technology

Keywords: Teacher education, postdigital, AI

### Supported Autonomy in the Postdigital ZPD: Reframing Educator Roles in AI-Enhanced Learning in Higher Education

The integration of GenAI tools into higher education is not only reshaping how learners engage with learning but also how educators support that engagement. The author introduces the concept of supported autonomy to reframe Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) in postdigital contexts. While learners may appear increasingly able to work "independently" by using AI, this apparent autonomy often conceals a deeper need for pedagogical guidance, critical awareness, and relationship support. Drawing on postdigital theory and sociocultural theories, the author argues that AI should not replace educators, but rather strengthen and reanimate their roles. AI is not the scaffold, but part of the terrain where learning takes place. Within this terrain, the educators' presence becomes more essential than ever. Supported autonomy recognises the shifting balance between learning independence and the enduring need for responsive and relational teaching. This conceptual contribution to ZPD forms part of a broader model currently in development, the Shotgun Driver Model, which seeks to reimagine educator roles in AI-enhanced higher education. The audience is invited to explore how future-oriented pedagogies can sustain meaningful, human-centred learning in the increasingly automated education landscape.

Submitted by: Sophia Li, Manukau  
Institute of Technology



Pepa 194  
Session: 6 - 4.35 to 5.05pm - 303-G20  
SIG: Teaching and Teacher Education

Mere Berryman  
University of Waikato

David Copeland  
University of Waikato

Elizabeth Eley  
University of Waikato

Jay Haydon-Howard  
University of Waikato

Frances Kelly, University of Waikato

Keywords: tertiary settings, power-relations, Māori futures

**Taking responsibility for better connections and stronger futures: Understanding and responding to power-relations between tertiary staff and Māori students**

This research questioned how very determined acts of face-to-face andragogy, together with specifically curated online resources, could promote tertiary staff to take greater responsibility for connecting with the learning of Māori tertiary students and thus result in students improved future life chances.

Working within participatory, Culturally Responsive Methodologies, interviews-as-conversation were used to retrospectively understand what staff had learned from participating in this particular professional learning. Staff also identified Māori students with whom some were working; the voices of these students subsequently revealed their current experiences. The experiences of lecturers and students were then triangulated.

This research revealed that lecturers had changed cultural understandings about equity and social justice, and about subject matters they had previously never considered. Being proactive with this learning and growing their praxis with their students or professional communities, required understanding the historical and cultural contexts in which they worked. This also required, lecturers and their colleagues, understanding agency and power, including the power and influence of society and professional institutions still perpetuating top-down discourses of power and privilege.

Students' voices exemplified the benefits of these new understandings and shared- power-relations. If tertiary retention rates for Māori are to improve, these findings have important implications.

Submitted by: Mere Berryman, University of Waikato



Pepa 195  
Session: 5 - 3.15 to 3.45pm - 303-G20  
SIG: Teaching and Teacher Education

Catherine Fairhall  
BSLA Senior Educator/ Teacher  
Practitioner within the Child Well-being  
Research Institute at the University of  
Canterbury

Dr Amy Scott and Dr Lisa Furlong are  
both Senior Lecturers within the Child  
Well-being Research Institute at the  
University of Canterbury

Keywords: Teacher aides, oral language assessment

### **Teacher Aides' Role in Oral Language Assessment to Facilitate Teacher Monitoring of Children's Oral Language Development**

Oral language skills are linked to children's socioemotional wellbeing and academic success. Assessing these skills is a valuable component of early literacy instruction, yet little is documented about how oral language assessments are utilised in primary schools, who is responsible for the administration, analysis and interpretation of this assessment data and, how this is used to inform teaching. This study forms one phase of a 3-phase mixed methods programme of research exploring the role of teacher aides (TAs) in the administration of oral language assessments in New Zealand English medium primary schools, and how their involvement may support teachers in monitoring children's oral language development during the early years of schooling. The aim of this first phase of the research programme, and the focus of this presentation, was to determine the nature of oral language assessment practices in primary schools, the extent of TA involvement, and educators' perspectives on the facilitators, barriers, and benefits of TA participation. Survey data from 181 participants indicated that while oral language assessments are used in 59% of schools, only 40% of schools involve TAs in oral language assessment compared to other literacy assessments. TA involvement primarily consisted of assessment administration, rather than analysis or interpretation of assessment data. Educators reported training to be the most critical factor supporting TA involvement with oral language assessments. In doing so, educators described how this assessment data can then support teachers' understanding of the effectiveness of intervention and enhance their responsiveness to student learning, although fewer educators identified its use for informing whole class instruction.

Submitted by: Catherine Fairhall, Dr Amy  
Scott, Dr Lisa Furlong, BSLA Senior  
Educator/ Teacher Practitioner within the  
Child Well-being Research Institute at  
the University of Canterbury



Pepa 196  
Session: 0 - 2.20 to 2.50pm - 303-G16  
SIG: Teaching and Teacher Education

Leena Rebello  
Te Rito Maioha ECNZ

Fiona O'Connell Jones  
Te Rito Maioha ECNZ

Andrea Colebourn  
Te Rito Maioha ECNZ

Keywords: professional teacher identity, bicultural, initial teacher training

### **The development of a professional identity in a one-year Graduate Diploma (Primary) teaching qualification.**

The research aims to understand how three distinct features, online study, field-based practice, and assimilation of the bicultural aspect of Aotearoa New Zealand, of an Initial Teacher Education (ITE) one year Graduate Diploma of Teaching (Primary) Programme in Aotearoa New Zealand may contribute to the development of the professional identity of student teachers. For this research, professional identity is referred to as the evolution of professional self in the role of an educator and considered from a sociocultural framework as students are influenced by their experiences and learning. The three distinct features are further explored by considering Our Code, Our Standards/Ngā Tikanga Matatika, Ngā Paerewa and programme elements such as students' contributions to online conversations, and the use of reflective journals throughout the programme. The researchers gathered data from students via online surveys undertaken three times across two academic years. The responses gathered from the survey suggest that the three distinct features of the programme have a positive influence on the development of professional teacher identity. The findings will discuss how the programme elements named above interacted with the three distinct features to further inform the students' development of their teacher identity. These survey results will offer valuable insights into guiding and understanding the effectiveness of the distinct features of the programme in shaping teacher identity and how this can be applied by future ITE developments to support the growing of teacher professional identity.

Submitted by: Leena Rebello, Te Rito  
Maioha ECNZ



Pepa 197  
Session: 6 - 5.05pm to 5.35pm - 303-G20  
SIG: Teaching and Teacher Education

Zeba Ali  
Manukau Institute of Technology

Kriya Patel  
Manukau Institute of Technology

Keywords: Culturally-responsive, Field based, ITE

### **Threads of Change: Weaving Community into Field-based Initial Teacher Education NAZRE**

Threads of Change: Weaving Community into Field-based Initial Teacher Education What does it mean to design an initial teacher education (ITE) programme that truly reflects the community it serves? Despite numerous approaches to address the shortage of teachers in the primary sector, there remain limited options for students to access face-to-face, culturally responsive training, for diverse communities across South Auckland (and across Tāmaki Makaurau). The Bachelor of Education (Primary, Pasifika), is a field-based programme, developed by the community, for the community. This programme honours the strengths, and aspirations of unique communities, predominantly for Māori and Pasifika. At its core, is the Fatugātiti cultural conceptual framework that integrates relationships, values, pedagogy and principles. Our talanoa (conversation) shares insights from students and beginning teachers, and the tangible outcomes in local schools across the community; evidence of what's possible when education is grounded in people, place and purpose. This presentation invites reflection on how we, as educators and institutions, can respond to local needs with integrity and innovation.

Submitted by: Zeba Ali and Kriya  
Patel, Manukau Institute of Technology

Pepa 198  
Session: 5 - 2.45 to 3.15pm - 303-G16  
SIG: Wellbeing Education

Dr Sarah Bashir  
The University of Waikato, New Zealand

Keywords: Workplace bullying of healthcare employees, Prevention and management of workplace bullying, Healthcare organisations

### **Leadership Education for Bullying-Free Healthcare Organisations: A strategic Framework for Prevention and Management**

In New Zealand (NZ), healthcare organisations face the challenges of fostering a bullying-free workplace to facilitate employees' wellbeing, but often lack guidance on recognising and addressing workplace bullying (WPB). This raises the question: how can a framework be developed to educate managers and leaders to identify early signs of WPB and implement targeted solutions? A multi-stage qualitative study was conducted. First, a scoping review of systematic reviews on WPB of healthcare workers was performed using PRISMA guidelines, which revealed gaps in HR training and poor reporting. Second, 20 NZ doctors were interviewed to capture their views on effective prevention and management. Finally, a Delphi panel comprising 11 NZ healthcare professionals, including healthcare administrators, HR and clinical managers, pointed out the essential knowledge, skills, and competencies to recognise and address WPB. All data were analysed using thematic analysis. Interconnected themes on education and awareness resulted in a tetrad competency cluster: (1) early recognition and safe reporting channels, (2) trauma-informed education programmes, (3) inclusion of patient safety and (4) collaborative efforts. This tetrad competency cluster provides a framework for early detection and effective prevention and management of bullying, positioning managers and leaders as the key facilitators of safe healthcare workplaces.

Submitted by: Dr Sarah Bashir, The  
University of Waikato, New Zealand



Pepa 199  
Session: 5 - 2.15 to 2.45pm - 303-G16  
SIG: Wellbeing Education

Rachel Cann  
Ministry of Education

Claire Sinnema  
The University of Auckland

Keywords: teacher wellbeing, intervention

**An educator wellbeing programme for Aotearoa New Zealand: sharing practical strategies and insights into adaptive design from the MARKERS wellbeing programme.**

Educator wellbeing is increasingly recognised as a systemic issue, yet many interventions focus narrowly on individuals, overlooking relational and contextual factors. This presentation introduces the MARKERS (Multiple Action Responsive Kit for Educator, Relational, and School) wellbeing programme, an intervention grounded in systems-informed positive psychology, social network theory, and socio-ecological theory. Co-designed with staff in an Aotearoa New Zealand school, the programme was tailored to local needs, reflecting the conference theme of the importance of place and connections. The programme includes wellbeing focused activities at individual (e.g., stress mindset, gratitude), relational (e.g., active constructive responding), and organisational (e.g., workload redesign) levels. A mixed-methods case study revealed that participants increased their wellbeing and energising interactions, even as overall schoolwide wellbeing declined' ighlighting the value of adaptive, place-based approaches. This work contributes to the scholarly discourse on educator wellbeing by showing how flexible, multi-level interventions can foster flourishing in real-world settings. The presentation will share practical activities from the MARKERS programme that support wellbeing. Attendees will engage with tools such as gratitude practices, stress mindset shifts, and active constructive responding. They will leave equipped with insights and adaptable resources to co-create wellbeing in their own educational places and communities.

Submitted by: Rachel Cann, Ministry of Education

Pepa 200  
Session: 2 - 3.20 to 3.50pm - 303-G16  
SIG: Wellbeing Education

Robyn Caygill  
Ministry of Education

Rachel Borthwick  
Ministry of Education

Hannah Bennett  
Ministry of Education

Keywords: International, wellbeing, trends

### Are the kids alright? Well-being of middle primary and lower secondary students.

The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) has been conducted in New Zealand since 1994. Since those beginning years, information on student wellbeing has been collected, using questions about both positive and negative experiences at school. Measures have been created using Item Response Theory to generate factors from individual questions. Although the contributing questions have evolved over time (for example adding cyber-bullying questions in recent cycles), the measures give us an indication of the wellbeing of our middle primary and lower secondary students and how that has changed over time. For example, the most recent TIMSS, conducted in 2023 indicates worsening experiences of bullying behaviours for both Year 5 and Year 9 students compared with TIMSS 2019. To understand the veracity of these measures, comparisons between years can be made with both contributing questions and the generated measures using tests of significance. This presentation will discuss the wellbeing of children and young people using the wellbeing measures from TIMSS and demonstrate the impact of wellbeing on achievement. The analyses of the links with achievement take account of the complex sampling. The learning sciences remind us that taking care of physical and mental wellbeing of our learners helps them to be ready to learn. The findings confirm this showing that wellbeing matters for learning.

Submitted by: Robyn Caygill, Ministry of Education



Pepa 201  
Session: 1 - 12.45 to 1.15pm - 303-G16  
SIG: Wellbeing Education

Melinda Webber  
Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of  
Auckland

Mohamed Alansari  
Rangahau Mātauranga o Aotearoa |  
New Zealand Council for Educational  
Research

Mengnan Li  
Rangahau Mātauranga o Aotearoa | New  
Zealand Council for Educational  
Research

Keywords: Whānau, motivation, school involvement

#### COMPASS 4: Whānau partnerships with school - patterns and associations with Māori students' learning

Previous COMPASS studies have found that ākonga Māori behaviour and motivation at school is crucially influenced by whānau engagement, kura and kaiako support systems, cultural efficacy and belonging. Our studies have consistently shown that ākonga are wayfinders who do not navigate choppy seas on their own' hey instead work alongside whānau, kaiako, and other role models to reach new horizons. In COMPASS 4, we focused on the views and experiences of the whānau (N= 1,665) of ākonga Māori, in three key areas (whānau engagement; whānau perceptions of children's school engagement and enjoyment; intrinsic, extrinsic, and whānau motivation). Using a heirarchical cluster analysis technique, this study explored the following research questions: 1. In what ways do whānau of ākonga Māori view their involvement with/in school, their child's motivations to attend school, and their engagement patterns? 2. Do whānau views and perspectives of the above differ in relation to whānau reported achievement, career aspirations, and support networks? Specifically, six clusters were identified, conceptualised, and labelled; 43% were identified in active partnerships with schools, 4% were identified in passive partnerships, and 53% in inactive partnerships. Overall, we found a spectrum of whānau perceptions of their children's school joy, as well as whānau engagement with, and motivation towards, education. Importantly, this study emphasises the critical role of school enjoyment and motivation to whānau engagement in education.

Submitted by: Melinda Webber, Waipapa  
Taumata Rau / University of Auckland

Pepa 202  
Session: 2 - 4.20 to 4.50pm - 303-G16  
SIG: Wellbeing Education

Dr Charlotte Bagnall  
University of Manchester

Keywords: primary-secondary school transition; intervention science; emotional wellbeing

### **Examining the impact of a universal, emotional-centred transitions curriculum (#Talking about School Transition 5-7) on improving children's emotional wellbeing over primary-secondary school transitions**

The number of children experiencing poor emotional wellbeing, which can lead to mental-ill health, is increasing rapidly. Primary-secondary school transitions can be emotionally demanding longitudinal experiences, that pose heightened risk for the development of poor emotional wellbeing, as recognised in research, by key stakeholders (e.g., parents/guardians, teachers), and policymakers. Supporting children's emotional wellbeing over primary-secondary school transition sensitively, taking a preventative, early-intervention approach has the potential to improve mental health and educational trajectories; yet existing primary-secondary school transitions interventions are limited in foci, sustainability, and reach, relying on cross-sectional, rather than longitudinal evaluations. Aims: #Talking about School Transition 5-7 (#TaST 5-7), a 17-week universal, skills-based transition curriculum, delivered across Year 5, 6 and 7, aims to overcome this gap. #TaST 5-7 is informed by Jindal-Snape's (2023) Multiple and Multi-Dimensional Transitions Theory; prior empirical research, and educational practice. This study employs a quasi-experimental two-arm (intervention vs. control) trial design, incorporating mixed methods implementation and process evaluation (IPE). Methods: 1850 children are participating in the #TaST 5-7 curriculum pilot in England, which will complete in March 2026. Design and implementation findings of #TaST 5-7 in England and Australia, alongside primary school IPE data will be shared at the conference. #TaST 5-7 has implications for educational practice and policy in elucidating the importance of supporting children's emotional wellbeing over this period.

Submitted by: Dr Charlotte  
Bagnall, University of Manchester



Pepa 203  
Session: 4 - 10.55 to 11.25am - 303-G16  
SIG: Wellbeing Education

Hilary Dutton  
University of Auckland

Valerie Sotardi  
University of Canterbury

Keywords: mental health; secondary schools; wellbeing

### Exploring Access to Mental Health Support for Rangatahi in Aotearoa Secondary Schools

Schools are increasingly expected to support students' mental health, yet there remains limited understanding of how this support is enacted in practice and how schools evaluate its effectiveness. This presentation shares preliminary findings from a research project funded by the Health Research Council (HRC). In 2025, we visited six secondary schools across Aotearoa New Zealand and interviewed 28 school leaders, counsellors, nurses, and other support staff about their school's approaches to student mental health. Our findings reveal widespread concern about anxiety, emotional dysregulation, and students' diminished ability to cope with everyday stressors. While most schools adopted multi-layered, holistic approaches to mental health, these efforts were often constrained by limited funding, staffing shortages, and restricted access to external services. Systemic pressures related to referrals and continuity of care remain significant barriers. We also noted that the physical environment such as the availability of private, confidential spaces shaped how mental health support might be accessed by students. Schools recognised the importance of engaging parents and whānau and expressed concern about the ongoing impact of social media and device use on adolescent wellbeing. Particular attention was drawn to the unique mental health challenges faced by neurodiverse students, as well as those from ethnic and migrant backgrounds.

Submitted by: Valerie Sotardi, University  
of Canterbury

Pepa 204  
Session: 2 - 3.50 to 4.20pm - 303-G16  
SIG: Wellbeing Education

Dr Charlotte Bagnall  
University of Manchester

Keywords: primary-secondary school transitions; emotional wellbeing; psychometrics

**How can we accurately identify children who are experiencing poor emotional wellbeing in the context of primary-secondary school transitions: insights from the Primary-Secondary school transitions Emotional Wellbeing Scale (#P-S WELLS) development study**

Primary-secondary school transitions are a critical period for children, posing heightened risk for the development of poor emotional wellbeing and mental health. However, the corpus of scales used to assess primary-secondary school transitions and emotional wellbeing have considerable limitations, and critically there is no existing scale which comprehensively measures children's emotional wellbeing in the context of primary-secondary school transitions. This contextual measure is needed to holistically assess children's emotional experiences and has significant consequences for identifying and supporting children. To overcome this gap, we have designed, piloted and now validating the first robust, sensitive, and standardised scale, to longitudinally assess children's emotional wellbeing in the context of primary-secondary school transitions. The Primary-Secondary School Transitions Emotional Wellbeing Scale (#P-S WELLS) was developed following a multi-informant, mixed-methods model of scale development, which will be shared in the talk, alongside our pilot and longitudinal psychometric findings with approximately 3,000 children in the UK and longitudinal validation in Australia and New Zealand. #P-S WELLS is novel in its approach (e.g. asks children about their feelings towards the changes they are negotiating in context); and its longitudinal design and operationalisation. In sum, the lack of a standardised, robust and sensitive scale to assess children's emotional wellbeing, over time and in the context of primary-secondary school transitions, is inhibiting empirical progress within the field, our ability to best support children in practice, and likely leading to policies and practices that are not fit for purpose.

Submitted by: Dr Charlotte  
Bagnall, University of Manchester



Pepa 205  
Session: 4 - 11.25 to 11.55am - 303-G16  
SIG: Wellbeing Education

Jill Hayhurst  
University of Otago

David Berg  
University of Otago

Mereana Pawa  
University of Otago

Hitaua Arahanga-Doyle  
University of Otago

Andrew Tagg, Ray Reichenberg , Kalika  
Kastein (University of Otago)

Keywords: ākonga wellbeing, measuring wellbeing

### Measuring ākonga Wellbeing in Schools: A Pilot Study

Curriculum Insights is a large-scale, Ministry-funded assessment study that monitors trends in student achievement and develops insights to support system-level improvement. One vital contributor to learning is ākonga wellbeing in school - a complex concept that is not well understood or measured, notably within our unique Aotearoa context. To address the challenges of measuring ākonga wellbeing, we ran a four-part pilot study. First, we reviewed the literature and convened an advisory group to discuss wellbeing and the measurement of wellbeing in schools in Aotearoa. Second, we asked n=95 ākonga (Years 3-9) a collection of qualitative and quantitative questions about wellbeing and measuring wellbeing in school. Our diverse sample included ākonga of different ages, Māori and non-Māori, a variety of school locations, and school equity index bands. Third, we adapted our wellbeing items based on student feedback, quantitative analysis, and input from our advisory group. The result was the 12-item Wellbeing in School scale. Finally, we trialled the scale with n=548 ākonga and ran a factor analysis. This paper explores the process of creating a new measure of ākonga wellbeing in schools, in the hopes of improving our understanding of ākonga wellbeing in Aotearoa.

Submitted by: Jill Hayhurst, University of  
Otago

Pepa 206  
Session: 3 - 9.35 to 10.05am - 303-G16  
SIG: Wellbeing Education

Darren Powell  
University of Auckland

Keywords: health education; commercialisation; mental health;

### **Mental health education and the commercialisation of expertise**

Global concerns about children's mental health have led to a proliferation of school-based mental health education programmes. These programs are increasingly devised, funded and implemented by for-profit organisations and actors. In this presentation, I critically examine mental health 'edu-businesses' that promote mental health programmes to primary and secondary schools in Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia. Using Foucault's notion of governmentality, I examine how these private sector companies draw on 'expert' science and research to market themselves as both experts in mental health and experts in mental health education. I interrogate how dominant discourses of psychological expertise help form relay points between rationalities of neoliberalism and technologies of commercialisation, acting as a means to govern schools, teachers and students 'at a distance' and to profit from the mental health crisis.

Submitted by: Darren Powell, University  
of Auckland

Pepa 207  
Session: 3 - 9.05 to 9.35am - 303-G16  
SIG: Wellbeing Education

Amanda Lester  
University of Canterbury

Keywords: flourishing, teachers, wellbeing

### Perspectives of Secondary School Teachers on Flourishing in the Profession

Teacher wellbeing is a focus of educational research, stemming from a lack of recognition, as well as increased job dissatisfaction, burnout, and attrition rates. There is ample literature exploring the consequences of teacher 'illbeing' using deficit models; however, there has been a notable shift to explore teacher wellbeing using a positive lens. This presentation is a call for action to shift the approach of addressing 'illbeing' to encouraging wellbeing through a focus on flourishing in the teaching profession. It is based on an empirical doctoral research study of secondary school teachers' perceptions of the notion of flourishing in the profession in New Zealand. Reflexive thematic analysis was used to (i) develop a shared understanding of flourishing in the context of teaching, (ii) explore the various ways teachers experience flourishing, and (iii) consider the conditions that are conducive for teachers to flourish in the profession. The focus of this presentation is to share perspectives from teachers on flourishing in the profession in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Submitted by: Amanda Lester, University  
of Canterbury

Pepa 208  
Session: 1 - 1.45 to 2.15pm - 303-G16  
SIG: Wellbeing Education

Mr David Gray  
University of Auckland, Waiheke High  
School

Associate Professor John Fenaughty  
University of Auckland

Keywords: Counselling, Education, LGBTQIA+

**Producing safer schools for Takatāpui and Rainbow ākonga: Some roles of, and conflicts for, counsellors in secondary schools in Aotearoa.**

Takatāpui and Rainbow youth in Aotearoa experience disparities in mental health, and existing research has demonstrated the need for societal and school environments to become more inclusive and provide support services. This presentation explores some of the challenges LGBTQIA+ youth encounter when accessing mental health support in schools through interviews with six high school counsellors in Aotearoa. A thematic analysis of the data from the interviews produced four main themes: 1. Structural challenges within schools that hinder inclusivity. 2. Professional challenges faced by school counsellors. 3. Counsellors need to increase their visibility to engage LGBTQIA+ youth. 4. Counsellors must build positive relationships with school staff to improve LGBTQIA+ youth engagement. Recommendations from this Masters of Counselling thesis study included engaging counsellors to guide professional development for school staff to produce safe and supportive environments for LGBTQIA+ students; increasing training opportunities for school staff to understand the importance of safe spaces for LGBTQIA+ students; and developing better processes and policy within schools regarding the counselling role to reduce the chances of ethical conflicts for counsellors.

Submitted by: David Gray, University of  
Auckland, Waiheke High School

Pepa 210  
Session: 4 - 10.55 to 11.25am - 303-G01  
SIG: Education Policy

Huidan Niu  
IPU New Zealand

Keywords: Teacher unions, professionalism, mainstream media, education policy, National Standards, NCEA

### **Navigating Professionalism and Industrial Advocacy: Representations of Teacher Unions in New Zealand's Mainstream Media**

This study examines the dual identity of teacher unions as both professional advocates and industrial negotiators through the lens of their media representations and self-representation in New Zealand's mainstream media over the past two decades. Analysing 53 media articles from sources including traditional media outlets and union press releases from Scoop, the research explores how unions navigated contentious reforms. The analysis reveals socio-political tensions shaping teacher unions' strategies and public image, highlighting unions' efforts to balance their professional and industrial roles in a mediated environment. The findings contribute to understanding the challenges teacher unions face in maintaining professional legitimacy and public credibility amidst ideological and policy conflicts in contemporary education systems.

Submitted by: Huidan Niu, IPU New Zealand



Pepa 212  
Session: 9 - 2.50 to 3.20pm - 303-G01  
SIG: Education Policy

Java Grant  
Waipapa Taumata Rau

Keywords:

### What kind of game is the university

Drawing on game theory and political economy, this paper interprets students, academics, senior administrators, and politicians involved with New Zealand's universities as players of layered games whose behaviours are strategic moves in contested fields. Larger games involve policies and funding structures, acting as moves within one game and as establishing the rules of another. Useful for cutting through strategic rhetoric, a game-theoretic lens 'gives away the game', exposing incentives and power via an empirical analysis of policy documents, public statements, and player behaviours. This analysis reveals the existential threat in the form of a 'meta-game' of hyper-competition and power consolidation, demonstrating the symptoms of these phenomena and the consequences for participants and the idea of the university. Having 'named the game', this paper provides a vocabulary for Critical University Studies and university activists in New Zealand to engage in strategic planning, particularly identifying vulnerabilities in the existing order. Ultimately, this framework is a valuable step for creating a university that lives up to the socially valuable story we have been sold.

Submitted by: Java Grant, Waipapa  
Taumata Rau



Pepa 213  
Session: 7 - 10.35 to 11.05am - 303-G14  
SIG: Māori caucus

Esther Smaill  
(Tangata Tiriti): Kairangahau Matua

Keita Durie  
(Ngāti Kauwhata, Rangitāne, Ngāti  
Raukawa, Ngāi te rangi, Ngāti Ranginui):  
Kairangahau Māori

Sheridan McKinley  
(Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa, Ngāi  
Tahu): Tumu Māori

Keywords:

**He tōtōpū nō te pakiaka, he hiwa nō te pā: Research to inform Tīrewa Mātai**

The Ministry of Education recently committed to developing Tīrewa Mātai, a national monitoring system for education settings where mokopuna learn through te reo Māori. While the English-medium schooling system has benefited from uninterrupted national monitoring of student achievement since 1995, there has been no comparable system for kura Māori for most of that period.

In 2024, the Ministry contracted Te Wāhanga-NZCER to conduct research to inform the development of Tīrewa Mātai. Initially conceptualised by the Ministry as a “literature review” reporting on at least five indigenous frameworks, our team recognised the limitations of relying solely on peer-reviewed literature. To ensure the study was grounded in tikanga and kaupapa Māori, we extended its design to include whakawhiti kōrero with indigenous scholars and knowledge holders.

This presentation introduces the five monitoring frameworks and three assessment models identified during this study. It highlights key insights that emerged from the literature and kōrero with eight indigenous scholars and knowledge holders from Aotearoa, Hawai‘i, and the Potlotek First Nation. We conclude with recommendations generated to inform the development of Tīrewa Mātai as a culturally grounded, authentic system that reflects the aspirations of Māori and the right of mokopuna to be educated through te reo Māori.

Submitted by: Esther Smaill, (Tangata  
Tiriti): Kairangahau Matua



Pepa 214  
Session: 6 - 5.05pm to 5.35pm - 303-B07  
SIG: Learning Environments

Keywords: School libraries

### School libraries as 'third spaces'

Effective school libraries support curriculum teaching and learning, reading for pleasure, and wellbeing. They can operate as a 'third space' between the academic space of the classroom and the social space of the playground. This workshop presents findings from the recent research: School library spaces, resources, and services in Aotearoa New Zealand. The research was carried out by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research for the National Library and the School Libraries Association of New Zealand. The research involved a national survey of library staff and case studies of six New Zealand schools from a wide range of contexts. The presentation explores how these schools created thriving library environments which staff and students considered to be: accessible; culturally and linguistically inclusive; Te Tiriti honouring and place-based; emotionally, socially, and physically safe; and knowledge rich.

Submitted by: Sue McDowall,



Pepa  
Session: - -  
SIG:

Keywords:

Submitted by: ,

V313125



Pepa  
Session: - -  
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Keywords:

Submitted by: ,

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