PRISMATIC STORYING:
MAKING VISIBLE MULTI COLOURED CODES

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ABSTRACT. Language is a casement into cultures' deepest meanings. As children acquire languages, they implicitly adopt the mores of people around them; read the symbols, artefacts and codes. In this article, we examine the importance of language and literacy in the early childhood curriculum Te Whāriki: He Whāriki Matauranga mo ngā Mokopuna o Aotearoa/Early Childhood Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1996). The focus of the article is on literacy from a bicultural perspective. Adults support children in finding out about both their social and physical worlds. They use their 'imaginations to explore their own and others' identities' (MoE, 1996, p. 25). Our aim is to offer teachers in mainstream early childhood centres (ECE) strategies to apply, practise and situate literacy approaches that reflect Te Ao Māori through stories reflecting symbolic representations of people, places and things.

Keywords: identity; language; storying; Te Ao Māori; *Te Whāriki*

Introduction

Language is multi-faceted. People who have two or more languages have insights and understandings denied to mono-lingual speakers. Children read the symbols, artefacts and codes of the community of speakers around them. The metaphor of the prism has been used by Barbara Rogoff (Rogoff et al., 2003, p. 184) to illustrate the complexity of using and understanding narratives through language. Seeing bicultural narratives as prisms, gives teachers insights into adopting approaches to stories, to give depth, and brilliance. Prisms have multiple surfaces, each refracting light differently. Prisms break up 'white-light' into multi-coloured rays. When viewing light through a prism, the viewer, depending on her position, may perceive each ray of light differently. Rogoff et al. (2003) caution that each

plane can cover related aspects of whole traditions. The viewer looking at each surface of the prism may be analogous to two differing cultural certainties; be deemed to offer a different worldview. When one worldview (the Eurocentric) suggests that narratives of identity and origins are myths and legends, the Aotearoa-centric worldview loses its brilliance, becomes murky. In this article the focus is on language learning and teaching, especially Māori language. When teaching te reo Māori it needs to be grounded in understanding of its metaphorical richness with links to the land, its people and its artefacts. Few phrases are solely functional. For example, the metaphorical whāriki is more than merely a mat, but includes allusions to its crafting. While *Te Whāriki* translates as 'a woven mat', able to be built upon, it allows for diverse patterning. It reflects the multiple uses within Māori society. When teaching language, adults should draw on both Māori and Pākehā stories, rhymes, lullabies, songs and identity narratives. Biculturalism aims to make visible the histories, language and cultures of both peoples.

That western education is euro-centric is accepted (Barnes, 2013; Ka'ai-Mahuta, 2011; Milne, 2013). What is not always evident is how such centering locates every thought, phrase and 'truth'. The bicultural curriculum document *Te Whāriki* is challenges the euro-centricism by offering teachers learning outcomes specifics on reflecting Māori viewpoints. Every assumption about 'people, places and things', positions the euro-world in its descriptions. Every spoken phrase, enunciated parable retains 'overlaps, borrowings, resemblances' (Foucault, 1998, pp. 288–289); these form the discourse that shapes us. We need, Foucault (1998, p. 293) suggests, to 'delve into the mass of accumulated discourse under our own feet': in 'a culture like ours, every discourse appears against a background where every event vanishes' (1998, p. 292). This means both Pākehā and Māori need to be aware of our histories and cultures; have to be aware of the forces that formed us. Pākehā teachers need to operate at the boundaries, looking from their culture, to the 'other', and being aware of Māori ontologies and epistemologies and how they differ from these. They can then support children in dialogic understandings, with depth of listening to guide interchanges. Dialogue can take place across cultural frames when both parties can listen deeply from their own position. Such dialogue happens from positions of 'not-knowing', of resisting any expectations of expertise; of listening and viewing differently.

The purposes of education in western countries is to foster 'skills to be employed in adulthood ... children are often involved in specialized child focused exercises to assemble skills for later entry in mature activities' (Rogoff et al., 2003, pp. 188–189). Such educational rationales arose in the organisation of factories, based on ideas of efficiency. Curriculum content was 'broken into bits to be delivered in a specified sequence, like an assembly line' (p. 189), privileging the role of teacher-as-technician, as overseer. While ECE may be free of the worst of the 'factory technology' images, child development, the st/ages of the child developing to become a fully functioning adult, enframe its purposes.

While noting that her illustrations are prisms, through which to observe wider cultural facets, Rogoff et al. (2003) suggest that there are epistemological and ontological differences that can be used as schema to contrast societies. Societies borrow and exchange ideas, and assumptions. Parents successful in western education systems may adopt some of the facets of the schooling discourse. Much of the success in learning, Rogoff suggests comes from what is treasured: 'In valued activities children make genuine contributions ... participate with eagerness' (Rogoff et al., 2003, p. 190). As concepts of individual autonomy, of authority and of managing skills for survival differ widely across cultures, one teaching and learning approach for all should be avoided. For teachers using the curriculum, it may mean examining our implicit assumptions about the role of the adult in promoting children's learning and adopting '... an approach that emphasises the importance of relationships and whānaungatanga' (Ministry of Education, 2009, vol. 2, p. 2).

Language is embedded in culture: not just words, but how, when, for what purposes things are named and discussed. In summarising contrasting pedagogical intent between the minority and majority worlds Rogoff states: 'In intent participation, talk is used *in the service* of engaging in the activity, augmenting and guiding experiential and observational learning; in an assembly-line lesson, talk is *substituted* for involvement' (Rogoff et al., 2003, p. 195, italics in original).

What Does This Mean for Practice?

As ECE teachers we have the power and responsibility to name 'people, places and things' in both worldviews. Talking of the effect of successive governments' policies Glynn stated (2015, p. 104). '[t]he cumulative effect of these policies has been to require Māori to sacrifice more and more of their language, culture, and educational aspirations to the needs and aspirations of the majority culture'. Government policies have had a very mixed response from Māori, who have seen little in the way of positive outcomes. Dialogue is difficult, tension-ridden, often conflictual and involves active participation by both parties to unravel value judgements. Care of the self and the 'other' is essential during moments of tension. When bringing together two sets of values, understandings and cultural ideals, the two parties need to listen with deep intent. Dialogic theorists, Bakhtin (1981, p. 276) notes that, 'between the word [which is a cultural sign] and its object [the thing referred to by the word], between the word and the speaking subject, there exists an elastic environment of other, alien words about the same object, the same theme'.

Te Whāriki was the first bicultural curriculum (MoE, 1996, p. 7) and was developed in New Zealand. Language is a window on culture. When teaching groups of children from different cultures, teachers should scaffold children to decode the cultural symbols, such as tukutuku panels. Teachers' emphasis on tangata whenua's relationship to the land allows children to view water, mountains

and Papatuanuku through bicultural eyes. Mainstream teachers know *Te Whāriki* is founded on the aspiration that all children 'grow up as competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society' (MoE, 1996, p. 9). Adapting this in specifics to each rohe, to the mana whenua supports cultural and linguistic aspirations. *Te Whāriki* includes curriculum specifically for Māori immersion services and establishes a bicultural commitment for all early childhood education services. Its sociocultural emphasis stresses the importance of a learning partnership between teachers, parents and whānau. The 'whāriki concept recognises the diversity of early childhood education in New Zealand. Different programmes, philosophies, structures and environments will contribute to the distinctive patterns of the whāriki' (MoE, 1996, p. 11). Recognition is given in *Te Whāriki* to the importance of all children to having the opportunity to develop understandings and knowledge of the cultural heritages of both partners to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. It makes a number of statements that reflect this aspiration: 'To address bicultural issues, adults working in early childhood education should have an understanding of Māori views on child development and on the role of the family as well as ... other cultures in the community' (MoE, 1996, p. 41). 'New Zealand is the home of Māori language and culture: curriculum in early childhood settings should promote te reo and ngā tikanga Māori, making them visible and affirming their value ...' (p. 42). 'The curriculum should include Māori people, places, and artefacts and opportunities to learn and use the Māori language through social interaction' (p. 43).

Te Whāriki challenges adults to use, promote, extend both their own and others' knowledge of those mana whenua of their district.

People and places construct the Māori subject and young child, as they greet their land, mountains and water in mihi. Māori offer heroic individual stories often of demi-gods, as models to be emulated (see below). Many of the former Pākehā heroic models such as Grace Darling or Florence Nightingale are no longer discussed. Things are often valued differently in the two cultures. For example much of the things Pākehā value may be modern artefacts; Māori 'taonga tuku iho', ancestral things handed down. Western constructs of child development as a universal is no longer accepted (Rogoff et al., 2003, p. 195).

Challenges

One of the challenges with implementing *Te Whāriki* is the tension between theoretical understandings and practice. Teachers' knowledge of Māori child development; of local stories from those who hold mana whenua becomes important. While this is true there needs to be a connection made to the overall focus of language and literacy approaches so that the reader can understand the relevance and connection. *Te Whāriki* is an integrated curriculum statement that is based on principles, rather than prescriptive learning linked to subject content or

knowledge areas. The rationale for this has been that a subject-based approach to curriculum is inappropriate for young children that could constitute push down curriculum and pedagogy. The problem with such philosophical beliefs is that they have been used to exclude specific teaching and learning of content which results in teachers not having clear guidelines for content implementation. There is a growing call for teaching practice to be not only philosophically driven, but also emphasise appropriate cultural and contextual pedagogical content knowledge (e.g. Hedges & Cullen, 2005).

Early childhood teachers' professional knowledge of subjects can assist teachers to construct knowledge with children in ways that relate meaningfully to children's prior knowledge and experience and that guide children towards rewarding lives in the contexts of their communities and cultures. The critical importance of teachers having sufficient breadth and depth of subject knowledge in order to respond meaningfully to and extend children's interests and inquiries is highlighted (Hedges & Cullen, 2005, p. 20).

This lack of content knowledge is evident in the bicultural implementation of *Te Whāriki*. Cullen (2001) states that 'It is not easy for teachers to recognise and support diverse cultural beliefs and practices. The problem is how to translate it into everyday practices' (cited in Fleer, 2013, p. 224). Non-Māori teachers have struggled to provide more than tokenistic fragments of Māori language and culture. Bicultural curriculum should be reflected in teachers' actions as professional best practice; as ethical aspirations to improve quality.

An Education Review Office (ERO) report *Success for Māori children in early childhood services* (2010) found that services lacked strategies that focused upon Māori children as learners, treating all children the same. Services often included statements about Māori values, beliefs and intentions in their documentation, which were rarely evident in practice. Effective processes to ascertain the aspirations of parents and whānau (extended family) of Māori children were missing, while services had inadequate self-review processes to evaluate the effectiveness of their provision for Māori children. What is good for Māori is good for all: what is good ethical language practice for Māori children will enhance the linguistic kete of all children.

The report (ERO, 2013) *Working with Te Whāriki* highlights findings related to implementation. The report found that *Te Whāriki* was not well understood or implemented as a bicultural curriculum. While some ECE services' intent was, good there was insufficient guidance to support them in good practice. For example, Services' philosophy documentation made mention of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and that they had developed partnership with whānau Māori in providing a responsive curriculum Ritchie (2003) notes that realising the intent: '...is subject to the extent to which a largely Pākehā (person of European/British descent) early childhood teaching force are able to deliver on expectations that require a level of expertise that is beyond their experience as monocultural speakers of English with little experience of Māori culture and values' (p. 10).

One very real issue is that the expressions 'bicultural' and 'biculturalism' (e.g. MoE, 1996, pp. 10, 40) can mean different things to different people. This makes use of the terms problematic. Challenges for those aspiring to 'biculturalism' include:

• The terms relation to 'multiculturalism' which makes tangata whenua one-among-many, rather than the original people grounded in this land.
• There are assumptions that there is one Māori view, a homogenous voice and identity.
• Mātauranga Māori has similarities to socio-cultural concepts, yet it is more than this. Every individual is 'born in a particular time and place with specific cultural patterns' (Rogoff, 2011, cited by Glăveanu, p. 143). The holistic concept of the child being nestled within her whānau and hapū; of the inter-relationships of people and their surroundings and the spiritual aspects are central. Services may be strong on relationships and aspirations with an individual parent, but miss familial relationships with wider family.

Implementation of *Te Whāriki*

When using *Te Whāriki* adults tend to use a generic Māori tikanga and language, largely divorced from hapū and iwi. Te reo can more often be observed in teacher-initiated group activities, rather than in spontaneous teaching and learning situations. Children's receptive but not expressive language learning is in such cases, unlike their learning of the dominant language.

Te Whāriki has several crucial statements that underpin successful teaching and learning practices, drawing on Mātauranga Māori.

The first (MoE, 1996, p. 9) states that the curriculum reflects the partnership of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in text and structure. The term partnership involves an ethos of consulting, listening, negotiating, and moving to new understandings. It is about building and maintaining relationships. Language support for English-speakers can build on ongoing reciprocal engagement. In mainstream ECE centres staff have to actively work to ensure Māori individually and collectively do not become 'junior partners' in any sense (O'Sullivan, 2007, p. 19). Teachers need to take responsibility for their own learning, and this requires deep listening, and an understanding that trusting relationships are critical to Māori involvement. Services must ask themselves what can we contribute to develop this relation, e.g. do we have surplus garden crops that could be shared; can we contribute in a voluntary way to the upkeep of the marae. Without this relationship, access to local Māori knowledge will not be sustainable. The questions we must ask ourselves are 'why would the local marae want to be involved with us and what can we offer them to begin the relationship'?

A second central aspect of the relational partnership is the requirement to 'acknowledge spiritual dimensions and have a concern for how the past, present,

and future influence children's self esteem' (MoE, 1996, p. 46). In the case of literacy, mainstream teachers need to know how the stories, songs and legends about the past, influence the present and the future. Relates to overall topic, emphasise. Many Pākehā in a secular environment are wary of spiritual elements. yet need to understand that they are greater than any religiosity. Spirituality is tied to whakapapa, ancestral dispositions and mana. Often children's names are 'gifted' by elders, in the secure knowledge that the ancestral appellation brings with it revered characteristics. Stories support the formation of children's character, persistence and area of expertise. Mika (2007, p. 192) noted that 'a shell of meaning can be transmitted through translation, the sacred manifestation of the word ... was not done justice'. For example, 'Kia mòhio hoki ki a Ranginui ràua ko Papatùànuku, à ràua tamariki, me ngà kòrero mò ràtou' (MoE, 1996, p. 35) suggests that children be aware of the original ancestors, of their offspring, including their specific domains of land, sea, forest etc. 'Kia maumahara ko ngà mokopuna "he kàkano i ruia mai i Rangiàtea"' (MoE, 1996, p. 35) reinforces children's links to the diaspora and to their ancestral roots.

For adults promoting and assessing children's learning, mainstream teachers need to examine their assumptions about teaching and learning.

To be successful teachers need to have three intersecting domains of knowledge.

1. subject knowledge about literacy and language-learning: how language is learned and transmitted (e.g. Hedges & Cullen, 2005).
2. knowledge of our curriculum's expectation of planning, implementing; then assessing and evaluating what children have indeed learned (MoE, 1996, 2004; 2009).
3. knowledge of what stories, oriori, waiata tuturu, pepëha and tribal knowledges are specific to the tamariki attending our centre, and the hapū holding mana whenua (Manning, 2012; White & Mika, 2013).

Developing relationship with local mana whenua is essential. This knowledge cannot be gained solely from sources such as the internet. There are inherent tensions for learning, including language learning, as receptive and expressive language learning relies on face: face relationships. There are analogies to the infant's absorption of language, when children are taught holistically on the parental lap. Gaining initial access to the locals requires active seeking a relationship, which once started needs on-going reciprocity between speaker and hearer.

The three domains support teachers in weaving 'together intricate patterns of linked experience and meaning' (MoE, 1996, p. 40). Adults should know things that are not readily available in books, or on the web: local, relational knowledge of 'people places and things'. Staff are challenged to meet face to face with locals in the community; to know the limits and boundaries of their personal and professional knowledge. Centre management and individual teachers need to take

responsibility for relational opportunities and ongoing learning. For example, understanding that purakau and pakiwaitara do not directly translate as 'story-telling'. For Pākehā this requires an acceptance that western culture has differing epistemological understandings from Mātauranga Māori.

Language in the ECE Curriculum: People Places and Things

Comprehension is a shared process as we empathise with and utilise others' language to foster understanding. Knowledge of language, dialogue and learning applies to 'people, places and things' when we as educators work with children' (MoE, 1996, p. 9). 'Children learn through collaboration with adults and peers ... as well as through individual exploration and reflection' (p. 9). As we assimilate information through language we are involved in a process of 'simultaneous appropriation and transmission' (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 341). There is 'always a gap between our own intentions and the words – which are always someone else's words- we speak to articulate them'. Learning that is 'culturally mediated' is an ongoing dialogic process – what Barbara Rogoff (Glăveanu, 2011) describes as an 'apprenticeship'. Unlike minority western cultures (the Anglophone countries, young children in many majority cultures (the non-European cultures) are intimately involved in all community activities. They learn language by 'listening-in' from birth, absorbing, assimilating and appropriating cultural mores through 'Intent Community Participation' as through 'a prism' (Glăveanu, p. 146). Moreover individuals learn language through communities 'building on cultural practices of prior generations' (Rogoff, 2007, p. 5). Comprehension is a shared process, involving empathy and utilising others' lexicon and language to foster understanding: every speaker, every word betrays the world view of the speaker. Reciprocal relationships between speaker and listener, 'leads to a form of tension that describes [dialogicality] as the conflict between intersubjectivity (i.e. the need to develop shared understanding with others) and alterity (i.e. the opposing need to distinguish oneself from the other)' (Wertsch, 1998, cited in Koschmann, 1999). Bakhtin (1981, p. 341) talks of these tensions as the 'ideological becoming of a human being ... is the process of selectively assimilating the words of others'. It is greater than co-construction, as mediation of differing aspects, not unlike the two differing planes of the one prism.

For teachers using the curriculum, it may mean examining our implicit assumptions '... an approach that emphasises the importance of relationships and whānaungatanga' (MoE, 2009, vol. 2, p. 2). So acting with cultural empathy, both teacher and child learn from each other, as they negotiate the shared space of the ECE setting, yet using different lenses; diverse positions; each checking with the other about understandings. Language learning is about relational planes, checking with one another about valuing artefacts differently; about deep listening and newly understood hearing. Within the social contexts, negotiation sheds light on meanings. Words are fashioned, created and negotiated at every utterance.

Sociocultural Context

Socio-cultural theories support us to challenge normative assumptions, to critique our role as teacher. Briefly explain. How teachers support relationships will differ from traditional societies. In contrast to 'apprenticeship' western education tends towards the 'metaphor of acquisition rather than transmission' (Rogoff et al., 2003, p. 182). While, as Rogoff states 'intent participation was very effective for children's learning of both abstract spiritual knowledge and practical skills when Māori (New Zealand) community life was pervasive and strong' (Metge, 1984, cited in Rogoff et al., 2003, p. 184), it may no longer be a dominant mode of cultural transmission in fragmented contemporary urban suburbs. Māori children may no longer be bilingual, accessing Te Ao Māori through a supportive community of language-speakers; may not be surrounded by numbers of siblings and whānau. So learning of Te reo, rather than by absorption, needs specific planning. Language is ideally taught in a community of speakers, offering rich, continual receptive experiences. Early Childhood centres are often pods of similar-age cohorts, with few adults to model, mentor, speak and listen. The teaching of language and literacy skills needs to take account of these realities. Learning a language occurs in a social, rather than an individual context. Thus, adults need initially to input language regularly and consistently, so the learners have contextual cues and articulate models. Children's receptive language precedes their expressive as they 'develop verbal communication skills for a range of purposes' (MoE, 1996, p. 72). In infant and toddler rooms, naming objects, singing waiata, asking questions can offer good foundations. Children can 'initiate conversation non-verbally and verbally' (p. 72). Ideally young children should use some language, as they attend, and reply to questions; sing, dance and practice waiata-a-ringa. Adults can 'extend conversations with children' (p. 76) using questions, prompts and oral storying.

Dialogue provides the 'link between oral and literate forms of interpreting, understanding and transforming the world. ... speaking, reading and writing are interconnected parts of an active learning process and of social transformation. The words that people use in order to give meaning to their lives are fashioned, created and conditioned by the world which they inhabit' (Freire, 1993, cited in UNESCO, 2006, p. 152).

The Forces that Formed the Pākehā World View

Pākehā have roots in Europe, in the temperate climate portrayed in stories of Winnie the Pooh, and those of three goats or pigs. Every Easter, the signs of spring, with (chocolate) eggs, rabbits and signs of (re-birth take our focus. The signs have lost their significance; yet uncritically perpetuate their existences. The stories continue, accumulate strength in new contexts, the stories speak devoid of Christianity, or an earlier pagan past. What remains are implicit assumptions about

the centrality of the individual: a being with knowledge, dispositions, attitudes. Because the individual is valued, her socio-historic links are peripheralised. The normative plane which privileges the one over the collective is so prevalent it has become invisible, accepted as best teaching practice. Reinforced by regulatory assumptions, teachers work with the child. They enrol, assess, scaffold the individual: are extolled to 'focus on individual children over a period of time' (MoE, 1996, p. 29). *Te Whāriki* is underpinned by the concept of nurturing and promoting each individual child's growing competence. While teachers may consult, listen, live in a community, the child is the professional focus. The curriculum is assiduously planned to support the individual developing child in civil skills. The focus for assessment is on the future; with the past left behind. The teleological aspiration of reaching goals comes from Judeo-Christian concepts. Some Māori concept of 'kia mua' suggests models may in fact come from both the past and future: '[w]hakangaromanga Ao, mò te àhua o ngà wà o mua, me muri nei...' (MoE, 1996, p. 34).

Families, too, have lost their connectedness. In the diaspora from Europe, community networks were left behind. Few people with European roots have a genealogical knowledge of distant relatives from old Albion. The land which may have nurtured European ancestors remains a mythological, barely remembered site. Any cultural memories of villages that raised the children are now replaced with normative portrayal of mother, father, and child. Yet in many stories the concepts of villages, of copses and creeks are English, rather than those of Aotearoa

While a many from European roots experience disconnects from the earth, tales continue to construct our children in the images of that land. The links to European stories, are no longer seen, distanced from the realities of harvesting our crops, killing and dressing our food, breaking bread together. Children's gardens/ *kindergartens* have become 'early childhood services', providing clients with 'choice'. Exploring dirt, our local neighbourhoods, is deemed a risk to be minimised by regulation. Trees provide shelter, but play among their boughs is relegated to myth and legend; herbaceous plantings replaced with safety-matting, poisonous plants banished.

Māori World View – Different Realities

Te Ao Māori differs in many ways to the western ones, in that the past is able to provide guidance for educational theory and practice, including literacy approaches and understandings. While terms like land, family, and guardianship may be translated as whenua, whānau, and kaitiaki they have deeper, esoteric meanings. Māori look back for guidance in ways that European cultures do not. Stories are more than 'myths and legends', but are accolades to the ancestors. The past, present and future are viewed as intertwined, and life as a continuous cosmic process (Walker, 1996). Patterson (1992) argues that from a western perspective the past is behind and one's goals and aspirations relate to the future, which is

ahead. From a Māori perspective the opposite is the case and the past is ahead not behind. It is therefore in the past that one finds one's models, inspiration and guides. '… past is conceived of being in front of human consciousness, because only the present and the past are knowable. Muri, designating the future, also means "behind" because the future cannot be seen. Thus an individual is conceptualised as travelling backwards in time to the future, with the present unfolding in front as a continuum into the past' (Walker, 1996, p. 14).

This conceptualisation of history, time, of the continuous cosmic movement does not leave the past behind, rather one carries one's past into the future. The past therefore is central to and shapes both present and future identity. The strength of carrying one's past into the future is that ancestors are ever present, and one's place in the kin group is acknowledged and affirmed (Patterson, 1992). The prism analogy allows teachers to access these perspectives alongside their own supporting the examination of their implicit assumptions about the world, and their roles in promoting learning.

From a Māori worldview the relationship, both physical and spiritual, to the land cannot be overstated. The physical relationship is about geographical connectedness to important natural features such as a mountain, a river, or a place. The spiritual relationship is an ancestral connectedness through whakapapa back to their mountain and river and to Papatūānuku, the earth mother.

> The land is a source of identity for Māori. Being direct descendants of Papatūānuku, Māori see themselves as not only "of the land", but "as the land". The living generations act as the guardians of the land, like their tīpuna had before them. Their uri benefit from that guardianship, because the land holds the link to their parents, grandparents and tīpuna, and the land is the link to future generations. Hence, the land was shared between the dead, the living and the unborn. (Ministry of Justice, 2001, p. 44)

Māui Narratives

Central to sociocultural contexts are narratives: the storyings of identity. Every culture has tales that link the past to the present, give a sense of place and of linkages. Actions in parables are examples of behaviours; to be emulated, or holding attendant warnings. Māori myths and legends locate tangata whenua in the land, the cosmology and ancestors. Stories are part of Māori symbolism, philosophies, culture and worldviews. Analogous to Rogoff's (2003) use of the 'prism', Ranginui Walker (1978) maintains that mythology can be likened to a mirror image of culture, reflecting the philosophy, norms and behavioural aspirations of people. Myths can function in such a metaphor, in two ways. First, as an outward projection of an ideal by which 'human performance can be measured and perfected'. Secondly, as a 'reflection of current social practice' in which case it is more about validation of existing behaviours and precedents (p. 20). He adds: 'In some cases the myth-messages are so close to the existing reality of human

behaviour that it is difficult to resolve whether myth is the prototype or the mirror image of reality' (p. 32).

Although the characters of myth possess supernatural powers and live in a world of gods, they display many human feelings such as love, hate, jealousy, anger and the pursuit of revenge. These characters can provide humans with heroic role models and behavioural characteristics (Walker, 1978). According to Māori Marsden (2003), traditional myths and legends, such as the Māui narratives are 'deliberate constructs employed by the ancient seers and sages to encapsulate and condense into easily assimilable forms their view of the world, of ultimate reality and the relationship between the Creator, the universe and man' (p. 56). They provide morals, values, ethics and formative elements that are central to the culture and that guided ways of being and interacting within the world. The cultural messages, embedded within mythology have increasingly been used to make sense of and contribute to contemporary Māori ideology (Berryman, 2008). 'Traditional Māori stories are therefore part of the cultural symbolism that forms the foundation of a Māori worldview, a view of the world that is also maintained in many traditional cultural practices and that still forms an important part of Māori society today. These traditional understandings… contribute to how we perceive our identity as Māori in contemporary New Zealand society today' (Berryman, 2008, p. 41).

Māui is a romantic figure, a mischief-maker, a culture hero described as courageous and wise and sometimes associated with negative characteristics such as laziness, deviousness, recklessness, and mischievous. His more favourable traits include intelligence, initiative, boldness, persistence and determination (Walker, 1996). He is, according to Walker (1990), the most important culture hero in Māori mythology, the prototype culture hero who overcame disadvantages and barriers to achieve fame and prestige. He serves as a model, characterising personal qualities and traits valued in Māori society – Māui-mohio (great knowledge), Māui-atamai (quick-wittedness), Māui-toa (bravery). 'He was quick, intelligent, bold, resourceful, cunning and fearless, epitomising the basic personality structures idealised by Māori society' (Walker, 1990, p. 15). He is a trickster who used deception to achieve many of his accomplishments. This is where he derived his names, Māui-nukurau (trickster) and Māui tinihanga (of many devices). These names have relevance for teachers as they provide information about what behaviours, knowledge and thinking is valued from a Māori perspective, and therefore should be reflected in early childhood practice and curriculum implementation.

Māui is a spiritual as well as physical being. His whakapapa connects him to the realms of the gods and also acknowledges that he was the recipient of spiritual traits and characteristics, as are children. He provides a template for valued ways of being and acting that have been handed down through the generations to support future generations. Māui is a mentor, an inspirational being whose dispositions can be emulated to support Māori children's educational success.

From stories such as the Māui narratives, teachers can distil dispositional traits that may be fostered and be reflected in their programme. Māori narratives are more than 'myths'. They can be analysed for differing values and mores. For example, Māui was the arch trickster, with recurring themes of trickery and deceit in his adventures. His trickery is a key element to the achievement of his tasks. Such a disposition is rarely valued in western epistemology.

What Does This Mean for Teachers?

'The growing international awareness of the broader social contexts in which literacy is encouraged, acquired, developed and sustained is especially significant. Indeed, literacy is no longer exclusively understood as an individual transformation' (UNESCO, 2006, p. 159; see too Rogoff, 2007).

How can adults support these Māui dispositions; to make the connection to literacy such as mana and whanaungatanga in children? Criticism of tokenism are but a first step towards new lenses. An understanding that cultures value dispositions differently offers a enhance movement towards multi-faceted enlightenment. For ECE services the expression and assertion of mana includes having a positive view of the child's abilities, views, relationships, herself, of her place in the world and that of others. Children must know 'who they are' and where they belong, and be able to acknowledge and respect this in others.

Acknowledging mana whenua of the region, the specific iwi – making posters, books, puzzles, displays etc. Discuss among colleagues and members of the iwi any cautions you need to consider when using head:

• Writing the stories of the mana whenua. Uphold their mana by being careful of the mana of the things depicted. For example, when telling stories be sure of sources and differing interpretations e.g. knowing that Tongariro is always a male rangatira.

• Acknowledging one's responsibility to uphold the mana of the tangata whenua by recognising that care must be taken when using local legends.

• Recognising the mana disposition in children and depicting these in assessments.

For the ECE service, whanaungatanga is evidenced in the ways children develop and maintain kinship relationships; take responsibility for themselves and others, and connect with others. It involves establishing and maintaining effective and equitable relationships and requires the recognition of what is inherent within the child, what the child brings to the context, including their whakapapa, their whānau/hapū/iwi and ancestors, their history and links to the land. Behaviours that reflect the mana inherent within each person include showing respect and kindness to others, caring, sharing and being a friend. It requires that children develop empathy and connectedness with others, social and communal identities, and understandings of roles and responsibilities associated with those identities.

• Connects to community – reciprocal relationships. Discuss what our ECE setting can offer the community as well as what they can offer us as teachers.
• Know the links between children – who may be tuakana, who teina, who is related to whom, both in your centre and community. Kanohi ki kanohi is about ongoing relationship building, of going beyond narrow understandings of professionalism, to see teachers' roles as enhance the humanity of our charges and their wider groupings.

Principled Teaching and Learning

The principles of *Te Whāriki* give guidance on ways we as teachers work with people and places. The principles support the prism, to allow the facets to be seen more clearly. Without the principles, we may revert to the western pedagogy which is an 'accretion of information or skills, brought across a boundary from the external world to the mind of the learner' (Rogoff et al., 2003, p. 182). Whakamana requires us to empower the Māori child in knowledge of her place in the whānau, hapū, iwi and Aotearoa. This is done by working on whakawhānaungatanga, the building of ongoing relationships with the child's wider family. The child sits within her family, and her community, in meaningful, vital ways that position ngā hōnonga in involved and engaging connections. To empower the confident and competent Māori child, we as teachers work differently with communities, seeing the child holistically as having genealogical links to significant ancestors, turangawaewae and taonga – hold view of peoples, places and things that value kōtahitanga. Multi-faceted light offers passion and pride as we are excited by the possibilities of teaching and learning together. We view newly discovered artefacts as shining with newly understood awareness. By being involved in dialogic learning, prismatic teaching and multi-faceted understandings, we learn as much about 'self' as about the 'other' as both perceive differently.

We cannot view the Principles in isolation. We need to understand the esoteric, often spiritual meanings of words – a challenge in a secular milieu. The weaving metaphor requires that we holistically work with several intents – such as building relationships to better understand the child holistically. These are the weft, the supports. Together they support us in acquisition of 'deep knowledge' 'across time and place' (MoE, 1996, p. 9). The strands are the warp; how the adults – kaiako teachers, whānau, mātua – work to weave the child's learning 'through guided participation and observation of others, as well as through individual exploration and reflection' (MoE, 1996, p. 9). Learning never happens in isolation, but through a bringing together of the home and centre, teachers and whānau. The term kai ako affirms the conjoined processes of teaching and learning; the child from the adult; the adult from the child.

To return to the metaphor of enlightenment, the Principles are the supports for the prism. The casements open, allowing for greater knowledge of and a renewed passion for teaching and learning. Light is shed on the complexities when one

seeks the view through two Principles; new insights are possible if one seeks different Principles. Possible the greatest gain for the teacher who engages with multifaceted light is a renewed knowledge of 'self' as one engages with the 'other', learns from the 'other'. The prism as multifaceted purveyor of shades and insights; colours and intensities provides insights into the satisfactions and challenges of teaching and learning.

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Glossary

Aotearoa – now used as the Māori name for New Zealand.
hapū – kinship group, clan, tribe, subtribe – section of a large kinship group.
iwi – extended kinship group, tribe, nation, people, nationality, race – often refers to a large group of people descended from a common ancestor and associated with a distinct territory.
Kōtahitanga – unity, togetherness, solidarity, collective action.
Kakano – seed, kernel, pip, berry, grain.
Mana Whenua – territorial rights, power from the land, authority over land or territory, jurisdiction over land or territory – power associated with possession and occupation of tribal land. The tribe's history and legends are based in the lands they have occupied over generations and the land provides the sustenance for the people and to provide hospitality for guests.
Māori – native, indigenous, belonging to Aotearoa/New Zealand.
Māui-atamai – Māui who is quick-wittedness.
 Māui-mohio – Māui who holds great knowledge.
Māui-nukurau – Māui the trickster.
Māui-toa – Māui displaying bravery.
Māui tinihanga – Māui of many devices.
Mātua parents – plural form of *matua*.
Rangiatea – place in Hawaiki and point of final dispersal of some migration canoes.
Ranginui ràua ko Papatùànuku – *atua* of the sky and earth Ranginui is husband of Papa-tū-ā-nuku, from which union originate all living things.
Taonga Tuku iho – heirloom, something handed down, cultural property, heritage.
Te Ao Māori – The Māori world.
Teina – younger brothers (of a male), younger sisters (of a female), cousins (of the same gender) of a junior line, junior relatives.
Tuakana – elder brothers (of a male), elder sisters (of a female), cousins (of the same gender from a more senior branch of the family). Tuakana Teina: the older/more competent scaffolding and mentoring the younger.
Turangawaewae – domicile, standing, place where one has the right to stand – place where one has rights of residence and belonging through kinship and *whakapapa*.
Whakamana – to give authority to, give effect to, give prestige to, confirm, enable, authorise, legitimise, empower, validate, enact, grant.
Whāriki – floor covering (often imbued with great significance), ground cover, floor mat, carpet, mat.
whakapapa – genealogy, genealogical table, lineage, descent.
whānau – extended family, family group, a familiar term of address to a number of people – the primary economic unit of traditional Māori society. In the modern context the term is sometimes used to include friends who may not have any kinship ties to other members.
(Source: http://māoridictionary.co.nz)

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