

EARLY CHILDHOOD PORTFOLIOS AS A TOOL FOR ENHANCING LEARNING DURING THE TRANSITION TO SCHOOL

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Abstract

From 2005-2008 Mangere Bridge Kindergarten in New Zealand carried out a Centre of Innovation research project exploring the transition between early childhood education and school. A flexible action research approach was used, with the three teacher researchers, supported by two university research associates, developing and researching a range of strategies for supporting children's learning as the children and their families 'crossed the border' from early childhood education to school. Many of these initiatives involved working closely with teachers in the local school setting. This paper focuses on one aspect of the findings, the ways in which the early childhood portfolios could be used to enhance children's learning during the transition to school. Portfolios were identified as a belonging and empowerment tool; a means for school teachers to access to children's funds of knowledge; playing a role in constructing a positive self-image about learning; and as valuable literacy artefacts.

Introduction

This article presents some of the findings from a three-year Centre of Innovation research project at Mangere Bridge Kindergarten in New Zealand. The focus is on crossing borders between the kindergarten and the local school and we consider how relationships between the settings can be strengthened. Successive spirals of innovation, data gathering and analysis explored the role of portfolios in enhancing learning 'across borders', and their place as a tool for enhancing belonging and empowerment as children make the transition to school.

Background

This Centre of Innovation study built on a history of research by teachers at Mangere Bridge Kindergarten, which aimed to develop shared understandings between the early childhood and school sectors and support children's transition to school. The approach taken was consistent with the aims of New Zealand's 10-year strategic plan for early childhood education (Ministry of Education, 2002). In a section on enhancing the coherence of education between birth and eight years the following strategies were suggested:

- promoting better understanding between ECE [early childhood education] teachers and primary teachers about the links between *Te Whaariki* and the New Zealand Curriculum Framework
- promoting better understanding between ECE teachers and primary teachers about the pedagogical approaches in ECE and schools
- distributing information about effective transition from ECE to school practices. (p.17)

This aim for early childhood and school teachers to have greater understanding of what happens in the other sector is reflected internationally. For example, in Denmark, Broström (2002) noted the vital need for teachers to be aware of what happens in each other's settings. He described a number of problems, such as anxiety, nervousness, and lack of support that occur for children and families because of the lack of understanding and communication between the sectors.

However, achieving such understandings is not always easy. New Zealand researchers Timperley, McNaughton, Howie and Robinson (2003) found that “despite a commitment to collaborate, teachers from the two sectors (ECE and primary) had very different expectations of each other and most were dissatisfied with the current arrangements” (p.55). Our research set out to change and re-position current arrangements within a framework of the Early Childhood curriculum *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996) and within the assessment approach modeled in *Kei Tua o te Pae* [Early Childhood Exemplars] (Ministry of Education, 2004). It was felt that a relationship that empowered teachers, children and families to make learning visible in both settings would allow us to meet the challenges of the constraints that Broström (2002) and Timperley et al. (2003) had identified in their research.

This article explains how portfolios are used at Mangere Bridge Kindergarten, and how they came to be used at school. We have chosen case studies to illustrate the different roles portfolios played, and consider the implications of portfolios for supporting learning ‘across the border’ between early childhood education and school. We then discuss some of the complexities that became evident as we explored the implementation of this strategy further.

Context of the study

Mangere Bridge Kindergarten is situated in a South Auckland suburb, with a strong community focus. The community is culturally and economically very mixed. The majority of the children at the kindergarten transition to one of two local primary schools. The kindergarten is under the umbrella of the Auckland Kindergarten Association with a parent committee who support the running of the kindergarten. The kindergarten is sessional, with 43 children in the daily morning session programme, and 43 children in the three-afternoon sessions a week programme.

Data gathering

The three teachers from the kindergarten [Carol, Pat and Jemma] took the role of teacher researchers in this action research project supported by the two university research associates [Sally and Margaret]. A spiral approach was used with spirals developed from previous spirals and following the research questions. This approach was necessarily complex and recursive (Graue & Walsh, 1998) as the researchers sought deeper meanings and understanding of the situation being studied. Multiple data collection methods were used to gather information from a range of perspectives. These included:

Participant observation in the kindergarten and in the new entrant classrooms.

Interviews with new entrant teachers, Deputy Principals, and Principals in the two local schools

Focus group interviews with 5, and 6 year olds at school.

Semi structured interviews with near 5 year olds.

Focus group interviews of parents in groups from each school that their child had transitioned to.

Full details of the project are provided in the final report, Hartley, Rogers, Smith, Peters & Carr (2009).

Portfolios at Mangere Bridge Kindergarten

While the use of portfolios at Mangere Bridge Kindergarten began as a formative assessment tool for teachers and children, over the course of several years they have come to mean much more, to the children, to the teachers and to the families. Not only are they assessment tools, they also fulfil a multitude of roles including for those children and families for whom English is an Additional Language. Portfolios have become literacy artefacts, tools of engagement, empowerment, interaction and communication; connecting the child and family in the border crossings between home and kindergarten, and later home, kindergarten and school.

The learning stories (Carr, 2001) in the portfolios illustrate the child as a capable and competent learner (Ministry of Education, 1996) from multiple perspectives. The child's first day at kindergarten is recorded as a settling experience and then during the child's time at kindergarten learning stories are added to the portfolio. These include individual, group, and personalised group stories (Carr et al., 2008), along with artwork, children's work, and descriptions of kindergarten events. The kindergarten teachers use observation and interpretation - noticing, recognising, and responding to key learning events in order to write narratives for inclusion in the children's portfolios. These portfolios are constantly revisited and discussed with children, the teaching team, parents and families.

These valued "taonga" [treasures] move between home and kindergarten, with contributions being added at home as well. The portfolios record developing skills, dispositions and knowledge, family events, birthdays, holidays, special friends and visitors. All of this contributes to the 'funds of knowledge' (Gonzales, Moll & Amanti, 2005) that are visually able to be read, revisited and shared. They therefore present a multi-dimensional perspective of the child as learner. The individual portfolios of the children are valued in the kindergarten setting, carried, read and pored over by children as they discuss their learning and experiences with each other, with teachers and with any available adult.

Portfolios as Virtual backpacks

We came to think of the children's portfolios as a suitcase (Brostrom, 2002), a mediation tool (Vygotsky, 1978) or a virtual school bag (Thomson, 2002), full of cultural and linguistic resources gained at home and in early childhood education. The learning stories, with their dispositional focus, contribute to the 'funds of knowledge' contained within the portfolio and validate children's early childhood experiences as powerful learning, thus contributing to their identity as a competent learner (Gonzales, Moll & Amanti, 2005). Makin, Jones, Diaz and McLachlan (2007) refer to the challenge of connecting with families and validating their experiences in a pluralistic society such as New Zealand. The learning story format and the composition of the portfolio negotiates this challenge by communicating using visual image rather than English language based text.

A defining moment: Gaurav's portfolio at school

The initial success of one child's portfolio in the school classroom was the defining moment in developing the proposal for our research and we began to investigate how this small "WOW" moment could be developed further. This first child, Gaurav's, experience suggested that by using their portfolios, each child could engage with other children, adults and teachers in the new setting, opening their suitcase of experiences, recalling, revisiting, and identifying their cultural and linguistic resources. The portfolio enabled teachers to build on what children brought to school, which Gonzales and colleagues identify as an "incredibly effective

teaching strategy” (Gonzales, Moll, Amanti, 2005, p.8). Gaurav’s story (below) illustrates the power of the portfolio as a “tool of belonging” and this had a huge impact on our thinking as we went on to research the multiple uses of portfolios in transition.

“And then Gaurav’s book went to school”

At the onset of his kindergarten experience Gaurav spoke fluent Hindi, was very outgoing and playful at home, but at kindergarten remained quiet, non-verbal and diffident. He formed an attachment to a teacher and was very unhappy if away from her initially. Later he interacted with children around construction work at the carpentry bench, using trolleys and moving around in the playground. His portfolio reflected his interests and capabilities even though he interacted verbally with adults on a very minimal level. It showed how well he had pursued his strengths and interests within the kindergarten programme.

After a chance remark by the kindergarten Head Teacher, Gaurav’s mother had taken his portfolio to the new entrant room to illustrate her child as a learner. Once his portfolio went to school, Emma his new entrant teacher recalled:

I’ve been teaching for 12 years... and previous to this I hadn’t known about the portfolios ... and then this little boy brought his portfolio in and he was a very quiet boy, ESOL, didn’t speak a word for probably a week or so and then he brought his kindy book [portfolio] in and it was like a new child emerged and it was like this is me and this is who I am and even though I don’t necessarily have the language to tell you I can show you with pictures.... and I would turn around at all times of the day and hear little murmurings and laughing and there would be pockets of children sitting around this little boy with his kindy book.

The impact Emma went on to describe that this had on Gaurav’s experience of school was for us such strong evidence of the contribution of the portfolio to children’s learning and ‘belonging in this place’. During Gaurav’s time in the new entrant room his teacher reported that he continued to return to his portfolio book whenever he appeared to be feeling insecure or didn’t know what to do, and used it to engage children in conversation, sharing his ideas and recalling previous experiences. This continued for many months and we watched Gaurav become “more established as a member of the school setting” (Fabian & Dunlop, 2002, p.3). He also used it to introduce himself to other new children as they started. Quite soon a number of children were bringing their ‘kindy books’ to school and there were several observations of other children using these to foster relationships.

“Moving on”

Over a year later, on a visit to school, the kindergarten teachers were intrigued and delighted to find Gaurav at the front of the class in charge of the music, deciding when and what the children should sing next. Shortly after this Gaurav transitioned to another class as numbers in the new entrant room had unexpectedly ballooned, and, as he was one of the older children, it was decided he would move.

He hooked his portfolio under his arm, walked straight into Mrs Jones classroom, sat down, read his book [portfolio], walked over to a row of cane baskets and ‘claimed’ one for his ‘kindy box’. (Excerpt from a Learning Story – 16 August 2006)

Consolidating the practice

From a serendipitous event when Gaurav first took his kindergarten portfolio to school, this became part of the routine transition practices in this new entrant classroom. Emma, as the new entrant teacher, encouraged all children to bring these on their school visits, regardless of the early childhood service they had attended. “When we mention the kindergarten books or if they see them in the classroom, sometimes the children will say ‘I’ve got one from my daycare or my whatever’ ... which is really nice” (Final Interview, p.2).

A special box was provided to keep the portfolios in, and the teacher made a point of encouraging the children to share them:

If they brought their book on their visiting day then we would share that with the class. It maybe just a few pages “would you like to find a couple of pages and we’ll share?” and I don’t think I ever had anyone who didn’t want to because they loved those books so much and we would talk and a lot of the children who had been at kindy would be “oh there’s me” and “I remember that” and “I’ve got one of those” and they’d run off and get theirs and there’d be this little discussion and all of a sudden that new child is not feeling so new. (Final Interview, p.11)

Emma started to write learning stories to add to the portfolio during the child’s school visits:

I would then try and take a photo in the morning at some stage if they were doing something and I had a go at writing my own little learning story which I’d busily type up at morning tea time and print that out. I didn’t glue it in but just popped it in and gave it to the parents to say “here it is”. (Final Interview, p.11)

The stories moved between school and kindergarten, as children shared ECE stories at school, and also shared the stories that Emma wrote during school visits with their early childhood teachers and peers. This allowed younger children to gain insights into what happened at school.

Other new entrant teachers in both schools then began to use the portfolios in their classrooms, and some added stories during the visits, just as Emma had:

I try to take photos of the child during at least one of their visits doing things like one of the activities. I try and capture them in the playground if there’s an older sibling. I try to get the older sibling to come down and take a picture of the older sibling [as well].... I try and do that so the portfolios have been fantastic and not just for us to read but to add to it as well. (Teacher C, Final Interview, p.12)

Data gathered over the three years of the research indicated a number of benefits arising from the uses of the kindergarten portfolio during the transition to school. These include:

- Portfolios as a belonging and empowerment tool
- Opening the backpack – teacher access to children’s funds of knowledge
- Constructing a positive self-image about learning
- Portfolios as literacy artefacts.

Portfolios as a belonging and empowerment tool

The power of portfolios as a tool for fostering belonging and empowerment was evident in Gaurav’s case study, and, later, for many other children.

I guess it's like us starting a new job and moving to a new country, everything is new but if they come with this little treasure, that's something that's theirs, something they can talk about, something they share and particularly for children who are really shy or having English as a second language, they don't even need to talk, they can just sit and show and share and often you see that happening and you realise they are really valuable and really powerful. They have helped settle quite a few children over the past years that I'm absolutely sure would have taken a lot longer to settle had they not had those, so it's just keeping those up and talking to the parents about the value of having those and that it will help their child settle and helps how they work. (Teacher D, Final Interview, p.10)

I've noticed that even the most shy of children when they've got their portfolio with them they just seem to have this sense of confidence, it's that ownership over something and the fact that the other children in the class are acknowledging their prior learning and lots of rich experiences for the kids in that the children here remember friends from the kindergarten, they remember the teachers, they see Carol or Pat or Stephanie in the picture "oh there's Stephanie". (Teacher C, Final Interview, p.12)

Opening the virtual school bag – teacher access to children's funds of knowledge

The school curriculum in New Zealand acknowledges that the transition from early childhood education to school is supported when the school "builds on the learning experiences that children bring with them" (Ministry of Education, 2007, p.41). The portfolios were particularly powerful for children who had English as an additional language:

Again with those ESOL children only having one or two words but being so excited about wanting to talk about something. The fact that they're having a go at talking to a group or the teacher, whereas they may not have done that for 6 or 7 weeks, they're doing it within that first week which again gives the teacher a much better picture rather than sitting back waiting or hoping or just observing. It's another form of assessment as such for us to see what those children know. (Teacher D, Final Interview, p.12)

Principals from the two schools both commented on the value of this:

... lets have a look at how many connections we can make and look at building those. If it was a ravine lets look at closing the gap, how many bridges can we build across that for kids to make it as easy as possible.... I really thought that was great. (Principal F, Final Interview, p.6)

They have their own record and what the child's done in terms of learning and the teachers find them absolutely invaluable. They're a really strong link and it's something that the child brings with them from kindy. (Principal E, Final Interview, p.10)

Connecting the learning evident in the portfolios with learning at school seemed to be further enhanced by school teachers actually visiting the early childhood setting and seeing some of the activities in practice:

We had some wonderful discussions back at school. Some of the teachers were saying "I've been limiting the children when you see them, what they do at kindergarten building these huge buildings and using hot glue guns" and those kinds of things, so that was really good. (Teacher D, p.3)

Constructing a positive self-image about learning

The portfolios assisted in developing “a positive self-image about academic learning”, something Margetts (2007, p.109) noted as important for transition to school. The following case study provides an example of this.

“I don’t need any help thank you”

Myrrin was one of the first children to visit school and return with a story written by Emma. The class had been given instructions around a maths task and Emma then commented to Myrrin that she could sit beside Rachel and if she needed help Rachel would be there to help her. Myrrin confidently replied, “I don’t need any help thank you”. As Emma noted in her narrative “and she didn’t”.

For Myrrin’s parents this was an indication that their oldest child (whose only contact with the school prior to this had been the whole kindergarten visits) was a capable and confident learner in this new situation. They had wondered how Myrrin would cope with the transition to school and this self assurance indicated to them that Myrrin felt comfortable in this situation. They felt her confidence illustrated the value of the relationship between the kindergarten and the school.

This experience might have gone unnoticed. However, because this narrative was contained within the portfolio for Myrrin and her parents it was a documented, valued example of her ability to participate, interact with the school environment and confidently articulate how she was dealing with this new setting.

Portfolios as literacy artefacts

Te Whaariki (Ministry of Education, 1996) emphasises becoming familiar with oral, written and visual text as important communication goals for children and this links very clearly with the learning outcomes for children contained in the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education 2007). The use of the portfolios supports the literacy awareness and development as children ‘read’ the multi-modal texts contained within the portfolios, both in the early childhood centre and the school.

When Gaurav’s book first went to school his teacher commented that it became “the most read book on the shelf”. As other children’s portfolios attracted similar interest, their value as a literacy artefact became apparent to the teachers in both sectors. Children commented on the different ways they read them. For example, in a focus group of new entrant children they were asked “what did you use them [the portfolios] for [at school]? Replies included, “You use them for reading” and “Yeah, and for looking at, and for reading with a partner or someone has to ask us if they want to read them” (Group 3, 21 November 2007).

Occasionally teachers also made more deliberate use of the portfolios for reading. For example, during Jayden’s time at kindergarten he had spent lots of time with his teacher aide investigating the stories and images within his portfolio. He used the images to communicate with the teacher aide and with other children. When he went to school this became his way of engaging others to communicate. He would produce his book whenever a new adult came into the classroom and would sit with them, reading the pictures and conversing about the stories included in his book. He was also observed sharing it with a child who was new to the new entrant room – not an ex-kindergarten child (Learning Story ‘A book still in use’ 7 June 2007). Jayden appeared to be very attached to his portfolio and seemed to consider it a very important part of his previous role as a learner at kindergarten.

His new entrant teacher, Jenny, realised the potential of the portfolio as a literacy learning “artefact” and adapted the concept by making a new book for Jayden to use within the new entrant classroom.

...every day he would go and read it and chose a close friend to read it with. So I made him a similar sort of portfolio which started from his first day at school, and you know we talked about and took photos of activities that he was doing at school and then got him to dictate a little story about them, which I typed out. (Teacher Interview, Term 4, 2007, p.3)

Jenny noted that Jayden was captivated by visual image and his attachment to his kindergarten portfolio was a useful entry point to create literacy artefacts at school that would engage Jayden in literacy learning.

Both the kindergarten and the new entrant teachers became very excited about the ways in which this simple initiative was enhancing children’s experiences of transition, and supporting their learning at school. However, as the research continued, we found the use of portfolios was more complex than it first appeared, and there were a number of issues to consider if their use was to be extended beyond one enthusiastic and interested teacher.

Issues to consider

Protecting the treasure

We became aware that some families were reluctant to let their child’s portfolio go to school. The primary school teachers acknowledged the reluctance parents might feel in parting with such a unique and precious document in case it was damaged. One commented, “having a child of my own now and he’s got a wonderful day care one [portfolio] and thinking ‘would I even want that at school?’” (Teacher D, Final interview, p.4)

Teachers in both sectors looked at ways of addressing any reluctance families felt in letting the portfolios come to school by showing that the portfolios were treasured by the teachers too. The kindergarten teachers gave the children their portfolios in named kete [flax bags] to protect them, and the school built a specially designed wooden ‘tree’ for the kete to hang on. While it showed they were valued, this way of storing the portfolios (as opposed to being on the bookshelf or in an open box in the new entrant room) appeared to impact on their effectiveness, as it was observed that the children used their portfolios less frequently than they had before. Reflecting that she was unsure how to foster greater sharing of portfolios, Teacher B commented:

I don’t know how we do that ... part of it is the parents wanting to look after these portfolios and they are precious and somehow we need to say “yes we value them because we’ve had these trees made” but they really aren’t being used. (Final interview, pp.7-8)

On the other hand one teacher felt they were being used more often. “I think now that we have them in the kete, they’re more special, they’re better used now” (Teacher G, Final interview, p. 10). Although there may be other factors beyond the storage issues that are impacting on their use, ensuring the portfolios are easily accessible does seem to be important.

We are still trialling other options. Ideally a second copy of each portfolio would be made, one for home and one for school, but the financial implications of this are prohibitive. Digital portfolios are currently being explored as these may reassure families if they know that the whole portfolio is held in digital copy as a back up if the paper copy is lost or damaged.

Another option, suggested by one of the primary school teachers, is to reproduce part of the portfolio to take to school, but this raises questions about what material should be selected, who should select it, and whether it would be as powerful as the full portfolio. These are issues that will continue to be explored in the future

Teacher attitudes and use of the portfolios

Another issue that became apparent as the use of portfolios was taken up by more new entrant teachers was that the value placed on them by teachers varied and this appeared to impact on their use. This was especially true with the ongoing changes in the teaching team within the new entrant classes in both local schools.

The research team were alerted to the differing attitudes and uses when one teacher commented that “some children settle very very quickly into school without always the, well not need, but probably is, need to have a portfolio as security” (Teacher interview, Term 4, 2007, p2). This positioned the portfolios more as a ‘security blanket’, which was somewhat different to the original intention, and overlooked the portfolio’s value as a tool for fostering a sense of belonging, connecting learning, and as a literacy artefact.

Further investigation revealed that in another class the portfolios were shared only at news time:

The only way we use them is the children informally show them to other children and they share them at news. To be honest we don’t closely read each page and the other children like seeing the kindy teacher in the photos and they like remembering things they’d done and it’s a way in for the new child for conversation but other than that that’s the only we use them. (Teacher A, Final Interview, p.10)

Parents were less likely to leave their children’s portfolio in a classroom when they felt that there little interest shown by the teacher.

...took hers for news, I think first, one of her first few day she was there, very proud of her kindy book... um, I’m sorry to say it was like ‘oh that’s lovely, put it in the box and we’ll bring it out for news’ and like, it was such an important thing for her, you know, I love her kindy book. So I thought it was a bit, the importance of it wasn’t really, I was going to say appreciated. (Parent focus group, 22 May 2008, p.20)

However, the situation was complex. As one teacher noted, if more children brought their portfolios, then she would make more use of them, but she then reflected that if she did use the ones that were there, then more children might bring them:

They don’t come. If they came, I would certainly make more of a thing... and maybe they don’t come because I haven’t made enough of them but then I haven’t really had them to make anything. If the children would bring them, then I could make more of a thing of them and provide a time, talk about them and encourage the children to look at them and use them, but then on the other hand maybe I should encourage.... So there’s both sides of it. (Teacher B, Final interview, p.10)

In order to encourage more families to share the portfolios Teacher D suggested they might discuss the portfolios when they had initial interviews with parents:

talking to the parents about how we use them and how important they are and I think as right in the beginning there if we had that conversation then once they

start in the classroom they can see the other ones there then perhaps it won't be.
(Final Interview, p.5)

Regarding the ways teachers used the kindergarten portfolios, and the value placed on them, it seemed that this was something that should be revisited each year as new teachers came into the new entrant rooms. Otherwise teachers might take up the practice, in this case of having kindergarten portfolios in the classroom, without being aware of the reasons underpinning it. At the end of the project, Emma, who was now in a senior role within the school, commented:

My concern at the moment is it started with me as the new entrant teacher. My focus now is making sure each new entrant teacher that comes in after that actually has all of that knowledge and I don't think they do at the moment. I've talked to them about it and I've shown them things... and I've actually booked them [two new teachers] in for the next kindy presentation morning which I think will make a big difference... once they see the whole big picture, I think will make it happen more.... So I guess that's my job now to make sure that it continues as strongly as it has been. (Emma, Final Interview, p.4)

Conclusion

Transition for children and families is diverse and complex. Children and families moving into school carry with them markedly different experiences and backgrounds. The portfolios going to school initially formed the function of engaging the school children and the teacher in the new entrant classroom. At the outset the portfolio created a way for a new child to cross the border from one setting to another, overcoming some of the challenge that Dockett and Perry (2001) noted of the change in role from an experienced early childhood participant to an inexperienced new entrant in the primary classroom. The portfolio addressed this change, and also issues of power in that the child controlled the portfolio and was in charge in interactions with children in the new classroom.

Corsaro and Molinari (2005) refer to events that facilitate being a participant in collective routine activities as “priming events “, and we would suggest that the way these portfolios were used first in the kindergarten and then in the new entrant room, encapsulates that function, one of supporting the child to be part of a group culture, empowering them to be able to build relationships in the new setting.

In addition, just as Gonzales, Moll and Amanti (2005) proposed in their work “the educational process can be greatly enhanced when teachers learn about their students’ everyday lives” (p.6). The portfolios fulfil that role of learning about each other, not just in the classroom but between home and centre. They can act as a tool of engagement and belonging and also as a basis on which new learning builds.

Gipps (2002) commented that the formation of one’s identity as a learner is tied up with assessment, identifying what one is able to do and how that is interpreted by others. In valuing each child’s prior learning we found the teacher in the new entrant room (and indeed the principal, deputy principal, and others) all contributed to the child’s sense of self as a strong, capable, interesting and competent learner.

Although children sharing their portfolios is not dependent on a new entrant teacher’s direct involvement, their use did seem to be more effective when it became part of the culture of the new entrant room and was valued as ‘what we do here’ in this particular community to support children as they move into this setting.

We have seen, just as Wenger (1998) proposed, that a community of practice is one that develops from the participants’ response to a particular condition and context. The sustained

use of the portfolios was dependent on the individual school teacher's response to the portfolio. We feel that portfolios as transition artefacts, in all their multitude of forms, are highly dependent on the relationships between the kindergarten teachers and the new entrant teachers within the school. Although there were some issues to consider in order to maintain the effective use of portfolios in the new entrant classroom, it appeared that this was worth persisting with because when the system worked well there were both direct and indirect benefits for children's learning.

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