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Cover image: Kaleb and Odhran buddy-reading at Manawaru School. Photo / Waikato Council

Tēnā koutou katoa. Welcome to the third edition of *Te Kōrero Pānui Tuhituhi o Aotearoa Literacy Forum NZ 2021*. Thank you to the Waikato Literacy Association for the excellent work they have done in contributing high quality articles for this edition of *Literacy Forum NZ*.

We hope you enjoyed reading our **first online Literacy Forum NZ journal** earlier in the year. We have had an amazing team of creative people working hard for many months to move Literacy Forum NZ to an online journal. A huge thank you to Dr Stephanie Dix, Editor; Scotty Delamare, IT coordinator; and Donna Russell, designer, for their mahi. We all learnt a lot on the way. The kaupapa of bringing our Forum journal to a digital platform is important for NZLA. We hope that you will enjoy being able to access your literacy journal and search previous articles with ease.

Our 2021 NZLA conference ***Raranga i ā tātau kōrero - Weaving Our Stories*** was very sadly cancelled due to the uncertainties surrounding the latest Covid 19 outbreak in New Zealand. We are very grateful to the Hawke's Bay Literacy Association for their mahi over a period of two years to prepare for our conference. We acknowledge how difficult the decision to cancel the conference was. Arohanui to all of the HBLA team from your colleagues and friends across the motu.

We are so disappointed for the **Marie Clay Literacy Trust recipients** from all over Aotearoa from Te Tai Tokerou to Southland who were ready to attend the conference. However, each recipient has been offered the opportunity to use their award to attend the 2022 NZLA

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Sarah McCord
NZLA president

Auckland conference instead. We hope to see many of you in Auckland on October 9-12, 2022! We are grateful to the Marie Clay Literacy Trust (MCLT) for the grants they fund teachers to attend the NZLA national conference each year. Ngā mihi ki a koutou.

NZLA has very active NZLA Councils across Aotearoa who provide wonderful professional learning opportunities, events, competitions and so much more for their communities. I encourage you to become a member of your local council to take advantage of the many opportunities offered. Just click on the 'Regional Councils' tab at the top of the NZLA home webpage to find out more. Or contact me and I will put you in touch with your local council. In my experience, the connections made through local councils develop into wonderfully enriching and long-lasting friendships.

Ngā manaakitanga, Yours in literacy
Sarah McCord, NZLA president

Kia ora koutou katoa.

What a year it has been! Sadly, we all couldn't attend NZLA's Hawke's Bay Conference – COVID challenged us again. Several teachers' personal stories on 'managing Covid' were presented in the previous *Literacy Forum*, I am sure you could relate to them.


The team has been working hard to get new systems in place. As we transition, you will enjoy a more convenient and colourful journal to read and discuss with colleagues.

Welcome to the third and final issue for 2021. I hope you enjoy this *Literacy Forum NZ Te Kōrero Pānui Tuhituhi o Aotearoa*. A range of articles, interviews, and regional council reports provide interesting and thought-provoking reading in Vol 36, no. 3. Thank you Todd Burton and his Waikato Literacy Association team for gathering articles and contributing to this *Literacy Forum*.

In our first article, Lisa Allcott has updated her blog and explores the debates and research on reading the screen versus hardcopy. This article is highly relevant for both teachers and academics due to the increasing shift of information and texts now online. The issues Lisa raises will challenge teaching pedagogy but also present suggestions for developing a bi-literate brain.

Two further articles in this Forum share ways to enhance students' literacy skills and knowledge – but through different contexts. Linda Cheer set up her Forest school allowing children to learn through Play. Frustrated with barriers created by rules and timeframes, Linda

FROM THE EDITOR



Stephanie Dix
Editor

fosters literacy learning by encouraging children to play and interact in the natural environment.

Furthermore, Todd Burton re-visits a range of literacy approaches with his year 7-8 students to support a better understanding of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) requirements. Working collaboratively on STEM projects, find out how his students employ and improve their literacy skills when unpacking specialised language concepts and vocabulary meanings.

Richard Hill's article identifies various challenges bi-lingual students may face

living in small, rural communities. Oral language, recognised as a foundational life skill, is critical; it reflects one's identity and culture but is also crucial for effective communication. In a school on the East Coast, exciting things are happening. Richard shares one teacher's innovative method to build young Māori students' oral language capacity in te reo Māori and English.

The creative use of oral language is Steve Horne's passion. Steve explains how over the years he has honed the craft of Storytelling and in particular retelling his personal, lived-experiences. Humour, engagement, delving into emotions, and exploring the use of voice are values he promotes with his students.

Exploring picturebooks to support Pacific People in Aotearoa New Zealand was a summer project that Early Childhood Education student, Cushla Foe, engaged with. Mentored by Nicola Daly and Janette Kelly-Ware, Cushla has identified picturebooks that feature and support Pacific People's language, culture and identity – a useful resource for teachers. Further analysis of text and images in one book demonstrates how Samoan values, culture and language are presented.

I am delighted that we celebrate Annette Smith, awarded Officer of New Zealand Order of Merit for services to Children's Literacy. As lead author and Educational Consultant for the *PM Collection*, Cengage Learning Australia, Annette has dedicated her expertise in developing children's literacy knowledge on both the national and international stage. Thank you Annette for your commitment ensuring our

children have access to quality literacy material.

The two book reviews written by Joan Gibbons celebrate the winners of the New Zealand Book Awards for Children and Young Adults in 2021.

Charlie Tangaroa and the Creature from the Sea by T.K. Roxborough explores intergenerational relationships, environmental issues and a battle between Māori gods. *The Pōrangī Boy* by Shilo Kino is a more sophisticated text written for older readers. It follows Niko and his koro's protest concerning a prison being built on Māori ancestral land.

Finally, the regional councils share their amazing expertise in organising and promoting professional development for literacy educators. I was fortunate to attend a WLA meeting and listen to Linda Cheer speak on Play-Based learning, and more recently in Auckland hear Associate Professor Rebecca Jesson and Professor Janet Gaffney present: *Who sets the course for literacy in Aotearoa?*

Such quality speakers.

Ngā mihi

Stephanie
Editor



Lisa Allcott has been a Facilitator for National Capability at National Library's Services to Schools since 2001. She currently works with schools in South Auckland, Manurewa and Franklin, runs face-to-face and online professional development for school library teams and teachers in the areas of reading engagement, digital resources and school library development.

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This blog post was first published in March 2019. It's been updated to include recent research from Read NZ Te Pou Muramura. Crown copyright National Library of New Zealand Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa.

Reading on-screen vs reading in print: What's the difference for learning?

By **Lisa Allcott**

Introduction

How well do your students learn when they read online? What are the outcomes of on-screen reading compared with reading in print? Current research suggests that reading online results in lower understanding and less critical reflection. What might this mean for our students' learning and for society?

I read differently online but what about our students?

I spend a lot of time in front of my laptop reading for research. But when I'm reading for pleasure, I usually grab a print book and relax on the sofa for a good read.

I've noticed that my reading is quite different when I'm online. I skim the text quickly, looking for keywords that might relate to what I'm researching rather than settling in for a long read. I often print online articles so that I can read them in hard copy because I find that easier to concentrate on.

For our students who are growing up in a digital world with all its advantages and distractions, I wondered what reading practices have developed to deal with the online world and what their consequences might be.

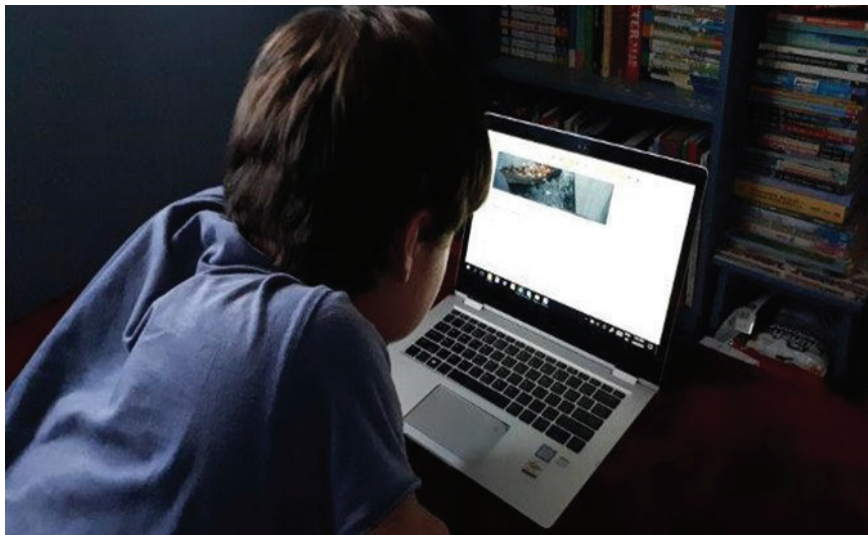


Photo / Courtesy of National Library of New Zealand. All rights reserved

Online and connected

The online world is vast and there is [no sign of data creation slowing down](#). Our digital experience is enhanced by media-rich content and quick links to other sites, offering convenience, flexibility of approach, and often cheaper costs than print materials. We have instant knowledge of world events and everyone's reaction to them and can, in turn, instantly react and contribute ourselves.

But not all of this information is unbiased or even relevant to our needs, and the speed at which events are reported upon gives us little time to evaluate sources, think critically or engage in considered reflection. As [Susan Greenfield](#) (2014) a neuroscientist from Oxford University, comments in her interview with ABC's Gary Rivett:

The issue is that information isn't

knowledge. Of course, you can be bombarded with endless information, endless facts but if you can't make sense of them, one fact is the same as any other fact. You can cruise on YouTube or on Google going 'yuck' and 'wow,' but you're not actually making sense of things.

So, do our digital reading practices foster the reflection and deep reading necessary to evaluate and respond thoughtfully to all of this data?

Researcher Ziming Liu (2005) noted that:

With an increasing amount of time spent reading electronic documents, as screen-based reading behaviour is emerging. [This]... behaviour is characterised by more time spent on browsing and scanning, keyword spotting, one-time reading, non-linear reading, and reading more selectively,

while less time is spent on in-depth reading, and concentrated reading.

Research comparing print and digital reading experiences

In [Scholastics' 2012 Kids and Family Reading report](#), kids say that ebooks are better than print books when they do not want their friends to know what they are reading, and when they are out and about/travelling. Print is better for sharing with friends and reading at bedtime.

[Naomi Baron](#) (2016) compared how students read in print and on-screen, and she reports that participants “praised digital reading on a number of counts, including the ability to read in the dark, ease of finding material (‘plenty of quick information’) saving paper and even the fact they could multitask while reading” (p. 15).

In Baron’s (2017) later article, [Reading in a digital age](#), her review of related research included a 2011 study by Ackerman and Goldsmith. This study noted that when students had a choice, they spent less time on digital reading, and had lower comprehension scores. Schugar et al. (2011) also found that participants reading on-screen used fewer study strategies such as note-taking. More recent research by Kaufman and Flanagan (2016) found that students reading digitally did well on answering concrete questions while those reading in print did better on abstract questions needing inferential reasoning.

In Baron’s own study, with more than 400 university students from five countries, 86% preferred reading longer

texts in print and 78% when reading for pleasure, with 92% saying it was easiest to concentrate when reading print. 85% of the US students were more likely to multitask in an online environment and only 26% when reading print.

New Zealand researchers, [Hooper and Herath](#) (2014), determined that the impact of the online environment on university students’ reading included:

- increased amount of reading due to the growth of online material
- improved speed of reading
- improved skimming ability.

The impact also included:

- change in patience as readers
- multitasking
- distraction
- eye strain
- scanning rather than reading through (in print 82% of participants read from beginning to end).

Multitasking in a fast-paced world

Sally Blundell (2018) interviewed neuroscientist Maryanne Wolf for The New Zealand Listener. As Blundell and Wolf note: “By and large, reading on a screen encourages multitasking, a different form of attention, a different speed of processing.” And if people are skim, skim, skimming, she tells the Listener, “and not going deeper to

understand the complexity of issues, they will be far more attracted to false news or worse” ... But there is concern, she says, that digital media and the sheer volume of online information and communication invite the fast and shallow read. The result, she writes, is more and more young people not reading other than what is required, “and often not even that: ‘tl; dr’ (too long; didn’t read).

The issues are more compelling for even younger students as their adaptation to a fast-paced digital world may be changing their brains and influencing their ability to develop these skills.

Our brain circuits are being rewired

The very plasticity of our brain, the ability to respond and adapt to our environment, and its challenges that has kept our species alive for millennia also encourages it to take on the characteristics of whatever medium it is reading on.

If you have a young brain with the evolutionary mandate ... to adapt to the environment, and the brain is placed in an environment that is very fast-paced, requiring a little attention span where you move onto the next thing, ... the brain will obligingly adapt to that. And then you put that same child in an environment where it has to concentrate for a long period of time, it won’t have rehearsed that skill. Therefore it won’t be very good at it (Greenfield, 2014).

Researchers Schugar et al. (2013) worked with middle-grade students and found that those who read print

“when ebooks are properly selected and used, children develop literacy skills equally well and sometimes better than with print books”

comprehended more than those who read an ebook on an iPad. This is further confirmed by [Reich, Yau and Warschauer](#) (2016) in their report on using tablet-based ebooks with very young children (0-2 years), commenting that enhanced ebooks with sounds, animations, and games can distract children and reduce learning. When book-sharing with an adult, conversations during ebook reading are often about the platform while print book conversations are more often about the book content.

However, these same researchers have also found that with ebooks that are carefully designed to support reading rather than distract with features that are simply entertainment, the children’s comprehension of a story was at a similar level.

A recent literature review of 14 studies on the effect of ebooks on children’s reading by López-Escribano, Montesino, and García-Ortega (2021), notes that “when ebooks are properly selected and used, children develop literacy skills equally well and sometimes better than with print books.” The authors also noted that “children living in a deprived context, at risk of learning disabilities, and English Language Learners benefited from all the reviewed ebook interventions, which highly improved their literacy skills, regarding concepts about print,

phonological awareness, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. Digital learning and ebook reading represent a potential compensatory strategy for these children.”

Best of both worlds

Both print and online reading are thoroughly established in our students’ daily lives. Online reading has evolved to allow the quick perusal of a lot of information very quickly — a great strategy for scanning through email for example. Additionally, ebooks and digital technology can be very engaging for reluctant readers. The [National Literacy Trust’s](#) (2015) study of children’s access to ebooks found that:

...boys’ reading levels increased by an average of 8.4 months, compared to 7.2 months’ progress made by girls. Furthermore, the percentage of boys that felt reading was difficult almost halved from 28.0% to 15.9%, suggesting that confidence in their own reading ability increased as a result of the project. In addition, the percentage that felt reading was cool rose from 34.4% to 66.5%.

Wolf (2018) notes that print reading allows us to slow down and give time to sophisticated deep reading processes, letting us discern truth, apply critical analysis, gauge inference, develop empathy, appreciate beauty to reach the knowledge and wisdom necessary to sustain a good society.

[Baron](#) (2016) reports that the students in her study commented that print was aesthetically more enjoyable (“I like the smell of paper”) and that print gave them a sense of where they were in the

book — they could see and feel where they were in the text.

So it’s not an either/or choice but a matter of how we get the best out of both. Wolf (*Reader Come Home*, 2018) suggests that we need to teach our students which medium best suits the purpose for which we are reading. Her best hope for our reading future is the ‘bi-literate’ brain — one that uses the optimal skills of each reading style so that students can read deeply as well online as in print.

Find out more

[2019 Research: Reading in a Digital Age](#) — research by Read NZ Te Pou Muramura.

[Australian kids and family reading report](#) — Scholastic.

[Is digital reading changing how our brains work?](#) — Maryanne Wolf (2018) interview with Kathryn Ryan on Radio New Zealand.

[Reader Come Home: The Reading Brain in a Digital World](#) — 2018 book by Maryanne Wolf.

[Skim reading is the new normal](#) — Maryanne Wolf (2018) in the Guardian.

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Intentionally teaching literacy in a Play-Based primary classroom



Linda Cheer was Deputy Principal at Lucknow School in Hawke's Bay.

She went on to establish one of the first New Zealand Forest Schools. Longworth Forest was recognised in 2017 as one of a hundred global innovations in education by the Finnish organisation HundrED.

As co-director of Longworth Education, Linda coaches teachers in their classroom settings to support evidence-based play pedagogy. She has presented keynote addresses at several Literacy Association Conferences focusing on how to incorporate and enhance the teaching of literacy through play.

<https://www.longwortheducation.co.nz>

By **Linda Cheer**

In the beginning

Eight years ago, an intense feeling of frustration led me to establishing a Forest School on our lifestyle property in Hawke's Bay. The frustration came from trivial rules such as:

- no water allowed in the sandpit
- drizzly rain at lunchtime – the bell was rung for everyone to go inside and videos were turned on
- cones were placed around large puddles in the playground
- junior students were banned from the big adventure playground

And then... the introduction of National Standards (MOE, 2009).

As these frustrations mounted, the words, writings, and research of renowned educators such as Harry Hood, Elwyn Richardson, Sylvia Ashton Warner, Kelvin Smythe and Jill Eggleton also spurred me on to challenge the status quo. And, my son's words, as a 5-year-old, also kept ringing in my ears: "School interrupts my life."

When drawing on an understanding and awareness of *how* children acquire knowledge rather from a place of *what* we must teach, we begin to see constructivism in action. Constructivism identifies teaching and learning as active processes and draws on the understanding that learners discover and construct knowledge by and for themselves, and

in collaboration with others (Aiono, 2020; Fosnot & Perry, 2005): this underpins all aspects of teaching and learning through play.

With a considerable body of literature supporting the importance and use of play as a teaching and learning tool, there are still diverse viewpoints as to what play is, and how it can be effectively used in the school setting to benefit learning outcomes of students. Questions educators often ask when investigating the implementation of play in their school setting include: What is play? What type of play do we foster in primary school? How do we distinguish between rich authentic play and 'low-level' play?

A common misunderstanding about play-based learning in the school context is that it is free play with limited or no teacher guidance (Cooper, 2014; Pyle & Danniels, 2017). In fact, the teacher's role is both complex and crucial (Aiono, 2020; Pyle & Bigelow, 2014; Weisberg et al., 2013). While we know that children learn through play, the bigger challenge is to achieve crucial teaching through play 'formula' that meets children's learning needs. This formula will include

- setting up an environment that is conducive to rich play experiences,
- knowing what to observe,
- knowing when to gift knowledge and to scaffold and support learning,
- understanding developmental stages, play urges, or schema,

Figure 1. Challenge Practice



- encouraging a joy of learning across all areas of the curriculum,
- having a sound knowledge of all areas of the curriculum, and
- having the skills to develop the learning areas we observe in the play.

Where does literacy fit in?

In an effective, evidence-based play environment, we see a balance between the explicit, instructional teaching of literacy (and numeracy) with the intentional teaching of all other areas of the curriculum. Throughout the day we will see teachers taking reading groups, writing groups and maths groups. With the use of a flexible timetable, we will also see teachers using play as a tool to intentionally teach science, social sciences, health and technology in an integrated, naturalistic way through play.

Management of explicit teaching and teaching through play

There are many challenges in successfully managing explicit teaching through play. For many teachers working in collaborative spaces, a balance is more easily achieved with

more adults available in the room. But what about those in single-cell classrooms, often in solo-teaching positions? We recommend explicit daily instruction targeted at two guided writing groups, two guided reading groups, and two maths groups per day. This ensures specific, targeted support for explicit literacy instruction, alongside the recognition of the importance other learning areas of the curriculum hold as well. Providing opportunities for children to play, outside of explicit instruction time, offers opportunities for them to use their literacy knowledge in meaningful contexts and consolidate areas of knowledge during play interactions.

Writing in Play

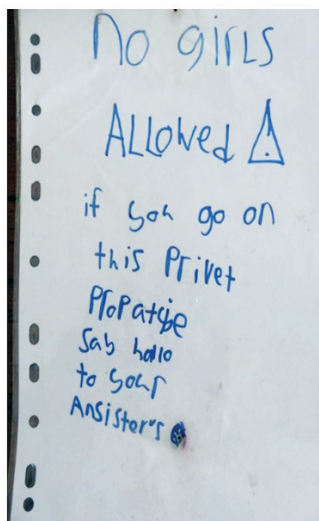
There are some key ideas about writing that we should teach our students:

- Writing is fun.
- Writing takes place anytime and anywhere.
- Writing is about imparting a message and preserving it. It is not just about conventions.
- Writing should be purposeful and should always have an audience.

During play, students often have important messages to convey. Building huts and secret places may lead to 'a learning' on how to make signs like: "No girls allowed" and "Ben made it, don't break it" or this one: "No girls allowed, if you go on this private property, say hello to your ancestors." See Figure 2.

These are powerful messages and

Figure 2. Real opportunities for writing



students who write these have a very good understanding about the importance of the written word. These messages should become a teaching point during guided writing sessions. In a play environment students often want to send these types of messages. It is important that we have lots of different writing tools available alongside the play. Traditionally, classrooms may have offered this in the form of the 'writing table.' We suggest changing this limiting option for writing and enabling children to engage in meaningful reasons and purposes for writing. Integrate the writing into the play throughout the day. Let's bring joy and purpose into writing so that all our students want to write. See the range of writing displayed by a year 4-5 class (Figure 3).

Our observations are crucial in supporting literacy across the

Figure 3. Writing produced from a Year 4-5 class during play



curriculum. In this photo (Figure 4), the children are engaged in bow and arrow practice. This experience opens a range of literacy activities that would encourage students to pick up writing tools. These could include

- recording the distance the arrows travel,
- making signage for safety,
- constructing targets.

Reading in Play

In a play-based classroom, a well-considered reading programme will be evident. We would see guided reading, shared reading and independent reading happening. The books available for independent reading will reflect the

Figure 5: Children engrossed in images of weaponry



Figure 4. Bow and arrow experiences initiate writing



urges/schema and interests observed in the play. While a specific time should be set aside each day for independent reading, some students will choose to read as part of their play. This is true if they are wanting to gain more information about a topic or how to solve a problem. This is important at all ages. Our early readers, while not reading text independently, will often have great discussions about the pictures in a book. An Usborne book of weaponry held the attention of two 5 year-olds for at least 20 minutes because of their strong trajectory urge (picture below). The discussion was priceless. See Figure 5.

Oral language in Play

In a play environment there is more student talk and less teacher talk. In an earlier study, it was identified that in traditional classrooms, teachers talk 89% of the time (Cazden, 2001). How often, as busy teachers, do we spend time in meaningful conversations with

our students?

In a play environment, conversations develop throughout the day. Students who need extra support with their oral language need more time talking. Teachers should spend more time with these students 'gifting' language, in the same way that many parents gift language to their pre-schoolers. Repetition and language enrichment should happen in a natural conversational way.

Our students do not always respond well to constant questioning. Rowe's study (cited in Cazden, 2001) identified that a question is asked every 72 seconds in a classroom setting – with most teachers waiting only 2 seconds for an answer. In addition, 38% of questions asked by teachers are in fact answered by teachers!

In a play setting, teachers need to work to reduce the number of questions posed and increase the number of descriptive comments made – in an intentional and targeted manner. If questions do need to be asked, then students need to be provided with a longer time to process their response. Teachers, in supporting students' oral language, will intentionally plan to extend and enrich vocabulary alongside children as they play in the classroom.

In summary

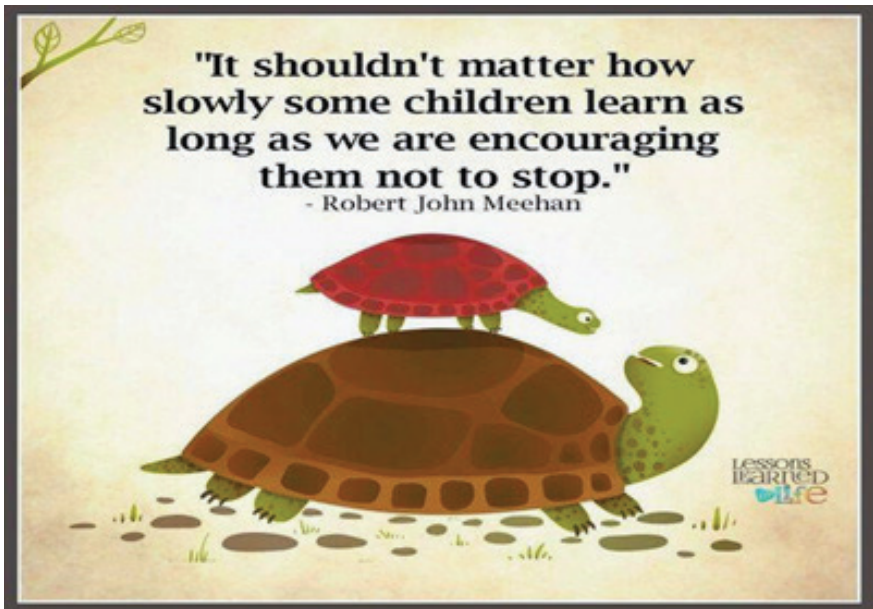
Teaching literacy in a play-based classroom calls for an intentional, well-planned but flexible timetable. Teachers will recognise the literacy learning they see in the play they observe and then find ways to support the learning further by enriching

students' knowledge, the environment, and through the provision of resources in a timely manner. Supporting literacy development outside of explicit guided teaching moments is more than providing a library corner and a writing table. Students disengaged or unmotivated to write or read require the teacher to intentionally take the literacy out into the play. To provide a real-life, meaningful context for literacy and to demonstrate that there is a point to reading and writing. Take all the writing tools off the writing table and place them next to the huts, the buildings, the tea parties and shops. Make sure the woodwork table can be used to make signage.

Key takeaway points to consider:

- Shed the guilt and make more time for teaching literacy in the play environment.
- Give yourself the time to enjoy teaching literacy.
- Teach more, assess less.
- Focus on the developmental stages of learning, not the students' chronological age.
- Talk less and listen more and know when to 'spray and walk away.'
- Maintain a balance and spend time on observing your students in their learning.
- Learning literacy is fun. Share those poems for pure enjoyment and not for drilling language conventions.

Most importantly have FUN!



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Talking Sticks: An innovative method of building students' oral language

by **Richard Hill, Violet Aydon-Pou, Karen Koopu**

Abstract

Oral language is a critical foundational skill children need for success at school. However, many children's experiences prior to school either do not provide sufficient language 'nourishment' or, for bilingual students, there is a

misalignment between preschool and school experiences. Consequently, to ensure students prosper in their schooling, junior school teachers have the significant task of bridging the language knowledge gap. This article discusses a New Zealand teacher's innovative oral language programme that helps to fill this oral language gap in her young Māori students. *Talking Sticks* involves the use of Cuisenaire

Richard Hill



Violet Aydon-Pou



Karen Koopu



During this project Richard was a lecturer at The University of Waikato teaching literacy and bilingual education themes in the Initial Teacher Education programme. His research has primarily focused on transitions of Māori medium/bilingual students, including language transitions (te reo Māori to English) and school transitions. Richard is now working at Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Bernard Fergusson in Ngaruawahia as the English transition teacher.

Violet is from Ngati Porou, Nga Puhi and Tauwiwi. A Resource Teacher of Learning Behaviour in the Whakatane/East Coast region, she has worked in four school clusters since 2001. Violet has also been a researcher for the Te Kotahitanga project, and is currently completing her second Master degree in the area of Contemporary Education.

Karen has been teaching for nearly 30 years, predominately in kura Māori. Her early years were spent teaching the English transition programme in kura Kaupapa alongside her husband Ned. Her children were also taught through Māori medium education. More recently Karen returned home to her paradise in Te Whānau a Apanui, and seeing the need to improve the oral language of her students she started Talking Sticks which is now part of her daily routine.

rods to create pictures from which oral language is modelled, reinforced and innovated. The collaborative pilot project between university and school found that not only were the children highly engaged when using this approach, there were positive signs of oral language growth. We conclude that more substantial research should build on this project across a wider range of programmes, as it has the potential to support teachers working with students who display low oral language skills.

Introduction

Oral language plays an important function in people's lives. Not only does it help us communicate our needs, it marks our identity and reflects our culture (Education Review Office, 2017; Ministry of Education, 2009). Importantly, sound oral language development is a foundation for later literacy development (Cameron, 2019; Fillmore & Snow 2000; Shiel, Cregan, McGough & Archer, 2012).

This makes what happens before school starts and in the early school years extremely important to ensure students have every opportunity to develop fully. Clearly, children who are exposed to a range of home and preschool experiences with language and books will be better prepared for school. However, many children arrive at school having not had those experiences (van Hees, 2011). They may be from low socioeconomic groups with few resources, or bilinguals whose transition to school involves both cultural and linguistic change.

This article discusses the outcomes of a pilot project in response to a new

approach for teaching oral language skills to junior school students.

Karen Koopu of Te Kura o Te Whānau-a-Apanui (TKOTWAA) on the East Coast of the North Island became frustrated at the lack of literacy language progress of her young Māori students and started to experiment with an approach she called *Talking Sticks*. This article will discuss the promising results that have emerged from the study in the hope that it can be developed more fully as a resource for other teachers who also struggle to lift their students' oral and written language needs.

Literature review

Historically, countries like Aotearoa New Zealand have had a chequered history accommodating culturally and linguistically diverse groups who have been expected to assimilate into the culture and language of the dominant groups (May, 2012; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2017). For Indigenous Māori in particular, the assimilation process led to significant effects on their lives and their language. Only in the 1980s, with the entrance of *kōhanga reo* Māori language nests and *kura Kaupapa Māori* (May and Hill, 2018) was *te reo Māori* (Māori language) brought back from 'imminent death.' Since that period, Māori medium education has grown steadily, offering a range of options for *whānau*. However, despite its positive impact, issues still remain. In communities, such as the one at the centre of this article – children from English speaking homes – may embark on a bilingual education in pre-school before transitioning into English medium primary schools. Hill presented evidence from 2017

enrolment statistics showing of the 10,340 students attending Māori medium Early Childhood Education (ECE) programmes, only 1,978 year-one students enrolled in Māori medium primary schools (Hill, 2020; Statistics New Zealand, 2018). Even accounting for the wider age group in preschools, the drop is still significant, signalling either a fall in support for long term Māori medium education, or as occurs in the region at the centre of this project, a lack of options available to them.

This pattern of early withdrawal from bilingual education can be dangerous. Overseas, it led Jim Cummins to develop the Thresholds Hypothesis to warn of possible consequences (Cummins, 1976; Toukoma & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1977). Figure 1 shows a three-levelled house with ladders representing the students' languages ascending to the top floor. The aim is to progress students via bilingual education to the top floor with the ultimate outcome of full bilingual development. While on reaching the second floor there are no negative outcomes, however the full benefit of bilingual education will not be borne out. If however, students remain on the ground floor, with both languages underdeveloped, they are described as semi-lingual, as their languages are not strong enough to enable them to operate competently in either language. While there is some controversy over the term semilingualism for its deficit undertones (Edelsky et al., 1983; MacSwan, 2000; Martin-Jones & Romaine, 1986), the phenomenon it describes is real and needs to be recognised for its impact on student progress (Cummins, 2000).

For junior school teachers, accommodating students through

effective programmes is critical to their successful progress, but how to do this is less well understood. In their report on early childhood and primary school teaching of oral language, the Education Review Office (2017) warns of a wide variability in how teachers cater to students' oral language needs reflecting a lack of knowledge about how oral language develops and how to teach it. Nurturing better home school partnerships is emphasised, together with an acknowledgment in schools that attending to students' oral language is not solely the responsibility of the New Entrant teacher.

Despite negative evidence of how New Zealand teachers support oral language learning, there have been several studies showing successful school literacy programmes, particularly for bilingual students. Tagoilelagi-Leota, McNaughton, MacDonald and Farry's (2005) study of bilingual Pasifika students' transitions into English mainstream in Auckland identified programmes that successfully bridged the gap from home languages to English. There was, however, a concern for the fate of the home languages which were used less often as a consequence of the changes. More recently, Rona and McLachlan's (2018) study on the transition of three bilinguals into English medium, partial immersion and full immersion programmes, showed positive outcomes for all three bilinguals. The classroom programmes offered stimulating environments and a range of literacy learning approaches. The teachers were also skilled at looking after students' personal needs.

These are positive findings, but they may conceal some of the issues teachers

The lack of English medium ECE pathways for whānau is a key issue for the community. It means that for parents wanting their children to be educated in English medium schools, the only early childhood education option is to use Māori medium. The result is that when students transition to school, neither of their languages are well developed (see Figure 1). According to TKOTWAA principal, Kimiora Webster, on arrival at school students will possess some basic understandings of te reo Māori, but not fluency, and their English may consist of 2-3 word sentences. Some students also display American accents from the impact of television and online video games. Exposure to storybooks is something that Karen feels does not occur to a great extent in many homes.

Description of the Talking Sticks programme

Prior to *Talking Sticks*, Karen would implement a wide range of approaches to support her students' language skills, including the Language Experience approach (Ministry of Education, 2003) which saw Karen taking her children for walks to talk about their environment, and bringing interesting items to class to talk about. Despite Karen's attempts, she found oral language growth slow, so in 2019 she started to experiment with something new. Earlier in Karen's career a visiting education advisor had introduced her to an approach called Talking Circles, which was primarily aimed at teaching students social skills using repetition and reinforcement. To this Karen added Cuisenaire rods to create pictures which she had witnessed in Te Ataarangi Māori language courses (Mataira, 1980;

“Karen has found that a 15-20 minute daily lesson significantly impacts on students’ oral and written language growth.”

Nock, 2020). The collaborative nature of these two approaches, where simple sentences are modelled, repeated and innovated by group members, allowed Karen to expose students to sentences in a collaborative way. More advanced children could also adapt sentences and reinforce the playful nature of language use.

In the two years Karen has been experimenting with this approach, she has found that a 15-20 minute daily lesson significantly impacts on students' oral and written language growth. It also offers opportunities to integrate oral language into other parts of the programme including, mathematics, class inquiry and the teaching of te reo Māori.

The following sequence offers an example of how Karen forms her *Talking Sticks* lessons.

1. With students sitting in a circle and the Cuisenaire rods in the middle, Karen uses the principle of 'I say, you say,' a term she continually reinforces with her students to help them register the new sentence structure and to 'get their tongues around it.' Karen may start by modelling a mihi, "Good morning everyone, I feel happy today."
2. The conversation then moves around the circle with the children

greeting one another and adapting their responses. At times Karen intervenes if a child requires support.

3. Karen will then create a picture using the Cuisenaire rods, and model a sentence to the group: “This is my car. It is a red car.”
4. The children will repeat Karen’s sentence individually around the circle. They then create their own picture.
5. Karen repeats her focus sentence, and then each child describes his/her picture, adapting Karen’s sentence.
6. At times Karen will create group challenges for students that adds further engagement. She may for instance ask them to build a high tower or a long road.

Research design

This was a Kaupapa Māori-based project (Bishop, 2005; Pihama, 2010; Smith, 1999) as the community is Māori, the majority of the research team are Māori, and the inspiration for the project came from that community after Violet Aydon-Pou, the regional Resource Teacher of Learning and Behaviour (RTL B), asked Richard Hill of Waikato University to collaborate in the project. The research processes used Māori tikanga, and researchers ensured the important processes of Kaupapa Māori, including initiation, benefits, representation, accountability, and legitimacy, were present (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). The project aims were two-fold: first to gauge the benefits of the programme, that

will benefit students and teachers, who find themselves in a similar position as Karen, and second, to acknowledge this innovative teacher’s work.

The pilot project was conducted over a three month period and involved: interviews with students, staff (Karen and her principal and deputy principal) and whānau; classroom observations; reflective discussions; and oral language assessments of three students using Junior Oral Language Screening Test (JOST) (Special Education Service, 1994) and Record of Oral Language screening test (Clay, Gill, Glynn, McNaughton & Salmon, 2015). Unfortunately, during the process of this project only one parent was available to be interviewed, and she subsequently moved away from the community before its conclusion. As such, the whānau voice was not present. The lack of a student control group also meant that caution is required when drawing conclusions from assessment data. Overall, despite the shortfalls, this pilot offered the opportunity to gauge the potential of the Talking Sticks programme for teachers.

Results

When Karen reflected on her experiments with this approach, she highlighted its engaging nature and creative elements.

“They really enjoy the interaction with *Talking Sticks*... they don’t get bored.”

This factor was confirmed by the students at the conclusion of the study. There was widespread positive feedback about the approach. When asked why they liked it, the students responded with the following comments:

“Because we can make shapes and use different colours”

“Because sometimes sticks make it easy”

“I like it because I can learn new words and that’s it”

“I like building stuff with it”

“We say kind things about each other and then we feel happy”

“Because it’s fun”

Karen finds the approach embeds new language structures in less confident students whilst enabling more confident students to experiment. This is then accessible to younger students. One example Karen described was based on the theme of pizzas. Students’ Cuisenaire pizza creations engaged them in the language to describe pizzas, opening the opportunity to innovate their responses about their pizza toppings.

The simplicity of creating lessons for a range of purposes is another advantage of this approach, according to Karen.

“It has so much scope for a teacher, so much flexibility to be able to do numerous things, and get some really interactive talk going on, but also hone in and do specific patterns you want the children to learn.”

Karen has used the approach to teach mathematics concepts and te reo Māori. She also uses it to add an additional language layer to classroom social studies themes.

“They really enjoy Talking Sticks. They don’t get bored”

Karen Koopu

Multiple classroom observations were conducted over the three-month period of this project demonstrating the benefits of this programme. The lessons provided enabled Karen to model full sentences, which students learned and practiced in a controlled and supported environment. High levels of concentration were necessary as the children were required to use their newly learned sentences in front of the group. Having each child respond around the circle meant there were multiple role models reinforcing the sentence forms, including the older students who took pride in adding their own creative responses. Karen was also available to support those who struggled to reproduce grammatically correct sentences. Throughout the process, there was a sense of peer support and encouragement amongst the group, which led to the shy children having a go.

The following is an example of one lesson observation.

Introduction (mihimihi)

Karen: “Morena (names student), how are you feeling today?”

Student 1: “Morena whaea (aunty). I’m feeling good today.”

Student 1: “Morena (names peer), how do you feel today?”

Student 2: “Morena (names peer), I feel like a box of pineapples.”

Student 2: “Morena (names peer), how do you feel today?”

Student 3: “Morena (names peer), I feel sad because I had to give one of my puppies away.”

Following Karen’s introduction she continued to develop a social studies/ language theme they had previously been exploring on moki, a fish species that is revered in the Te Whānau-a-Apanui region. She asked her students to construct a moki of their own.

Teacher: “Make a moki so you can tell me about moki.”

Teacher: “The moki live at Whangapāraoa.”

Student 1: “The moki is the only fish that has big-as lips.”

Student 2: “The moki has big eyes.”

Student 3: “The first moki you catch have to hang it up in a tree by its tail [sic].”

Results from language tests

Three 5-year-old students were tested before and after the intervention using JOST and ROL. Two further students initially tested were absent from school at its conclusion preventing their results from being analysed. An interesting outcome from the ROL test was its inability to show small improvements over the three-month period. The three students made marginal improvements but stayed within level one of the

assessment. The research team concluded that this assessment was not adequate for showing minor gains. Its use has also been questioned by Hill (2009), who found that the sentences students repeat resemble formal written language rather than oral language that would be observable in this age group. The outcomes from the JOST assessment had two contrasting results. Sections requiring specific language, such as pronoun use, showed little change. However, the pragmatics section (see Table 1), which asks students to freely describe a park scene from a picture, showed significant growth with students more likely to use full sentences.

Discussion and conclusions

This study offered the opportunity to explore an innovative approach in supporting the oral English language learning of kōhanga reo-educated students in a small coastal, rural community. The lack of English medium ECE programmes had meant whānau were forced to choose a Māori medium preschool education before transitioning to English medium primary school. This situation presented their teacher Karen Koopu with the challenge of how to lift their emergent English language skills.

The results from each data collection method provided support for the programme’s benefits. The use of Cuisenaire rods added a physical and creative element to lessons. The range of classroom applications and simple implementation also made this an attractive tool for Karen, who could then create a meaningful language lesson or add a language layer to many curriculum areas – very simply.

Table 1. Students' responses to pragmatics section of Junior Oral Screening Tool (JOST) (N.3)

STUDENT	Pre March 2021	Post June 2021
Student 1	<p>Riding his bike Eating his lunch Red socks on Balloon in sky A baird (bird) A dog Trees Grass Sky</p>	<p>Bike is going slow He's eating his lunch He's taking his shoes off A balloon flied The bird is flying The dogs stopped The trees have stayed there This grass is growing The sky is not going</p>
Student 2	<p>The man and the girl Taking their shoes off This man on the table eating his lunch box This boy with paper riding the bike This girl dropped the balloon in the sky The dog just jump and grabbed the balloon</p>	<p>The dog is barking to the bird The boy is putting his shoes on The boy is eating lunch The girl is ride on the purple bike (points to the girl) The girl is playing with the balloon</p>
Student 3	<p>Somebody's trying to get balloon A dog barking at a baroon (balloon) Somebody's trying to tie his shoes There's someone on dis (this) bike Someone's tying his shoes and this one not This someone eating his lunch And there's a bird there's a twee (tree)</p>	<p>Someone lost her balloon See someone eating cheese Someone is tying her shoe up Someone is riding on a bike If you go over here it looks like it's got three wheels ... like a wheelchair This way it looks normal. See a boy sitting down And a dog is barking at the bird That's all I can see</p>

Overall, this approach provided an additional tool to lift a group of students at risk of failing in the education system because of a misalignment between school, preschool and home.

Earlier in this article the issue of how young bilinguals' language needs are catered for within schools was discussed using Cummins' Thresholds Hypothesis. Despite a weight of evidence suggesting that for bilingual students, long term bilingual programmes are best at providing the environment conducive to success (see for instance, Thomas & Collier, 2003; Baker & Wright, 2017). In instances where whānau choose another pathway, or the options are not available to them, it leaves children vulnerable to failure as their languages are not strong enough to enable them to operate competently in either language.

Talking Sticks offers a supplementary method which helps to fill this gap by speeding students' oral language growth. It therefore could be used in any situation where students struggle with learning the language of the classroom, including Māori medium, with bilingual Pasifika groups and in low-socioeconomic communities attending English medium schools.

Finally, this project highlights the reality that teachers are also innovators. On a daily basis they are creating programmes to align to the needs of their students. At times however, their frustration leads to a new approach which pays dividends. Karen Koopu is one of those teachers. Her innovative approach is supporting her students and could be applied to a range of other contexts where teachers struggle to lift students' oral language skills.

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Exploring Pacific Picturebooks to support the language, culture and identity of Pasifika children. A Summer Scholar's perspective

By **Janette Kelly-Ware, Cushla Foe and Nicola Daly**

Abstract

Populations of Pacific People in Aotearoa New Zealand are growing, and many education documents recognise the need to support the language, culture and identity of children from these communities in educational settings.

In this article we explore the potential of

picturebooks to support principles from *Te Whāriki* and *Tapasā*. Specifically we report on the findings of a Summer Scholarship research project at The University of Waikato where a Summer Scholar (Cushla Foe) identified 90 picturebooks featuring Pacific Peoples published since 2013. We present content analysis of one picturebook in terms of how Samoan language and identity are reflected in the text and illustration, and how this links to

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Nicola Daly is a sociolinguist and Associate Professor in the Division of Education at The University of Waikato where she teaches courses in children's literature. Her research focus is multilingual picturebooks and she was a Fulbright New Zealand Scholar in Arizona, USA in 2019/2020.

principles and Turu competencies in *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017) and *Tapasā* (MoE, 2018).

Introduction

Populations of Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand increased by approximately 45% between 2006 and 2018 (Stats NZ, 2018), and they are expected to continue growing.

“Pacific peoples are one of the larger ethnic groups in New Zealand, with the highest proportion of children aged 0-14 years. It is estimated that the number of Pacific learners will increase from 10 to 20 percent of the total school population by 2050” (*Pasifika Education Monitoring Report*, Ministry of Education [MoE], 2017).

Teachers, therefore, need to be equipped with necessary knowledge and skills to respond to Pacific children and communities in Aotearoa New Zealand education settings. New requirements for teacher graduates were introduced in the *Initial Teacher Education Programme Monitoring and Review Requirements* by the Teaching Council of Aotearoa (2019).

Expectations of high-quality teaching practices were adapted to ensure that learning is designed according to the strengths, interests, needs, identities, languages, and cultures of learners. Additionally, *Tapasā: Cultural competencies framework for teachers of Pacific learners* (Ministry of Education, 2018) was “developed in collaboration with key Pacific community stakeholders who have participated in a series of talanoa workshops with education practitioners and the Ministry

of Education” (p. 1). These important resources set out expectations, and support teachers of Pacific learners in early childhood education (ECE) as well as in other sectors of education - primary, secondary and tertiary.

One of the ways in which children can see their language, culture and identity reflected in education settings is in picturebooks. This format has the advantage of presenting both text and image in ways that are suitable for a wide age range.

The purpose of the research project presented in this article was twofold: (1) to identify picturebooks reflecting Pacific culture, values and languages published since 2013, and (2) to analyse the Pacific values reflected in the text and images of these picturebooks. It is argued that the benefits in identifying and analysing these picturebooks better informs teachers so that they can become more inclusive and culturally competent in relation to Pacific learners, (Ministry of Education, 2018) and extend the range of potential connections to language, culture and identity

Table 1. The 10 picturebooks selected for analysis

<i>Book Title</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Publisher</i>
<i>Mose and the Manumea</i>	<i>Jane Va’afuasaga and Rebecca Stirnemann</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>Little Island Press</i>
<i>Ko Kumā mo Feke</i>	<i>Lisala Halapua</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>Talanoa Books</i>
<i>Matua Fakamoe of Nanumaga</i>	<i>Alamai Manuelle Sioni</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>Tuvalu Auckland Community Trust</i>
<i>Pots for Sale</i>	<i>Jill McGregor</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>Puriri Paddocks</i>
<i>Maan ni Koroboki ni Kiribati: Kiribati alphabet</i>	<i>The Rodney Kiribati Community</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>Rodney Kiribati Community</i>
<i>Ko nā Inati</i>	<i>Oli Heve</i>	<i>2019</i>	<i>Ministry of Education</i>
<i>O le a le lanu lenei? What colour is this?</i>	<i>Annabel Piliu</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>Mistry Press</i>
<i>Uncle Tino</i>	<i>Jane Va’afusuaga</i>	<i>2019</i>	<i>Little Island Press</i>
<i>Fili ‘a e me’akai mo’uilelei</i>	<i>Institute of Education</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>Institute of Education</i>
<i>My Ocean Home</i>	<i>Penelope Casey</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>Tadramai Limited</i>

for Pacific children and families in education contexts (*Te Whāriki*, Ministry of Education, 2017).

Method

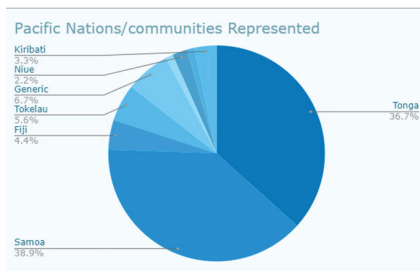
Cushla, a third year ECE student teacher with Samoan and Māori heritage, spent the summer of 2020/21 working with Janette and Nicola to locate New Zealand picturebooks published since 2013 when the New Zealand Pacific Picturebook Collection was established (Daly & McKoy, 2013). Cushla then used content analysis (Elo & Kyngas, 2008) to analyse the content of a purposeful sample of 10 of the 90 picturebooks located (see Table 1), ensuring that a range of Pacific nations were represented: Samoa, Tonga, Tokelau, Tuvalu, Fiji and Kiribati. The content analysis involved a close reading and analysis of both text and illustration, noting language use, and aspects of illustration including setting, clothing, colours, and symbols with links to Pacific nations. Cushla also ensured that a wide range of genres were incorporated within the sample of 10 picturebooks, including a mixture of non-fiction, fiction, alphabet/concept, and traditional stories.

Findings

Located picturebooks

A total of 90 picturebooks were located representing numerous Pacific nations and communities including Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Tokelau, Kiribati, Niue, Fiji, Cook Islands, and Vanuatu (see appendix for a full list). Figures 1 and 2 show the range of Pacific nations represented in the 90 picturebooks located and analysed, and Figure 2

Figure 1. Pacific Nations/communities represented in the 90 Pacific picturebooks



shows the range of genres present in the 90 picturebooks.

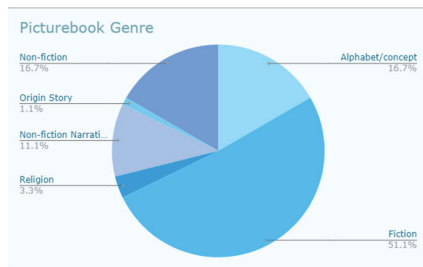
Of the 90 picturebooks located, six genres were identified which included fiction, non-fiction, alphabet/concept, non-fiction narrative, religion, and origin story.

Sample content analysis

Of the 10 picturebooks chosen for detailed content analysis, in this article we describe one book, making links to the Turu (competencies) in *Tapasā: Cultural competencies framework for teachers of Pacific learners* (Ministry of Education, 2018). Similar analyses of the remaining nine picturebooks are in process.

Mose and the Manumea (Va'afusuaga & Stirnemann, 2018) was sourced from a local public library in Tauranga Moana. Its Samoan language version *O Mose ma le Manumea* (Va'afusuaga & Stirnemann, 2018) was located at the National Library of New Zealand in Auckland. These publications from Little Island Press were created by Jane Va'afusuaga and Rebecca Stirnemann (see Figure 3). Though neither of the

Figure 2: Genres represented in the 90 Pacific picturebooks



authors is of Pacific descent, both have first-hand knowledge and experience of Fa'a Samoa – Samoan ways of living, being and doing. Va'afusuaga draws on four years of teaching experience in Apia, Samoa and her life in the village of Falease'ela where she lives with her Samoan husband and children. Full immersion in village life has given Va'afusuaga insights into the language, culture, church, and customs of Samoan people. Stirnemann has also experienced living in Samoa – she spent seven years as an ecologist dedicating her time and efforts to protecting native birds of Samoa including the endangered Manumea (tooth-billed pigeon).

The native tooth-billed pigeon of Samoa is scientifically known as the *Didunculus Strigirostris* and is one of the closest living relatives of the extinct dodo. Found exclusively in the islands of Samoa, this native bird is in dire need of protection for if the Manumea becomes extinct, the species will be lost forever. The Manumea is not only a fundamental part of Samoan culture, history and heritage, it plays a crucial ecological role ensuring that fruits are distributed to promote the growth of native trees. In

1997, it was estimated that around 4000 of these birds existed, unfortunately the number of birds has dwindled. Recent predictions indicate that there may only be between 150 to 200 Manumea remaining (Va'afusuaga & Stirnemann, 2018).

Throughout this picturebook, the scarcity of the Manumea and its endangered status is regularly mentioned with the main character, a young boy called Mose, acknowledging how great it would be if he could help to save the birds. Toward the end of the book, an informative section offers further information about the bird and ways in which people can contribute to the protection of these beautiful animals that feature on local currency - the 20 tālā note and the 50 sene coin.

Several aspects of Pacific culture, specifically Samoan identity and language, are present in the English and Samoan versions of this picturebook, particularly in the illustrations. In terms of setting, we see a fale (house) where the walls are decorated with family photos and 'ula (garlands). Grandma sweeps the floor with a salu broom (made from the midribs of coconut leaves) while Mose and his Grandpa sit on a woven pandanus (tropical palm) mat discussing the endangered Manumea. The flora and fauna of Samoa is also shown in the illustrations as we follow Mose and his aiga (family) on their hunt for the Manumea. As they navigate the tropical Samoan landscape the illustrations depict an abundance of teuila (the state flower of Samoa), taro plants, coconut and banana trees, native wildlife, white sand beaches, and tropical forests. Indigenous designs are also present in the illustrations with

tapa patterns used on several pages. Local practices of wearing lavalava, having bare feet in the fale, and wearing jandals outside are also realistically portrayed in the illustrations.

We also see Samoan identity reflected in the use of Samoan names for characters and their clothing and appearance. While *O Mose ma le Manumea* is told completely in the Samoan language, in the English language version several Samoan words are borrowed into the text, including manutagi (Crimson-Crowned Fruit Dove), manumea (Tooth-Billed Pigeon), lavalava (clothing), tālā (dollars), manusina (bird), maota (large house), lupe (Pacific Pigeon), fale (house). This use of Samoan language words within the English language text is a way of reflecting Samoan identity (Daly, 2008).

This picturebook touches on topics including conservation and Fa'a Samoa - culture, living and language exploring Pasifika values from a broader perspective.

Discussion

Pacific picturebooks can provide a valuable tool to assist teachers implementing *Tapasā: Cultural competencies framework for teachers of Pacific learners* (MoE, 2018) to support Pacific learners in all education settings.

1: In terms of Turu (competency), by introducing picturebooks featuring stories from Pacific communities in an education setting, an increase in awareness of the diverse and ethnic-specific identities, languages, and cultures of Pacific learners develops – for both teachers and the children they

Figure 3: The covers of *Mose and the Manumea* and *O Mose ma le Manumea* (Va'afusuaga & Stirnemann, 2018)



teach. In *Mose and the Manumea* and *O Mose ma le Manumea* (Va'afusuaga & Stirnemann, 2018), the strong presence of Samoan language brings awareness of this language into education settings. These picturebooks may provide opportunities for Samoan speaking family/community members to come and read *O Mose ma le Manumea* while the teacher reads the English language version of the picturebook. They may also provide a chance for a teacher to ask children for help in pronouncing the Samoan words in the English text of *Mose and the Manumea*. Much research supports the importance of children having their first language supported in educational settings (Christensen, 2011; Cummins, 2009; Cummins & Hornberger, 2008). Support of the home language in an educational setting supports not only language development, but general cognitive development and academic achievement (Cummins & Hornberger, 2008). Opportunities for discussion about protecting birds and other species, intergenerational learning,

materials for making houses, and flora and fauna in different contexts, are also presented by the illustrations in the picturebooks.

2: These practices will contribute to the development of Turu (competency), collaborative and respectful relationships and professional behaviours. As the teacher shows respect for Fa'a Samoa – language, culture, and identity, perhaps inviting community members to share readings of the picturebook(s), there is the potential for respectful relationships and cultural understandings to develop.

Dual language picturebooks can play a strong supporting role in education to ensure that the strengths, interests, needs, identities, languages, and cultures of Pacific children are reflected within their environment. Using picturebooks as pedagogical tools can support teachers in developing cultural competence and inclusion in relation to Pacific learners, expanding the range of connections to language, culture, and identity for Pacific children and their families in education contexts as expected in *Te Whāriki*, the Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood curriculum framework (MoE, 2017).

The content of *Mose and the Manumea* (Va'afusuaga & Stirnemann, 2018) connects with the *Te Whāriki* principles of *Whānau Tangata Family and Community* and *Ngā Hononga Relationships* (MoE, 2017). Grandpa tells Mose about the endangered Manumea bird, then Mose and his cousin Niko set out to find it in the deep forest on their island. The story involves the characters “making connections between people, places and things in their world” (op.

cit. p. 24) - a radio programme, the local newspaper, a map and money, conservationists and pig hunters, and wildlife like snakes and birds. The strands of Mana Reo Communication and Mana Whenua Belonging from *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017) are both present. Mana Reo Communication is represented as children are read this picturebook and “experience the stories and symbols of their own and other cultures” (op.cit. p. 25), and Mana Whenua Belonging is evident as we see children taking part in caring for their place – doing chores – and showing respect for kaupapa, rules and the rights of others (op.cit. p. 24) including non-human others.

Conclusion

This article has outlined a Summer Scholar project conducted at The University of Waikato by a third year ECE student, Cushla Foe. We have identified 90 picturebooks reflecting Pacific nations and communities published since 2013, and explored in detail one of these picturebooks and how it can be used to enact key principles, strands and turu of *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017) and *Tapasā* (MoE, 2018) in education contexts in Aotearoa New Zealand. The power of picturebooks for both reflecting the identity of readers and facilitating opportunities for them to see into the worlds of others (Bishop, 1990) cannot be underestimated.

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- Va'afusuaga, J., & Stirnemann, R. (2018). *O Mose ma le manumea*. Little Island Press.

Appendix: Full list of picture books located

Author	Title	Publisher	Year	Genre	Pacific Nation
Aflague, Gerard	<i>Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes In Tongan</i>	Gerard Aflague Collection	2017	Alphabet/ concept	Tonga
Aflague, Gerard	<i>My First Samoan 200 Picture Word Book</i>	Gerard Aflague Collection	2016	Alphabet/ concept	Samoa
Aflague, Gerard	<i>Opposites in Tongan</i>	Gerard Aflague Collection	2018	Alphabet/ concept	Tonga
Aflague, Gerard	<i>Seasons and weather in Samoa</i>	Gerard Aflague Collection	2017	Alphabet/ concept	Samoa
Aflague, Gerard	<i>Teach Me To Count In Samoan</i>	Gerard Aflague Collection	2017	Alphabet/ concept	Samoa
Aflague, Gerard & Mary	<i>Let's Learn The Samoan Alphabet</i>	Gerard Aflague Collection	2016	Alphabet/ concept	Samoa
Aflague, Mary	<i>Colours in Samoan</i>	Gerard Aflague Collection	2016	Alphabet/ concept	Samoa
Aflague, Mary	<i>Good Night Tonga</i>	Gerard Aflague Collection	2018	Fiction	Tonga
Aflague, Mary	<i>My First Samoan Children's Bible Stories</i>	Gerard Aflague Collection	2017	Religion	Samoa

Author	Title	Publisher	Year	Genre	Pacific Nation
Aflague, Mary	<i>My First Tongan 200 Word Picture Word Book</i>	Gerard Aflague Collection	2016	Alphabet/ concept	Tonga
Aflague, Mary	<i>My First Tongan Children's Bible Stories</i>	Gerard Aflague Collection	2017	Religion	Tonga
Aflague, Mary	<i>Sleepy Time Samoa</i>	Gerard Aflague Collection	2018	Fiction	Samoa
Aflague, Mary	<i>Teach Me My Feelings In Samoan</i>	Gerard Aflague Collection	2018	Alphabet/ concept	Samoa
Aflague, Mary	<i>Teach Me To Pray In Samoan</i>	Gerard Aflague Collection	2016	Religion	Samoa
Allen, June	<i>Tiseniko in Samoa: Turtles, food and fun.</i>	Kwizzel Publishing	2020	Fiction	Samoa
Allen, June	<i>Tiseniko in Tonga: Tiseniko Catches an Octopus</i>	Kwizzel Publishing	2019	Fiction	Tonga
Casey, Penelope	<i>My Ocean Home Fiji</i>	Tadramai Limited	2018	Fiction	Fiji
Coopriider, Mark	<i>Buster the Tongan Dog Goes Exploring</i>	Mark Coopriider	2020	Fiction	Tonga
Fa'oliu, Mele Young	<i>Ko e 'aho fakatiefia kia Paula</i>	Institute of Education	2018	Non-fiction Narrative	Tonga
Gaulofa, Mehepa Atoni	<i>Takalo Lakapī Faka-niu Hila</i>	Ministry of Education	2019	Fiction	Tokelau
Gaulofa, Mehepa Atoni	<i>Tauvāga Hiva Tokelau</i>	Ministry of Education	2019	Fiction	Tokelau
Halapua, Lisala	<i>Ko Kumā mo Feke</i>	Talanoa Books	2020	Origin Story	Tonga
Heve, Oli	<i>Ko Nā Inati</i>	Ministry of Education	2019	Fiction	Tokelau
Heve, Oli	<i>Te Ika Fuefa</i>	Ministry of Education	2019	Fiction	Tokelau
Holt, Sharon	<i>Tatou O! (translated by Mulipola, Ioana)</i>	EduMaxi Ltd	2019	Fiction	Samoa
Hu'akau, Kaliopeta	<i>Where Do Baby Turtles Go? = 'Oku Ō ki Fē 'a e Fanga Ki'i Fonu Pēpee'?</i>	Ministry of Education	2015	Fiction	Tonga
Institute of Education, USP	<i>Fili 'a me'akai mo'uilelei</i>	Institute of Education	2018	Non-fiction Narrative	Tonga
Institute of Education, USP	<i>Fua'i'akaū mo e Vesitapoló, ifo ma mo'uilelei</i>	Institute of Education	2018	Non-fiction Narrative	Tonga
Institute of Education, USP	<i>Ko e 'ea ma'á 'a e lelei taha</i>	Institute of Education	2018	Non-fiction Narrative	Tonga
Institute of Education, USP	<i>Ko hoku fāmilī 'oku fe'ofa'ofani</i>	Institute of Education	2018	Non-fiction Narrative	Tonga
Institute of Education, USP	<i>Mata'itohi Faka-Tonga = Ngaa-hi me'a mo'ui 'o e tahi</i>	Institute of Education	2016	Alphabet/ concept	Tonga
Institute of Education, USP	<i>'Oku ou longomo'ui</i>	Institute of Education	2018	Non-fiction Narrative	Tonga
Jaques, Jill	<i>Counting in the South Pacific</i>	PictureBook Publishing	2015	Alphabet/ concept	Generic
Jaques, Jill	<i>Reading in the South Pacific</i>	PictureBook Publishing	2017	Alphabet/ concept	Generic
Kaitapu, Soana	<i>Ko e liliu kia Vilami</i>	Institute of Education	2018	Fiction	Tonga
Kelemete, Aloihoi Kave	<i>Ko He Pehe Mālie!</i>	Ministry of Education	2019	Fiction	Tokelau

Author	Title	Publisher	Year	Genre	Pacific Nation
Kool, Katie	<i>O Lo'u 'Āiga</i>	Samoan Reader	2016	Fiction	Samoa
MacIntyre, Lesieli Kupu	<i>A Surprise for Losa Kakala = Ko e Ofo 'a Lose Kakalá</i>	Ministry of Education	2017	Non-fiction	Tonga
MacGregor, Jill	<i>Fa'afisi's Turn</i>	Puriri Paddocks	2020	Non-fiction	Samoa
MacGregor, Jill	<i>Coconut Oil</i>	Puriri Paddocks	2017	Non-fiction	Samoa
MacGregor, Jill	<i>Why Do Bats Hang Upside Down?</i>	Puriri Paddocks	2017	Non-fiction	Tonga
MacGregor, Jill	<i>Pots For Sale</i>	Puriri Paddocks	2017	Non-fiction	Fiji
MacGregor, Jill	<i>School Days</i>	Puriri Paddocks	2017	Non-fiction	Tuvalu
MacGregor, Jill	<i>Show Day</i>	Puriri Paddocks	2015	Non-fiction	Niue
MacGregor, Jill	<i>The Walking Tree</i>	Puriri Paddocks	2015	Non-fiction	Vanuatu
MacGregor, Jill	<i>Toakase's Tapa</i>	Puriri Paddocks	2015	Non-fiction	Tonga
MacGregor, Jill	<i>Siva Afi</i>	Puriri Paddocks	2015	Non-fiction	Samoa
MacGregor, Jill	<i>Billy's Weekend</i>	Puriri Paddocks	2013	Non-fiction	Fiji
MacGregor, Jill	<i>Fau Fibres</i>	Puriri Paddocks	2013	Non-fiction	Samoa
MacGregor, Jill	<i>Market Day</i>	Puriri Paddocks	2013	Non-fiction	Samoa
MacGregor, Jill	<i>The Rat and the Octopus</i>	Puriri Paddocks	2013	Non-fiction	Niue
MacGregor, Jill	<i>Wrapping It Up</i>	Puriri Paddocks	2013	Non-fiction	Samoa
Mewburn, Kyle	<i>Moon Cow</i>	OneTree House Ltd	2018	Fiction	Samoa
Malaeulu, Dahlia	<i>Malia Shares</i>	Little Island Press	2019	Fiction	Samoa
Nelisi, Lino	<i>Lavalava</i>	Ministry of Education	2020	Fiction	Samoa
Nu'u, Sandra Fatu	<i>O fea e nofo ai Samasoni?</i>	Pasefika Kids in Books	2020	Non-fiction Narrative	Samoa
Nu'u, Sandra Fatu	<i>Sauni mo le aoga!</i>	Pasefika Kids in Books	2020	Non-fiction Narrative	Samoa
Nu'u, Sandra Fatu	<i>O Fili le tama malosi!</i>	Pasefika Kids in Books	2020	Non-fiction Narrative	Samoa
Nu'u, Sandra Fatu	<i>E fiafia tele Losa e siva!</i>	Pasefika Kids in Books	2019	Non-fiction Narrative	Samoa
Ongosia, Maile	<i>'Ota'i mango</i>	Institute of Education	2018	Fiction	Tonga
Percy, Darcy	<i>Kaiana and Teiti</i>	Duck Creek Press	2020	Fiction	Generic
Piliu, Annabel	<i>O le a le lanu lenei? What colour is this?</i>	Mistry Press	2020	Fiction	Samoa
Piliu, Annabel	<i>Ko e lanu hā 'eni? What colour is this?</i>	Mistry Press	2019	Fiction	Tonga
Piliu, Annabel	<i>O fea lou isu? Where is your nose?</i>	Mistry Press	2020	Fiction	Samoa
Pulotu, Leilua	<i>Sina</i>	Leilua Pulotu	2019	Fiction	Samoa

Author	Title	Publisher	Year	Genre	Pacific Nation
Scanlan-Toti, Carmen	<i>Pepe Lanu-pulupule = Spotted Butterflies</i>	Ministry of Education	2017	Fiction	Tonga
Sendak, Maurice	<i>'O le nofoaga 'olo'o iai meaola uiga'se</i>	Huia Publishers	2014	Fiction	Samoa
Sioni, Alamai Manuella	<i>Matua Fakamoe of Nanumaga = Matua Fakamoe o Nanumaga</i>	Tuvalu Auckland Community Trust	2020	Fiction	Tonga
Sioni, Alamai Manuella	<i>Nui's unique heritage = Nui iloga e kakateke</i>	Tuvalu Auckland Community Trust	2020	Fiction	Tonga
Sioni, Alamai Manuella	<i>The taa of Nukulaelae = Te taa o Nukulaelae</i>	Tuvalu Auckland Community Trust	2020	Fiction	Tonga
Sioni, Alamai Manuella	<i>The magical gardens of Nukufetau = Fou mai tuua o Nukufetau</i>	Tuvalu Auckland Community Trust	2020	Fiction	Tonga
Sioni, Alamai Manuella	<i>The tautiti and taumalo = Te tautiti mote taumalo</i>	Tuvalu Auckland Community Trust	2020	Fiction	Tonga
Sioni, Alamai Manuella	<i>The rainmaker of Niutao = Te fakatooga vaiua o Niutao</i>	Tuvalu Auckland Community Trust	2020	Fiction	Tonga
Kaveinga, Meliele	<i>The Ili of Funafuti = Te ili o Funafuti</i>	Tuvalu Auckland Community Trust	2020	Fiction	Tonga
Kaveinga, Meli	<i>The legend of Tautunu from Vaitupu = Te tala o Tautunu mai Vaitupu</i>	Tuvalu Auckland Community Trust	2020	Fiction	Tonga
Smith, Walt	<i>Bula Buddies: The Mysterious Shadow</i>	Walt Smith	2013	Fiction	Fiji
Va'afusuaga, Jane	<i>Visiting Grandma</i>	Little Island Press	2020	Fiction	Samoa
Va'afusuaga, Jane	<i>Uncle Tino</i>	Little Island Press	2019	Fiction	Samoa
Va'afusuaga, Jane & Stirnemann, Rebecca	<i>Mose and the Manumea</i>	Little Island Press	2018	Fiction	Samoa
Va'afusuaga, Jane & Stirnemann, Rebecca	<i>O Mose ma le Manumea</i>	Little Island Press	2018	Fiction	Samoa
Va'afusuaga, Jane	<i>A gift for Ana</i>	Little Island Press	2016	Fiction	Samoa
Va'afusuaga, Jane	<i>O le meālofa mo Ana</i>	Little Island Press	2016	Fiction	Samoa
Vaai, Reina	<i>The Detective</i>	Truths She Wrote	2020	Fiction	Generic
Vaai, Reina	<i>The Baker</i>	Truths She Wrote	2020	Fiction	Generic
Vaai, Reina	<i>The Inventor</i>	Truths She Wrote	2018	Fiction	Generic
Veā, Peseti	<i>Ko e kiliniki suka 'a Nena</i>	Institute of Education	2018	Fiction	Tonga
Veikuna, Heti	<i>'Aho Tokonaki 'i 'uta</i>	Institute of Education	2018	Fiction	Tonga
Rodney Kiribati Community	<i>Maan ni Koroboki ni Kiribati = Kiribati alphabet</i>	Rodney Kiribati Community	2018	Alphabet/ concept	Kiribati
Rodney Kiribati Community	<i>Maata n te taetae ni Kiribati = Kiribati colours</i>	Rodney Kiribati Community	2018	Alphabet/ concept	Kiribati
Rodney Kiribati Community	<i>Waare ni Kiribati = Kiribati numbers</i>	Rodney Kiribati Community	2018	Alphabet/ concept	Kiribati

Integrating literacy into STEM: A teacher's perspective



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Introduction

The purpose of this article is to look at how STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) activities can be used to develop literacy skills with students as part of the classroom programme. The musings that follow are not from an expert in Literacy or STEM, but rather from a classroom teacher looking for ways to improve the learning experiences for his students and in doing so share a few ideas for other educators to play around with.

Over recent years, while pursuing my interest in STEM and digital technologies, I found myself letting go of some really solid literacy approaches in order to make time for the messiness of design and construction that can come from STEM. Intuitively knowing how critical tried and true literacy approaches are, I began looking for ways to bring back explicit literacy teaching back into my classroom programme while trying to stay within reach of the modern, and fast moving, frontier of STEM. Writing about the literacy approaches in this article compelled me to delve into some of my old resources to freshen my memory. They certainly helped shine the spotlight on my understanding of what a 'balanced' literacy programme might look like. The following STEM resources: Spheros, Blu-bots, House of Science, and Tronbots have been used in my class to capture student interest – and while I don't have a favourite, the EPro8 Challenge comes close.

Figure 1: EPro8 Challenge kit.



1. EPro8 Challenge

The EPro8 Challenge is an inter-school science and engineering competition. Every year over 10,000 students from 800 schools throughout New Zealand take part. Students take part in a series of competitions and events designed to promote science and engineering. Schools can purchase, or hire, a comprehensive classroom kit (see Figure 1) that can be used in conjunction with ‘challenge cards’ to build structures and contraptions to solve hypothetical problems. Each challenge card (located on the EPro8 website and printable in PDF form) contains a series of tasks with clearly defined success criteria that students are required to meet. See example in Figure 2.

Figure 2: EPro8 Challenge card.

EPro8 Challenge

Engineer Problem Solve Innovate

Caveman Car

The latest craze in your pre-historic town is a round thing called a wheel. It is turning up everywhere. There is even a new invention called a car. Caveman cars need you to kick the ground to make them go – and you don’t like getting your feet dirty. What if you could build a rubber band powered car that could store energy and drive without you needing to kick?

Construction	
Criteria	Construct a vehicle that can be pushed along the ground. It must have somewhere for the cavemen to sit and a shelter to protect them from the rain.

Dry Feet	
Criteria	The reel is attached to a wheel. Rope is wound around the reel. When the rope is pulled the wheel rotates and the vehicle moves.

Kelvin Thiele, the founder of EPro8 (<https://www.epro8challenge.co.nz>), thinks the letter 'E' from STEM needs to stand for 'English' instead of 'Engineering' because of how important literacy is. He noted, with interest, how the subtleties of language often tripped children up when they were trying to make sense of the challenge cards. For example, an object 1.2 meters wide and 600mm deep can often confuse children, who are used to 'deep' referring to height as it would in a swimming pool. My own experiences in the classroom mirrored these observations. Even when working in groups of three or four, without teacher support, many of my fluent readers struggled with interpreting the technical language and mathematical vocabulary they encountered in the challenge cards. Wording that seems pretty straight forward to most adults, for example "... unsupported at least one meter in height" can be difficult for children.

Purpose of using the Kits

I initially purchased the EPro8 kit for our school so that my students could practise working in their teams of four prior to competition day. Teams who rushed the reading of the challenge cards and failed to comprehend the criteria laid out in the tasks often lost valuable time, and ultimately points, by having to rebuild their structures. I began to use these challenge cards in Shared Reading sessions to unpack some of the vocabulary that was used – prior to letting students commence the challenge. The consequences were immediate. Children were motivated because they could see how an improvement in their comprehension

Figure 2: EPro8 Challenge card continued.

Rubber Band Powered	
Criteria	A long string of rubber bands is attached to the reel. Winding up the reel stretches the rubber bands. When the vehicle is released the rubber bands pull on the reel which powers the wheels.
Hint	You will need to attach the other end of the rubber band to another part of the vehicle. The further away that you connect it the longer the string of rubber bands you can make and the longer the rubber band can be wound up. You could attach a tall vertical pole to your vehicle and attach the rubber band to that.
Speed	
Criteria	Measure how far your vehicle travels in 5 seconds. Calculate how far your vehicle travels in 1 second. Calculate how far your vehicle travels in 1 minute. Calculate how far your vehicle travels in 1 hour. What is your vehicles speed in km/hr?
Fast	
Criteria	Make the string of rubber bands three times as thick. How long does it take to travel the same distance as the previous step?
Long Distance	
Criteria	When released the rubber band powered car can travel the entire length of your classroom without stopping.
Hint	You will need an extra, extra long string of rubber bands. But now you would need an extra, long pole. But this will hit the roof of your classroom. Build a frame with pulleys on the top and the bottom. Feeding the rubber bands through these allows for an extra long string of rubber bands in a relatively small area.

After you have attempted this challenge watch the tutorial to see our solution at www.EPro8Challenge.co.nz/Tutorial and enter the Challenge Code **CMCR**.

helped them improve their success as a team.

Shared Reading Approach

In small groups, each student would receive their own photocopy of the challenge card so they could follow along with the text as I read it. Even with older students I would deliberately mispronounce or omit words just so I could model strategies like 'sounding out,' repeating words, or re-reading the sentence. I would feign misunderstanding, appear confused in order to initiate student discussion

around certain phrases or vocabulary. For example, I might say, “I think rigid means strong?” Next thing we would be looking through dictionaries, thesaurus’ or asking Dr Google for help, via I-pads or Chromebooks, all to help clarify our understanding. At times, I read the challenge card out to the students, while they followed with their eyes, and other times they would be the reader. When necessary, I would question them to check their understanding or prompt the students to use their existing knowledge when they got stuck. Our discussions would sometimes head off on a tangent as we explored new science concepts. I didn’t need to be an expert. With devices on hand it wasn’t hard to search information. We would also critique and discuss the validity of the websites they were using and try to be discerning about what they were reading.

Oral Language

Oral language is the common thread that weaves its way through all STEM activities. Engineers and Scientists need to communicate complex ideas and in doing so use technical words in their sentences. When working in groups to solve problems, students need to be able to communicate their message. Jill Eggleton (2010) talks about the importance of children requiring practise in a variety of language experiences, one of which is Specific Communication: this involves giving directions; describing how to do something; and giving opinions. When my students are working in groups, regardless of age, frustrations and emotions can boil to the surface because students are not well practised in communicating effectively. It is not

surprising though as it is something many adults struggle with! In my classroom I try to give my students daily practise and reminders on: taking turns to speak and listen; looking at the speaker or audience; and articulate clearly so their audience can hear them.

Shared Writing Approach

By working through each of the tasks outlined on the challenge cards, students would end up with a structure or contraption. I recently used EPro8 to engage a group of reluctant writers. After each challenge had been completed the group had to put together a shared piece of writing to publish (Figure 3). Every member of the group was required to contribute.

I would then give them feedback and support. I found the students really enjoyed using the technical language in their writing. Also, the group could

Figure 3: Students writing together.



create a video presentation describing what the challenge was, how it was completed, some of the reasoning behind their thinking, as well as some frustrations.

2. House of Science

I was reminded just how effective, or ineffective, teams of students can be when I began using the science resource kits from House of Science. House of Science (<https://houseofscience.nz>) is much more than a resource library for schools. Each week a school receives a packed out container of scientific equipment, consumables, activities and resources that teachers are able to use in their classrooms (see Figure 4). Established in 2013, House of Science is a charitable trust that was founded by Chris Duggan, a trained biochemist, former Bay of Plenty secondary school science teacher and college Head of Department. Chris and her team want to empower young New Zealanders to think scientifically and have a healthy curiosity to explore the world around them. She strongly believes science builds key skills like critical thinking, questioning and problem solving. The contents of every kit are strongly linked to the New Zealand Curriculum.

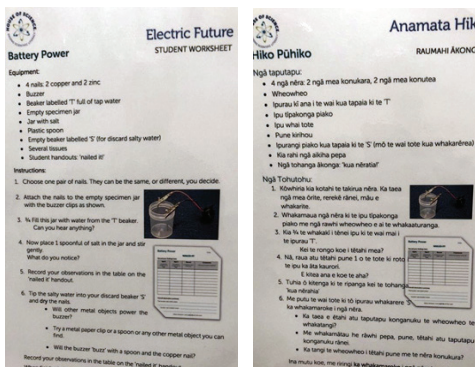
All resources in the kits are completely bi-lingual, written in both te Reo Māori and English (See both Figures 5 and 6).

Children can learn about bees in ‘What’s the Buzz?’ or Forensic Science using the ‘Whodunnit’ kit. There are thirty-something different kits and the team at The House of Science are continually

Figure 4: The House of Science kit.



Figures 5&6: Activity cards in English and te reo.



working with industry to develop ideas for new kits.

There are usually five or so experiments, tasks or activities in each themed kit. There are 10 laminated cards per activity containing instructions for children to follow, thus allowing children to work in groups of at least three.

Collaborative Meaning Making of Text

When I first began using the kits, I would put my students into small groups with an activity card and give them a few minutes to read the instructions before taking turns at collecting the equipment and materials required to complete the experiment. It appeared students could decode the procedure fluently but most needed support understanding the vocabulary around different pieces of scientific equipment, measuring apparatus, and simple scientific instructions.

I had, what I thought at the time to be, some very good readers but they couldn't seem to be able to understand the simple instructions. It was soon evident that 'understood' did not have a universal meaning! More often than not this science lesson involved a fair amount of ad hoc shared or guided reading, as I roamed the classroom responding to a chorus of "what does this mean?" or "how much do I put in?" Wasn't this a fantastic opportunity to integrate literacy teaching into a science lesson? I'm not entirely sure how I would describe the chaotic approach, but my students were engaged and learning, and more importantly they were learning from each other as they mimicked each other's successes and avoided repeating the mistakes of others.

After a few weeks using The House of Science most of the children showed a significant improvement in their collaboration skills. Using devices, most students were able to work with their groups to 'unpack' any language or phrasing on the activity card.

As a teacher, I became less helpful when students asked for help. "I don't

know," or "Where could you find that out?" were common responses I would give my students. See Three Before Me (C3B4ME) was another teacher tool suggesting children have to ask three other students, or three other groups before coming to see the teacher for help. Despite the growing independence of the class as a whole, there are always a few students requiring more intensive support.

Guided Reading Approach

The day before using our House of Science kits, I would gather together a small group of students (my strugglers) and we would read through the activity card. Using the cards as the basis of a Guided Reading lesson, I would introduce the activity card and each student would take turns at sharing what they knew about the given topic. It always amazes me the breadth of knowledge children have about seemingly obscure subjects. (I wonder if it is because children have greater access to discovery channels, Youtube videos and scientific websites nowadays). The students would independently read the task, and we would stop and talk about the concepts and vocabulary. The students were thus 'front-loaded.' The purpose was to ensure they could contribute to their respective groups the following day.

3. Tronbots

Tronbots is Waikato's student version of the international brand Battlebots. Tronbots evolved from the Hamilton Boxbot competition created by Hamilton teacher Shannan McPeak (<https://tronbots.co.nz>). Using simple electronic components, a remote control

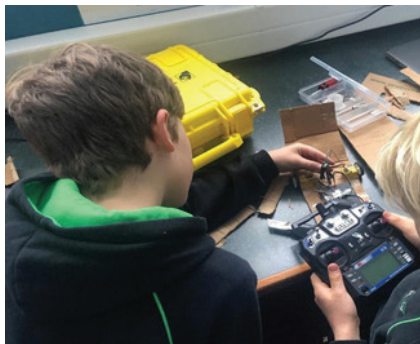
transmitter and receiver, students are able to construct a remote controlled cardboard vehicle (for lack of a better word) that can combat would-be challengers. See Figure 7.

I like to work with groups of three or four students who collaborate in this shared experience of design. Everyone contributes in discussion. Ideas are captured in words and in pictures. The approach is essentially a language experience.

Language Experience

I pulled out an old, yet timeless resource *Effective Literacy Practice in Years 1 to 4* (Ministry of Education, 2003) looking for ways to engage some reluctant writers and readers I had. In the aforementioned book it outlines using language experience activities as an approach to writing. It involves students ‘doing’ and talking together, whereby the teacher can extract the students’ own language about what it is they are doing. Some of what the students are saying can be recorded by the teacher. For example, “can I borrow the (craft) knife,” or “make sure you put cardboard under it so you don’t cut the desk” and “where does this wire go?” Ideas experienced can be recorded on a large sheet of A3 paper or small whiteboards to be used later in a shared writing (or guided writing) session. The shared writing may simply be a recount where the focus is on using time connectives such as: firstly, secondly, next, penultimately, finally. Children can use an exciting ‘hook’ (introduction) and a concluding statement as well. The written recount can then be read by the students. To go a step further, the piece of writing could be given out

Figure 7: Students assembling Boxbot.



to the whole class (as a photocopy), written on the whiteboard or displayed on the classroom TV. In pairs students can discuss ways we could revise or edit to improve the piece of writing. After some whole class re-crafting we would print off the word processed recount, along with some photos showing the process of Boxbot building (in my case), and display the work in our writing corner. The same process of ‘experience-talk-write-read’ can be used over again with any STEM activity. Each time, you can simply adapt the genre focus. For example, explanations or descriptions (although some might argue that all writing is descriptive!) To finish I’ll talk briefly about Blu-bots and Spheros, both STEM activities stimulate excitement and discussion between students.

4. Coding Devices

Coding devices such as Spheros (<https://sphero.com>) and Blu-bots (<https://www.teaching.co.nz/catalogue/mtanz/mta-ict-robotics-blue-bot>) are cool gadgets that can be used to learn code. Through simple programming you are giving

Figure 8: An example of a student's map.



the robot some instructions to follow. Blu-bots are for younger children but can be adapted for older children and are great for engaging reluctant writers. We can model writing instructions using half and quarter turns, forwards and backwards, once, twice and three times. There are maps that can be purchased to go with the Blu-bots (or the variant Bee-bots) but the children enjoy creating their own maps using A2 sheets of paper carved up into 15 centimetre grids, as in Figure 8.

Children can write instructions independently, or in groups with the teacher to get from one point on the map to another. For example, each child would have a mini-whiteboard and marker (although scrap paper is fine too). The child tries to visualise the path they want the Bot to travel and then writes down the instructions on their whiteboard: Forward one, quarter turn right, forward two, quarter turn left, forward one. The child then programs the Bot by pushing the correct buttons, pushes go and then sits back and observes whether or not their

Figure 9: Children coding the Bot and recording instructions.



instructions were correct.

I think the Spheros are more suited to older children, and although very user friendly require an i-pad, smartphone or other device to programme or control remotely via Bluetooth. They also have the ability to move in any direction at variable speeds making them a much more versatile piece of STEM equipment.

There is a wide range of STEM products available to schools. I find that students get really excited and engaged when using 'hands-on' technology and gadgets.

Conclusion

In the busi-ness of classroom teaching, as educators, we are required to give our students rich learning opportunities across all areas of the curriculum. I have discussed a number of literacy approaches: Language Experience, Shared Writing, Guided Writing, Guided Reading, Shared Reading and Oral Language, that I have used over the

years in conjunction with some useful STEM resources: Spheros, Blu-bots, Tronbots, House of Science, EPro8. I used these literacy approaches confidently with junior classes as a beginning teacher many years ago so it was great to incorporate them again with older students. I am passionate about STEM and literacy and hopefully I have shared some engaging ways of integrating these subjects into your classrooms, regardless of the levels you are teaching. Children enjoy the problem solving and teamwork associated with STEM and at the same time they are engaged in purposeful literacy learning.

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Everybody loves a story: The WHY and HOW of storytelling

by **Steve Horne**

Introduction

The focus of this article is on oral storytelling and the value of retelling personal lived experiences. This focus is deliberate as I believe that we make meaning about life from reflecting, scripting and telling our own stories. So what is storytelling...? According to Wikipedia (n.d.) "Storytelling describes the social and cultural activity of sharing stories, sometimes with improvisation, theatrics or embellishment. Every culture has their own stories or narratives which are shared as a means of entertainment, education, cultural preservation or instilling moral values." I couldn't have written a better description!

I am a self-taught storyteller, still learning the craft of storytelling. The following thoughts and insights come from my experiences in developing understandings and skills in the art of storytelling over the past 40 years. I have told stories to primary, secondary and tertiary level students both nationally and internationally.

In the beginning...

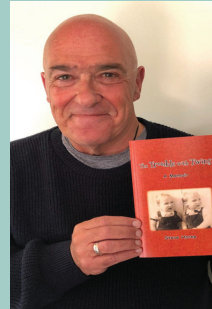
In 1981, I was teaching at Maungaturoto Primary School. All classes were invited to hear the late itinerant storyteller, Derek Gordon aka Bringwonder the

Storyteller. I sat down with my students and quickly became engrossed in the way he was able to engage the audience in his stories, and by the clever and creative use of words and actions. In particular, I remember the way he played with the words: “The great grey-green, greasy Limpopo river...” This Storyteller was playing with our minds, but in a good way! He was extending our lives. Derek told me that he had given up his secure, full-time, high school teaching position to travel around schools sharing his passion of storytelling. Such a brave, committed, and resourceful person.

What Derek did in the hour session stayed with me – in a subliminal way, until I was a teaching Principal at Gordonton School in the mid 1990s. I used to make up ‘story-starters’ for my classes. The process and planning involved me looking through magazines and cutting out pictures of adults and children. I would then add large scars, eye-patches and other facial enhancements with a felt-tip pen to the pictures/photos of the adults. They became the villains (antagonists) in the story. The magazine pictures of children (protagonists) however were never ‘defaced’ as they were always the heroes!

I would start off telling a story, never quite knowing where it would go. At the story climax, I would stop and tell my students to finish it off however they liked. The students audibly groaned, not because they had to write, but because I had built the story up so much, they just wanted to hear how it ended!

Off they went to eagerly express themselves. They HAD to write because they HAD to get the story out of their heads. The productive and purposeful silence in the room was amazing to experience. There were no discipline problems as no one was distracted or disengaged. At the end of writing time we would always have a sharing time... and what a sharing time it was! Also my students would often ask if they could be the characters in their story. Yes, they could. Can we



Steve Horne has been teaching for over 40 years. Twenty-seven of those years were in the roles of principal and deputy principal. He has taught in New Zealand, Australia, India and Africa.

His enjoyment of storytelling has never waned. Consequently, his first book, *The Trouble with Twins* (2020) was published by CreateBooks (NZ). Many of these stories have been shared in his lectures and workshops.

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have multiple endings? Do it. Can we make our story into a play? Yes! Who was I to be an obstacle in the way of a wonderful learning experience where we could enjoy the oral and written stories.

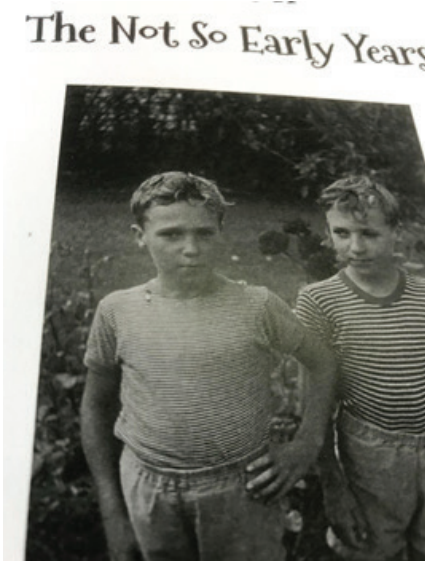
I also noticed that when asking questions many weeks later, about our never-ending stories, the students' recall of detail was outstanding. Why? Perhaps it was because they were in my stories and I was in theirs. Accidental co-construction? Even at their young age they were gaining an understanding into common human experiences and the axiom that we are 'in this together.'

Fast forward to the early 2000's when for the first time (while I was a Deputy Principal at Silverdale Normal School), I presented a Storytelling Workshop to American educators at a school in South Auckland. I was very nervous and was essentially a mess by the end. But I knew the workshop 'worked.' Incrementally I was building self-belief in the many benefits of storytelling and mastering my occasional stutter.

As years passed, I have continued to tell stories to my classes and design and present storytelling workshops and guest lectures to The University of Waikato, School of Education students. In addition I have told stories based on 'life's ups and downs' to primary and secondary students and their teachers while in Australia, Africa and India.

In the past nine years at Hamilton Boys' High School, I have continued to tell stories to my Tutor Group students, my Mathematics, English, Trades and Social Studies classes and to Year 13 Lion mentors. As you can see, stories

Figure 1: An early photograph of identical twin brothers Steve and Chris.



belong to and can work in a variety of curriculum areas.

WHY encourage oral storytelling?

I am a twin, and as identical twins we engaged in a great deal of mischief, mischief that has formed the basis of many of my stories (see Figure 1). Chris, my twin brother, also interested in communication and self-expression (he currently teaches drama at Glen Eden Intermediate School), stated that "affective learning is learning that involves emotions and senses. Emotional memories are very strong and are activated by such learning as storytelling. Learning should be holistic, that is, involve our physical, cognitive and emotional beings."

Furthermore, he believes “that we need to engage children in this type of learning as, quite simply, it makes sense. As toddlers we learn this way and as we get older we just refine and develop our responses to our make-up and who we are as people.” Interestingly, Robyn Ewing (2020) writes that by three years of age, most children can tell a story, especially if it is co-narrated. She also believes that by listening to evocative words and images children’s own imaginations and creativities are fostered.

Storytelling also encourages children to be problem-solvers, critical thinkers, philosophers and above all to be curious. As teachers, we should reflect on the wise words of the late New Zealand educator Kelvin Smythe whose holistic philosophy believed growth is about the interaction of the cognitive and the affective. Kelvin was a passionate advocate that this type of learning, based on personal experiences, is meaningful, exploratory, and challenging – hence the attention to discovery learning, curiosity and problem solving.

Storytelling had a place in English in the New Zealand Curriculum (1994) as stories can be used to develop children’s language processes and functions: Listening and speaking, Reading and Writing and Viewing and presenting. Storytelling is an art form where children can become artists and communicators with words and with kinetic body language. Key vocabulary, voice modulation, and body expression can work in unity to create a masterpiece to be enjoyed by peers and teachers alike. When we as educators speak about resilience, storytelling

encourages decision-making, risk taking and collaboration. There is nothing quite like an audience to help you face your fears, have-a-go and be an individual or enjoy collective success. Storytelling can be confidence building.

Moreover, storytelling affirms and confirms children as storytellers in their own right. It encourages children to believe that their stories have intrinsic value and are worthy of being shared. Their individual expression and self-identity is encouraged and validated.

So, WHY do I enjoy Storytelling?

After all these years, and as I face retirement from full-time teaching I know:

- I can reminisce and still feel young. I had a wonderful childhood. I’ve never really grown up and I don’t want to!
- I love creating pictures in children’s/adult’s minds that they can relate to.
- Life can be far too serious at times, so fun and creativity is important.
- Children and adults love to laugh. Storytelling has enabled me to express my sense of humour to a ‘captive audience.’
- My stories, however, are not always humorous – they reflect life’s roller-coaster ride.
- Telling stories enables me to impart some values, morals and principles in a non-threatening way.

My response to the technological age we live in is that there are many pitfalls. My stories are personal 'snapshots' of my life and are best shared in oral story form – they are not from a screen. In my opinion, if we write about a story from a screen, we are copying someone else's story and that has its own creative limits. Storytelling is not Reality TV. It's the exact opposite.

My stories happened, are real and they mean something to me. They are original and yet reflect common human experiences.

What good things happen during and after storytelling?

- You can develop an instant rapport with a class/audience, no matter what age, gender, culture or background.
- Children and teachers are reminded that storytelling has an important place in our classroom programmes, and is not an add-on to our already 'full' curriculum.
- Storytelling is a simple means to develop narrative texts using oral language skills.
- Storytelling can be used to develop and deepen understandings and skills in the Arts and Social Sciences.
- You place value on the spoken word.
- As you tell stories, children and adults alike can see you as a 'real person,' just like them.

HOW you can develop storytelling skills

You and I are involved in telling stories every day.... So let's demystify the art of Storytelling. YOU CAN DO IT. A number of suggestions to help teachers become storytellers are as follows:

- Remember the first story you tell to your class will be your hardest story to tell, but after that it becomes easier with further practice, reflection and refinement.
- Your class will be 'on your side.' Make sure your classroom is a very safe place to share.
- Be confident. No one else knows the script or structure of your story. What possibly could go wrong? Nothing.
- I suggest you write your story out in narrative or bullet point form. Remember your story needs to have a beginning, middle, climax point and end. Follow the narrative or recount structure. (See Figure 2).
- Never try to 'make-up' a story if you are stressed, exhausted, scared, or 'hangry'. Your creativity is compromised.
- Find yourself a quiet place or a cafe and close your eyes.... Reminisce for a while... Think about some highlights of your childhood or more recent highlights. Be prepared for negative thoughts to come, that's quite normal. Let those negative thoughts go and wait for that story that causes you to think, giggle or both!

Figure 2.

NARRATIVE:	RECOUNT:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title: Attention grabbing • Setting: Where is it located? • Characters: Who is it about? • Initiating event: When did it start? Where did it start? What action began the events? • Complication: What difficulties arose? • Events: What events took place? How did the characters react? • Resolution: How was the problem resolved? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title: Attention grabbing • Setting: Where is it happening? • Characters: Who is involved? • Events: Sequential in order of time. What was the first thing that happened? What happened next? • How did it end?

- Write your ideas down. You think you'll remember them later - trust me, you won't.
- Share your story with an understanding partner or your class. Have a go. You have nothing to lose, so be brave and launch yourself out of your comfort zone.
- Consider facial expressions, body language and perhaps sound effects.
- Practice, adapt, practice, adapt and repeat for a very long time.
- Ask yourself, how can the sharing

of this story make you and the audience more caring, empathetic and create connections with people?

- And ENJOY YOURSELF. If you do, your class and audience will too.

In conclusion

Our stories mirror the experiences of ourselves and others around us. It's time for us all to share stories that can make a difference in the world we inhabit. Everyone loves a story. Everybody has a story.

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Celebrating Literacy: An interview with Annette Smith

By **Stephanie Dix**

Who is Annette?

Annette Smith is acknowledged and celebrated for her superb contribution to literacy, and for her role as Lead Author and Educational Consultant for the *PM Collection* of primary school literacy resources.

Annette trained at Hamilton Teachers' College in 1960-61. From there she began her teaching career spanning 30 years followed by a further 22 years as an author and literacy consultant.

Annette's involvement in the *PM Collection* began in the early 1990s. She became a full time writer for the *PM Collection* in 1997 and has written more than 700 books including teacher resources and contributed to a further 1,000 titles. This material includes the *PM Benchmark Literacy Assessment* kits that were first published in 2001/2002, revised in 2008/2009 and the new more comprehensive literacy assessment resources published in 2019/2020.

The *PM Collection* that Annette has been involved in developing and writing has been sold worldwide making a significant contribution to millions of children's literacy acquisition. These educational resources are used daily in New Zealand, Australia, Canada and other English speaking countries; they have also been translated into several languages including French and Spanish. Initially, the PM Readers were published in the 1960s by Price Milburn in Wellington, New Zealand but are now published globally by Cengage Learning, in Melbourne, Australia.

As lead author and educational consultant, Annette's team of writers and Cengage Learning's primary publishing editors have developed a complete literacy programme for students in their first eight years of schooling. More recently, Annette has overseen the publishing of the *PM eCollection* of online interactive resources. See <https://cengage.co.nz/primary/browse-series/pm/pmecollection>



The investiture ceremony at Government House. Annette Smith with Governor-General Sir Jerry Mateparae, 14 April 2016. (<https://gg.govt.nz/images/annette-smith-hamiltononzm-services-childrens-literacy>)

Over the past 22 years, Annette has shared her knowledge with teachers, delivering workshops at the New Zealand Reading Association, the Australian Literacy and Educators Association, and Reading Recovery conferences in New Zealand, Australia and the United States.

In 2016 Annette's passion and commitment to literacy was recognised nationally as she was awarded Officer of New Zealand Order of Merit (ONZM) for services to children's literacy. Congratulations Annette, we at NZLA celebrate and value your contribution to literacy.

Questions

Annette, how did your involvement in producing an international literacy programme begin?

In the early 1980s I had decided to commit the rest of my teaching career to children in the first three years of their schooling because those are the most formative years. So it started at the time when I was appointed as Assistant Principal at Pukete School in Hamilton. It was a very big school and I had the

responsibility for approximately 300 children in their first three years, as well as the literacy programmes for the entire school. I felt it was essential to ensure that all children were given the opportunity to become literate which would lead them to becoming effective learners.

However, I was concerned about the resource material being distributed to schools. Some of these books were not allowing children to take control of the reading process as Dame Marie Clay's research had helped us understand. I wanted quality reading material. I discussed this problem with other Assistant Principals at one of our meetings. They also concurred that we needed reading material that would support early literacy learners. I wanted more PM readers but they were difficult to find. I was familiar with the PMs that were written by Beverley Randell in the early 1960s. I knew that our children were comfortable with them because they enjoyed the New

Zealand emphasis; they could relate to the stories, the experiences and events/situations in them. Beverley Randell's books were published by her husband's company Price Milburn, in the early 1960s.

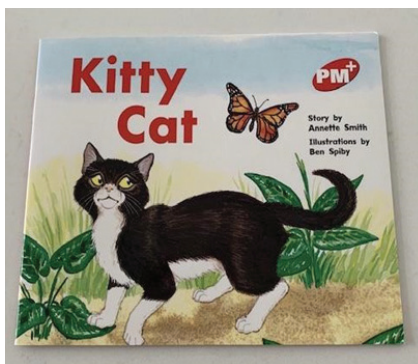
So... I wrote a detailed letter to this small publishing company in Wellington. I asked if they could publish more books and elaborated, by telling them which books from the original series should be retained but also offering advice on changes for new publications.

This communication led to being contacted by the PM sales manager who was about to visit Nelson Publishers, a large international publishing company in Australia. Fortunately, the CEO of this company was interested in my ideas. A meeting in Auckland was arranged for me to work with Beverley Randell and a small group of teachers to discuss this proposal further. As I was adamant that teachers should know how to use the books correctly for effective learning, Beverly suggested that I write the Teacher Resource Guides. These manuals explained how to use these new books for guided reading sessions. I wanted less-experienced teachers especially to use the suggestions and prompts that supported each book so that their students understood what was happening during the lesson – and why.

I believed that all children should have a quality guided reading session because ... meaning matters!

Tell me about the new PM readers

The original PM reading levels extended from Red level to Gold level, that is for



Kitty Cat became a favourite character appearing in many books in the PM Plus series.

the 5-8 year-old reading ages. I also wanted material for early readers, in particular something prior to the first Red level books. I believed that photographic texts were needed for the young learners; texts that showed real children doing real things.

These emergent readers required basic sentence structures as per a three-year-old's spoken language. As oral language development comes before reading, the child must already have control of spoken language patterns to help them read the basic sentence structures in our graded texts, so for these emergent readers, we called the books Magenta 1 and Magenta 2. Basic sentence structures and high frequency words were embedded gradually within meaningful contexts at Red levels 1, 2 and 3 storylines. They allow children to grow in confidence as they apply their new reading skills.

Over the next 12 months, as the new PM Library resource grew we decided to develop material beyond Gold level, that is for the 8-year reading level. These



Helicopter Pilots: Non-fiction texts with supporting photographs open up children's minds to the world around them.

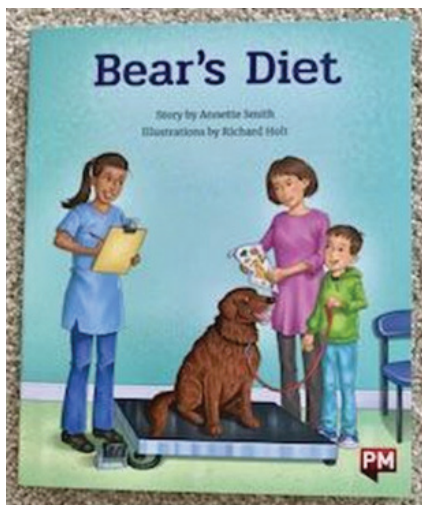
four new levels were Silver 8.5- 9 years, Emerald 9-10 years, Ruby 10-11 years, Sapphire 11-12 years.

It was astounding how well the PM Readers and Teacher Resources were received by New Zealand and Australian schools. A North American publishing company also became very interested; they thought these readers were the greatest. They wanted another complete series for the American market. This was how the PM Plus series evolved.

What convinced you to leave teaching?

I had been at Pukete School for 13 years and to move on professionally, I had to consider my future. In 1997, Nelson Publishing Company was taken over by Cengage Learning.

The primary publishing manager asked



The four books about the character 'Bear' were based on true events. The dog was owned by a family at Pukete School.

me to come out of teaching and work full time with them as their Lead Author and Educational Consultant. I accepted this opportunity, not only for me to grow professionally but also I knew that my love of literacy and experiences supporting teachers would ultimately benefit children.

When I was Assistant Principal I would often say to beginning teachers – “Always remember that it is a privilege to be a teacher as everything you say, you do, your actions, your reactions – they will have an effect on children.” For me it has been a privilege to support children worldwide to become readers.... When a child becomes literate, you open up their world, they stand tall; their self worth and self belief is enhanced. I remember observing children on the Reading Recovery programme at Pukete School – as they learned to read, they stood taller, their shoulders were back



PM Benchmark Assessment kits.

and their eyes were sparkling because they believed in themselves. Yes, it's about building self-esteem and creating opportunities that will enhance their lives. Successful readers and writers who can read, who have a broad vocabulary, and who think deeply can adapt their skills to any situation. They have options in the world.

I have never regretted my move into writing and publishing. I have had the most enjoyable career working with the editorial teams and other writers developing PM literacy material for the world market.

What is your philosophy for teaching and learning literacy?

The PM philosophy includes these statements:

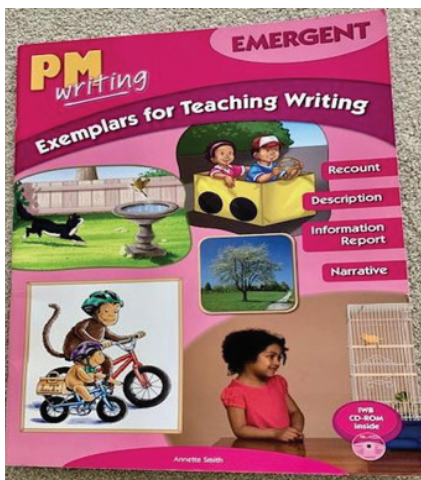
- Children learn to read well if they are encouraged to use a variety of skills, processes and behaviours, rather than a particular method or approach.
- When children are learning to read

they should be given materials that are carefully crafted to meet their needs; books that give them from the earliest experiences with the printed word, success, enjoyment and understanding.

- All PM resources are designed to open up children's minds, challenge their thinking and stir their emotions.

In my role as the PM Lead Author and Education Consultant, I worked closely with the editorial teams at Cengage Learning to fulfil the PM philosophy and help children become self motivated achievers. To enact this we carefully crafted a wide range of resources for children at all levels: emergent, early, developing, consolidating and the more advanced levels, that is, 9-12+ reading ages.

These resources include graded readers, large books to model and develop oral and written language, teacher guides, shared books and phonics books to promote phonological awareness. We also developed the first *PM Benchmark*



The *PM Writing Emergent Exemplar* features key teaching points related to the language and text structure of four different text types.

Literacy Assessment kits to monitor individual achievement and progress.

How do you ensure there is consistency for each reading level?

Every series is carefully planned... I worked closely with the editorial team as we made decisions about new products. We selected our authors who were required to provide a synopsis of their texts before proceeding with first drafts of their manuscripts.

As the writing of manuscripts proceeded over a period of many weeks, I would be online all the time working with the editors and giving the authors feedback. We were always checking that the texts were at the right level conceptually as well as structurally.

Correct vocabulary usage in the early levels 1-14 was imperative. For example, the first conjunction 'and' is

not introduced in the PMs until level 7. Then at level 9 the second conjunction 'but' can be used to develop two clause sentences. The high frequency word 'put' comes at the end of level 12 because the letters 'p' and 'b' can be visually confusing for some children. Similarly the words 'saw' and 'was' are introduced at different levels. We are also very careful introducing certain digraphs and blends, short vowels and long vowels.

Line breaks are important to drive meaning as they are linked to the rhythms of English as a spoken language. By the end of green level (level 14) 250 high frequency words have been introduced.

Throughout the writing and editorial process, I meticulously checked everything based on my knowledge built over 30 years of teaching children, and 22 years of working with the editorial teams. These understandings shaped all PM Literacy resources.

What are your thoughts on teaching phonics?

English is a very complex language. The PMs have always provided support material for teachers to develop their students' phonological knowledge and phonemic awareness. The *PM Alphabet Starters*, *PM Alphabet Blends* and the *PM Sounds in Words* big books which we developed many years ago are invaluable resources in all primary school classrooms.

I believe in short sharp lessons, linking new learning to previous and current situations.



PM Big Book for teaching phonics.



PM Phonic books.

Phonic instruction should always be meaningful within a guided reading situation so that children are aware of letter-sounds and patterns.

Often, as I gathered my class together before going to the lunch break I would refer back to a guided reading session I'd had with a particular group.

I would ask them to share something new they had learned about the sounds of some words in their book and say for example... "Remember the word 'poor.' It makes the 'or' sound. Let's make a list of other words that makes that sound." - *poor, saw, core, oar*. In this way, the whole class gained from this shared situation.

Where to next?

It is time now for me to spend more time on the golf course as I attempt to improve my abysmal handicap!

The Cengage Learning editorial team knows that I am available to write for them. Recently, the primary publishing manager approached me to write a few more books for a new series that is being developed. I thoroughly enjoyed writing again.

My passion will always be to open up the world of literacy to as many children as possible. They are our future.

New Zealand Book Awards for Children and Young Adults: Winners 2021

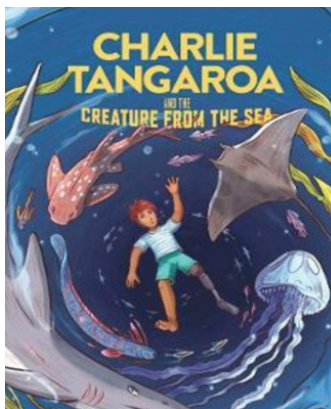
Reviewed by **Joan Gibbons**

Charlie Tangaroa and the Creature from the Sea by T.K. Roxborough.
Wellington: Huia, 2020.

Charlie Tangaroa and the Creature from the Sea won the Junior Fiction Award and the Margaret Mahy Award for best book overall this year. I think Margaret would have approved of this choice. It shares with some of Margaret Mahy's books an interest in disabilities, the supernatural, sibling relationships, and an ethical viewpoint.

The story starts with Charlie and his half-brother Robbie doing their regular beach clearance near Tolaga Bay on the East Coast. After a clash with some rubbish-spreading beach bullies, the brothers find a dehydrated ponaturi, a kind of mermaid. Robbie runs to fetch Grandad, and they take Po-nuia home and put her in their pool. But that night, Pō-nuia's menacing ponaturi tribe arrive. Grandad frightens them off, but wants Pō-nuia to return to her own people. Po-nuia shares her thoughts with Charlie and asks for help. She wants to go to Tāne in the forest to seek a reconciliation between him and Tangaroa, the god of the sea. Tāne's

people, the humans, are damaging the seas and sea creatures, and Tangaroa seeks revenge. Charlie understands war between brothers because of his relationship with Robbie. Robbie is younger, so Charlie must look after him, but Robbie is also very competitive, and thinks Charlie's prosthetic leg is an unfair advantage.



Jenny from New York visits Tolaga Bay. Her father is checking the new port facilities being built. She quickly finds the ponaturi, but has to have the Maori aspects of anything explained (which is a help to ignorant pākehā readers!) There are a series of earthquakes as Rūaumoko expresses his displeasure with human behaviour. This results in a number of people

gathering at the farm, and then Grandad has to go to help Charlie's mother, who is badly hurt. Charlie is left to deal with the warring gods. He is helped in this by all of the traditional stories and waiata he learned from Grandad during his hospital visits.

The Māori gods are treated as real throughout this story. Charlie talks with them, and uses their unfairness in giving him a stump instead of a leg in his negotiation with them. Jenny talks with her father about what the port can do to ameliorate potential damage. Solutions to problems are practical as well as supernatural. I personally agreed with the judges in awarding

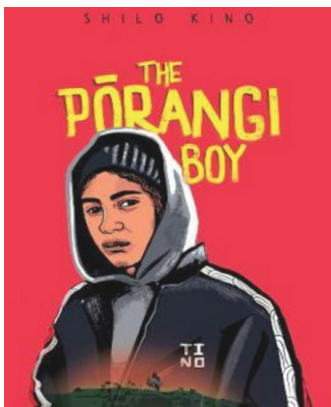
Book reviews

this book the prize. It was the best of this year's novels. Its contender was the graphic novel, Jonathan King's *The Inkberg Enigma*, a book which thematically has a lot in common with Charlie Tangaroa. Both are exciting stories with serious implications involving the sea. Intelligent readers at Intermediate School level may enjoy comparing the two. I recommend this book for Intermediate, Primary and lower Secondary School libraries, as well as to any reader who enjoys reading books with themes concerning New Zealand myth, ecology, disability, or family conflict.

The Pōrangī Boy by Shilo Kino.
Wellington: Huia, 2020.

The Pōrangī Boy won the Young Adult Fiction award for 2021. While the protagonist of this book is 12, younger than Charlie Tangaroa, both the structure of the books and some of the incidents in it are more suitable for people with more emotional security than junior fiction normally requires. Some serious bullying is involved in this story.

Niko is growing up in a small rural town in Northland. A prison is scheduled to be built on his ancestral land, in the place where a taniwha, Taukere, lives. Niko's koro is involved in protesting against the building of the prison, and, particularly after his koro's death, Niko takes a leading role in the protest.



Bastian Point is several times mentioned as a model for protest. Although their first court appeal is not successful, they will continue to protest.

Not all of Niko's relatives agree with Koro that the prison is undesirable. In particular, Niko's uncle, Elliot, and his son, Tu, are antagonistic to the views of Niko and his koro. This is why Koro leaves his money to Niko, whom he trusts to defend their ancestral land. Koro is called pōrangī (crazy, mad) by many locals, including his own son. Niko hates it when people call him or his koro pōrangī. It is not until he can accept this name-calling that he is able to deal with the issues properly. His friend Wai has different problems. She is against the prison because of

the taniwha, but would like her father, who is in prison, to be close by so they can visit him more often. The structure of this story requires more sophisticated reading skills. Chapters are labelled as Before, After and Now. I thought at first that the division was Koro's death, but the reading of the will is Before, so it is not quite that simple.

I recommend this book for Intermediate and Secondary School libraries. Primary schools with intelligent readers should also consider purchase, but will have to consider the emotional maturity of likely readers. Kura with English language readers would also find it useful.

Council reports

Auckland

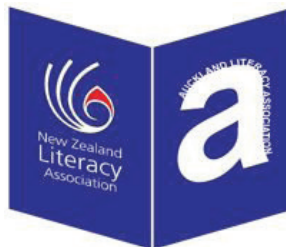
There have been a few changes on the ALA executive due to the resignation of ALA president Alice Musuku. Bronwyn Hayward has agreed to fill in for the remainder of Alice's term before handing over to Sandy Griffin in 2022.

ALA has held two successful and inspiring events throughout the winter. In June we held an extremely successful *Young Authors and Illustrators* event for students in Years 5- 8. ALA was grateful to Te Papapa School for allowing us to use their hall and classrooms for this well attended event. The students went away enthused with inspiration to aid their own writing and illustrating. You can read some of the students' written reports in the latest ALA newsletter.

Pre-lockdown we were fortunate to hold our second event, a seminar titled *Who sets the course for literacy in Aotearoa?* This was presented by Associate Professor Rebecca Jesson and Professor Janet Gaffney. We had many attendees from around Auckland and from further afield in Hamilton and Wellington highlighting the interest and importance of this conversation.

Our fingers are crossed that Auckland and the rest of the country can move to lower alert levels so we can hold our planned events to end the year. In November we are having our Gala dinner and we look forward to having Dr Rae Si'ilata as our speaker.

Like many of you we were saddened at the cancellation of the 2021 NZLA conference to be held in the Hawke's



Bay. We offer our support to the Hawke's Bay Literacy Association and understand their frustration as they wind up all their hard work and organisation.

ALA is continuing to plan for the 2022 NZLA conference. The conference venue will be in The Parnell Conference Centre, Gladstone Road, Parnell, Auckland. Our planning committee is working hard and inspirational plenary speakers are already confirmed from within New Zealand and from overseas. We will keep you all posted as our planning progresses.

Bronwyn Hayward
ALA Delegate

Council reports

Tai Tokerau

We are pleased that we have been able to hold a few events this year and once again connect with our members and enjoy some fantastic professional development opportunities.

Our AGM in March was a chance to listen to an afternoon talk by Jeannie Skinner from the National Library. She has a wealth of knowledge on books and this year she presented a session on wordless picture books – giving us some great tips to take away and use at school.

Also in term 1, we hosted an after-school session with Jill Eggleton. Jill discussed shared reading using both books and poetry and she highlighted the value of reading aloud to children – all essential building blocks in a quality literacy programme for all ages. Jill's approach to using shared reading is to capture the richness and rhythm of quality text that draws you into the magic of literature. She also highlighted the importance of carefully selecting books for reading aloud and the roles of both the reader and the listener in promoting a love of language.

In Term 2, TTLA and Dyslexia PLUS co-hosted with Sarah Sharpe. Sarah presented to a group of parents and teachers encompassing information on



Sarah Sharpe and the neural aspects of reading.

the neural aspects of reading. Sarah also talked about the importance of self-esteem, the challenges students can face, as well as focusing on their individual strengths. During the session, Sarah shared some of the appropriate learning aids available, and emphasised the value of positive role models, both well-known and local.

We acknowledge that parents of neurodiverse children carry concerns about schooling. Sarah addressed this

Council reports



Murray Gadd and Being an Effective Teacher of Writing.

stating that parents can find schools don't necessarily understand what their children face or how to best address their needs in a positive way. A key takeaway was that a Multisensory Structured Language approach works not just for these students but for all students, whereas other reading approaches often don't meet the needs of neurodiverse students. A sobering thought was the high number of responses from parents whose children do not like going to school. There is much for parents and teachers to learn to bring out the best in these students.

In term 3 TTLA were fortunate enough to bring Murray Gadd to the north for a session on *Being an Effective Teacher of Writing*. It's been quite a while since Murray has been north and he made

a great impression on the large group who attended. They enjoyed his relaxed and passionate approach. Teachers are telling us they're already implementing ideas and seeing a difference so we will definitely bring him back in the not too distant future.

The committee is busy planning for next year and, no doubt, we're all hoping for a smooth run.

Annmaree MacGregor

Council reports

Wellington

We hoped that 2021 could be a year of coming back to our 'new normal.' In many ways this has been the case, and our small committee has kept busy by meeting and sharing ideas for 'growing literacy' practice in our region.

In June, Wellington Literacy Association held our first 'in-person' literacy event, entitled Innovations in Literacy. This was a great success!

We were inspired by the speakers who shared their literacy practice for Years 1–13, across the levels of schooling. All speakers currently teach in schools around Wellington so it was exciting to hear about their brave ideas and the challenges they faced, as well as the great successes they've achieved for their students. All of the speakers talked about how *play*, in its many different forms, is essential for life-long literacy learning. The session was superbly facilitated by Dr Martyn Reynolds, who injected his own expertise into the discussion. We are hoping to repeat this event, in a different location, so that more teachers from around the Wellington region can benefit.

Also in June, our co-president, Karen Freeman and I attended the NZLA Annual Meeting in Wellington. This was the first time attending for both of us. We loved the opportunity to meet up with other councils and share ideas from around the country. A key aspect for us was the discussion of our NZLA Guiding Principles, and how we could capture our vision of 'growth



through literacy.' We also began a wider conversation on making our guiding principles more culturally responsive and to embed Māori tikanga throughout our organisation.

Debbie Boorman
WLA delegate

Council reports

Taranaki

At the time of writing, we are thinking of our Auckland colleagues, but are celebrating our return to Level 2 in Taranaki and looking forward to getting back to a form of normality in our various school roles.

In May, we regretfully farewelled our President Jenny Magon from our committee. Jenny had done a sterling job of leading our group for several years, unfortunately including our not-to-be-Conference committee last year. We wish Jenny well and thank her for all she has done for us. Our co-president, Resource Teacher of Literacy, Jo Frances-Allis has stepped into the role of President. Thank you Jo. We look forward to your capable leadership.

Early this term we held a very topical and well attended full-day workshop with speech language therapist, Emma Nahna, who is based in Te Kuiti.

Emma spent the morning unpacking the 'Word Recognition' half of the Reading Rope – sharing the evidence-based underpinnings of a Structured Literacy approach and giving practical guidance on the use of the Ministry's new *Ready to Read Phonics Plus* books. The second half of the day moved to the 'Language Comprehension' side of the Reading Rope, exploring powerful strategies to build vocabulary knowledge.

Next year we are looking at hosting more professional development to cater for secondary school teachers as well as continuing to bring inspiring presenters to share evidence-based practice



to enhance educators' pedagogical practice.

Having had our *Books for Babies* budget bolstered by helpful sponsorship from Scholastic NZ, we were happy to deliver our annual contribution to TDHB maternity for each of the 140 projected births of babies born in Taranaki. This enabled us to celebrate International Literacy Day, 8 September. Fostering reading in this manner always gives us great pleasure and we are currently reflecting and gathering more ideas for ways in which we might give back to our community in a similar manner.

Committee members, and our Marie Clay Literacy Early Careers Award recipient are all naturally disappointed not to be traveling to Hawke's Bay to experience another informative and inspirational NZLA conference. After our own similar 2020 experience, we commiserate with you Hawke's Bay and sincerely hope that if we manage to discipline Covid, 2022 will enable our next hosts to stage a fabulously successful conference!

Kia Haumaru, be safe,
Jackie Cameron

Council reports

Southland

The highly anticipated Southland Literacy Symposium for 2021 took place on Saturday 15 May at Donovan Primary School, Invercargill, with over 190 attendees. This included early childhood, primary and secondary school teachers, RTLb's, and other educational professionals from as far away as Christchurch. There was an extensive range of workshops on offer, and a common complaint heard was that it was just too hard to choose what to sign up for! Some of the workshops included: how to incorporate physical education into your literacy lessons; structured literacy; working with trauma and stress from a neuroscience lens; and emergent literacy interventions for learners with complex educational needs, to name a few. Attendees were warmly welcomed and the Symposium was opened by Southland Literacy Association President, Gina White.

By far the show stealer was the keynote speaker – Liz Kane, from Liz Kane Literacy, a leading New Zealand Structured Literacy Coach. Liz spoke about *Structured Literacy - Why, What and How*. Liz described the science behind Structured Literacy and why the implementation of it has taken hold across New Zealand. She unpacked Structured Literacy, its principles, elements, and the framework for the explicit teaching and assessment of foundational skills that underpin reading fluency and support comprehension. Liz had the audience hanging off her every word, as well as nodding their heads in agreement, as



Southland Literacy Symposium 2021.

she explained that decodable books and a clear scope and sequence were the crucial step in achieving equity for all students learning to read. Some attendees were also lucky enough to attend Liz's workshop, which was about the effective use of decodable texts for both beginning readers, and older struggling readers. After an amazing morning tea provided by Food at Clifton, participants attended their two chosen workshops, before coming back to the hall for spot prizes (which all teachers love) and closing words. The feedback from our attendees was overwhelmingly positive, with the general consensus being that they wanted more of the same and for it to be a whole day event. Liz Kane loved the Symposium and said she wants to come back and run a two-day workshop in Invercargill – so watch this space! Thank you to all the presenters who shared their insights, ideas and innovations to inspire others in our profession. Finally, a big shout out to our local Committee who made this a well organised and informative day for our community.



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