Navigating the entanglements:

Curriculum and assessment priorities in transitioning to school

in

Aotearoa-New Zealand

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Abstract

This thesis critically examines the curriculum and assessment priorities children encounter as they transition from early childhood to school and the modes of being, doing, knowing, and relating these priorities promote or make difficult. An initial focus on children's multimodal ways of operating shifted as this study progressed toward a more relational materialist conception of multimodality, drawing on the thinking of Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari and Karen Barad. A key focus became tracing the heterogeneous forces and entities that authorise and prioritise particular constructions of learning and learners.

The thesis follows the curriculum and assessment priorities six focus children met with in their last six months at kindergarten and their first six months in a new entrant classroom, and explores how these priorities relate to those of the children and their families. Data drawn on include a range of policy and practice-related documentation, interviews, fieldnotes and video-recorded observations. Excerpts of video are incorporated into the thesis as 'cases to think with' about key dimensions of everyday pedagogical activity not well represented by words.

While it may be a truism to say children navigate the move from early childhood to school differently, this thesis brings attention to the multiplicity of forces at play in how this move unfolds for particular children. It offers critical insights into the complex ways the global, local and 'here and now' specificities operate *in entanglement* to produce pedagogical priorities and learner-subjectivities. It highlights that the curriculum and assessment priorities for children in this study being/becoming new entrants strongly favoured children who were lingusitically adept, *and* willing *and* able to adjust to tightly prescribed classroom normativities, many of which centred around control of the body.

This thesis challenges the ongoing privileging of the verbal, arguing for the importance of making space for children's other modes of being, doing, knowing and relating. It questions the recent narrowing and intensifying emphasis on standards-based assessment and the strongly individualistic, regulatory discourse of self-managing learners. It foregrounds the ways in which transition to school agendas have escalated nationally and internationally and become part of day-to-day curriculum and assessment priorities. On the basis of these findings I call for greater ethical regard for

the heterogeneity of children and the capacities they bring and are capable of, including the capacity to engage with 'real world' multiplicity and difference-making interconnectivities with human and more-than-human others.

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Abbreviations

EC	Early Childhood
ERO	Education Review Office
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
KTOTP	Kei Tua o Te Pae
MoE	Ministry of Education
NE	New Entrants
NLG	The New London Group
NS	National Standards
NZC	The New Zealand Curriculum (2007)
NZCF	The New Zealand Curriculum Framework (1993)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PISA	The Programme for International Student Assessment
WKA	Wellington Kindergarten Association

Chapter One: Thesis Introduction

This chapter sketches the strands that in their entanglement brought me to the topic of transition to school and issues of literacy and multimodality: my previous personal experiences in teaching, research and professional development, recent local and international policy developments, and the theoretical concepts I found to be a useful way to engage with these areas of study. I outline the theoretical concepts I initially drew on from Gunther Kress's work in the field of social semiotics and multimodality, and introduce the relational materialist ideas of Gilles Deleueze and Felix Guattari, Karen Barad and Donna Haraway which came to play key roles in this thesis. In the concluding section I provide a brief overview of the nine thesis chapters that follow.

Transition to school has recently become a focus of greater prominence in and beyond Aotearoa-New Zealand, and is increasingly identified as a critical period for future school success. International observers point to the way in which the 'issue' of transition is giving rise to a not altogether dis-similar range of responses across a number of countries (Bingham & Whitebread, 2018). Overall, we have seen an increasing emphasis on school-readiness and particular pedagogies of transition, and an intensifying focus on curriculum continuity from early childhood (EC) to school settings (Dunlop, 2014). In some instances this has included moves to have children start school earlier. We have also seen a particular and growing trend toward a greater, earlier, and narrower emphasis on formal reading, writing, and numeracy skills, and with this an escalating and earlier focus on formal assessment (Bingham & Whitebread, 2018). For example, children in some countries are being formally assessed as young as two-and-a-half (Broström, 2017), and the introduction of formal baseline school-entry assessment is spreading (Bradbury, 2013).

The critique of such developments has been considerable, raising a number of questions that suggest transition to school to be a timely focus. As someone deeply immersed in EC education in Aotearoa-New Zealand, I found a number of the questions raised by these developments rekindled my own prior and ongoing deliberations about the relationship issues between the EC and school sectors. In particular, they rekindled my concerns about the 'top-down' and potentially narrowing effects of school-oriented skills-based conceptions of literacy on the traditionally broader, looser, more multimodal emphasis of the EC curriculum. To

explore these dissonances and the implications for children in encountering the transition process, I started the study with two over-arching research questions:

(1) How are discourses of literacy and semiotic multimodality reflected in curriculum and assessment practices in an EC and a new entrant (NE) setting?

(2) How do children encounter these as they transition from one context to the next?

As I began to delve further into the phenomenon of transition, my focus shifted. While I had started out thinking about transiton in somewhat passive terms as the "context" of the study, once immersed in the EC and school settings I gained an increasing sense of transition as a generative dynamic in its own right. The strength of this impression, in combination with the relational materialist ideas I was increasingly drawn to and engaging with — as I outline below — opened the way to an understanding of transition as being what Deleuze and Guattari (1987) would term an assemblage. Put briefly, this is a view of transition as a shifting conglomeration of macro and micro-practices and policies, and a confluence international, national and local forces and phenomena, and coherences and dissonances. While my original curriculum emphasis on literacy remained a key focus, I wanted to explore a wider range of curriculum/assessment priorities and the opportunities these opened up and closed down for children in relation to particular subjectivities and modes of operating. The questions I now sought to address were:

(1) What are the sorts of curriculum/assessment priorities found in EC/NE settings in Aotearoa-New Zealand?

(2) What particular identities, subjectivities and modes of operating (ways of being, doing, knowing and relating) are promoted or made difficult through the enactment of these priorities?

(3) How might these priorities be seen as transition-related and what might their effects be on the capacities of young children?

The personal pathway into my research project

My professional involvement with transition to school and issues of school-based literacy goes back to my first year of teaching, almost 40 years ago. I was teaching 5 1/2 to 6 year-olds in a junior syndicate of five teachers in a multicultural school, in a low-income, inner-city suburb. The children had been at school between six and

twelve months. As a novice teacher I remember how struck I was by the enormous emphasis on the learning and teaching of reading children met as they started school. I also recall — whether warranted or not — feeling under some pressure to 'keep up with the curriculum'. This was, most importantly it seemed, a matter of getting children through the prescribed sequence of readers within the expected time span. It's a long time ago now, but I still vividly recall how caught up in these regimes I became, how totalising and undermining of certain children they seemed, and how keen I was to explore other options. This was an endeavour I made very little headway with before leaving this teaching position to be a mum.

The concerns I had around the priority accorded print-based literacy, and issues around how to engage more openly with the diversity of children and their families were matters I continued to return to in some form or other as I took up teaching in EC and later moved into professional development and teacher education and research. Here too I found myself regularly noticing the privileging of language ahead of children's often highly embodied ways of doing and being, despite the profusion of open, inventive, vital, playful and unorthodox modes of operating I witnessed frequently characterising children's activities. The overlooking and undervaluing of these capacities became for me a key research interest, as did related issues of curriculum hierarchies.

One key research opportunity to explore the diversity of such modal capacities prior to commencing this thesis was a three-year action research project at Wadestown Kindergarten, undertaken as part of the Ministry of Education (MoE)-supported programme "Centres of Innovation" (Simonsen, Blake, La Hood, Haggerty, & Mitchell, 2009). Through this initiative, EC centres could obtain funded researcher support to investigate and develop an innovative aspect of their work. The aim of the research at Wadestown was to explore children's use of different meaning-making modes — also termed multiple literacies. Notable here were the capacities and understandings arising out of children's involvement in activities that were unlikely to rate highly on any orthodox hierarchy of educational content. One example was a child's passion for bike-riding, a passion we as a research team saw as helping feed a highly-attuned working knowledge of space and movement (Haggerty & Mitchell, 2010). This capacity to engage with and 'factor in' momentum and space in a range of contexts was one of many examples highlighting the importance of undoing

mind/body dualisms. The related focus on multimodalities is one I explore further in this thesis.

Video technology was a key part of the research mix at Wadestown — as in much of my previous research work — and offered important insights into children's (and adults') embodied modes of operating and more of the 'everyday' multidimensionality of curriculum 'in action' (Haggerty, 1998; Haggerty & Hubbard, 1994). Exploring the capacity-extending potentialities of this technology is a dimension I seek to pursue further methodologically in the current study, by incorporating video clips into the thesis assemblage within the chapters about the three settings. These clips show excerpts of 'everyday' curriculum events involving the focus children. The modes and activities featured are generally those that I saw the children liked to engage in, and/or those given priority by the setting. My aim here is to open a space for closer consideration of the sheer multifariousness of these curriculum events, particularly of dimensions and modes commonly obscured, downplayed, poorly served or distorted by words — what I once, not altogether facetiously described, as video's capacity to "capture the unwritedownable" (Haggerty, 1999).

The video-related capacities of particular relevance to this study include important opportunities for closer attunement to modes of operating, and dynamics of time, space and place that video renders more specifically and accessibly — dimensions such as body positioning, posture, gesture and movement ('human' and 'non-human'), and the capacity to follow the duration of things in 'real' time. Key too is the technological capacity to replay events — frame by frame if necessary — to allow for the perception of things that happen too fast or are too entangled to discern with the human eye. Also key are the possibilities video-recordings offer the research-participant/user for engaging with a form of observation data that in certain ways can be seen as less researcher-processed than a written account. The comparison I make here refers to the way that verbally describing an event or a scene typically involves things being broken down and recounted according to the ordering scheme of the author/teller, to the intentional and unintentional editing involved, to things that fail to catch the observer's/author's eye, or that simply defy being put into words.

'Thinking with' the conceptual tools of multimodality, rhizome and assemblage, and intra-active performativity

During the research at Wadestown Kindergarten and at the outset of this thesis my ideas about semiotics were largely drawn from work in the field of multimodality, primarily the social semiotic work of Gunther Kress (2011). I was attracted by how attention to semiotic multimodality enabled consideration of how meanings are created and communicated, and how learning happens, not just through words and in the head, but through multiple modes and media such as gaze, gesture, movement, book, screen, and hypertext. In an educational context, a focus on the multiplicity of modes "beyond talking and writing, used for meaning-making" was seen as posing an "explicit challenge to the central 'place' of language", and the long-held and still widely dominant view that language provides the ultimate means of expression, conceptual complexity and specificity (p.208). As a key aspect of what has led to the capacities of very young children being viewed highly reductively, this was of particular interest.

Kress (2011) identifies the semiotic approach he proposes as having two distinct but interrelated aspects: firstly a focus on multimodality; and secondly, as consistent with the traditional concerns of social semiotics, a focus on human meaning-making. Kress's definition of social semiotics is one that goes to great lengths to emphasise the agency of the meaning-*maker,* i.e*.,* what the *human social* agent *does*:

> Social semiotics is a theory about meaning-making in processes of interaction as communication...about meaning-making as sign-making with all the modes that are available in a culture, where sign-making is seen as the semiotic work of social agents. (p.209)

However, while seeing a focus on multimodality as offering promising opportunities to explore the relationship between children's diverse modes of being/becoming and curriculum and assessment practices in EC and NE settings, there was for me something fundamentally problematic in the seemingly all-consuming emphasis in *social* semiotics on *human meaning-making.* Could matters to do with children's modes of learning and becoming be subsumed under the category of conscious meaning-making, and the only 'real' forces at play be viewed solely in terms of a focus on *human* agency and *meaning-making*? As the study progressed and I encountered

situations that did not appear to fit the parameters of social semiotics, I was increasingly drawn into the quest for a more encompassing theory of semiotics and toward the ideas of relational materialism. As alluded to above, the more time I spent in and between the EC and NE settings, the more pressing I saw it to focus not only on curriculum/assessment priorities and transition practices but on the *heterogeneous* assemblage of forces and entities that came into play.

It was in the search for a fuller account of the agency of the body *and* world, and ways of reconceptualising modes as not just meaning-producing but also as transformative and 'being-producing', that I turned increasingly to the ideas of relational materialism, and what Haraway (1997) terms the material-semiotic. This conceptualisation of semiotics ties in with the move in relational materialism to allow "for bodies and things to be active in processes of signification", and so departs from the assumed fixity of signifier and signified, word and thing, in what has come to be called representationalism (van der Tuin, 2011, p. 26). Clark (1997) refers to this as "putting brain, body, and the world together again" (cited in Colebrook, 2014, p.14). In seeking to put this relational material-semiotic approach to work in this thesis, I draw on the metaphysics of Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 1994) and their concepts of *rhizome* and *assemblage*, and Barad's (2007) theory of *intra-active performativity* and her concept of *entanglement.* These concepts are discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

Thesis chapter overview

Chapter two explores theoretical constructs: the concepts of multimodality, the DeleuzoGuattarian figurations of assemblage and rhizome and Barad's (2007) notion of intra-active performative entanglement. I do not claim to provide a comprehensive explanation of these constructs, let alone the wider theoretical frameworks they form part of; the account I offer is abbreviated and partial. As outlined in this chapter, the relationship I seek with this work is rather "looser, more inventive and empirical", whilst still "working within a certain ethos of enquiry" (Rose, 1999, p.5).

Chapter three, the literature review, is presented in two main overlapping parts, following the trajectory of the study. The first part focuses on notions of literacy and how these mesh with ideas about multimodality, semiotics and materiality within research studies and scholarly articles. Here I trace some of the shifts in thinking about literacy, multimodality and semiotics, focusing mainly on the period beginning with

the work of The New London Group (NLG) (1996), the group credited with coining the term multiliteracies, through to work emerging recently out of the material and post-humanist turn.

The second part of the review focuses on transition to school. My aim in this section is to examine literature that offers insights into the macro-politics of transition-related developments, nationally and internationally, as well as literature that offers a more close-up view of how this intramixes with everyday practice in the move to school. Key here are the dynamics of children being inducted into particular constructions of learning and learners, and modes of being, doing, knowing, and relating deemed appropriate for school. Key here also is the positioning of difference and how the plurality of children and their families is met.

Chapters four and five, the methodology and methods chapters, outline the research process and discuss further the ways in which I sought to put relational materialist thinking to work methodologically. A key focus here is the centrality of ethics as an inextricably entangled part of the research assemblage, particularly in relation to research involving young children and the use of video.

Chapter six comprises a published paper: *Strengthening early childhood and school sector continuities in producing the lifelong learner in Aotearoa New Zealand,* written together with Judith Loveridge, one of my thesis supervisors (Haggerty & Loveridge, 2017). This paper forms part of the thesis assemblage by way of a foray into the wider curriculum/assessment policy developments occuring prior to and around the time of the study, from the time of the development of the draft EC curriculum (Te Whāriki) in 1993 up until the release of the Te Whāriki update in 2017 (MoE, 1993, 2017) [1]. In this paper we draw on Barad's (2007) notion of entanglement to discuss the intermixing occurring internationally as well as locally between the EC and school sectors, highlighting what Haraway (2008a) refers to as the 'redoing' of each other that occurs through such entanglements. Whilst it is possible to read the thesis without this chapter, it serves to underscore the importance of tracing the way in which particular constructions of learners and learning are authorised and prioritised, and become part of the "always emerging conditions of the present" (Rizvi & Lingard, 2011, p.7) in a given setting.

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[1] NB. The 1996 version of Te Whāriki was the mandated curriculum document during the fieldwork phase of the study

Chapters seven, eight and nine focus on the three study settings: in Chapter seven, Ranui Kindergarten, the EC service for all six focus children whom I introduce in this chapter; in Chapter eight, the Whānau rua class at Ranui School, the NE class of five of the six focus children; and in Chapter nine, Room 13 at Tapatahi School, the NE class of the sixth focus child (all names are pseudonyms). In these chapters, material from different data sets relevant to the concerns of this thesis (video, interview, fieldnotes, and documents) is presented and discussed in the manner of the DeleuzoGuattarian (1987) assemblage. Following the lead Deleuze and Guattari offer, the task here for the reader, as I see it, is not to engage with these chapters as a finalising/totalising account; the question to ask is: How do these chapter assemblages, including the analytical commentary I as researcher offer, work for you? In what ways might such engagement help us critically and creatively re-examine curriculum/assessment priorities to help free things up from where they have become stuck, and/or bring attention to some of the potentiating and potentially constraining effects on children, families and teachers?

In Chapter ten, the final chapter — which following Davies (2014), I have titled "(In)conclusion" — I foreground the generativity that thinking with relational materialist ideas and endeavouring to think (differently) with Deleuze and Guattari and Barad helped open up for me as researcher, in considering the ways in which the curriculum/assessment priorities taken up for children, in and beyond transition to school, impact on their ways of being and becoming in and with the world. Barad (2007) would likely frame it as a matter of questioning what is being made to matter and how what comes to matter affects what becomes possible to do and to think.

Chapter Two: Theoretical constructs

Several important concepts were introduced in Chapter one. These included ideas to do with *multimodality* and *relational materialism,* together with the DeleuzoGuattarian constructs of *assemblage* and *rhizome*, and Barad's theory of *performative intra-activity* and *entanglement,* all of which helped inspire the approach taken in my thesis. In this chapter I discuss in detail the assemblage of theoretical concepts and the ways in which they relate to my study. As part of this discussion I explain the way I draw on these concepts "as method" (Lenz Taguchi, 2016, p.213). I explore key aspects of the network of ideas these concepts sit within and highlight possibilities these approaches offer researchers in education and the social sciences.

Multimodality, modal affordances and social semiotics

The concept of modal *affordances* – the capacities different modes can be seen to offer – has played a central role in multimodality research. Coined by Gibson (1979) and later developed by Norman (1988), the notion of affordance is one Kress (2000) utilises to suggest that different semiotic modes offer distinctive potentials and limitations that facilitate or constrain various kinds of meaning-making and learning. Investigating the affordances of a mode, Kress's emphasis is not only on how affordances are *socially, culturally and historically* constituted; it is also and importantly about the way the *material* properties of a mode — the "physical stuff it entails and what sensory channels it employs" — link to the capacities the mode offers (Kress, 2003a, p.138).

In terms of how affordances are defined by the *materiality* of a semiotic mode, Kress (2011) suggests that each mode offers a distinct 'take' on the world, producing uniquely different 'data' (p.223). Photographs, for example, engage us visually, allowing us to see shape, size, colour, and position, but do not give us access to data involving texture, movement, and sound, obtained through other sensory modes. Kress gives the example of the drawing of a 3-year-old child, able to convey 'at a glance' his conception of "car-as-wheels" — a representation which, if put into words, would require lengthy explanation. Another is the 6-year-old who cuts out his drawing of a car — moving it from being "a representation on a page" to "an object in the

world" — a process that incorporates the three-dimensionality necessary for action play (Kress, 2003b, p.157).

Much research in the field of multimodality has focused on the affordances of particular modes (e.g., visual, gestural, mimetic, spatial and kinaesthetic, as well as verbal), on how modes are used in combination, and on the nature of their interconnectivity. Examples include studies focusing on how meaning is made and expressed through drawing (Lambert, 2005), physical actions (Franks & Jewitt, 2001), construction (Pahl, 2002), gaze (Lancaster, 2001), music (Erickson, 2009) and modes in combination (Martello, 2007).

The concept of affordance has been taken up in research efforts in considering how differences in mode interact with differences in media, as for example with the tactile affordances of touchscreen technology (Mangen, 2010). A further focus has been the affordances particular technologies bring, such as the recent advent of video-based online dictionaries for the learning of sign languages, and the capacity the digital interface affords for working interactively and three dimensionally (Lemke, 2002; Wohlwend, 2008). More broadly, notions of affordance have been usefully extended to include environmental affordances, the "action possibilities" of specific environments (Gee, 2008).

Considering affordances is a useful way of bringing human and non-human material-semiotic resources together into frame, with affordances increasingly seen as neither entirely 'in' person, tool, technology or environment, but rather in the relationship or activity between them (Gee, 2008). Yet, despite such moves toward a more distributed view of knowledge/agency, the emphasis in mainstream social semiotics has generally remained strongly focused on human meaning-making. For instance, in Kress's (2011) example above of the 6-year-old's cut-out car-drawing, considerations of agency focus on the actions of the child as human subject; the role of the materials fails to feature. Having observed similar situations in my work and the active part that non-human materials often come to play, my view is that the way such entities operate in opening up or shutting down particular avenues of activity needs to be attended to more fully. It was these sorts of deliberations that drew me to the ideas of relational materialism, DeleuzoGuattarian semiotics (1987) and Barad's (2007) concept of performative intra-activity.

Relational materialism

Variously termed the 'material turn', 'new materialism' and 'neo materialism' (Hird, 2004), the body of work associated with relational materialism is referred to by Hekman (2008), after Latour, as endeavouring to achieve a "new settlement" (p.91): a theory that does not ignore the constitutive power of language as modernism did, "but rather a more complex theory that incorporates language, materiality, and technology into the equation" (p.92). Hekman describes the "new settlement" as one that draws on the insights social constructionism and poststructuralism offer, whilst at the same time looking to revise these paradigms through challenging the way they have tended to obscure or bracket out the role of the material in constructions of reality.

Critics of social constructionism — the theoretical framework in which a large portion of social science and educational research is carried out — highlight the way in which discussions of discourse and text have served to "erase the materiality of the doer … in other words, that the doer has a material body" (Hird, 2004, p.223). I was attracted to relational materialism and the "expanded form of semiotics" it proposes (Prout, 2005, p. 71) as a move to more fully account for the agency, semiotic force and constitutive role of the material, of and beyond the corporeality of the human body (Barad, 2007). In looking to account for the inter-relatedness of phenomena, the material turn also and importantly, focuses on what is variously termed the 'non-human'/'posthuman'/'more-than-human' as well as 'human' entities — an endeavour to more fully account for materiality "whether this is thought of as nature, bodies, technologies, artefacts or architectures" (Prout, 2005, p.63).

A number of relational materialist theorists highlight Foucault's work as providing "the opening statements of new materialism" (Dolphijn & van der Tuin, 2012, p.88), through his efforts "to reorient the study of power toward the *material* operations of domination and subjectification throughout society" (Patton, 2010, p.88) (emphasis added). Hekman (2009) credits Foucault's legacy with fundamentally changing our understandings of power through bringing a "distinctly material" body "into discussions of power", as she observes "political theorists had not, before Foucault, been concerned with bodies" (p.445). A distinctly material focus is also apparent in Foucault's (1977) conception of governmentality and disciplinary power manifested in his analysis of technologies of power such as the panopticon and timetable.

The expanded semiotics of Deleuze and Guattari: The logic of assemblage and rhizome

Rhizome and assemblage are paired concepts Deleuze and Guattari (1987) introduced to propose a view of the world as a set of rhizomatically constituted assemblages of heterogeneous entities, forces, flows, and intensities. They are central constructs in Deleuze and Guattari's conception of semiotics, constructs utilised to move the semiotic focus from language and symbols, to include assemblages that incorporate — at one and the same time — sensation, movement, subjectivity, image, data, and global political economics (Watson, 2010). The construct of assemblage developed by Deleuze and Guattari shares many similar political commitments to Foucault. However, it is credited as more tuned toward current-day relations of power as dispersed, globalized, and closely entangled with technology (Braidotti, 2005).

Assemblages are conceived as operating at any level of scale from and beyond the sub-personal, involving entities ranging "from atoms and molecules to biological organisms, species and ecosystems" (DeLanda, 2006, p.3). Moreover, as Hamon (2010) explains, "any thing is best thought of as an assemblage of multiple assemblages — both near and far, now and then and yet to be, in and out, up and down — themselves assemblages of multiple assemblages".

At one level of scale, the concept of assemblage is seen as lending itself to being deployed "to develop cartographies of power that account for the paradoxes and contradictions of the era of globalization,…which do not take shortcuts through its complexities" (Braidotti, 2007, p.68). In policy analysis, for instance, the concept of assemblage has proved a useful means of tracing/mapping the shifting dynamics as global discourses, local traditions and diverse and competing considerations are brought together, often as if in apparent harmony. The motif of lifelong learning, which has proved powerfully influential in current conceptions of learning and learners, is one such example discussed in Chapter six. This has been strongly promoted in both the interests of an international competitive knowledge economy *and* furthering empowerment and equity, and has been seen to operate as both threat and promise (Tuschling & Engemann, 2006).

At another level the logic of the assemblage enables mapping/tracing the way "a microscopic event upsets the local balance of power" and hegemonic modes of operating (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p.16). Deleuze and Guattari give the example of

a child's spontaneous undirected playfulness and their use of body and gesture providing a means of escape (line of flight) from "the dominant competence of the teacher's language" (p.16).

The focus on assemblages in this study is viewed as offering a way into thinking about the intertwining of relations between semiotic chains, relations of power and circumstance in a way that could potentially more fully account for the heterogeneous dynamics at play in the everyday curriculum events in each setting. This includes, for example, the interplay of dynamics of different origins such as time-of-day, space, children's and teachers' sensibilities and curriculum/assessment dictate.

Human subject as assemblage

The human subject, viewed as assemblage, is conceived as a multiplicity — a constantly changing intermingling of forces, flows, intensities and passions (Braidotti, 2006) subject to chance confluences of biological, material, social and semiotic flows (Prout, 2005). This contrasts with the traditional view of a stable, rational individual experiencing changes but remaining, principally, the same person. This is how Lee (2001) describes what a DeleuzoGuattarian view of the world and their notion of assemblage offers the study of childhood:

> Looking through Deleuze and Guattari's eyes we do not see a single incomplete natural order waiting to be finished by human beings, we see many incomplete orderings that remain open to change…a picture of human life, whether adult or child, as an involvement in multiple becomings… Humans find themselves in an open-ended whirl of extensions and supplementations, changing their powers and characteristics as they pass through different assemblages…Deleuze and Guattari have given us a framework within which to compare various childhoods…Whether children are in or out of place, or whether new places are being made for them, we can ask what assemblages they are involved in and what extensions they are living through. (cited in Prout, 2005, p.115)

This conception of the extended self ('self-*AND')* is elaborated on by Colebrook (2002) who explains that in DeleuzoGuattarian ontology:

> The human becomes more than itself, or expands to its highest power, not by affirming its humanity, nor by returning to its animal state, but by becoming

hybrid with what is not itself. This creates 'lines of flight'....We become free from the human, open to the event of becoming. (p.129)

The notion of hybrid-self is one Prout (2005) takes up in using the Child-ICT assemblage to illustrate ways in which borrowings from the non-human world create new combinations (assemblages) and can extend human capacities and so open up new powers and possibilities. His analysis also emphasises how these possibilities and entities are *relationally* produced so that "what an ICT 'is' shifts according to the assemblage within which it performs" (p.121).

The Deleuzian/DeleuzoGuattarian conception of life as a process of continual becoming is also picked up by educational researchers Hultman and Lenz Taguchi (2010), who describe how "subjects can be understood as assemblages of encounters that will differentiate with each new encounter...in their continuous processes of transformation" (p.531). Quoting the philosopher Todd May (2005), they say that what is proposed is not about identities forming and reforming themselves, but "swarms of difference that actualise themselves into specific forms of identity" (p.538). As Deleuze and Guattari (1987) repeatedly emphasise, "becoming and multiplicity are the same thing" (p.275).

These ideas circle back to Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) ideas of different assemblage types and the distinction they make between *territorial* assemblages and *nomadic* assemblages. In territorial assemblages elements are arranged according to particular codings. An example Leafgren (2013) observes in her examination of a classroom assemblage is: "placing desks in striated columns and rows, assigning places to sit on the carpet" (p.278). Contrastingly, nomadic assemblages are "arranged in such a way that the conditions, elements and agencies of the assemblage are able to change and enter into new relations without arbitrary limit or so-called 'natural' or 'hierarchical' uses and meanings" (Nail, 2017, p.32). Braidotti (2009) explains the concept of nomadology as encouraging us to think not in terms of established categories, but rather of encounters with anomalous and unfamiliar forces, and as a stretching of bodies' capabilities: The nomadic subject is about "one's *potentia* and increas[ing] one's capacity to enter into further relations and to grow" (p.531). The critical point here is that the concept of power in Deleuzian/DeleuzoGuattarian ontology is a power of potential, of becoming, of what is not yet, of "aiming to be creative of yet unknown potentialities" (Lenz Taguchi, 2016, p.214).

In this study I am interested in what this view of children and childhood and the concept of assemblage allow us to explore in relation to the *assemblages of encounters* children meet in their transition to school, the particular forms of identity these work to effect, and how educational assemblages might facilitate the conditions for human capacities to open up new powers and possibiliites. This includes a focus on what Deleuze and Guattari (1987) term the rhizomatic, a concept that functions as both method and objective (Grosz, 1993).

Rhizomatics

The rhizomatic, or rhizoanalysis, as semiotic method presupposes moving beyond focusing on language in isolation, to focus on what language intermixes with and what effects are being produced in its inter-relations: "a method of the rhizome type…can analyse language only by decentring it onto other dimensions and other registers" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p.8). Deleuze and Guattari emphasise that the linguistic is ceaselessly combining with other modes: "a semiotic chain is like a tuber agglomerating very diverse acts, not only linguistic, but also perceptive, mimetic, gestural, and cognitive" (p.8). Semiotic chains are not only seen to involve these multimodal sorts of interconnections, but also — operating in the manner of "the conjunction and…and…and" (p.27) — the rhizome "ceaselessly establishes connections" between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances" (p.8). Thus semiotic chains are seen to interconnect with material and social flows rhizomatically in the forming of assemblages; while "an assemblage, in its multiplicity necessarily acts on semiotic flows, material flows, and social flows simultaneously" (p.25).

The rhizomatic as method is seen to function "as an assemblage machine for new affects, new concepts, new bodies…" (Colman, 2010, p.233); it describes the networking of a ceaselessly changing relational milieu: "a milieu of perpetual transformation" (p.235). Etymologically 'rhizo' means combining form — a meaning the DeleuzoGuattarian notion of rhizome draws on (Colebrook, 2010): "the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, 'and…and…and…'" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p.27). The botanical term 'rhizome', which is also drawn on, describes a low-lying or subterranean stem that "moves horizontally and expands multi-dimensionally, its points of regrowth, its shoots and roots, are chaotically a-centred, taking on a complex

existence, as it spreads outwards (extending), inwards (expanding), upwards (shoots), downwards (roots)" (Sellers, 2009, p.11). Rhizomatics/rhizoanalysis as the analytic method Deleuze and Guattari (1987) propose for the study of semiotics is based on the premise that semiotic systems "pertain to assemblages that are not principally linguistic" (p.128). As a method for mapping/tracing the processes of learning, it points up the experimental, unexpected, changing, direction-shifting, multiply interconnected, as counter to the hierarchical, prescribed, linear, sequenced, predicted.

The rhizomatic as an objective fosters connections and proliferations; it is about "delimiting ruptures", "removing blockages" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p.13) and 'lines of flight'. Deleuze and Guattari define the operation of a line of flight as the deterritorialising movement by which one leaves the territory of origin (p.559). In Deleuze and Guattari's writing it is "the very process of thinking and becoming different from the norm" (the movement of deterritorialisation and the operation of lines of flight) that is seen as having "the power to transform social and material realities" (Lenz Taguchi, 2016, p.220). In the field of education this work is seen to offer promising possibilities for resisting and interrogating taken-for-granted 'truths' or 'self-evidences' concerning the essential nature of learning and the learner-subject (Duhn, 2006), and as opening a space for "envisaging new ways of relating to the world and to otherness" (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p.118).

At the same time, the primacy of the rhizomatic in DeleuzoGuattarian ontology is not to be mistaken as unqualified valourisation of pure change (Nail, 2017); encounters involving openings to the new are recognised as not always productive or positive; what is new and innovative may over time become rigid and stultifying. A line of flight may be creative, but may also be destructive, perhaps even catastrophic. Additionally, lines of flight can "encounter organisations that will restratify everything" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p.10). Tensions between working with the already-known and creating the new, and between freedom, structure and control are viewed as an inevitable part of life. Dynamics such as old and new are not treated as mutually exclusive or able to be mapped onto simple binaries such as good/bad; movements of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation are considered "always connected" and "caught up in one another" (p.11). These ideas resonate strongly with Barad's (2007) insistence that phenomena must be studied in their entanglements.

Barad: a focus on performativity as 'intra-activity'

DeleuzoGuattarian ontology shares many affinities both with Barad's (2007) notion of entanglement and her call to focus on the "mode of performativity" (p.3). Barad's concept of performativity is, she says, derived from "important insights" from Judith Butler, Michel Foucault, Donna Haraway, Vicky Kirby and Joseph Rouse and the work of Niels Bohr in philosophy and quantum mechanics (p.129). Her reworking of the notion of performativity as a theoretical tool to offer a performative understanding of discursive practices is "precisely about a contestation of the excessive power granted to language to determine what is real…an invitation *not* to turn everything (including material bodies) into words" (p.121) (my emphasis).

> Language has been granted too much power. The linguistic turn, the interpretative turn, the cultural turn: it seems that at every turn lately every 'thing' — even materiality — is turned into a matter of language or some other form of cultural representation….Language matters. Discourse matters. Culture matters. There is an important sense in which the only thing that doesn't seem to matter anymore is matter". (p.120)

Performativity — understood as "intra-activity" — is a theorising of the material as dynamic relationality: "not a static relationality but a doing" (Barad, 2007, p.122). In contrast to the concept of 'inter-activity' which denotes the idea of activity that occurs between bounded entities, the notion of "intra activity' — one Barad derives from Bohr — denotes the idea that 'things' are constituted and reconstituted by iterative activity, as opposed to having inherently determinate boundaries or properties. Barad uses entanglement to refer to the way that phenomena, practices, events and individuals not only become relationally intertwined but "iteratively reconfigured through each intra-action"(p.ix). Hence for Barad, as for Deleuze and Guattari, it is about the doing implicated in effecting and becoming.

In Barad's (2007) conception of intra-activity there is no clear divide between discourse and the material; the material is "always already material-discursive" (p.140). Barad here reworks a Foucauldian-inspired construction of discourse *not* as language alone (what is said), but "that which constrains and enables what can be said" (p.146); material and discursive are viewed as intertwined, interdependent, and mutually constitutive. Lenz Taguchi (2010) describes this relationship as "the

discursive being immanent to the material and the material being immanent to the discursive" (p.29). For Barad this is about what "emerge[s] from a field of possibilities", not a field that is static or singular, but "a dynamic and contingent multiplicity" of entangled relations (p.147).

Intra-active performativity, Barad (2007) says, involves rethinking a host of fundamental concepts: notions of being, knowing, identity, and agency. Practices of knowing and being are "not isolable" but "mutually implicated":

> knowing is a matter of part of the world making itself intelligible to another part.... We don't obtain knowledge by standing outside the world; we know because we are *of* the world. We are part of the world in its differential becoming. (p.185)

Barad (2007) proposes *onto-epistemology* "the study of practices of knowing in being" (p.185), as a better way to think about the understandings we need to engage with — knowledge as a "material practice ... *not an ideational affair*" (p.342). These ideas of attending closely to the entanglements of doing, being and knowing, and to human and non-human in what actually comes to matter, are ideas I pick up on in this thesis through focusing on modes of operating as modes of being, doing, knowing, and relating. These ideas, like Lenz Taguchi's (2010) notion of intra-active pedagogy, are also taken as inferrring a focus on the whole curriculum event, including the often obscured role of the environment and the generative role of its materials.

Barad's (2007) notion of performativity, which she terms *post-humanist,* treats humans and non-humans, and the material and the discursive, as mutually constitutive and inextricably linked. The use of the term "post-humanist", Barad explains, calls into question the "givenness" of the categories 'human' and 'non-human' prompting instead closer scrutiny of the material-discursive practices through which these differential boundaries are stabilised and destabilised (p.126). Bodies are not viewed as objects with inherent boundaries and properties, but as "material-discursive phenomena". For Barad, as for Deleuze and Guattari, 'human' bodies are not held to be inherently different from 'non-human' ones: "What constitutes the 'human' (and the 'nonhuman') is not a fixed pregiven notion, but nor is it a free-floating ideality ...but rather it is a material dynamics of intra-activity" (p.141).

Not only are there important resonances here between Barad and Deleuze (and Guattari) in their common posthumanist decentring of the human subject, but also and importantly, in the emphasis they put on the encounters through which things become different. For Deleuze "new powers of becoming are always being produced. Indeed the only thing that returns or is repeated is the power of difference" (Colebrook, 2002, p.60). For Barad (2007):

> Difference cannot be taken for granted; it matters — indeed it is what matters. The world is not populated with things that are more or less the same or different from one another. Relations do not follow relata, but the other way around. Matter is neither fixed or given nor the mere end result of different processes. Matter is produced and productive, generated and generative. Matter is agentive, not a fixed essence or property of things. Matter is differentiating, and which differences come to matter, matter in the iterative production of different differences. (pp.136-137)

Such ideas may seem a long way from the world of young children and education. However, it is my contention that Barad's questions — about how matter matters and "*how the body's materiality* (including for example its anatomy and physiology) *and other material forces* … (including nonhuman ones) *actively matter to the process of materialization*" (p.65) — are fundamental to matters of pedagogy, a major focus of this thesis.

The research use of these concepts

The primacy Deleuze and Barad put on the encounters through which we may become different — what Deleuze calls differentiation and Barad intra-action — is being increasingly taken up in feminist and educational theorising as opening up critical and creative opportunities for rethinking difference. Feminist cartographer/philosopher Rosi Braidotti, who is a key theorist credited with coining the term "neo-materialism" and providing a genealogy of it (Dolphijn & van der Tuin, 2012), draws on the Deleuzian/DeleuzoGuattarian counter-figurations of the becoming-body, difference and Otherness, to work at dislodging the hegemonic exclusions she sees wrought by a practice of categorising, that "translates difference into binary and hierarchical relations of 'worth-less-than'" (Braidotti in Dolphijn & van der Tuin, 2012, p.99).

In the education field, Dahlberg and Moss (2005), as early supporters of the Deleuzian/DeleuzoGuattarian call for multiplicity and openness to difference, press for educational institutions to be "places where the Other is not made into the Same, but which open up instead for diversity, difference and otherness, for new possibilities and potentialities" (p.2). Like others, they find inspiration in the pedagogy of listening of Reggio Emilia and its commitment to work with 'the hundred languages of children', an approach cited as productive of conditions and relations that value and enable difference (Davies, 2014; Lenz Taguchi, 2010; Ohlsson, 2009). Davies writes of such a pedagogy needing to work at engaging with "the very specificity of each person" (p.1) and as also and importantly, needing to foster an openness to becoming different in one's encounters with others. This focus on the capacity to enter into encounters with others, of being open to being effected by the other, and being open to becoming different in one's usual modes of being, is a focus I seek to explore further, particularly in considering the implications of the curriculum/assessment priorities in each of the settings and through the transition to school.

"Concept as method"

In my endeavours to work with these theoretical constructs in this thesis I followed the lead of other researchers in looking to the suggestions Deleuze and Guattari and Barad (and Haraway) themselves offer on ways of approaching the reading and use of their work (and that of others). In the case Deleuze and Guattari (1987) this is the strategy of "plugging in" (p.5), and in the case of Barad (and Haraway), the concept of diffraction.

The phrase plugging in is one Deleuze and Guattari (1987) use in discussing how to approach the reading/writing/use/content of books. Their suggestion is that the question to ask is not "what a book means" (p.4), but rather what it "can be plugged into, must be plugged into in order to work" (p.5). Hence, as St Pierre (2013) notes, while a commitment to engage "long and hard" with DeleuzoGuattarian concepts is important, the invitation to have concepts drawn from their writing and "plugged into" to see if, how and whether it works for you, frees one from becoming overly caught up in whether one has "'gotten it right'" (p.284). In a similar vein, Mazzei and McCoy say of the notion of plugging in Deleuzian concepts that "being faithful to Deleuze" (Mazzei, 2010, p.515) is not about invoking a fidelity to getting Deleuze right,

but rather a fidelity to "*think with* Deleuzian constructs in a way that might produce previously unthought questions, practices and knowledge" (Mazzei & McCoy, 2010, p.504) (emphasis added)(see also Jackson & Mazzei, 2012).

This idea of 'thinking with' concepts also resonates strongly with what Lenz Taguchi (2016) — following Colebrook (2014) — describes as using "concept as method", a research process of "learning *from* and *with* the concept", a process in which "the event is 'taken in for questioning'", which in turn "might reconfigure the event, the problem, and the concept itself" (p.214).

The concept of diffraction, which Barad (2007, 2014), after Haraway (1997, 2008b), draws on, carries notable resonances with DeleuzoGuattarian rhizomatics in that it too promotes creative experimentation and focuses on engaging with 'real world' differences, difference-producing effects, complexity and messiness. Diffraction — a concept derived from physics and concerned with the way differences operate — is a concept Haraway is credited with first introducing into feminist theorising in an attempt to move away from linguisticism and the assumption that words have authority over things (van der Tuin, 2011). Diffraction, Haraway (1997) says, "is about heterogeneous history....Diffraction patterns record the history of interaction, interference, reinforcement, difference" (p.273). This she describes as offering a "geometry and optics for relations of difference" (1992, cited in Barad, 2014, p.172). Both Haraway and Barad frame difference as "differencing", configuring it as a verb, as in Deleuzian/DeleuzoGuattarian thinking. "[D]ifferences are formed through intra-activity" (Barad, 2014, p.175), and produced performatively.

Barad (2007, 2014) takes the notion of diffraction and the focus on difference and relationalities further methodologically — putting it to work, for example, in the practice of presenting selected insights of feminist theorising, quantum physics and biological science, read through each other. In the opening section of her paper "Diffracting diffraction", for instance, Barad uses the example of earthworms ingesting, tunneling and burrowing and so allowing oxygen in, opening the soil up and breathing new life into it, as a means of illuminating the importance of the doing in what comes to matter. In somewhat similar vein I seek to bring the actual/performative practices of "curriculum-ing" (Sellers, 2009, p.1) into frame in this research, through incorporating video/visual *and* verbal texts into the thesis assemblage, to be read diffractively though one another.

The relational materialist ideas of Deleuze and Guattari and Barad (and Haraway) discussed in this chapter form part of their larger geopolitical and eco-philosophical projects. Haraway (2008b) describes it as finding new ways of thinking which the challenges of the 21st century require of us, to involve others and our entanglement with those others, a set of entanglements ranging from our own diverse inner worlds and bodies, to planet ecology. Whilst engaging with this scale of worldly becoming is well beyond the scope of this thesis, this is nevertheless the relational materialist ethos of enquiry that I endeavoured to work with in exploring questions of the curriculum/assessment priorities and modes of operating being promoted (or stifled) in everyday EC/NE practices and in relation to the phenomenon of transition to school.

Chapter Three: Literature review

This literature review is presented in two overlapping parts. Part one focuses on notions of literacy and how these interconnect with ideas about multimodality and the expanding reach of relational materialist thinking. Part two focuses on transition to school, looking both at the micro-practices of inducting children (and parents) into starting-school priorities, and the wider political rationalities and assemblages, seen as tying into what constitutes a successful transition.

Parts one and two of the review, read through one another, offer useful insights into the entangled state of relations between the two discourses. For example, successful performance in literacy — "first and foremost" learning to read (Spencer, 2009, p.218) — is often construed as the ultimate indicator of a successful school transition. Both bodies of literature share a traditionally strong reliance on discourses of readiness; both reflect a recent strengthening influence of socioculturalism. Both literatures also intersect with critical, poststructural, and relational materialist endeavours that in their different ways expand into questions of pedagogical and political priorities, power relations, and issues of multiplicity. Viewed as assemblages, a perspective supported by this review, the fields of transition and literacy studies show themselves to be complex and shifting, and a confluence of macro and micro forces and phenomena.

Part one: Tracing the assemblages of literacy, multimodality and semiotics

Lankshear and Knobel (2003) suggest that the very different conceptions or approaches to literacy, within what is an increasingly diverse and highly contested field, may be categorised and mapped along two key continua — *modal* and *social*. The first continuum traces an increasing plurality of modes, with literacy described as ranging from print-based to multimodal texts; the second relates to the extent to which literacy is viewed as *social* practice. This is seen as ranging from the idea of literacy as a context-free set of skills limited to "the generic capacity to encode and decode alphabetic print", to literacy seen as the "competent handling of texts that are meaningful to 'insiders' of particular sociocultural practices and discourse communities" (Gee, Hull, & Lankshear, 1996, cited in Lankshear & Knobel, 2003, p.73).

A similar trajectory is described in other historical accounts (Gillen & Hall, 2003; Murphy, 2003; Razfar & Gutiérrez, 2003). Under the early influence of behaviourist psychology (Skinner, 1957) the study of literacy focused on reading as a discrete set of skills and instructional processes: breaking reading down into sub-set skills, e.g., de-coding correspondences such as letter-sound, letter-image; linking the learning of these skills to reinforcement systems seen as enabling children to acquire the requisite mastery; and measurable behaviour. Under the influence of developmentalism, reading remained the main preoccupation, but with the emphasis shifting to reading readiness. From this perspective reading is viewed as an intra-individual cognitive process that unfolds "in concert with biological development" (Teale & Sulzby, 1986, cited in Razfar & Gutiérrez, 2003, p.36) and as linked to a particular mental age. One 1931 study, for example, proposed that beginning reading needed to be postponed until a child reached "the mental age of six years and six months" (Morphett & Washburne, cited in Gillen & Hall, 2003, p.4). That study is commonly associated with the onset of readiness testing (Murphy, 2003).

The rise of sociocultural approaches to language and literacy emerging out of earlier anthropological approaches to 'orality' and 'literacy' during the 70s and 80s saw literacy studies move away from focusing on the individual as the unit of analysis, and literacy as an in-the-head phenomenon, toward a view of literacy as situated, socially mediated, and as involving joint participation in literacy events. The result was a host of studies that "put context at the centre of understandings about literacy" (Brandt & Clinton, 2002, p.340). Literacy researchers now not only commonly concerned themselves with the way children and others co-constructed situated literacies, but also with ideological questions of culture and power (Street & Lefstein, 2007).

For reasons of space, it is not possible to provide a detailed tracing of the trajectory of these earlier developments. I therefore turn to the efforts to strengthen a focus on multimodality, to the shifts sited toward the end of Lankshear and Knobel's (2003) two continua, and the work of The New London Group (NLG), the group that coined the term multiliteracies. I then discuss the emerging turn in literacy studies toward relational materialism and the semiotic role of the material — shifts the continua somewhat predate. This saw an increasing effort to conceptualise semiotic modes more broadly, and in less text-centred ways, with what counts as literacy

viewed as becoming evermore expansive, and 'slippery' (Kuby & Rowsell, 2017). Conversely, as becomes apparent in the transition to school section of the review, what counts as literacy has, in this same era, become more narrowly prescribed and standardised (Spencer, 2009). The constructions of assemblage and entanglement discussed in the previous two chapters help provide insight into this shift.

The New London Group: Multiliteracies and the age of the digital

The forming of the NLG (1996) coincided with, and was enormously influenced by the explosion of digital technologies. Gee (2010) describes this small group of international scholars, of whom he was a member, as an amalgam of new literacy studies, situated cognition studies and "other movements" (p.38); Kress, a founding and leading figure in the field of multimodal social semiotics, was also a member. Brought together by the perceived need for an approach to literacy able to account for the burgeoning of multimedia environments, the NLG (1996) wrote a manifesto for 'new times' — times seen as technologically driven, culturally and linguistically diverse, and increasingly globalised. This position paper introduced the notion of *pedagogy as design*, reflecting the idea of literacy practice moving from the *authoring* of texts to the *designing* of texts, and proposed six 'modally-derived' areas: linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, spatial, and multimodal.

Digitality was seen as the defining feature of the new wave of studies (Gee, 2010). As Knobel and Lankshear (2006) put it in their paper *Discussing new literacies*:

> We argue that what makes a literacy new has to do with two kinds of 'stuff', which we call 'technical stuff' and 'ethos stuff' respectively...the new technical stuff is digitality...the ethos stuff has to do with the kind of <u>mindset</u> informing a literacy practice (p.317) (my emphasis).

The kinds of *mindset* Knobel and Lankshear go on to describe also link closely to new technologies; for example, rethinking notions of text as "in change" rather than book oriented (p.318). Thus the impetus for reconceptualising notions of text owed much to the materiality of digital technology and the affordances this brought for drawing on a range of modalities to integrate words with images, sound, music and movement (Gee, 2010; Hull & Nelson, 2005). The spread of the digital was thus strongly influential in bringing research attention to the transformative semiotic capacities of material technologies.

Literacy and the turn to social semiotic multimodality

From a modal standpoint, one key legacy of social semiotic multimodality was its challenge to the privileged place language occupied within the hierarchy of modes as "the sine qua non of rationality" (Kress, 2011, p. 206). Kress in particular is widely recognised as pioneering a wider body of work exploring the notion of language as "only one piece in a literacy puzzle that is completed by other modes" (Wohlwend, 2008, p.127).

Particularly notable in terms of this review, is the way in which the privileging of certain modes was identified by researchers concerned with understanding the capacities of very young children. In reporting on her video case study of the home and preschool meaning-making practices of four 3-year-old children, Flewitt (2005a) makes the point, also made by others, that "different semiotic modes carry differentiated currencies in the current educational climate where more easily 'assessable' modes of spoken and written language are prized and the multimodality of pre-school children's meaning making remains undervalued and under-researched" (p.209). Sheets-Johnstone (2011) identifies movement as an area of particular neglect, contrasting the differing axiologies of the often "kinetically-charged" primacy of movement in young children with what she terms the "muted kinetic character" of the adult (p.462).

Rowe (2003) suggests a key distinction in research focusing on young children's multimodal semiotic practices relates to whether researchers view these practices as the beginning of a lifelong process of learning how different modes are drawn on and combined in their communities, *or* as immature practices that ideally will one day be superseded by their progressively maturing conventional reading and writing abilities.

The turn to discourse

The turn to discourse came in the 1990s as the field of multimodality expanded from its linguistic and psychological foundations to draw from anthropology, sociology and discourse theory (Jewitt, 2008). The shift was welcomed by many social semiotic researchers (Kress included) as offering a usefully broader unit of analysis. Discourse analysis and a focus on the way in which practices are discursively produced helped bring together a focus on situated meaning-making and a consideration of the constitutive elements in particular contexts of use. For example, it allows a focus on

the way different individuals use particular media or artefacts semiotically, and/or the way they are used differently within different sets of relations (e.g., learner/teacher), and in different contexts (e.g., play/instruction). The coalescing of these developments and the central place of discourse in Foucault's highly influential analytic of power assisted in opening pedagogical contexts to discourse analysis informed by critical and poststructural theory (Rogers, 2011). Furthermore, *multimodal* discourse analysis helped in turn to challenge the "problematically exclusionary focus on language" within discourse studies and discourse analysis practices in educational literacy studies (Kress, 2011, p.208).

There are important resonances between the work reviewed thus far which looks to account for the material role of the body and its senses, and the artefacts and resources used semiotically, with relational materialist efforts to more fully account for the role of the material, the focus of the next section. However, for relational materialists, addressing the over-privileging of human agency and issues of anthropocentrism and linguisticism seen as characterising social constructionist and poststructuralist accounts, was fundamental to bringing research attention to the significance of human/more-than-human materiality as a generative world-making force (Alaimo & Hekman, 2008).

Literacy and the material turn

Emerging interconnectivities with efforts to study heterogeneous networks, using unifying conceptual frameworks such as those offered by Activity Theory (Miettinen, 2009), Actor Network Theory (ANT) (Latour, 1997, 2005), DeleuzoGuattarian constructs such as assemblage (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) and Barad's (2007) concept of intra-activity/performativity, are playing a central role in endeavours to bring the material into the literacy frame. The implications of such thinking for literacy studies and researchers interested in semiotics are beginning to be more extensively explored.

Wohlwend (2011), in her three-year ethnographic classroom study, for example, combined activity theory and social semiotics together with what she termed "action-oriented multimodal analysis", to study young children's use of different modes in the processes of play and design as action texts (p.244). Wohlwend's focus, like other researchers of the social semiotic drawing on Activity

Theory, was on the *relation* of semiotic and material tools-embodied action, the use of materials, and the implications of the way various aspects of the physical environment are configured. Wohlwend's recounting of a 15-minute episode of puppet making, for example, details a child's experimental encounters with the affordances of scissors and masking tape: the way for instance, the unruliness of the tape thwarts one of his nine cutting endeavours as it "curls and twists back on itself" (p.255). Resonating with the macro-relations of power featuring more fully in the transition section of this review, Wohlwend highlights classroom-level tensions between the discourse of multimodal play-based literacy and US federal and state assessment discourses involving skills mastery, achievement benchmarks, accountability mandates, and annual standardised testing.

The first literacy theorists to seriously engage with ANT, according to Reder and Davila (2005), were Brandt and Clinton (2002). It should be added though that early developers of ANT were themselves directly concerned with the role texts (and other inscriptions) played in the development of science and technology. Brandt and Clinton describe the work of Bruno Latour and ANT as answering the need for "perspectives that show the various hybrids, alliances, and multiple agents and agencies that simultaneously occupy acts of reading and writing" (p.347). They highlight Latour's focus on interaction as a site of meaning-making as offering literacy researchers a way to break from the tendency for ethnographic accounts to over-concentrate on local perspectives, to "see the ways that literacy arises out of local, particular, situated human interactions while also seeing how it regularly arrives from other places — infiltrating, disjointing, and displacing local life" (p.343). Particularly significant, Brandt and Clinton argue, are the insights gained by following the ANT imperative to fully attend to the role *materials* play as active mediators, or what Latour terms 'actants' in their own right. Examples in Brandt and Clinton's study include the way textbooks and the internet are seen to operate transcontextually. In this study I too seek to pay particular attention to the way forces and phenomena from other places infiltrate local pedagogies.

DeleuzoGuattarian constructs have also been used in a growing number of literacy and semiotic studies in a variety of ways. This diversity of approach is illustrated in Masny and Cole's (2009) edited volume: *Multiple literacies theory: A Deleuzian perspective,* a predominantly theoretical rather than empirical collection. In

this volume Masny (2009) outlines what could be described as Multi Literacy Theory's manifesto of ideas about literacy:

- Literacies are constructs.
- They consist of words, gestures, attitudes, ways of speaking, writing, valuing: ways of becoming with the world.
- They are about texts that take on multiple meanings and are taken up as visual, oral, written, tactile…
- They constitute texts in a broad sense (for example music, art, physics, mathematics) that fuse with religion, gender, race, culture and power, and that produce speakers, writers, artists: communities.
- Literacies are actualized according to a specific context in time and in space…
- Literacies (e.g. personal, community, school-based, etc) are about…reading the world and self as texts. (p.181)

Leander and Boldt (2012), who were amongst the first to pioneer this work empirically in the field of literacy studies, offer an analysis of a 10-year-old boy's day of manga-inspired play, drawing on a DeleuzoGuattarian perspective to problematise the NLG framing of literacy, the dominant conceptual paradigm in new literacy studies. They contend that the NLG depiction of literacy activity as planful, rational, human-controlled design constitutes a "domestication" (p.24) of literacy practice, making it difficult to conceive what else might be going on. In contrast, their analysis of play as assemblage foregrounds multiple interactive forces, phenomena, and modalities: the emergent 'human-and'/inter-relational nature of the activity, the affective intensities it creates and is fed by, and the movement-related dynamics of a body "in constant movement in an environment that is itself always in motion" (p.29). They ask — drawing on the DeleuzoGuattarian (1987) conjunction "and… and…and" (p.27) — "What might we make of the invitation to consider literacy in 'and…and…and' relations?" (p.41). This question resonates strongly with the thesis focus on pedagogical openings toward greater multiplicity.

Literacy and the posthumanist turn

Recent efforts to revise the paradigms of poststructuralism and cultural studies "in ways that can more productively account for the agency, semiotic force, and dynamics of *bodies and natures*", a central theme of the material turn (Alaimo & Heckman, 2008, p.6), have seen the field of literacy studies become more body-focused and performatively-oriented. This is shown in calls for a reconceptualisation of literacies that take as their starting point a fuller range of human modes of being, doing,

knowing and relating. However, as Hackett and Somerville (2017) observe, the focus here is most often *human* bodies rather than their interactions with the *material* world. The interest for these researchers, as for a growing number of others, is in a posthumanist reconceptualisation of literacies that not only takes as starting point a fuller range of *human* modes of being, doing, knowing and relating, but which also seeks to take account of how these modes occur in complex intra-active entanglements within *more-than-human* worlds.

A special issue of the *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy* calling for literacy education to explicitly engage with posthumanist ideas further illustrates how this is opening up new ways of thinking about literacy (Kuby & Rowsell, 2017). For the contributing researchers to this volume, the material turn in literacy studies is one of decentring the human subject, of shifting away from notions of the autonomous agentic subject as the centre of experience, learning and knowledge (Hermansson & Saar, 2017). The child-subject of literacy is re/conceptualised as emergent in a relational field (Ohlsson, 2009) , in entangled 'becoming with' the world (Haraway, 2008b). Studies in this volume, many of which draw extensively on Deleuze (and Guattari) and Barad (and Haraway), and the educational work their ideas have influenced — Lenz Taguchi (2010), Ohlsson (2009) and others — offer views of literacy assemblages in which:

- there is a break away fom the frequent conflation of thinking, language and rationality associated with constructs of literacy and the tying of what it means to be human to these three things (Hacket & Somerville, 2017)
- affect is forefronted (Boldt & Leander, 2017; Hacket & Somerville, 2017; Harwood & Collier, 2017)
- notions of text are opened up and destabilised (Harwood & Collier, 2017)
- literacy events are characterised as relationships between multiple elements unfolding and enfolding (Hermansson & Saar, 2017) operating in intra-active, emergent entanglement (Boldt & Leander, 2017)
- different trajectories, energies and intensities are produced, bringing into being the familar and the same, as well as unanticipated new potentials and radical departures (Boldt & Leander, 2017)
- intentionality or agency is distributed across non-human and human actors (Boldt & Leander, 2017)

- there is interest in what is brought into relation and in difference-producing effects (Boldt & Leander, 2017), a becoming-other "with" the world (Haraway, 2008b)
- human and non-human materiality matter, shaping but not determining what eventuates (Boldt & Leander, 2017)
- meaning-making is decentred (Wohlwend, Peppler, Keune, & Thompson, 2017) toward the being and becoming of matter.

In further reconfigurings, Hackett and Somerville (2017) draw on Sheets-Johnstone to press for a reconceptualisation of literacies that takes movement and sound as starting point, framing this as a shift toward "ways that reconcile with young children's being in the world" (p.389). Harwood and Collier (2017) frame children's play as a literacy practice, arguing that literacy learning in its broadest sense "is about one's place in the world and the ability to communicate and connect with others", human and non-human (p.348). Thiel and Jones (2017) examine the production of what they term literacies of race, class and place, literacies acquired as a process of coming to know about race, class and place through material-discursive intra-action.

The terrain such reconfigurations open up, where literacies are envisaged as material-semiotic modes and as being-producing processes, is the space in which I see the current study located. Yet while I welcome notions of literacy broadening to make more space for the multiplicity of children's modes of being, doing, knowing and relating, I have concerns about the potentially reductive effects of subsuming children's modes of being under the homogenising and domesticating motif of literacy. The problem here is akin to the issue of a discourse of learning/learnification and a conception of life being 'all about' learning. Both lead potentially to a narrowing of children's possible identities and subjectivities, a trajectory I explore further in the transition to school part of the review and again in Chapter six.

Part Two: The transition to school assemblage

This part of the review traces the way different studies have concerned themselves with the positions and perspectives of those most directly involved in transition: children, parents and families, and teachers. Interconnectivities with wider macro-political transnational dynamics are a focus throughout, especially in the concluding section. Further key strands of discussion include: the issue of transition-related

curriculum/assessment priorities, the way diversity is met and conceptualised in different studies, and the positioning of materiality.

Children's positioning in the transition literature

The inducting of children into school modes of being, doing, knowing and relating tends to be framed somewhat unproblematically in much of the transition literature as part and parcel of a successful transition, and adaptations children must make. As Leafgren (2015) puts it, the prevailing perspective is "assimilationist" (p.96). One illustration of this is what Graue and Reinke (2014) refer to as "the remedial tone" of much of the early school readiness literature (p.160). Another is framing successful transition as "the adjustment of children to school" (Margetts, 2002, p.106), and as aiming to "facilitate adaptive coping" (Dunlop, 2014, p.40). Dockett (2014) reports that transition to school programmes remain the most commonly employed strategy for overcoming transition-related challenges, with many such programmes narrowly focused on preparing children for school. Notably too, while a growing body of literature promotes the notion of schools being 'child-ready' (Broström, 2000), this cannot necessarily be taken to indicate a preparedness to challenge or problematise school priorities in any substantive way (Broström, 2017; Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2017).

Transition studies commonly make reference to positioning children at the centre of the research (Graue, 2006; Margetts, 2002; Perry, Dockett & Petriwskyj, 2014), which seems, in many respects, a commonsensical if not laudatory focus. Yet as Vandenbroeck and Bouverne-De Bie (2006) caution, the issue with the central place of the child in much of the transition literature is that while focusing on children as separate from adults may in some instances lead to better understandings of children, treating children as a separate category can also mask commonalities and interconnections in how specific groups of children and their parents are marginalised. Petriwskyj (2014) makes the point that an overly child-focussed view risks overlooking the multiple possible priorities of different families and group-oriented communities. The importance of attending to interconnectivities and multiplicities is of concern in this study also.

A number of studies emphasise individual differences in children's transitions. Dunlop (2014) and Margetts (2002) advocate seeing each child's transition as unique,

with Dunlop pointing out that for some children "the apparently same transitions are toxic" (p.40). Peters (2004) also stresses that individual children's experiences of transition can be highly variable, as was evident with the seven case study children she followed from their last few months in an EC setting through their first three years at school. She suggests that no matter how academically able a child may be, they can still experience problems. Teacher-researchers Recchia and Bentley (2015) write of "audacious...talkative, idea-laden Samantha", a child they taught in preschool, becoming "silent" in the school classroom, and of a child's dad telling them of his newly-transitioned daughter's strategy to "do what she's told without questioning" (p.161). Broström (2005) notes "a number of well-functioning preschool children lose competencies during their transition to school", dubbing this an "illogical phenomenon" (p.18). The interplay between school expectations and children's modes of operating in such accounts suggests a complex entanglement of conformity and multiplicity.

'Child voice'

In seeking better understanding of the variabilty of children's transition experiences, researchers have increasingly turned to children themselves for insights, sometimes referrred to in the literature as a 'child voice' perspective (Dockett & Perry, 2015). Notwithstanding the valid critique of the uncritical uptake of this perspective (Reay, 2006), this work is seen as significant in helping to surface differing perspectives between children, parents and teachers, sometimes bringing attention to unquestioned and unexamined assumptions. Ackesjö (2014), for example, in her 18-month ethnographic study of moving to school transitions in Sweden, pointed to children's perspectives that went against the common wisdom of the desirabilty of continuity, suggesting that transitions involving discontinuities between EC education and school "actually can be desirable" (p.12). Notably too, this study is one of a number (see also, Einarsdóttir, 2014; Peters, 2003) that point to the importance of friends and peers commonly highlighted as a top priority by children. The aspect of transition that children here identifed as most problematic was separating from old friends and having to form new peer relationships. This differs from the perspective researchers commonly offer where the concern may not be so much the value of friendship per se, but more about the child finding the 'right' friend (Brooker, 2002;

Peters, 2003, 2010). That is the friend that helps instrumentally achieve the transition-subject's successful transition. Brooker (2002), in her ethnographic study in a reception class, refers to two case study children as eventually managing to become integrated into the classroom "through the catalyst of a well-adapted 'best friend'" (p. 151).

In Loizou's (2011) study of 55 first graders in Greece, children were asked to draw and talk about their kindergarten and first-grade experiences and questioned about the teachers they were fond of. They spoke of teachers who did not shout or get angry with them, who showed love, were helpful and explained things. Here again it was peers and friends children frequently positioned as an important source of support and empowerment, especially in first grade. Children also made particular reference to various aspects of the physical environment, something seldom a priority focus for transition researchers. Asked what they would have liked elementary school to have that kindergarten had, most children commented on the lack of toys and material equipment, e.g., balls, slides, puzzles, swings. Almost all children commented positively on the greater spaciousness of the school, especially the size of the playground allowing for playing more freely.

Lack of toys was raised also in the interviews of first-year school children in an English transition study, with children described as "highly attuned" to changes in the physical environment (White & Sharp, 2007, p. 100). Additional issues children raised with school ways of doing things included being bored by lengthy periods sitting listening to the teacher at mat-time (generally focused on literacy and maths), and having fewer opportunities to choose activities, move around, or go outside. A number of children expressed concern about their ability to cope with the "'hard work'" (p. 99), and several emphasised their dislike of writing.

Children in Mortlock's (2016) observational and interview study of mat-time in three classrooms in Aotearoa specifically referred to the physical discomfort of the confined space, "feeling squashed" (p. 150), and the difficulty of retaining the particular body posture required for the duration expected. One child drew Mortlock a map of the various possible mat-time seating positions (front, back, middle and side), describing how these positions aligned with classroom power relations, for example, where you were placed if the teacher wanted to keep an eye on you.

Collectively, these studies point to how children's perspectives of the move to school may differ from those of teachers, parents and researchers in a range of ways. As Prout (2001) puts it, "while any one child sees and speaks from multiple, combined and intersecting positions — of gender, class, ethnicity, disability and so on…within this diversity there appear to also be commonalities between children that are located within a set of generational relationships" (p.195). At the same time, as other studies highlight, it would be a mistake to construe from this that differences in perspective operate as an adult-child binary. One English study, for example, used interviews and questionnaires with 21 children aged 3 to 8 and their parents and teachers to explore the different perceptions of "independent learning" (Hendy & Whitebread, 2000). Children's and parents' responses *both* suggested children were capable of independent thought and action from a very young age. Contrastingly, for many of the teachers the predominant concern was found to be "the organisational element of children's independence" (p. 247). The researchers highlighted a notable lack of reference to "the cognitive aspects of independent learning skills" (p. 251), e.g., problem solving, in teacher responses. A further contrast was that teachers of the preschool children generally perceived their children to be more competent than was the case for the teachers of children at school. The researchers' view was that the main thrust of teachers' expectations and practices at school was "moving children toward greater dependence on teachers rather than less" (p.251), the experience of schooling appearing "to quickly dissuade [children] from independent action" (p. 251). The dynamics of power/control involved in children's capacity to act within the assemblages of transition are a particular focus in governmentality studies, as seen in those discussed in the next and subsequent sections.

Relations of power in the 'schoolifying' of children's modes of being, doing, knowing, and relating

Foucault's (1994) notion of governmentality and the disciplinary role of various technologies have been taken up in a number of classroom studies examining the 'schoolifying' of children's modes of being, doing, knowing, and relating. This work has also been instrumental in drawing attention to the material aspect of various technologies of governance; for example, the way space is used to regulate movement through individualised spacings and prescribed groupings, often invoked to prevent

pupils from interacting with each other (Boldt, 2001; Hargreaves & Affouneh, 2017), and the way activities and time are used by teachers to control the content, pace, order and timetabling of what pupils do (Hargreaves & Affouneh, 2017). Foucault (1977) also highlights what he terms "signalization" practices e.g., "bells, clapping of hands, gestures, a mere glance from the teacher", such practices, working to place the body "in a little world of signals" whereby the child-pupil is to respond automatically (p. 166). Boldt (2001) draws on Foucault in emphasising the way the child-body serves "as a central site for the enactment of power relations", highlighting particular strictures around children's movements, and the "lengthy rituals of 'practicing' proper movement" (p. 94) children are put through.

US teacher-researchers Leafgren and Bornhorst (2016) draw on Foucault (and Deleuze) to underscore the level of control sought over "where the child-body should be and what it should be allowed to do" (p.2), and the "precise and inflexible procedures" that operate as "techniques of subtle and constant coercion" (p.6). From observational research in their own and others' classrooms these researchers draw attention to the way children are inducted into their roles as "judges of normality" of each other as well as themselves. They raise as a particular issue the impact on children of being encouraged to disregard the discomfort of peers and the exclusions meted out, expressing concern at practices seen as working to "exclude humanity" (p. 9), as with a child punished for stepping out of line to help a fallen classmate.

Reay (2006) foregrounds power relations amongst classroom peers as part of what she refers to as a pupil's need "to straddle the apex of two hierachies of esteem...official knowledge and learning and the peer group" (p. 175). While the 8-year-old children in Reay's interview and observation-based study were further on in school life than the newly transitioning children who are the focus of the current study, the significance of their peer hierachies resonates with studies in EC (MacNaughton, 2005). Reay's contention, which I view as highly relevant to the current study, is that there is a need to move beyond the power imbalances between teachers and children to a more complexity-sensitive analysis of classroom dynamics. For Reay, this included moving into the realm of how inclusionary and exclusionary power differentials operated in relation to different groups of children *as well as* in relation to classroom pedagogies. On the one hand Reay seeks to give visibilty to the entangled intra-mix of differences of social class, gender, ethnicity, and perceived academic abilty seen as operating in complex,

unfair and detrimental ways in peer group power struggles; on the other hand she works to highlight the school's role in the creating of these hierachies, seen as encouraged and exacerbated through classroom practices such as "'top sets'", and labels such as "'gifted and talented'", as well as through the strongly influential "narrow remit" of standards-based pedagogy (p. 179). Reay refers to her work as warning against the uncritical adoption of children's perspectives, a warning given also by MacNaughton (2005) in relation to exclusionary and limiting peer practices operating in EC settings. Reay's broader call for attention to be paid to what she terms the numerous overlapping fields of power and influence within the classroom carries strong resonances with the DeleuzoGuattarian/Baradian notion of assemblage as an entangled intramixing of forces.

Further support for a view of transitions, classrooms, and peer hierarchies as a complex intramix of forces is offered by Cosaro and Molinari's (2008) five-month ethnographic study of 21 children moving to school in Emilia-Romagna, Italy. Shifts in peer dynamics noted here included children seen as "the most active leaders at preschool", no longer able to just expect to have others follow them, and several children viewed as "more often followers than leaders", seen as prompted to become more socially proactive (p. 263). Transitions in this study were thus highlighted as providing openings for a reconfiguring of peer hierarchies and friendships, and growth in social skills for both groups of children.

The positioning of parents and families in the transition literature

Parent involvement in children's transition to school has become a focus of increasing interest for researchers and policy makers across many countries, based on what is widely regarded as well-established research evidence of the importance of parent involvement for children's progress as learners (OECD, 2017). The premise drawn on in much of this literature seems to be the "obvious" view "that competent parents can provide support for their children's transition better than ill-informed, badly prepared and non-supported parents" (Wildgruber, Griebal, Niesal & Nagel, 2011, p.2). This intensifying research/policy interest in parent involvement in their children's transitions is associated, nationally and internationally, with a strengthening discourse of lifelong learning, strongly promoted as providing optimal conditions for children's progress as learners (OECD, 2017). Gibbons (2013) sees the New Zealand strategy as

mirroring international policy efforts toward inter-sector alignments to produce "one increasingly coherent (lifelong learning) sector" (p.506).

Research interest in the relationship between parent involvement and children's trajectories as learners across the move to school frequently links to wider policy interest in children's academic learning, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The central thrust of much of this work is illustrated in reports such as that in the US by Van Voorhis, Maier, Epstein, Lloyd and Leung (2013): *The impact of family involvement on the education of children ages 3 to 8: A focus on literacy and maths achievement outcomes and social-emotional skills*. Of the 95 studies the report examines, 52 are literacy-focused and 43 maths-focused; the social-emotional skills referred to in the report title rate little mention. While the report recommends that social outcomes be considered important areas for future research, the rationale given is "that young children's social and emotional preparation for school may be most important for advancing reading and maths skills in…the early grades" (p.82). Notable also is the framing of diversity as the deficit 'other' in the report's finding, that "Parents from diverse backgrounds, when given direction, can become more engaged with their children. And when parents become more engaged, children tend to do better" (p.iii).

Other research directs more critical attention to the remedial targeting of children, families and groups, and notions of parent involvement. Examples are research querying the way in which notions of parent partnership are commonly based on the interests of the school, i.e., parents collaborating *with* the school (Lehrer & Bastien, 2015), and the way in which the substantive decision-making of many transition programmes tends not to involve the parents (Lehrer, 2012). The way in which the difficulties and challenges of transitions impact particularly negatively on the children of already marginalised families is also widely documented (Ball, 2010; Brooker, 2002; Perry, 2014; Skerrett, 2010).

In reviewing the literature on the transition experiences of Māori children in Aotearoa, Skerrett (2010) highlights the ongoing damaging impact of a longstanding deficit focus and the importance of drawing on family and wider cultural funds of knowledge. Skerrett argues that the historical colonised positioning of Māori modes of being, knowing, and relating continues to work against this being achieved. Peters (2010), in addressing the question of particular challenges for both Māori and Pasefika

families in her review of transition literature, notes that while families getting involved and advocating for their children was generally likely "to assist in their transition" (p.3), disparities in ideology and background with the children's teachers were observed to make this difficult. Gibbons (2007) emphasises a wider education-sector issue of difference needing to become "more than a legitimating narrative for policy makers [and] curriculum planners" (p.310).

Dockett (2014) highlights the deficit-focus of Australian transition programmes that single out Aboriginal families as needing remediation. She calls for greater critical reflection on the way transition discourses institutionalise particular expectations into normativities, and the way in which these imposed normativities fail to recognise the strengths and diversity of experiences children and families already have. Perry (2014) cites the evaluation of a preschool curriculum framework in 35 Indigenous Australian communities, showing many children moving from seeing themselves at preschool as successful learners to seeing themselves as failures in the first year of school.

Graue's (2006) transition research in the US highlights the proliferation of various school readiness checklists as targeting parents and functioning as inherently normalising. She describes these readiness checklists, which incorporate highly specific literacy and numeracy items, as a "crazy quilt" of very particular skills and dispositions (p.47). Graue also singles out constructions of readiness arrived at "in the name of responding to difference" which refer to "different readinesses for different children" (p.49), but which manifest as narrowly focused targeted intervention programmes that serve to reinforce pre-existing patterns of social class and ethnic privilege.

Brooker (2003) emphasises hegemonic differences in ideology and background between children's families and teachers in England, referring in her ethnographic study to "a continuum of beliefs and practices" of white working class and Bangladeshi families, "frequently at odds with the school in their understanding of teaching and learning and the roles of adults and children" (p.127). Ang (2010) offers an analysis of recent policy attempts to address cultural diversity in the English foundation stage curriculum, contending that curricula informed by neoliberal discourses of equality and inclusion potentially serve to present an overly homogeneous perspective of cultural diversity. Ang's analysis points to a normative underpinning standard that constructs what gets perceived as a "diverse or 'different' way of being in the world"

(p.45), "as if it is only communities that deviate from the norm which should be identified as 'diverse'" (p.47). Her contention is that such a categorical dualist construction of cultural difference works to obscure fluid 'real world' cultural identities, "hybridisations where children can belong simultaneously to a range of different ethnic categories" (p.47). While Ang's foremost concern here is to do with failures relating to diverse ethnicities, her broader call for pedagogies that enable "multiple positionings, identities, and belongings" (p.48), resonates with the DeleuzoGuattarian-derived emphasis on individuals as a site of multiplicities, singularities and difference, I look to draw on in this thesis.

In focusing on how wider political and international forces work to shape the nature of parent involvement, other writers point to moves toward greater parent involvement as arising out of parents' increasing responsibility to prepare their children for school success and employability, part of a strengthening neo-liberal discourse of "no rights without responsibilties" (Vandenbroeck, Coussée, & Bradt, 2010, p.135). Examining the growth of policy initiatives that increase parents' role in schooling Reay (2004) concludes, "we have now reached a point at the beginning of the 21st century when parental involvement is no longer optional as parents are increasingly seen to be co-educators alongside their children's teachers" (p.76). A similar trend of parents and families as "a target for pedagogicalization" has also been noted in EC (Karila & Alasuutari, 2012, p.23). Ball (2010) links the shift in and heightening of parental responsibility in the UK to the new "economics of learning" (p.159) and to a discourse of "choice and active parenting" that "totalises, individualises and commodifies parents and families as 'consumers' of education and investors in human capital" (p.163). He argues, in a similar vein to Reay, that it is through the circumstances of education policies "which give undue stress to excellence, competition, standards and performance... [and] strategic rather than social relations" (p.163) that parents are encouraged to seek relational advantages for their children, including through resources 'bought in' from the market.

With children's preparation for future success at school increasingly viewed as needing to start early, more parents are observed to be putting greater emphasis on preparing children for formal education (Ang, 2014; Ball, 2010). Alasuutari and Markström (2011) frame this as a shift from the focus on being and becoming social, which traditionally, for many parents and teachers, was the key expectation for a child

in EC. The trend is identified as especially marked in countries with highly competitive, strongly privatised education systems (Ang, 2014; Ball, 2010). In analysing the policy emphasis on "'school readiness'" in and beyond the UK (p.185), Ang gives examples from Hong Kong and England, highlighting parental expectations that EC offer children a head start and in some instances prime them for gaining admission into selective primary schools.

Strengthening transition-related norms and accountabilities for parents and families were also identified in Aotearoa in policy analysis conducted by Sophie Alcock and myself (2016). This was illustrated in the transition to school advice to parents offered on the MoE website suggesting they support their child's learning by viewing their young children as "readers, writers and mathematicians", and encouraging them to be school-ready by having them practise sitting still for short periods of time and learning to "wait for things" (MoE, 2014, cited in Haggerty & Alcock, 2016, pp.139-140).

An analysis of media coverage of transition by Einarsdóttir (2014) emphasises the influential role played by material technologies as part of the mix of forces serving to extend the pedagogical role of parents. Her analysis highlights parents being advised to train their children to be self-reliant and follow instructions, and the role of publishing companies in appealing to parents and advertising books to prepare children in reading and maths to give them "a head-start" (p.25). Ball (2010) also foregrounds the intramix of commercial interests, noting the outside-school role worldwide commercial companies such as Kumon and Kip McGrath have come to play as "supplementary educational providers" (p.160).

Parent 'voice'

Growing policy interest in the parent role in children's transitions has been a catalyst in the strengthening research focus on parents' perspectives, with families deemed at risk of failng to meet the desired norms a further particular focus. One such example is the 721 parent interview study by Wildgruber et al. (2011) undertaken with the support of the German government and European Commission, and featuring a particular focus on migrant families. Parent responses here suggested parents regarded participating as partners in their child's school education as important, seeing this as a matter of communicating with the school, monitoring homework and

keeping the child successfully motivated. At the same time, and somewhat paradoxically, parents saw themselves as having "to cede responsibility and control" (p.5) to teachers. Insights from this study included the extent to which new-to-school parents looked to each other for support and assistance, with migrant parents referred to as "intensely" (p.7) seeking information from other parents of the same or similar background.

Brooker (2010), in an interview-study of the parents and teachers of 20 children in two English nurseries, offers a view of parent/teacher priorities as competing, contrasting, and conflicted amidst an entangled set of forces coming into play. Brooker reports parent frustration with assumptions on the nursery's part, firstly that "if parents are offered practices which are viewed as positive for the child's development, they ought to accept them gratefully, and without question", and secondly that "what is good practice for the generic parent, and the generic child, is assumed to be good for all" (p.188). She noted the frustations of parents who saw teachers as failing to recognise the capacities of parents who were educated professionals, and a strengthening discourse of consumer entitlements, intermixed with the emotional bond and debt of gratitude some parents spoke of feeling toward teachers. Brooker also emphasised parent worklife pressures, viewing these as potentially impinging on their capacity to consider the interests of their children. This serves in turn to raise as an issue the conflating of parents' and children's perspectives.

The diversity of children, and their families and communities, is a recurring theme in much of the transition literature examined in the previous two sections. So too are increasing tensions to do with stengthening measures to bring children and their parents into conformity with very particular constructions of learners and learning and school modes of being, doing, knowing, and relating. Some transition writers suggest that the expectations of homogeneity in school entrants, which have underpinned notions of school readiness, are showing signs of yielding to a realisation of the diversity of young children, families and communities (OECD, 2017; Petriwskyj, Thorpe, & Tayler, 2005). Others take a more critical view, pointing to transition discourses as considerably more complex and conflicted and the dynamics involved much more multi-entity. These contrasting perspectives are explored further in the remaining two sections with regard to teachers and wider assemblage priorities.

The positioning of teachers in the transition literature

The focus on teachers within the transition literature carries a number of resonances with the work focusing on children and parents/families. There is a focus on individual teachers, teacher attributes, and teacher practices seen as transition-friendly (or not); there is literature arguing against focusing on single issues such as teacher practices and calling for a more complex and multifaceted view of transition dynamics (Dockett, Petriwskyj, & Perry, 2014); and there is critical and poststructural research interest in the power relations and wider assemblages shaping teachers' actions.

Teacher attributes and practices were , for example, highlighted by Skinner, Bryant, Coffman, and Campbell (1998) in their five-month ethnographic study of the starting-school experiences of 21 former Head Start children in the US. The contrast drawn by these researchers was between the positive effect of teachers who were caring, believed in the children, and did not dwell on what the child could not do, and strongly compliance-oriented practices that researchers argue even in the first few weeks of school involved moving some children into the track of school failure. Examples cited included the turn-around of two boys, considered disengaged and at risk, who moved class part way though the year. The new teacher was described as stressing the importance of getting children thinking and children needing to believe in their own capacities as able to devise innovative tasks and to provide the required scaffolding, as well as being highly caring.

In seeking to bring attention to the ways curriculum and assessment policy imperatives come into play in teachers' everyday priorities, a number of ethnographic studies have pushed for a more multifaceted view of transition-related classroom dynamics. Brooker (2002) concluded from her 18-month study of pedagogical priorities in a Year-one English classroom, that while the teacher viewed core skills as just a small part of what she thought the curriculum should ideally focus on for the 4-5 year-olds in her classroom, "the multiple top-down and outside-in pressures from government and society obliged her, as the year went on to focus much of her provision on literacy and numeracy" (p.142). Assessment was also highlighted as playing a key role. In addition to undertaking baseline assessments of "core skills" and "personal and social development", children were assigned to different groups for reading, writing and maths on the basis of highly specific criteria, e.g., phonological awareness. Brooker says these hierarchical groupings became the means of

perpetuating differential rates of learning; for example, what was referred to as the "'top group'" received "lengthy input and discussion" (p.142). Brooker's portrayal of the classroom process as to what got prioritised, and how, resonates strongly with the notion of an intra-active, multi-entity assemblage of timetable pressures, assessment, accountability, teacher-child dynamics, and expediency:

> Without conscious intention, and in response no doubt to the pressures of getting groups 'done', the children who were chosen first were those who could pick up a new activity quickly, be amenable to instruction, be pleasant to interact with, and produce a product which could be used as a template for subsequent groups' efforts. (p.143)

Brooker concludes that "constant pressure to 'deliver' the planned curriculum made any other course of action unrealistic" (p.143).

Bradbury (2013) drew on two year-long ethnographic studies in the Reception classrooms of two inner London primary schools to examine the way the statutory early years foundation stage assessment profile (EYFSP) defines the 'ideal learner'. As well as drawing attention to the traditional "wide range of activities" available in these classrooms, Bradbury points to the way this diversity was mitigated by the underpinning hierarchy of different activities and styles of learning, and impacted on by the profile point system (p.9). For example, a higher status is accorded writing tables ahead of building blocks, and mathematical puzzles ahead of bicycles. Bradbury critiques the all-encompassing scope of the EYFSP model of 'learning' and 'learners', warning this closes down possibilities for alternative successful subjectivities in school. She asks who is excluded by such a level of specificity and with what implications. Her examples emphasise how little room for difference this assessment regime offers:

> [T]he quiet, shy child, the child who is focused on one activity or particularly talented in one area, and the child who struggles to recognise the subtleties of the changing demands of the classroom are all deemed failing in some way within this framework. In multiple ways, these children can be constituted through the EYFSP as failing to develop in the right ways and at the right speed. (p.16)

Teacher entanglements in policy-related disparities between curriculum aspirations and assessment imperatives also feature in Martlew, Stephen, and Ellis' (2011) study

in six Year-one classrooms in Scotland. This study focused on the struggles of teacher-participants to instigate more play-based pedagogy in response to emerging policy interest in encouraging greater curriculum emphasis on active learning. Play-based pedagogy was defined in this study as responsive to children's interests, encouraging of children's enquiry and more focused on opportunities for choice, autonomy, open-ended tasks and active involvement. Teacher feedback here was that while they were enthusiastic about the move to more active learning, there was difficulty reconciling this with practical realities such as large classroom numbers and maintaining the requisite focus on performance indicators and attainment targets. Martlew and colleagues reported "very little evidence of child-initiated tasks in any of the observed classrooms in the study" and "minimal evidence of peer interaction" (p.81). In all but one of the classes children were described as having their day carefully structured with no opportunity to choose what to do or when to do it. Children were grouped for tasks and could only move on to the next task at the direction of the teacher. Practices focused on whole-class and teacher-intensive tasks and often involved children sitting for lengthy periods of time. These researchers concluded that to make alternative options possible would require "a shift in pedagogy that goes beyond the bounds of individual teachers and their classroom interactions" (p.81).

Further insight into the sorts of 'on the ground' issues experienced by teachers in the pressure to produce measurable school-entry assessment items is provided by Guimares, Howe, Brogaard Clausen. & Cottle (2016), in reporting on a five-school trial in England to incorporate a measure of wellbeing into standardised baseline assessments for literacy and maths. Teachers here saw value in a focus on wellbeing as an element in children's successful transition to school. However, researchers argued that the nature of the assessment measure was highly flawed. They questioned the purpose (and validity) of reducing wellbeing — as complex, multidimensional and highly situation-dependent — to a single static score. Examples included how variable children's wellbeing and involvement could be with different and self/chosen activities: "He's a one when he's not at the water tray, but a five when he is" (p.250). The call from these researchers was for wellbeing to be considered from multiple perspectives, including those of children, families and EC settings. Yet to go back to the water tray, what is missing from this call from a relational materialist perspective is attention to what Barad would term the entangled intra-activity of human and

more-than-human — boy *and* water-tray — the and...and...and dynamic I aim to play closer attention to in the current study.

Strengthening collaboration and alignment between the beliefs and practices of teachers in the EC and school sectors has become in many countries a transition-related priority, a move toward what the OECD terms "pedagogical continuity" (OECD, 2017). Karila and Rantavuori (2014), for example, report on a municipal-level development project in Finland, "aimed at supporting fluent transitions from preschool to primary school through the provision of joint lessons for preschool children and school pupils" (p.377). Findings here include the observation that despite the teachers' will and intention to collaborate in the developing of new pedagogies, "pre-existent school practices were given clear precedence", whilst EC practices "tended to be left somewhat in the margins" (p.389). Karila and Rantavuori see this as tied into what Turunen et al. (2014) refer to as the "paradigm change" in Finland's latest curriculum document toward more school-based pedagogies (p.301). Policy-linked shifts in the pedagogical priorities of teachers were also noted by US researchers in the decade following the introduction of the policy *No Child Left Behind*, e.g., there was a "dramatic increase" in the importance Year-one teachers placed on core reading and maths skills (Abry, Latham, Bassok, & LoCasale-Crouch, 2015, p.79). Collectively this literature points towards transition processes and curriculum and assessment priorities as entangled with, and powerfully shaped by, wider assemblage priorities, the focus of the next and final review section.

Macro-politics and transitions: The quest for fit for purpose curriculum and assessment priorities

In an analysis of shifting pedagogical policy priorities, Torrance (2017a) describes the current era as one of governments around the world seeking fit-for-purpose curriculum and assessment systems and outcomes. The resulting hierarchy of priorities not only "responds to the direct call for a skilled workforce to compete globally, but also creates the idea of a skilled workforce, and what constitutes such an entity, in the first place" (p.87). This hierarchy, commonly characterised as strongly neo-liberal, is seen to involve the higher ranking of entrepreneurial, autonomous, responsible and self-regulating individuals (Vandenbroek & Bouverne-De Bie, 2006), and as working to the detriment of educational values such as interconnectedness and

solidarity (Hsueh & Tobin, 2003). Language and literacy skills remain the most strongly and specifically emphasised, as evidenced in the transition guidelines within the curriculum documents of many countries (OECD, 2017), but notions of desirable 21st-century workforce-related outcomes are also viewed as shifting and broadening to include "the 'soft skills' of flexibility, creativity and so forth, in addition to straightforward academic achievement" (Torrance, 2017a, p.87). The era of the modern neo-liberal state is thus seen as promoting "'a new normality of the child' — a child who will be flexible, who is developmentally ready for the uncertainties and opportunities of the 21st century" (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p.7).

Conceptions of fit-for-purpose curriculum and assessment systems are further highlighted in the policy analysis literature as increasingly underpinned by a global discourse of lifelong learning. Rizvi (2007), in tracing the rise of this discourse internationally, suggests that while the idea of lifelong learning has drawn on different political and philosophical traditions and attracted considerable popular support, it is "the neoliberal concept of lifelong learning that has in recent years become dominant, even hegemonic" (p.114). Gibbons' (2013) examination of the transition-related effects of this continuity-promoting discourse in Aotearoa calls attention to the way in which the EC sector has been drawn into "new relationships of governance" (p.502), the way in which playing to learn has become an educational aim, and the way in which both child and adult (teacher/parent) have become more deeply enmeshed in practices of surveillance and "'measuring up'" (p.503). He warns of the risk to potential productive differences between sectors, noting the way official EC-sector commitments to care as integral to education are becoming progressively eroded, and points to the 'push-down' of school priorities as increasing the likelihood of experiences of "normalisation, assessment, routinisation, hierarchy [and] disconnectedness" (p.505). The dynamics of this discourse and its role in shaping curriculum and assessment priorities in the EC and school sectors in Aotearoa is explored further in Chapter six.

Macro-politics and transitions: Assessment

Literature from Aotearoa, Australia, the UK, US and Nordic countries points to a growing emphasis on assessing children's performance, with normative measures and standardised tests playing a key role in the increasing formalisation of EC education (Ang, 2014; Falachi & Friedman, 2015; Gibbons, 2013; Vallberg-Roth & Mansson,

2011). The rise of standardised assessssment across a raft of countries is highlighted as homogenising learning, having a profound impact on the pedagogical priorities of both EC and school sectors, and reconfiguring the nature of transition in the process. Some writers refer to assessment as 'the tail that wags the [curriculum] dog', that is, as having the power to dictate what ultimately gets to be prioritised in the educational agenda (Moss et al., 2016). Ang (2014) gives the example of the prescribed education targets of the assessment profile used in England in conjunction with the statutory EC curriculum. While this curriculum had been positively received by many in the sector as aiming to provide an enabling environment, when tied in with the profile, the ultimate aim became preparing children academically for school. Such dissonances between traditional espoused curriculum priorites and the emerging of future-oriented school-readiness agendas and normalising measures of assessment are elsewhere noted as strengthening, especially in Scandinavian countries where EC has had its own strong and distinctive philosophy and tradition (Karila, 2012; Vallberg-Roth & Mansson, 2011). From a transition perspective, such developments are most concretely manifest in the initiatives undertaken in several countries to assess children at school entry to provide baseline data for future progress (Bradbury, 2013).

Other analyses foregrounding the way in which educational agendas have become assessment-driven emphasise the role played by standardised international assessment measures (Sellar & Lingard, 2013). From a transition standpoint this is manifest in the recent OECD initiative to develop a baseline measure to allow for greater across-country comparability (the International Early Learning Study). This about-to-commence study to develop what Pence (2016) has dubbed Baby PISA is seen by critics as set to catalyse the sorts of reductionism and instrumentalism witnessed with its precursor, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) — a universalising pedagogy of data-driven accountability (Moss et. al., 2016). As leading EC academics from nine countries put it in a colloquium piece in *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, "This approach rests on the principle that everything can be reduced to a common outcome, standard and measure. What it cannot do is accomodate, let alone welcome, diversity of paradigm, theory, pedagogy or provision, childhood or culture" (Moss et al., 2016, p.348).

Concluding thoughts

Looking back across the four preceding sections of the transition part of this review, it is possible to discern what Graue (2006) terms a move from "simple functionalist views" of transition to "more complex interactional perspectives" (p.51), a move also discernable in the literacy/multimodality studies discussed in Part one. However, as Graue cautions, and as the preceding section helps to illustrate, while tempting to see such discourses as evolutionary, "it is important to recognize that all elements…live on in today's practice and policy often within the same person" (p.51).

The importance of engaging with more of the 'real world' contradictions, complexities and messiness Graue alludes to is borne out in this review. Thus, for example, what gets to be authorised and prioritised in the transition assemblage is on the one hand increasingly entangled with globalising economic imperatives and particular strongly-promoted discourses, e.g., lifelong learning. At the same time, on the other hand, significant difference-producing effects also eventuate from small-scale happenings such as the serendipitous 'break' afforded by a change of class, teacher or friend, or the freeing "physical space of the…bigness of…the playground" (Loizou, 2011, p.49). The DeleuzoGuattarian concept of assemblage and Barad's concept of intra-active performativity/entanglement are precisely about seeking fuller engagement with this heterogeneous multiplicity.

Chapter Four: Methodology

Introduction

Chapter four describes the methodological approach of this thesis, which looks to combine interests in relational materialism, aspects of multimodal and sensory ethnography, with a particular focus on matters of ethics, and the use of visual/video methods. I aim to show the way I worked with and through the associated bodies of literature, continually re/engaging with various philosophical, theoretical, ethical, political, logistical and personal aspects of what Barad (2007) terms the entangled relations of research.

Here I trace ideas and theories that I looked to in different ways as challenging the classical mind-body partition and the view that "all that is truly thinking must be linguistic" (Haraway, 2008b, p.371). These traditions have impacted particularly reductively on the way the lifeworlds and capacities of very young children are perceived. In particular, I describe my strengthening focus on relational materialism and the material-semiotic.

I begin this account by briefly revisiting the material-semiotic concepts introduced in the first two chapters — the DeleuzoGuattarian (1987) constructs of rhizome and assemblage and Barad's (2007) notion of performative intra-activity — to outline the way I aimed to put these to work methodologically and, later in the chapter, how this transpired. I revisit some of the initial decisions made around the use of ethnography, tracing connections and divergences between work in the area of sensory and multimodal ethnography and the methodology of this thesis. These and the sections following focus on my evolving approach toward matters of researcher-role, ethics and the research use of video.

Material semiotics and the use of rhizome, assemblage and entanglement as methodological constructs

In this study, putting the concepts of rhizome and assemblage to work methodologically opened up an expanded form of material-semiotics, based on what has been termed the DeleuzoGuattarian 'logic of the and' (Nail, 2017). This incorporates 'human' and 'non-human', and allows a way of exploring "the interaction

of culture, history, discourse, technology, biology and the 'environment'", whilst working against "the privileging of any one of these elements" (Alaimo & Hekman, 2008, p.7). In and beyond educational research, this has proved particularly useful in tracing/mapping complex, non-linear relational networks.

In this study, I focused on the assemblages of encounters children meet in the transition to school, on curriculum/assessment priorities, and on the particular modes of operating and forms of subjectivity these work to effect. Attending to the rhizomatic entailed considering the conditions and occurrences within these educational assemblages that help to bring human capacities to life and give rise to new powers and possibilities. Examples include the enlivening effect of a new friendship or relations made possible through accessing sustained rather than fleeting opportunities to be involved in activities of interest. I drew on the DeleuzoGuattarian concept of mapping/tracing, and the idea of data-recording and analysis *tracing* the pre-existing lines and patterns of a given assemblage, as well as *mapping* new rhizomatic lines and entry points (Smith in MacNaughton, 2005) as different modes of becoming in and with the world. Barad (2007) refers to this as attending and responding to "the details and specificities of relations and difference and how they matter" (p.71).

Data recording and analysis focuses on tracing/mapping:

- interactions that stratify and de-stratify the curriculum/assessment and transition to school assemblages;
- ways in which particular modes of operating (ways of being, doing, knowing and relating) are promoted or closed down, and in which 'lines of flight' or openings to the new emerge; and
- paying careful attention to difference-producing effects.

My aim was to investigate and trouble what is conventionally normalised and prioritised in EC and NE curriculum/assessment/transition discourses. I explore fragments of data rhizomatically, seeking the multiplicity in play and understandings that dominant constructions of children/childhoods seem likely to exclude.

"There is always going to be more to be considered and said" (Sellers, 2009, p.208) which is why in undertaking this combination of tracing and mapping, I look to avoid totalising. I offer what Sellers terms 's*ome*', rather than '*a*' rhizoanalysis, and

follow her example in viewing any part of a rhizoanalysis as "always already contestable" (p.208), and as "but an open/ing" (p.215).

Fundamental to Barad's concept of performative intra-activity is the notion of relational entanglement, a call to focus on the co-constitutive relationality as that which brings 'human' and 'non-human' into being. Put to work methodologically, this includes engaging with the concept of research relations as themselves always already entangled. As discussed in this chapter and explored later in the thesis, this requires a rethinking of traditional conceptions of the 'researcher-subject', the 'researched-object', and the 'research instruments' as separate, boundaried entities.

Putting Barad's concept of performative intra-activity to work methodologically is tied into her call for the study of practices of knowing in being ("onto-epistemology"). And, onto-epistemology, Barad (2007) insists, is always already ethical — what is enacted as knowledge/research has 'real' material-discursive effects; it matters. Thus Barad's contention, which is explored in this chapter and in the wider thesis, is that what this calls for "is something like an ethico-onto-epistemology — an appreciation of the intertwining of ethics, knowing and being" (p.185).

Revisiting the start: Ethnography

At the outset of the study my attraction to drawing on ethnography was based on seeing this as a good fit for the exploratory nature of the project and the task of grappling with and attempting to understand the complexities of an EC and NE setting. Derived from the field of anthropology, ethnography is a qualitative research tradition in which the researcher immerses themselves in the setting under investigation to obtain a holistic picture of the subject of study (Creswell, 1994). Maykut and Morehouse (1994) refer to gaining an "understanding [of] a phenomena in all its complexity and within a particular situation or environment" (p.13). This view shares some affinity with what Barad (2007) refers to as the need to study phenomena in their entanglement.

Ethnography is seen as having diverse strands. As Flewitt (2011) points out, ethnographic approaches have been used in pursuit of "a range of theoretical ideas", e.g., "anthropology, symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, structuralism, constructionism and post-modernism" (p.296). Definitions of ethnography — while

the subject of much debate — are typically broad and accommodating, tending to resonate with this research.

Writing of the use of ethnography in educational contexts, Dicks, Flewitt, Lancaster and Pahl, (2011), drawing on Green and Bloom (1997), distinguish between: "doing ethnography (framed within an anthropological discipline), adopting an ethnographic perspective (a more focused and less comprehensive ethnography)" and, as is the case with the current study, "utilising ethnographic tools (using methods and techniques associated with ethnographic fieldwork, but not necessarily guided by social and cultural theory)" (p.228).

Griffin and Bengry-Howell (2008), following Punch (1998) and Denscombe (2003), suggest the over-arching features of ethnography include:

- an emphasis on the importance of understanding the *meaning-making and cultural practices* of people from within everyday contexts;
- a commitment to understanding the phenomenon under study from the points of view of those involved — perspectives that are potentially diverse, complex and contradictory;
- a sustained period of fieldwork;
- multi-method data collection, including, for example, full-participant observations, questionnaires, interviews, video and audio recordings and documentary evidence.

While these are features relevant to this study, as discussed in the previous chapter, the exclusive referentiality to *human* meaning-making and cultural practices is problematic. The choice of performative intra-activity as method brings with it a commitment to engage with the world-making agency of the 'more-than-human' — in this case seeking to attend to the *heterogeneous* co-constitutive forces and entities that come into play as part of the curriculum/assessment/transition assemblage.

Multimodal ethnography

Approaches seeking to bring multimodality and ethnography together suggest that taking a multimodal approach to semiotic events and practices allows the ethnographer to broaden the scope of enquiry to look at how meaning is made "multi-semiotically" across a variety of modes and media in different and multiple

combinations with each other (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001, cited in Dicks, Soyinka & Coffey, 2006, p.84). Flewitt (2011) suggests that putting multimodality in partnership with ethnography allows for consideration of "broader social and cultural framings", and hence "how micro-moments of multimodal meaning making unfold in a complex network of socially-situated norms and practices" (p.297). *In situ* studies that involve researching the perspectives of very young children, seen as requiring "a readiness to tune into different modes of communication", have increasingly drawn on such approaches (Clark, 2011, p.311), as have studies in the field of children's literacies (Flewitt, 2011; Pahl, 2009). A focus on multimodality is viewed in these studies, as in the current study, as a means of engaging better with children's knowledge and enabling others to understand these ways of knowing more fully.

Sensory ethnography

Sensory ethnography is a further branch of ethnography with links to this study. This approach derives from what has been referred to as an "anthropology of the senses" (Pink, 2011a), building on the anthropological tradition of the researcher 'being with' the participants, but emphasising that certain forms of knowledge cannot be understood simply by observation or conversation. The aim here is to enable a fuller understanding of what is going on by taking the participants and researcher "beyond words into other domains of meaning" (Dicks, 2014, p.663).

As Pink (2011b), a key proponent of this approach explains, for these ethnographers, studying the everyday life practices they wish to learn about is a matter of drawing on the senses not solely as an object of study, but also as a means of inquiry. In her own work, for example, Pink likens her researcher role to "the process of imagining oneself into the body" of the other (p.351), and uses methods such as the video tour and walking with research participants through a focus location, having them convey aspects of significance by means such as *showing* and *re-enacting*. This approach marks a move toward acknowledging and engaging with the corporeality of the researcher-body and positioning this more centrally within the research frame.

Researcher role and ethico-onto-epistemological entanglement

As commonly advocated in ethnographic approaches, I started out drawing on the notion of researcher *reflexivity* as a key and defining feature of the researcher-self *(*Griffin & Bengry-Howell*,* 2008; Pink, 2001). Researcher reflexivity, Pink (2001) explains, "recognises the centrality of the subjectivity of the researcher to the production and representation of ethnographic knowledge" (p.19). Rather than denying researcher impact on the contexts they set out to study, ethnographic researchers are called on to understand this in a systematic and rigorous way as part of the research process (Aull Davies, 1999 cited in Bengry-Howell, 2008, p.17). The task of reflexivity is seen to include making the theoretical basis for interpretation explicit (Mischler, 1986, cited in Alldred, 1998, p.162). Willis calls this a form of "theoretical confession" in which the history, theoretical position and subjectivity of the researcher is stated as explicitly as possible (2000, cited in Griffin & Bengry-Howell, 2008, p.21), as are the conditions of the production of the research findings.

As the research progressed and in the face of its complexities, challenges and 'messiness', I became increasingly convinced that the claims made on behalf of reflexivity were often over-stated. My feelings were supported by critique I was reading of claims of analytic certainty and by calls for a new kind of researcher subjectivity, calls often led by relational materialist and feminist theorists (Barad, 2007; Haraway, 2008b). Rose (1997), for example, argues that, "assuming that self and context are, even if in principle only, transparently understandable seems to me to be demanding an analytical certainty that is as insidious as the universalizing certainty so many … have critiqued" (p.318). Rose calls for "'gaps' or fractures in interpretive authority", suggesting that "contradictions as well as certainties in research interpretations should be marked" (p.318); others make similar calls for 'failures' and uncertainty to be acknowledged (Horton, 2008).

Haraway (1997) proposes the notion of researcher as "modest witness", her use of the term 'modest' a reminder of the limitations of what we can know, her idea of researcher-as-witness "testing and attesting", also and importantly accompanied by the understanding "that this is always an interpretive, engaged, contingent, fallible engagement. It is never a disengaged account" (Haraway, 2000, p.160, cited in Braidotti, 2006, p.206). Affectivity is, as Braidotti (2006) explains, an important dimension of the way she and Haraway frame the role of the researcher. The

researcher as "modest witness" is "neither detached nor uncaring" (Braidotti, 2006, p.206). As Barad (2007) summarises it, and as I increasingly came to appreciate in the course of this study, just as "the entanglements we are part of reconfigure our beings, our psyches, our imaginations, our institutions, our societies; 'we' [as researchers] are an inextricable part of what gets reworked in our [research] projects" (p.383).

Ethics and the research entanglement

My approach to research ethics followed a similar trajectory of increasing realisation of the entangled nature of research relations. In seeking to engage in ethical research, particularly, but not only, with children, my starting point was an ethic of care and respect, and a commitment to situating research ethics within broader considerations of equity and social justice (Abebe & Bessell, 2014). As the research unfolded, so too did the importance of recognising and 'owning' the ambivalence and uncertainty of seeking to act ethically (Haraway, 2008b; Horton, 2008; Rose, 1997).

Like other researchers looking to undertake research with children (and adults) in participatory and inclusive ways (Stephenson, 2009; Sumsion & Goodfellow, 2012), my aim was to conduct research that looked to respect, attune to and account for participants' interests and perspectives, especially children's. Here I drew on the notion of 'situated ethics', a commitment that researchers look to respond variously and reflexively to complex situations in ways that attune to the interests of participants, rather than following a detailed, preconceived code of conduct (Flewitt, 2005b).

Methodological texts dealing with research with young children typically suggest that this involves specific ethical complexities (Lahman, 2008). Commonly highlighted is the 'non-child' perspective of the adult researcher, child-adult power hierarchies (Abebe & Bessell, 2014; Alldred, 1998), and what is perceived as children's greater vulnerability. Researchers are called to attend to their relational positioning, and to the power differentials in the researcher-child relationships, as well as to other child-adult relational dynamics pertinent to the research process. In this research I considered it important to be alert to the possibility of adverse research-related effects on child-teacher and child-parent relations.

My first visits to the research settings were planned as opportunities to start to form relationships and establish rapport with children, teachers, and families. I

generally looked to position myself alongside children during visits — rather than teachers — seeing myself as aiming for the role of interested, non-interruptive companion. I attempted, as Kindon (2003) puts it, to look "alongside" participants (p.142), in the spirit of what Braidotti (2006) describes as "a cognitive brand of empathy or intense affinity" (p.205). Yet, as noted in other research accounts (Horton, 2008), and as I discuss in the course of this thesis, this was not an easy point to reach with all participants, or in all circumstances.

Reading research that probed the often glossed-over ethical complexities, challenges and unpredictabilty of research endeavours served as reminder of the need to be continually re/evaluating notions of 'research', 'researcher' and 'researched'. For example, as MacNaugton (2003) points out in her discussion/critique of the children's 'voice' literature, and as seen in the current study, the power dynamics of child-child as well as child-adult relationships call for research attention. MacNaughton challenges notions of researcher role such as the 'child-friendly' researcher-as-non-interruptive companion I sought to adopt. She queries, for example, what researchers are to do when the children's 'voices' they hear are serving to silence or marginalise other children or reinforce injustices, and if and when researcher intervention is necessary. She asks, in a manner reminiscent of Barad's research entanglement:

> ...should research and children's participation in it be understood as always consequential because our presence in children's lives as observers will always place us in the position of colluding with their becoming? If we are present we are potential colluders. The questions for me, as researcher, have become 'what is it I want to collude with in children's becoming?' (p.39)

In looking to come to terms with what it meant to put ethical ideals into practice in this study amidst the complexities, uncertainties and anxieties I felt, at times, swept up in, I found it reassuring to read of increasing acknowledgement that 'the field' in research "is neither static nor controllable" (Barker & Smith, 2001, cited in Horton, 2008, p.376). I was heartened by accounts, such as those of Rose (1997) and Horton (2008), of research that happened in 'a non-ideal way' and inspired by calls for an honest research ethic that owns up to experiences of "fallibility, disappointment, and mess" (Horton, 2008, p.377). This thesis, in a small way, attempts to move in that direction.

Video and the research entanglement

When arguing for, following Barad, the always already entangled nature of 'the researcher', 'the researched' and 'the research tools', and "how material things — in effect — 'act back' and continually affect and/or effect us" (Horton & Kraftl, 2006, p.73), it becomes untenable *not* to explore the question of such effects within the research process. In this study, the use of video was an area of particular methodological significance. Not only did this entail the production of video-recorded observations but, as detailed in the Methods chapter there were opportunities for research participants to view and respond to these observations, and the video-recorded excerpts were to be included in the thesis itself.

The choice to use video-recorded observations in this study (and its dissemination), began with the idea of enabling more inclusive opportunities for involving children in research in ways their activities could do more of the talking, not just their words (Sellers, 2009).As suggested in previous chapters, this was prompted by the diversity of mode and level of detail "'just there' in video", needing to be described (if possible), or omitted, in writing (Bezemer & Mavers, 2011, p.200). Key here also was the broader potential Luttrell (2010) refers to as the power of the camera to "redirect, contest and unlock the gaze" (p.224).

Many of those using video to document the activities and interactions of very young children, myself included, highlight the potential for video to help redress the over reliance on the verbal, a reliance as noted previously, which has all too often led to children being viewed as communicatively, and consequently intellectually, limited (Flewitt, 2006; Haggerty, 2011). Researchers using video in studies of children's learning highlight its potential to assist in recognising non-verbal modes as integral to, rather than ancillary to learning, especially for very young children (Flewitt, 2006). Others framing video as instrumental in 'giving voice' to children's perspectives (whether using cameras operated by children or researchers), highlight the potential for this to introduce content and topics "otherwise overlooked or poorly understood from an adult viewpoint" (Luttrel, 2010, p.225).

Opportunities for participants to *view and respond* to video observations are also highlighted as opening up a space for enhanced participant input. Video-recordings have been used in education studies as a platform for inviting participants (children, teachers, parents) into dialogue with the researcher about matters that were not

opened up by relying on written descriptions and conversation alone (Ortrel-Cass, Cowie, & Maguire, 2010). Viewing video and visual material has been seen as a way of helping "rouse and reframe conversations" (Luttrell, 2010, p.225) about children's, teachers', and parents' understandings and experiences. Such research conversations have been held within and across settings, amongst children themselves, between children and participating adults (researchers, teachers, parents) (Luttrell, 2010), and/or as part of a wider, in some instances cross-national undertaking. See, for example, Tobin, Wu and Davidson's (1989) seminal, comparative study of preschools in Japan, China and the U.S., in which video recordings of 'everyday' activities were used as an interview cue to stimulate wider, cross-national dialogue.

In reviewing the social science literature for methodological advice on the use of video technology, I found much ongoing debate over both the dynamics involved in generating video data and how such data are to be 'read' (de Freitas, 2016). Central to this debate is the question of how the human-technology relationship is conceived and the roles attributed to each.

Approaches that take a more instrumental view of video technology, as many ethnographic accounts do, tend to emphasise the power of the videographer as the primary determinant of what does and does not get recorded (Coffey, Renold, Dicks, Soyinka, & Mason, 2006).

Methodological texts commonly warn against relying on video data alone, emphasising that the context video-recordings are part of needs to be considered systematically (Knoblauch & Schettier, 2012). The importance of keeping supplementary fieldnotes is emphasised, as is staying alert to what is happening out of camera range (Simonsen et. al. 2009). Researcher attention is commonly drawn to considerations such as the effects of camera positioning, and the amount of in-camera and post-camera editing undertaken. This was all advice I saw as worthwhile, yet not attending fully enough to the role played by the technology itself.

Ethnographic researchers focusing on sensory and multimodality and bodily conduct tend to bring more specific attention to bear on the choice of media used in the generation and presentation of data, highlighting this as a highly significant aspect of methodology (Cappello & Hollingsworth, 2010; Perry & Medina, 2011). Certainly, in reviewing this literature I was struck by how often the significance of the role played by such technologies was highlighted. In the field of gestural studies, for example,

McNeill (2000) argues that without the advent of audio-video technology, the study of gesture in relation to other modes "would scarcely be possible" (p.9). Researchers using multimodal ethnography point to audio-video technology as *transformational* in broadening understandings of how different modal practices are used in combination, and how personal and institutional factors impact on individuals' choices of modes (Flewitt, 2006; Gibson, Webb, & vom Lehn, 2011).

Researchers coming to the use of such technologies from a relational materialist perspective have sought to theorise the notion of distributed agency further, emphasising the ways in which significance is owed in part (sometimes in large part) to the generative force of the technologies themselves (Änggård, 2013), what Bennett (2004) refers to as "thing-power" (p.347). This perspective is characterised by the way it works to resist "the tendency…to refer all expressions of thing-power back to a human operation conceived as its ultimate source" (p.356). Latour (1994), for example, frames the relationship between user and technology as one in which human and technological partner are seen to borrow or exchange properties with each other; or as Don Ihde (2002) puts it: "Insofar as I use or employ a technology, I am used by and employed by that technology as well" (cited in Haraway, 2008, p.249). Haraway (2008b) frames these relational entanglements as an "infolding" in which human bodies and technologies co-habit each other, and in which technology is a "full partner" (p.249). In similar vein, Barad's (2007) notion of performative intra-activity, a key methodological concept in this study, frames 'human' and 'non-human' phenomena as *mutually constitutive* forces that overlap and intra-act with each other.

Ethics, video and the research assemblage

The use of visual/video data as part of the research assemblage is generally seen to involve particular ethical challenges. Commonly highlighted is how readily identifiable video makes participants, and how this works against conventional undertakings to preserve participant anonymity. Questions are often raised as to whether and how visual/video methods can be used in a way that has enough regard for children's (and adults') desires for privacy and confidentiality (Stephenson, 2009).

Advice on ways to help address such issues commonly emphasises the importance of the approach taken in gaining consent, particularly around the collection and use of the video data. This was advice I looked to follow, as I also looked

to follow more general advice about the need to take care in informing participants as fully and openly as possible about what the research involved, and was asking of them, and also and importantly their right to withdraw (See Methods Chapter for details).

Flewitt (2005b), whose ethnographic research work is also with young children and video-based, usefully suggests that what is needed, given the often unpredictable circumstances involved, is to treat consent as provisional. She advocates continuous checking and monitoring to ensure participants are comfortable with the way the research process is proceeding, sometimes on a 'moment-to-moment' basis, especially when it comes to children.

Questions over the amount of power video puts in the hands of the researcher, and concern over how close an inspecting gaze video allows, continue to feature prominently in ethical discussions in and beyond the education literature (de Freitas, 2016; Stephenson, 2009). Such questions and concerns resonate strongly with the sorts of issues Foucault (1977) raises over apparatuses of observation serving as a mechanism of surveillance and control, and are not to be readily dismissed. Yet, nor are they to be seen as applicable in every situation. Thinking with the DeleuzoGuattarian/Baradian concepts of assemblage/entanglement and difference helps point out that what an ICT 'is' depends on the assemblage within which it performs (Prout, 2005). My experience of using video in this study was that its role not only differed significantly from setting to setting, but from individual to individual and circumstance to circumstance.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have looked to provide an account of the ways in which my methodological approach was shaped by the wider philosophical and methodological literatures referred to. I have sought to show my endeavours to work through various philosophical, theoretical, ethical, political, logistical and personal dimensions. In addition, and foreshadowing the Methods Chapter, I have endeavoured to highlight something of the many 'sticky' entanglements encountered in the course of this research and the way in which these made 'real' to me, the case Barad (2007) and others (Braidotti, 2006; Haraway, 2008b) make for viewing matters of ethics, epistemology and ontology as inextricably linked. Experiencing such entanglements made the case for what Barad (2007) refers to as *ethico-onto-epistem-ology* or an ethics of matter[ing] (p.185).

Chapter Five: Methods

This chapter describes how the methodological planning for the study transpired. My aim here, in addition to outlining the methods adopted and explaining the decisions made, is to offer an account of what transpired that conveys something of the entangled nature of research relations, referred to in the previous chapter. That is, as Barad (2007) describes it, a view of the relations of 'researcher', 'researched' and 'research tools' as intra-actively intertwined. In this chapter I pay particular attention to what I, following Barad (2007), would term the ethico-onto-epistemological entanglements involved in both the 'researcher'-'researched' relation and the choice to use video as a research tool. This includes, as Bhatt and de Roock (2013) put it, in discussing the methodological implications of using video in their classroom-based digital literacy research, the way in which "decisions were also made *for* us by the apparatus we used" (p.9).

The research questions

The research questions were, as outlined in the introductory chapter, 'intra-actively' reworked in the course of the research. The final questions became:

(1)   What are the sorts of curriculum/assessment priorities found in EC/NE settings in Aotearoa-New Zealand?

(2)   What particular identities, subjectivities and modes of operating (being, doing, knowing and relating) are promoted or made difficult through the enactment of these priorities?

(3)   How might these priorities be seen as transition-related and what might their effects be on the capacities of young children?

To explore these questions I sought to:

•   provide an ethnographic account of the curriculum and assessment priorities the focus children (and their families) encounter in the course of transitioning from EC to school

•   investigate the ways in which curriculum, assessment and transition priorities are produced and enacted in the EC and NE settings

- examine the particular identities, subjectivities and modes of operating (being, doing, knowing and relating) promoted or made difficult for particular children, and what possibilities are opened up and shut down in the assemblages of encounters the children meet in transitioning from the EC centre to the NE classroom.

Data

Data in this study included the following;

- audio-taped initial and concluding teacher interviews;
- audio-taped initial and concluding interviews with the 'focus parents' (parents of the six focus children), and concluding interviews with the children;
- 'individual' video-recordings of the six focus children— around three to four hours per child recorded over three to five sessions, during their last 6 months at kindergarten; around three hours recorded over three to four sessions during their first 6 months in the NE classroom;
- 'setting' video-recordings of an 'everyday' session at the kindergarten and NE settings, focusing on the range of curriculum/assessment activity (at least one half-day per setting);
- 'video-logs' of written responses to specific sections of video by teachers and focus parents
- audiotaped, post-video discussions with teachers;
- photographs of the setting environments and events falling outside videoed observations
- pedagogical/policy documentation in each setting related to curriculum/assessment/ transition
- field-note researcher observations of ongoing events and informal conversations with children, teachers and parents/whānau in each setting

Details of what these different forms of data entailed and their intended purpose are provided in the table in APPENDIX A.

Time frames

Following the selection of the six focus children (and families) the research had two main, overlapping phases. The first phase followed the children's experiences during their last 6 months or so in EC; the second, their first 6 months at school. The EC-based phase of the research ran from February 2013 to August 2013. The school-based phase commenced in May, to allow time for familiarisation visits prior to the focus children starting. Scheduled to coincide with each school's weekly "visitors' mornings" these visits enabled me to observe the transition visits of soon-to-start children and families, including those of the focus children. The final round of school visits took place in March 2014, one month after the start of the new school year. At this point, after the start-of-year class-changes, five of the six children were in a new classroom, with a new classroom teacher, and all six children were with a different group of classmates. Children were with a mix of new classmates and former classmates, with some former classmates moving to other classes.

Data from these final visits is not drawn on due to the logistics of obtaining two further sets of classroom consents; the visiting data drawn on is from the weekly half-day visits to the kindergarten and NE classrooms. See APPENDIX B for a table of fieldwork timeframes.

Participant selection: Early Childhood phase

The process of selecting the participating EC service, schools, families and children was part-planned, part-emergent. My initial focus was to look for the pairing of an EC and NE setting, where teachers, children and families/communities were likely to find interest in the study, and be able to meet the research commitments. To search for suitable pairings I used a combination of purposive and "network sampling" (Wohlwend, 2008, p.129), seeking recommendations from EC and university colleagues. The formal process of approaching potential settings began once the research was approved by the Victoria University Faculty of Education Human Ethics Committee (January 2013) (APPENDIX C). Pseudonyms, chosen by the researcher, were used for all participating individuals and services.

Centre selection

Selecting an EC centre able to commit to the research — as I saw it — called for consideration of the stability of the setting e.g., teacher turnover. I sought settings of high 'quality', a notion I recognise as justifiably contested, but which I took to mean services well regarded by their local and professional community. The point here was that I did not set out to 'uncover' instances of poor practice, but to explore more commonly occurring tensions. While appreciating that in ethnographic research it is not possible to guarantee in advance that nothing will be discovered to the disadvantage of the institution or individual participants (Atkinson, 2009), my intention was not to exacerbate the risk of this happening. At the same time considerations of social justice and equity prompted me to look to include participants from groups whose transition to school experiences are commonly portrayed as problematic, namely participants coming from less ethnically privileged and economically advantaged backgrounds (Skerrett, 2010; Peters, 2010).

I began the process of negotiating consent with Ranui Kindergarten — the first EC service recommended, and a kindergarten I had worked with some years previously in a professional development capacity — by contacting the head teacher and arranging a preliminary meeting with the four-member teaching team (Clare, Lucy, Zara and Elspeth). Ranui Kindergarten matched the selection criteria well. While located in a relatively affluent suburb, the kindergarten had a socially mixed catchment area that included pockets of low-cost, rental housing and drew on an ethnically diverse community. Preliminary inquiries about the potential participation of the local Ranui school were also positive.

At my first meeting with the teaching team I outlined the aims and scope of the research and discussed the information sheets and consent forms (APPENDIX D), emphasising my commitment to ongoing consultation over the research process. Once teachers confirmed their wish to be involved, I sought and obtained the consent of the kindergarten association, as the over-seeing body (APPPENDIX E).

In the interests of manageability and wanting to be able to 'go deeper' (Cresswell, 1994), my original plan was for the study to involve one EC centre, one school and four focus children. I later took steps to broaden the diversity of focus to include a care and education centre as well as kindergarten, when teachers from such a centre asked to join the research. However this did not eventuate due to centre-

management concerns that the research would take teacher-time away from an upcoming ERO review.

Focus children selection

Without time to pursue a replacement centre but still keen to broaden the participatory scope of the research, I obtained teacher agreement to increase the number of focus children at kindergarten to six. Teachers supplied me with a list of children in the age band required and the schools they were expected to attend. From this I drew up a shortlist of children expected to attend the local school, and from additional profile details, a further shortlist to obtain a balance of gender, a diversity of social and ethnic background and a range of modal interests.

Teachers made the initial approach to the short-listed families. I then met with those interested, to discuss the research and their commitments as participants. I took particular care discussing the collection and use of visual/video data, the associated opportunities for parents and children to view and give feedback on these recordings and to vet any visual/video data they wished to prevent being further disseminated (APPENDIX F). In discussing my choice to use child assent forms (APPENDIX G), I emphasised these were not so much about filling in the actual form, as about the importance of children having 'a voice' in the research — children's perspectives being sought, and parents monitoring children's initial and ongoing comfort with participating.

The focus children selected were the first six on the list to meet the criteria: Venya, Zelda, Jacob, Sefa (SJ), Sabal and Caleb. The process of negotiating participation and consent with the remainder of the children/families at Ranui Kindergarten — those referred to hereafter for the sake of expediency as 'non-focus' children/families — ran concurrently with and as part of the familiarisation visits. The information and consent forms for the 'non-focus' EC families, are included in APPENDIX H.

Participants: School phase

School selection plans changed unexpectedly some weeks into the study, when Sabal's parents announced they had applied to send him to an out-of-zone school, Tapatahi, rather than Ranui. Because Sabal's parents and I wished to keep him in the study, I approached Tapatahi School to see if they were willing to participate. The response

was positive. After an initial phonecall and emails to the principal, I forwarded the relevant information and consent forms (APPENDIX I) and was invited to meet with the principal and deputy principal. At this meeting I was told the school agreed to participate, subject to the approval of Sabal's classroom teacher, Mrs Grant (known as Mrs G). Approval was received quickly; Mrs G expressed interest in the topic, and we met to discuss research details.

As Sabal was the last child to join the Rm13 NE class at Tapatahi, Mrs G undertook to pass information sheets and consent forms on to the 'non-focus' families (APPENDIX J); I held a follow-up, after-school information meeting shortly after. At Ranui, where new children continued to join the class up until the end of the year, I was able to negotiate consents with the 'non-focus' families in-person at the weekly visitors' mornings.

Initial overtures to Ranui School — the school the five other focus children were to attend — had already met with an early and positive response. The school had an active interest in the subject of transition and were experienced in and very positive about being involved in research. The deputy principal became my contact person. She undertook to liaise with classroom teachers, and gained ready assent for the school to participate. However complications arose around gaining classroom-level access. This was due to uncertainty over which class the focus children would be in and who their classroom teacher would be, a situation brought about by a rapid and unexpected rise in the number of new enrolments. As explained to me, the school had determined an additional NE classroom was required, but it was proving difficult to ascertain when this could open and a new teaching appointment be made.

The additional NE classroom (Whānau rua), the class the five focus children joined, opened at the start of Term 3 in July. The ramifications of this from a research point of view were that the familiarisation visits planned and commenced at the start of May, were neither to this class or its teacher, but to the two, already-operating, conjoint NE classes hosting the visitors' mornings. The familiarisation visits of first-to-start children — Zelda, Jacob and Caleb — were also to these classes. That is not to the class they would join or to the teacher they would be with. These classes were also where Zelda spent her first school week before the opening of the new classroom.

Negotiating teacher consent at Ranui proved complicated. The teacher appointed to Whānau rua — Alissa — was known to and had relieved for the school,

which enabled research information to be passed on to her. However, due to confidentiality strictures around new appointments I was not able to know who she was or meet her to discuss her participation until the second-to-last week of Term 2.

The situation was complicated further when a second, part-time relieving teacher — Susan — was unexpectedly appointed to the Whānau rua class. Susan's appointment was initially temporary — to cover for and assist Alissa, who had injured her arm. However due to unexpectedly high enrolments continuing, Susan was kept on till the end of the year, and her part-time role upgraded from assisting teacher to co-teacher. Susan, like Alissa, had worked at the school as a relieving teacher the previous year.

The circumstances of the information and consent process for Alissa and Susan, were not only logistically challenging, but ethically less-than-ideal. While both teachers agreed to participate, they were at the time preoccupied with the challenge of getting the new classroom underway. As the challenges continued, the demands of the research seemed an added pressure. I felt concerned the teachers' agreement to participate had perhaps been because it was 'the expected thing to do', and later, when made aware of the temporary nature of their tenure, wondered how important a factor *not* wanting to jeopardise the chance of ongoing employment at the school had been. I return to discuss how this quandary unfolded shortly.

Interviews

My approach to research interviews was to try to keep them conversational, aiming to have participants feel free to take a hand in the flow of the conversation. Yet, as I also believed participants were likely to welcome prior indication of what would be discussed, I provided outlines of the focus areas for teachers (APPENDIX K) and parents/families (APPENDIX L) shortly beforehand. The focus areas for children are included as APPENDIX M.

Both EC and NE teachers, in their initial interviews, were asked about their personal and professional background, about aspects of curriculum they most enjoyed, and about how curriculum/assessment/transition was approached in their setting and what were the key priorities and practices. Teachers were also asked, in their initial and concluding interviews, about their impressions of the focus children

and what they viewed as each child's particular strengths and challenges with regard to kindergarten, school and the transition.

Parents of the focus children were asked in their Initial interviews about what they saw as their child's 'singularities', their typical pastimes, ways of operating, areas of interest/ and particular expertise. Final interviews focused on how parents viewed their child's kindergarten and NE curriculum experiences, what they saw their child finding valuable and challenging about each, and how they felt they compared. Assessment and transition-related experiences in each setting were a further focus, as was discussion of the research video-recordings. The video-feedback process is discussed in the following section.

I decided to conduct final interviews with the children toward the end of the research when it was clear that opportunities to talk informally at school would be limited. Now however I am surprised that I didn't think to include them from the outset, an oversight that strikes me as at odds with the research aspiration to include children as fully as possible. I asked children about the things they enjoyed or 'found hard' at kindergarten and school, about the advice they would offer a friend or family-member starting school, and about the video-recordings.

The use of video

The processes of scheduling, producing, viewing and discussing video-recorded observations outlined in these next sections, were processes that unfolded differently in each setting. In recounting how this occurred I first highlight differences that arose in carrying out the actual video-recording. I then outline the steps involved in readying the video-recordings for participant viewing, participant discussions and permission-to-use. That process gave first 'sign-off' to teachers, and then a second and subsequent 'sign off' to the focus children and families. In this account I refer to the practical measures taken and the logistical problems encountered, together with some of the 'sticky' ethical situations to emerge. My aim here is to foreground the entanglement of the two. I conclude the chapter with an outline of how I approached data analysis.

Video-recording in the three settings

Video-recording curriculum 'in action' at Ranui Kindergarten typically involved videoing individual or small groups of children, commonly on-the-move from place to place, and commonly outdoors for substantial periods of time. Not wanting children feeling too intensively 'under the spotlight', and in consultation with teachers and families, I generally kept the videoing of individual children to about an hour at a time. However, when videoing a child involved in a particular activity, if I judged them happy with me videoing I would tend to continue till events reached a 'natural' conclusion. I conducted two rounds of videoing—eight half-day sessions overall.

My approach to consent, as outlined in Chapter two, was treating this as provisional, and continuously checking-in and actively monitoring that participants were comfortable with proceeding. I was, however, also keen to avoid disrupting children's activities more than necessary and sought to keep interference to a minimum. For example, while I generally aimed to seek children's permission before videoing, I would sometimes 'gesture' my request from the sidelines rather than enter the middle of a group activity and 'ask round' for permission to video verbally. To do this I used various combinations of pointing to the camera, questioning looks, mouthing "OK?" and the 'thumbs-up/thumbs-down' sign used in the assent form. As I came to know children better, if such interventions seemed likely to be overly disruptive, I generally felt confident to carry on recording, waiting to talk later, to check this was OK.

I was less confident when it came to video-recording in the two schools. Being less familiar with school settings and more concerned about causing disruption, I looked for more guidance from teachers to organise video-recording in a way that would create minimum interference.

Video-recording at Ranui proved complex, logistically and ethically. Two months into the classroom visits, in the process of finalising times-to-suit for video-recording, teachers Alissa and Susan expressed concern that the videoing might prove disruptive. They spoke of finding one of the focus children less co-operative when I was visiting, and of their worry about the added effect of the camera. Given both teachers seemed keen to keep video sessions to a minimum, I suggested limiting NE video-recordings to one round of four sessions with Whānau rua, and kept the sessions at Tapatahi with Room 13, to three.

Video-recording curriculum 'in action' in the schools differed considerably from kindergarten: children spent virtually all their time inside rather than outside, often as a whole class, frequently 'on the mat' and often in relatively static mode — more especially so in Whānau Rua. The frequency of large-group, teacher-centred activity also meant that teachers featured more extensively/intensively in the NE classroom footage.

In videoing a significant amount of whole group work in which considerable teacher effort was directed toward maintaining children's attention, I tried to avoid calling attention to myself, including moving round to get a better vantage point. In Whānau rua where non-adult talking was generally discouraged by teachers, even in small group work situations, I tended to rely more on non-verbal cues to seek children's assent to video and/or to wait for suitable breaks to check that children were ok with me videoing them.

When video-recording at Ranui concluded, and Alissa, Susan and I began discussing arrangements for viewing and discussing the footage, they spoke of further concerns about the videoing. In particular they were apprehensive about how they as teachers might "come across" in the video-recordings and how the recordings might be interpreted by parents. Susan later commented to me that if their professionalism as teachers didn't come across strongly enough in the video-recordings, this could adversely affect their future employment prospects at the school—employment that Alissa in particular, she said, was especially hopeful of.

I felt, at this point, very torn. On the one hand, I could appreciate Alissa and Susan's concern that the videoed material might be viewed negatively and that this could prove detrimental. On the other hand, I felt, as researcher, pressed to see the research through and uncomfortably aware that, as other researchers highlight, disaffected participants can "render the research impossible" (Atkinson, 2009, p.20). I asked if we could meet to discuss this further, but as both teachers thought themselves too busy, I suggested they wait to view the recordings, reminding them they had sign-off on the recordings before wider distribution.

Participant video-viewing: The process

The practical steps involved in preparing the video-recordings for participant viewing and feedback, started with downloading footage to a 'session-master' file, and copying this to DVD for teacher participants to view, discuss and 'sign off'. Once video-footage

was cleared by teachers, I compiled and downloaded separate 'focus-child project-files' (all clips taken of each focus child in each round of video-recording) to pass on to children and families.

For the EC phase of the research, families of 'non-focus' children featured in video-recordings were given opportunity to view this footage. In the school phase of the research this became untenable, hence 'non-focus' NE families were only offered an opportunity to view the actual excerpts used in the thesis presentation.

Video-logs

Hand-written logs were compiled cataloguing the video clips in each project file as a 'working' inventory of the research video data. As shown in Figure 1 clips were logged by date in numbered sequence, and further categorised according to:

- ACTIVITY (often identified by materials e.g., block building); and
- PARTICPANTS (identified by initial or where an unidentifiably large number of children involved group/ whole group/ class).

A NOTES column gave space for brief memos alongside each clip. Used alongside the DVDs, the logs provided teachers and families with a way to 'bookmark' particular clips for discussion i.e., for the purposes of consent and/or feedback. Video-logs thus usefully allowed for feedback and permission-for-use to be given clip-by-clip.

VIDEO-LOG: FOCUS:

DATE:

Clip No	ACTIVITY Materials	PARTICPANTS	NOTES

Figure 1. Video-log template

Use of the logs varied: three kindergarten teachers and three families used them as the basis for their own sometimes extensive annotations (See example APPENDIX N), others used logs to vet clips for permission purposes and/or mark for later discussion, or simply as a viewing guide.

The technical process of readying video-recordings for participant viewing was complex, with a succession of complications proving challenging, time-consuming and disruptive. This was due in part to the limitations of the technologies I had on hand, and in part to my own limited technical expertise. The software and hardware issues encountered with the volume of capturing, editing and copying required, were eventually resolved with a computer and software upgrade (Final Cut Pro X) that enabled me to clear the processing backlog. However my own lack of technical expertise remained an ongoing challenge. The domino-like effect of these delays was greatest and most concerning at Whānau rua, where the impact on arrangements compounded an already strained set of circumstances.

Viewing and discussing video-recordings: Teachers

Teacher video-viewing at Ranui kindergarten started with teachers viewing the first four-session round of recordings individually, then meeting with me to discuss them as a team. For the second round of recordings, teachers suggested they meet with me as a team, viewing and discussing the videos at one and the same time: a total of six feedback meetings. Teachers' feedback was extensive, teachers saying they found the video-recordings valuable for reflecting on their understandings of children and evaluating kindergarten practices. Teachers asked to have two brief clip-sections edited out. These were seen as showing a 'non-focus' child in a potentially detrimental light.

Video-viewing for the teachers at Ranui School was planned to take advantage of the holiday period to allow time for teachers to view the recordings individually with follow-up meetings scheduled early in the new term. Unfortunately these plans folded when technical difficulties prevented me having the recordings and logs ready until the start of term. This meant the process of teachers viewing and discussing the video material and clearing it for wider dissemination had to compete with busy start-of-term teaching commitments, and took several weeks.

Alissa and Susan chose two feedback meetings: one, together, for video-recorded sessions they co-taught, and one with Alissa alone for sessions taught on her own. Teacher feedback at these meetings mostly centred on explaining the pedagogical intent of some of the lessons and interactions videoed, though the main focus of discussion was vetting clips for permission. Teachers asked to have only three short clip-sections edited out — one that could have given the mistaken impression a child was not under teacher supervision, two others involving children put in 'time out'. I found this a relief as I had become anxious about what the teachers' standpoint might be and of the implications for the research.

Video-processing delays caused less disruption at Tapatahi for Mrs G, though the presence of a student teacher for parts of the video-recordings added a further set of copying and viewing and consents. One feedback meeting was held; Mrs G's feedback was primarily focused on Sabal's progress. No editing was requested.

Viewing and discussing video-recordings: Focus children families

Focus children and their families received three rounds of videoed-observations to view rounds one and two were from kindergarten, round three from school. Round one was discussed at the initial interview; rounds two and three, the final interview. All parents reported watching all or nearly all the videos; some watching some sections more than once. Parents also reported watching at least parts of the videos with their children, and four reported their children also re/watching videos on their own and/or with siblings. No editing was requested.

Most parents spoke of the insights they gained from the NE classroom video-recordings as particularly valuable; three parents commented that their children found them less interesting. Two children were reported as finding certain sections a little uncomfortable. From my efforts to discuss these episodes further I learned that the sections in question had also prompted parent 'quizzing' e.g., "Why didn't *you* put your hand up?" Given the seeming entanglement of child-parent response I resolved to see if I could get a clearer sense of the children's perspective during their individual interviews (see APPENDIX M). In following this up, the child in one episode reported no recollection of it, but indicated that overall there was nothing on the videos they did not want others to see, the second child recalled the episode (and the questions it prompted), but suggested it was OK if people saw it.

Data analysis

In keeping with the idea of 'concept as method' and the material-semiotic focus of the research, I sought in data analysis to pay attention to the corporeality of the body and modes of operating highlighted as important in the literature: gaze, posture, facial expression, gesture, movement, (Franks & Jewitt, 2001), sounds, vocalisations, words/language (Flewitt, 2005a, 2006), proxemics and manipulations (Wohlwend, 2011). In keeping with relational materialist thinking, and the concept of body-as-assemblage or 'body-and' (Leander & Boldt, 2012) I aimed to explore 'human'-'non-human' intra-activity in the day-to-day operations in each setting and as part of the assemblages of curriculum, assessment and transition. For example, I attended to aspects such as the operation of bodies-and-time and bodies-and-space, and to entanglements of intensity, flow, and affect.

Following Deleuze and Guattari I sought to trace/map everyday interactions/events bringing children into conformity with prescribed modes of operating, together with rhizomatic pathways providing openings to plurality, difference and the new, "possibilities that work against the forces of homogenization"(Lather, 2013, p.642). Or as Højgaard and Søndergaard (2011) describe it, giving consideration to the way in which the possibilities of being/becoming are opened up or closed down and to whom. This is seen, for example within the fluctuating agendas of a group of companions in play, or in the ways children are inducted into a particular set of classroom protocols around bodily conduct. A similar approach was taken to tracing/mapping the day-to-day curriculum/assessment/transition priorities promoted in each setting, for example by attending to the type of attention and time attached to particular activities and practices. Tracing/mapping interconnectivities (resonances/disjunctures/entanglements) with wider educational/political assemblages was a further and central reference point.

In plugging in and working across different data sets I sought to develop a take on diffractive analysis in line with Barad's (2007) advice to attend and respond to "the details and specificities of relations of difference and how they matter" (p71). Hence for example, I looked to consider the repeated occurrence of particular curriculum activities in a given setting, alongside the assessments undertaken, alongside the

curriculum/assessment/ transition directives at centre, association and school, at national level, and alongside those manifest transnationally.

Researcher analysis in this study was not so much a matter of separate, inner, mental activity as a matter of exploring a bodymind relationship with the data, a relationship of the sort Lenz Taguchi (2012), after Alaimo (2010), refers to as "transcorporal thinking". That is an approach to researcher engagement with data that calls on the researcher to be attentive to the registers of different faculties and to work *with* the data in order to reach beyond or transgress the already-known. This framing resonates strongly with my own endeavour in this study to be more in touch with affect and the complex relationalities and contingencies in play. It also carries affinities with my efforts to shift from a traditional linguistic-centric approach to engage more closely with performative understandings of different modes of operating. The use of video has been a key element of the endeavour in this thesis to move away from the reliance on our received vocabularies and the extent to which they pre-determine what we are able to consider, and to perhaps provide productive openings into and be part of the quest "to make matter intelligible in new ways" (p.267).

The practical methods used in data management and analysis included processes such as coding data by setting, and cross-coding all data relating to each focus child. Subsequent coding related to the focus areas of the research: curriculum, assessment, transition, material-semiotics and multimodality/multiplicity. I undertook multiple video re-watchings and numerous re-visitings to my handwritten field notes, interview transcripts, video logs, and research diary. In these re-visitings I used coloured highlighting and written memos to mark-up data fragments I judged to be of significance and constantly diaried my analysis-related thoughts. Alongside and entangled with this process was the 'outside' reading I continued to do and the ideas I noted down. These reading forays continued through the processes of writing and revision, themselves key co-constitutive processes in the analysis that occurred.

Once the chapters on the settings were completed, these were shared with the focus children and their families, and the kindergarten and NE teachers, with an invitation to comment. School principals were offered the opportunity to attend a presentation of the 'findings' related to their setting, and/or to receive a written summary; they opted for a written summary. Participants wanting to offer an

alternative view to the analysis provided, were offered the opportunity to have this included as an appendix. None did so.

Final comments

This chapter has reviewed how the research process unfolded. I have sought to convey a sense of the entangled relations of various aspects of this research, including a sense of its 'messiness' and unpredictability. I have also sought to foreground the way in which the choice to use video went on to infuse so many aspects of the study as well as the 'sticky' ethical dimension to these undertakings. As highlighted ethical dimensions were especially problematic in Whānau rua, where I found myself adding to the pressures teachers were experiencing, and wondering how to do justice to the seemingly intractable tensions emerging between the interests of children, families, teachers and researcher. I return to these issues and the call for an ethico-onto-epistemological approach to research in the concluding chapter.

The background paper in Chapter six, the chapter following, provides an outline of the curriculum, assessment and transition-related developments in Aotearoa-New Zealand, since the drafting of the first EC curriculum. In highlighting some of the local and international entanglements involved in bringing us to where we have arrived, this chapter serves as precursor to the three empirical chapters that follow it.

Chapter Six: Policy entanglements

Chapter six comprises a published article: Strengthening early childhood and school sector continuities in producing the lifelong learner in Aotearoa New Zealand, written together with my thesis supervisor Judith Loveridge (Haggerty & Loveridge, 2017). This article was based on my research into EC- and school-sector curriculum and assessment policy shifts dating from the time of the 1993 publication of the Te Whāriki draft and The New Zealand Curriculum Framework (MoE, 1993a,b). The article draws on Barad's concept of entanglement to trace the intra-active reconfiguring of officially sanctioned, national and international, transition-related pedagogical priorities. My contribution to this article, relative to my supervisor, was 70%: 30%. I was responsible for the initial research of the documents, the theoretical framing, and the drafting of initial arguments. My supervisor contributed to the structuring of the article. We both worked on subsequent redraftings. I oversaw the submission of the article for publication. The journal of publication allows for "reuses of its content for a thesis or dissertation" (Routledge Copy Clearance Centre).[2]

Haggerty, M., & Loveridge, J. (2017). Strengthening early childhood and school sector continuities in producing the lifelong learner in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Journal of Education Policy*. doi:10.1080/02680939.2017.1410576

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[2] Retrieved from https://s100.copyright.com/AppDispatchServlet#formTop)

Strengthening early childhood and school sector continuities in Aotearoa New Zealand

Recent education policy analysis has revealed the standardisation of education systems and an intensified focus on learners and learning to meet the requirements of the global economy and neo-liberalism. In this paper we analyse the way that early childhood education in Aotearoa New Zealand has become increasingly entangled with school sector priorities and international discourses of lifelong learning as it has encountered these requirements. We trace the shift from an explicit rejecting and countering of school sector pedagogy to the promoting of increasing continuity with school sector priorities. We draw attention to dynamic, contrasting and competing interests and entities that have shaped the construction of learning and learners and curriculum and assessment priorities. We argue the need to attend to the complex mix of constitutive forces at work in the formulation and enactment of early childhood sector priorities, in particular to these crucial entanglements with school sector priorities, international discourses of lifelong learning and neo-liberal economic rationalities.

Recent early childhood scholarship points to an intensification of learning in the early years with very young children being 'tied' to identities as lifelong learners (Bradbury, 2013; Buchanan, 2011). Lifelong learning is an idea which has attracted popular support historically and in contemporary education discourse. Rizvi (2007) argues that while the construct of lifelong learning appears sensible and self-evident, different political and philosophical traditions have produced different definitions. He contends that "amid this diversity of definitions it has been the neoliberal concept of lifelong learning that has in recent years become dominant, even hegemonic" (p. 114). A turn to the economic in education policy and an intensifying emphasis on gearing education toward economic ends is often highlighted as part of the project of neoliberalism (Sellar & Lingard, 2013), so too is the notion that the era of a globalised knowledge economy needs flexible workers, willing and able to engage in continuous re-education (Rizvi, 2007). Tuschling and Engemann (2006) refer to this era as an "emerging regime" (p. 451) of lifelong learning.

Linked to the construction of lifelong learning is the construction of children as learners, first, foremost and sometimes exclusively. Conceptions of lifelong learning located within the neo-liberal imaginary emphasise the individual learner becoming

responsible for their own learning, seen as a network of pathways from early childhood to adulthood; abilities, skill, knowledge, qualifications and interests are to be continually acquired and updated. There is also recognition that learning occurs in both formal and informal settings and across generations, and a valuing of the production of learners who are self-regulating and self-capitalising.

There is now a growing body of work examining the way that ideas associated with the neoliberal imaginary are increasingly shaping policy concerned with the learning and assessment of younger and younger children. Recently, Bradbury (2013) has examined the way that a statutory assessment system for five year olds in England contributes to a restrictive notion of a "good learner". She argues that the values inherent in the assessment framework, such as rational choice and individual responsibility, are "distinctly neo-liberal" (p. 17). As all children do not enter Reception classes equally exposed to these values and the experiences of choosing, she points to this restrictive notion of a "good learner" (p. 17) as setting some children on the path of educational failure at the very beginning of their schooling. Roberts-Holmes (2015) also focuses on English early years assessment policy and practices, arguing the narrowing of assessment is leading to an intensified focus on school readiness and a data driven approach to early years pedagogy.

In the New Zealand context, Buchanan (2013) undertook a Foucauldian analysis of early childhood assessment in response to a similar driving of pedagogy by assessment practices. As an early childhood teacher she began to experience "discomfort and uneasiness with enacting curriculum through an assessment lens" (p. 24). She argues that the narrative dispositional assessment approach, often referred to as *Learning Stories*, positions children as learning subjects encouraging them to conduct themselves as learners with boundless opportunities for learning. She further argues that despite a wide range of activities being valued in assessment documentation, there is a "terminal and reductive quality in this assessment form" (p. 27) which positions children instrumentally.

The focus of this paper is to trace and analyse curriculum and assessment policy changes in Aotearoa New Zealand concerning early childhood education and children's transition to primary school. Our primary purpose is to examine the national and international discourses of contemporary curriculum and assessment policies in and between each of these two education sectors. We investigate how priorities for

young children's learning and assessment have been constructed through the neo-liberal imaginary, traditional local discourses and national curriculum and assessment priorities operating in EC settings and schools in Aotearoa New Zealand. We examine the influence of new normativities introduced by neoliberal discourse and trans-national organisations like the OECD (Wood & Stray, 2015), the normalising and governance-related effects of key competencies and Lifelong Learning (Tuschling & Engemann, 2006), and the homogenising effects of internationally aligned measures of assessment and evaluation (Gorur, 2013). In a similar vein, Otterstad and Braathe (2016) recently explored "how Nordic discourses of learning in early childhood education and care (ECEC) (barnehage) are influenced by travelling neo-liberal discourses" (p. 80). Their use of the metaphor of travelling to convey how international neo-liberal discourses move into local policies and become appropriated and merge with traditional local discourses evokes the way that discourses move and morph.

We have ourselves drawn on Barad's concept of intra-active entanglements to analyse the way that curriculum and assessment priorities are always in a process of becoming. We do not claim to provide a thorough exposition of these ideas but rather to use them as tools to think through the ways that curriculum and assessment priorities 'twist and turn', emerge, dissolve, intra-mix, morph and transform. Barad (2007) uses entanglement to refer to the way that phenomena, practices, events and individuals etc. not only become relationally intertwined but "iteratively reconfigured through intra-action" (p.ix). Barad's concept of *intra*-action differs significantly from that of *inter*-action. In interaction individual agencies are presumed to exist independently prior to their interaction, whereas the concept of intra-action "recognises that distinct agencies do not precede, but rather emerge through, their intra-action...distinct agencies are only distinct in a relational not an absolute sense, that is, agencies are only distinct in relation to their mutual entanglement" (p.33). At the same time, to view curriculum and assessment priorities as the effect of intra-active entanglements and to view agencies as only distinct in relation to their mutual entanglement, is not to say that all forces and entities involved in such entanglements are equal in their effects. Barad (2012) herself emphasises that while this involves engaging with "a new understanding of causality", this is "not to deny, but to attend to power imbalances" (p.55). We find Barad's notion of entities as relationally constituted through multiple intra-active entanglements a useful one when it comes

to questions of curriculum and assessment priorities and the task of attending to the heterogeneous forces and power imbalances in play "in what comes to matter" (p.53). As St Pierre (2004) reminds us, citing Foucault, a key part of realising future educational priorities other than as they are presently configured is "to get a grip on the actual mechanisms of the exercise of power" (1980/2000 cited, p.293). We suggest through our analysis here that recognising the operation of these entanglements and getting "more in touch with contingencies, relationalities, instabilities and history" (Lather, 2016, p.129) is part of this endeavour.

In this paper our particular concern is with the ways in which the EC curriculum has been "iteratively reconfigured through intra-action" (Barad, 2007, p.ix) not only with the school curriculum but with global neoliberal forces. Our discussion proceeds chronologically prefaced by a discussion of the wider policy context in which the EC curriculum emerged and of which it subsequently became part. The draft of the first EC curriculum was promulgated in 1993 (MoE, 1993b). Up until that point, the regulations governing kindergartens provided no curriculum specifications (1959) and the regulations governing childcare centres, which were primarily about the physical environment, simply referred to "suitable activities to be provided" (1960) and a "programme of activities" (1985). For the school sector, 1993 saw the introduction of a new curriculum framework which incorporated the principle of encouraging students to become "independent and life-long learners" (MoE, 1993a, p.7). As our analysis proceeds we argue that EC curriculum and assessment priorities have become increasingly entangled with those of the school sector, and that there has been a shift from asserting and maintaining the distinctive nature of the curriculum and assessment priorities of each sector to promoting continuity between the sectors. This iterative reconfiguration involved both a change in discourse from *transition between* the sectors to *continuity of* early childhood education with the school sector and an emerging discourse of lifelong learning.

Curriculum and assessment priorities in primary education: 1993 NZCF

In 1991 the newly elected National Government announced plans for the comprehensive reform of the school curriculum that would, as the Minister said, "bring our schooling system into line with the needs of the 90s and the 21st century and the imperatives of the modern competitive international economy" (Ministry of

Education, 1991, p.3). In 1993 the New Zealand Curriculum Framework (NZCF) was mandated. It was the first unified (rather than subject based) curriculum and had a similar structure to the curriculum developed at that time in England and Wales (O'Neill, 2015). It brought a number of key structural and ideological shifts which have carried through into the current curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007). First was a structural shift from a focus on individual subjects to an over-arching curriculum framework made up of principles and essential learning areas, and a new trans-disciplinary emphasis on essential skills (MoE, 1993a). Second was a shift from content-based curriculum to outcomes-based curriculum, involving the introduction of achievement objectives for each learning area, organised into eight levels over 13 years of schooling. A further hallmark of the 1993 framework was an explicit prioritising of internationally-referenced economic ends. For example, in the foreword to the document reference is made to the need for New Zealand to progress and prosper within a "competitive world economy" and to produce "a workforce which is increasingly highly skilled and adaptable" and which has "an international…perspective" (p.1). The motif of lifelong learning features in one of the nine principles (p.7), another emphasises the importance of assessment and the need for "clearly defined achievement objectives to measure students' progress" (p.6).

The economic 'turn' in the new framework, described by one critic as a "headlong rush to make education a servant of the market" (Snook, 1996, p.55) was strongly critiqued. In particular, the positioning of education as primarily serving economic, political and vocational/market ends ahead of the development of the student as person attracted the attention and critique of a number of New Zealand academics (Lee & Hill, 1996; O'Neill, 1996; Peters & Marshall, 1996). The driving force of the changes was viewed as economic and political ahead of educational, and the model clearly seen as international rather than local; the mandate for the changes had *not* come from the raft of extensive local curriculum reviews undertaken in the 1980s (Lee & Hill, 1996). Māori input to the document was limited to providing a translation of the mainstream curriculum, Te Anga Marautanga o Aotearoa, so did not represent a specific indigenous contribution to the curriculum. The move to an outcomes-based curriculum was particularly controversial. The changes made were challenged as accountability and assessment-driven, and lacking a research base in either learning or curriculum theory (Snook, 1996).

The 1993 curriculum then represented a major shift from the previous subject based curriculum, introduced an outcome based assessment focus and promoted an approach to lifelong learning firmly located in a broader discourse of global economic growth and competitiveness. It was amidst these initiatives that it was decided there was also to be a national curriculum for the early childhood sector.

The development of a national curriculum for EC: Te Whāriki

For the early childhood sector, the New Zealand government first proposed letting a contract for the development of National Early Childhood Curriculum Guidelines in 1990, a time of major neoliberal reforms. Prior to this there had been little governmental interest shown in the content of early childhood sector programmes. The project co-ordinators, Margaret Carr and Helen May report that of one of the government's stipulated interests was obtaining "a clearer articulation of the early childhood curriculum in relation to school learning and beyond" (Carr & May, 1993, p.145).

The response of the early childhood sector was guarded, amidst fears national guidelines would result in a 'pushing down' of the school curriculum and end up working against the valued diversity of the sector. Carr and May (1993) describe the prevalent EC sector view of the school curriculum at that time as: "education without care, exclusion of families, timetables, adult-directed tasks, subject-based curriculum, and a focus on the three Rs" (p.121). Added to this were concerns about the increased emphasis on assessment within the new school curriculum and possible flow on effects to the EC sector of the newly introduced levels of attainment. International experiences such as the impact in the UK of school attainment targets on the EC curriculum seemed to support these concerns (Sylva, Blatchford, & Johnson, 1992).

Many in the EC sector saw it as timely "to both protect and promote early childhood philosophy" (p.172). The successful bid Carr and May put forward argued for "multiple curricula blueprints" (p.172) and taking a bicultural approach to both development and content; this had substantial backing from the EC sector. According to the 'Te Whāriki curriculum papers' (a collection of working papers compiled by the project co-ordinators) models of curriculum based on the notion of a hierarchy of skills, learning as linear, a focus on "levels and stages" and "preparing children for the next stage" (p.117) were explicitly rejected. EC curriculum, in contrast with school

curriculum, was to entail: a commitment to the inseparability of care and education, the involvement of parents and families in curriculum decision-making, and an emphasis on children as competent and capable of self-direction. It was to offer appropriate alternatives to a subject-based curriculum that incorporated a holistic view of children's learning and wider wellbeing.

Heralded as New Zealand's first truly bicultural curriculum (MoE, 1995), Te Whāriki was developed in partnership with Te Kohanga Reo National Trust (the umbrella organisation for most Māori immersion services). Tilly Reedy and Tamati Reedy were the appointed lead co-ordinator-writers. Carr and May (1993) attribute "much of the structure and philosophy of Te Whāriki" (p.200) to this partnership. Two separate but intra-connecting curricula were produced; one a 'mainstream' curriculum; the other, a Māori-developed curriculum in Māori, for use in Kohanga Reo and other Māori-immersion services. This stands in contrast to the mono-culturalism of the New Zealand school sector curriculum.

The title metaphor of curriculum as weaving, gifted by Tamati Reedy, played a major role in framing curriculum as potentially involving multiple contributors and multiple possibilities. The weft and warp of the woven curriculum mat were envisaged by the curriculum developers as metaphorically embodying the diversity of early childhood families and communities by providing space "for all to stand" (Carr & May, 2000, p.59). Each early childhood centre was envisaged as weaving their own curriculum mat, creating their own patterns from features and contexts unique to their children and their community, "different for every service, different for every centre, different for every child" (Carr, 1993a, p.44). Diversity of early childhood services was highly valued and to be protected. The metaphor of curriculum as weaving is identified in the development papers as closely matching Eisner's (1985) curriculum metaphor of the "spider's web", the favoured "Western" curriculum model (Carr, 1993c, p.121). Notably too the web model as network, interconnected and non-linear, was explicitly contrasted with 'staircase' curriculum: "the more traditional …instrumental, utilitarian model" associated with school curriculum (Carr, 1993b, p.67).

There were some subtle but important distinctions introduced between the draft and the final version, illustrating the intra-action between the emerging early childhood curriculum and the school curriculum. As Te Whāriki development

coordinators May and Carr (2000) noted, to begin with "the Minister of Education would not permit the first draft of Te Whāriki to be called a curriculum, because it looked so different from the national school curriculum document" (p.165). A number of the MoE's subsequent editorial changes in shifting Te Whāriki from draft to final document can be seen as bringing the EC curriculum into closer alignment with the school curriculum (Alcock & Haggerty, 2013; Haggerty, 1998). A key thrust of the MoE final version edit was to "demonstrate the ways in which Te Whāriki supported the learning areas and essential skills of the school document" (May & Carr, 2000, p.165). A section entitled: "The special nature of the early childhood curriculum" disappeared entirely. This section identified what was seen to be "distinctively appropriate to early childhood education", highlighting that EC curriculum "emphasises the intertwining of provisions for care and education, and…interweaves all aspects of children's learning and development" (MoE, 1993b, p.126).

Of particular significance was the shift in language. The draft document references to "learning opportunities" became the school sector discourse of "learning outcomes". Significantly, "learning opportunities" were proposed to offer "more than one possible strategy or outcome" and include "expressive and creative activities (those *which did not have a defined outcome*)" (our emphasis) (MoE, 1993b, p.117). In the final document 118 learning outcomes were specified.

Newly added material to the assessment section of the final document introduced two interconnected sets of learning outcomes in relation to knowledge, skills and attitudes and further contributed to the identity of child as a learner (MoE, 1996). *Learning dispositions* were described as "habits of mind" or patterns of learning, seen to be to do with "learning to learn" and the construction of children's identity as learners (e.g., dispositons to "investigate and collaborate") (p.44). *Working theories* were described as combining "knowledge about the world, skills, strategies, attitudes and expectations" (p.44), to do with children's ways of coming to know about themselves and the people, places and things in their lives.

Both the draft and final version of the EC curriculum comprised an intra-active mix of shifting local and global ideas, values, practices, artefacts and historical settlements. In response to local historical settlements, and overarching curriculum principles that were "strongly advocated by the Māori negotiators" (Carr & May, 1993, p.149), the curriculum is bicultural. The material cultural artefact of the Whāriki, was

used metaphorically to structure the curriculum and convey an intra-mix of indigenous Māori cosmology, openness and multiplicity (Reedy 1993). In a merging of local and international, and progressive humanist and neo-liberal traditions, learning was presented as a lifelong process that "begins at the very start of life" (MoE, 1996, p.7).

The 2007 New Zealand Curriculum: Shifting toward international alignments and '21st century' competencies

The formulation of the still current 2007 New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) for schools was notable for the considerable preparatory groundwork involved in its development. The initial preparatory work, commenced after the Fifth Labour government took office in 1999, was an official Curriculum Stocktake evaluating the appropriateness of the 1993 Curriculum and Marautanga (Māori-medium) frameworks. Local input was sought through the convening of a large reference group of teacher representatives and teacher unions and the commissioning of the National School Sampling study (McGee et al., 2002). However it was the international entanglements and their associated rationalities that wielded the most influence.

International comparisons of student achievement using the OECD and IEA played a primary role in determining the appropriateness of the overall framework. An examination of the Stocktake report shows several sections devoted to discussing the ranking of New Zealand students on the comparative international assessment measures of the OECD, PISA and IEA (MoE, 2002). The OECD's Definition and Selection of Competencies Project (DeSeCo) was also enormously influential in Stocktake deliberations over how to reframe the 1993 conception of essential skills. The goal of this project, launched in 1997, was to extend the PISA assessments of reading, maths, science and problem solving "into new competency domains", aiming to 'increase its relevance to lifelong learning' (OECD, 2005, p.3). DeSeCo promoted the notion of an identifiable set of *key* competencies, "important...for all individuals," to enable them to function well in a global world and to fit them for the "universal challenges of the global economy and culture" (p.5). These competencies were viewed as "more than just knowledge and skills...the ability to meet complex demands, drawing on and mobilising psychosocial resources (including skills and attitudes) in a particular context" (p.4). Three categories of key competencies were identified with each one closely linked to

economic rationalities: using tools effectively (e.g., language and technology), interacting in heterogeneous groups and acting autonomously.

In keeping with the motif of lifelong learning, various references are made throughout the Stocktake to promoting learning continuity between the sectors (MoE, 2002). For example, the key stated aim for the EC-school relationship is "to minimise the barriers to learning faced by young children" (p.31). The report gives the impression of some openness toward alignments involving 'transfer up' from Te Whāriki. For example, consistency with Te Whāriki is cited for the recommended move from 8 to 5 groupings of generic skills. Yet taking account of wider international policy developments shows this to be a recommendation that also brings the framework more into line with the OECD model, suggesting alternative possibilities as to what influenced what. Samu (2011) notes as intriguing the extent to which the NZC "makes statements that echo the DeSeCo project" (p.179).

A further illustration of the entanglement of EC and school sector priorities, bringing EC into closer alignment with the school sector, is seen in the outcome of the Stocktake recommendation that the revised curriculum incorporate a section on the relationship between the school curriculum framework and *Te Whāriki.* Significantly, while this original recommendation was to "outline the similarities *and differences* between the school curriculum frameworks and the early childhood curriculum" (MoE, 2002, p.32) (our emphasis), the newly added section in the 2007 framework makes no reference to *differences*. Rather than supporting the notion of a distinctive EC approach and pedagogy, the focus in the NZC is on continuity. In keeping with the over-arching motifs of continuities and alignments EC is presented as part of a "learning pathway" in which each stage prepares for and connects with the following stage (MoE, 2007, p.41).

Stocktake recommendations for the first school years were to prioritise what is termed "foundational learning", another "boundary-crossing" term utilised in official discourse, and presented here as needing to involve a particular emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy. Hence, for example, the recommendation for the early school years is that only the English and Maths curriculum statements be mandated. As would become apparent, these moves were consistent with subsequent policy work in the EC sector looking to generate a stronger school-ready focus in relation to verbal literacy and numeracy.

In spite of the Stocktake's opening claims that since the implementation of the 1993 framework there had been "wider consultation with Māori on their aspirations of education" (MoE, 2002, p.1), there is strikingly little witness to this in the Stocktake report itself. There is a singular lack of Māori input to the supporting Ministry-commissioned position papers and discussion documents. Māori 'presence' in the report is overwhelmingly *about* Māori rather than *by* Māori. In much of this the predominant focus is to do with 'equity' concerns about the relative underachievement of Māori (and Pasifika) students on comparative international assessments. This is consistent with what Savage, Sellar and Gorur (2013) describe as a global trend looking to shift conceptions of equity "towards a new logic based on measuring and understanding equity via student outcomes in comparative assessments" (p.163).

A further strengthening of international alignment was evident in the work of the New Zealand Curriculum/Marautanga Project, the official start to formulating the current 2007 school curriculum (Rutherford, 2005). One key task was to continue the preparatory work the Stocktake project had begun in conceptualising five categories of essential skills. This was supported by the commissioning of a background paper (Brewerton, 2004) to further explore the implications of the OECD's DeSeCo Project in the reframing of the New Zealand framework's essential skills. This development is consistent with international trends, with many countries adopting 21st century competences in their curricula, emphasising learning to learn, and often drawing on frameworks developed by international organisations (Voogt & Roblin, 2012). Brewerton supported the OECD model of key competencies, presenting it as based on "robust" research, "the most extensive research programme on key competencies that has been seen internationally" (p.9). Brewerton's recommendation was that New Zealand follow the OECD model but "adapted in a few small ways to make it suitable for the New Zealand context" (p.12). Brewerton's recommended adaptations to the OECD competencies to make them suitable for the New Zealand context included a reworking of 'acting autonomously' (one of the three OECD Key competencies) in favour of a more of a communitarian emphasis on responsibilities. In previous times it might well have been expected that such a case would have drawn on New Zealand's communitarian traditions of public education. In what had become an increasingly

neo-liberal era however, only for Māori and Pasefika peoples did Brewerton argue that to do otherwise would be "a significant omission" (p.41).

The school curriculum that eventuated in 2007 (NZC) was termed a curriculum rather than a curriculum framework, suggesting less openness to interpretation by schools in regard to their particular contexts. It retained the same structural categories of principles, learning areas and values as the 1993 framework, but with the essential learning areas downgraded to learning areas and eight essential skills reframed as five key competencies. The key competencies are: thinking, using language, symbols and texts, managing self, relating to others, and participating and contributing. These key competencies fit well with many of the features of the current discourse of lifelong learning for a knowledge based economy shaped by globalisation, with prominence given to communication skills, adaptation, active participation, and self-responsibility for education (Rizvi, 2007).

The eight curriculum principles were also modified, in line with Stocktake recommendations, to reflect a stronger focus on student outcomes. The reference in the 1993 NZCF to "the opportunity of a broad and balanced education" the curriculum was required "to give all students… throughout their years of schooling" (MoE, 1993a, p.6) was edited out. The 2007 introduction of the 'Learning to learn principle' heralded a further shift in the locus of responsibility, from student entitlement to the self-governing student, and a curriculum directive to get "all students to reflect on their own learning processes and to learn how to learn" (MoE, 2007, p.9). Tuschling and Engemann (2006) in discussing the international use of the 'Learning to learn' motif as an over-arching strategy, describe this as presented as "both an offer and an order….to develop motivation to do so" (p.466).

From curriculum to assessment: The development of National Standards in literacy and numeracy

In line with an intensifying international focus on assessment, the government moved in 2008 to introduce national assessment standards in numeracy and literacy. The potential move to standardised tests was strongly contested by teachers. Consequently, and contrary to what was happening internationally, the choice was made to base standards assessment on overall teacher professional judgement (OTJs) which are based on a range of assessment tasks. The shift from testing to OTJs was

justified by officials within the MoE as an attempt to circumvent the problems of standards based assessment experienced internationally and to ameliorate concerns that testing would lead to "narrowing the curriculum and mediocre outcomes" (Chamberlain, 2010, as quoted in Thrupp & White, 2013, p.4). The extent to which these claims are able to be realised remains to be seen. However, recent case study research suggests signs of similar perverse effects to those associated with high-stakes testing approaches of other countries (Thrupp & White, 2013). Researchers in this study, described participating schools as having a focus on the key competencies, but not integrating this into assessment documentation; the assessment emphasis was on literacy and numeracy. Similarly, recent research about students' conceptions of their learning has noted teachers expressing tensions about the narrowness of what is assessed; a Principal elaborating further commented "there's a big push for learning to be contextual and culturally relevant but we don't assess that" (Bourke & Loveridge, 2016, p.65). Teachers' issues with getting all children to the allotted benchmarks in the allocated time and the sense of urgency there was to do so has been highlighted in other recent research (Mitchell et al., 2015b). Parent concerns about the narrowing effects of National Standards coming at the expense of talents in areas such as creativity and design were also reported.

From the 1993 NZCF to the 2007 NZC then, there is a strengthening of global ideas, values and tools at play within curriculum and assessment policy. In accordance with wider global discourses, learning is, as with *Te Whāriki,* represented as a lifelong process. For example, NZC "takes as its starting point a vision of our young people as life-long learners who are confident and creative, connected and actively involved" (MoE, 2007, p.4). The move, initiated in the NZCF and further instantiated in the NZC, to a discourse of education as a private good and geared towards economic ends rather than education as the development of students and a concern with purpose and aims, brought with it what Biesta (2010, p.18) has coined the rise of "learnerfication" and an increasing emphasis on accountability-oriented assessment, continuous feedback and comparison. As part of this process equity was reframed in terms of student outcomes.

Kei Tua o te Pae: The assessment arm of Te Whāriki

Further evidence of the way that priorities of the EC sector became entangled with those of the school sector is seen in the way an intensifying policy focus on school sector assessment resulted in the development of assessment resources for EC. In tandem with MoE initiatives to develop assessment exemplars to support teachers to assess against the school curriculum levels of the 1993 curriculum, work began on developing EC assessment resources. School exemplars were described as "examples of student work that are annotated in order to illustrate learning, achievement and quality in relation to curriculum levels" (MoE, 2001, p.10). Early childhood exemplars were designed to cohere with and support the approach to assessment set out in Te Whāriki. Carr's ongoing role as one of the project co-ordinators for the development of EC assessment exemplars suggests MoE support for this continuity.

The Kei tua o te pae (KTOTP) early childhood assessment resource was developed over a nine year period starting in 2000. The resource comprises 20 booklets and 177 exemplars (MoE, 2004-2009). In keeping with the highly encompassing definition of curriculum in Te Whāriki, the definition of assessment set out in the first publication of KTOTP is also broad: "The ways in which in our everyday practice, we [children, families, teachers and others] observe children's learning [notice], strive to understand it [recognise] and then put our understanding to good use [respond]" (Book 1, p.6). Importantly, such a definition can also be seen as entangled with global discourses of lifelong learning.

The exemplars of curriculum/assessment practice are described in the resource as "...examples of assessments that make visible learning that is valued so the learning community (children, families, whānau, teachers, and others) can foster ongoing *and diverse* learning pathways" (MoE, 2004-2009) (Book 1, p.3) (emphasis added). Narratives, and more particularly Learning Stories, were the mode of assessment promoted in these exemplars. Early definitions of Learning Stories reference the qualitative research traditions of case-study, narrative and ethnography, emphasising the need to "mirror and protect" the complexity of learning and teaching (Carr, 2001, p.13). Developed as alternative to the standardised assessment regimes making inroads into EC pedagogy internationally, Carr calls this a "thick description" method of assessment, which aims to describe a child's orientation to learning "acknowledging contradiction, ambiguity inconsistency, and situation-

specific factors" (p.13). Later definitions appear to call for a more objectified view of learning and a more instrumental analytical focus: "a clear analysis or commentary highlighting the learning; and usually, some suggestions about the possibilities for further action or challenge" (Carr, 2009, p.34). This suggests that in becoming part of the official EC assessment (and entangled with the forces of globalisation) the later versions of Learning Stories have tended to have less of a focus on the complexity of children's ways of doing, being, knowing and relating that they initially sought to do justice to and have moved into closer alignment with government priorities for learners.

Also seen as key is what is termed Learning Stories' credit-based approach. Hatherly and Sands (2002) describe this as based on the premise that "learning flows from paying attention to children's strengths" (p.11). Later, Carr and Lee (2012) add that looking to resist deficit positioning does not mean Learning Stories "omit guidance for improvement and further achievement", but that they "often document, and work to sustain, what has been called the 'passion' for learning" (p.138). This view reflects a strengthening focus in national and international literature suggesting that the aim of assessment is not only to progress one's learning, but ultimately to protect and enhance one's identity as learner (Carr, 2009; Drummond, 2008).

A further significant feature of early iterations of Learning Stories was the commitment of the developers to have them cohere with Te Whāriki, through incorporating a disposition-based framework, to act as a guideline for analysing the assessment narrative. This framework proposed five core learning dispositions, presented as aligning with the Te Whāriki strands e.g., the disposition of responsibility aligned with the strand of contribution (Carr, 2000).

While received favourably by many in the sector, the Learning Story framework attracted some critique concerning the potentially narrowing effect of the strongly dispositions-focused framework. Cullen (2001) suggested that while a theoretician might find the disposition-focused assessment framework 'elegant', because of its one-to-one matching with curriculum strands: "In practice, a limited set of dispositions could be as reductionist as any set of developmental indicators or standardised test, if it filters out the richness in the learning story" (p.3). Peters and Davis (2011) suggested that the predominant emphasis on learning dispositions and learner identity served to obscure the Te Whāriki focus on children's working theories.

More critically, Buchanan (2013) argued that despite there being an emphasis on diversity and open-endedness in the assessment commentary and in the activities in the exemplars in KTOTP booklets, there was a "terminal quality" about the meanings that were made of the activities: "The child as a learner, and learning progress as the strengthening of learning dispositions, saturated the meanings made of events and engagements" (p.25). The inscriptive and normative qualities of the dispositional assessment approach contributes to a reductive view of the child as a learner; all of their actions and emotions and the interpretation of their voice are articulated as an expression of their learning intentions and their learning progress as they encounter boundless learning opportunities. Buchanan cites instances in the exemplars of children encouraged toward understanding their actions exclusively as 'learning performances' and themselves solely as learners, a key point here being that the development of dispositions may not be any less prescriptive in requiring learners to construct themselves in particular ways.

Early learning and continuity of learning

More recent intra-action between the EC and the school sectors is seen in a recent upsurge in policy activity seeking to strengthen alignments between the EC and school sector through a focus on the notion of continuity of learning. A major MoE website restructuring occurred in June 2015. This involved the disestablishment of the two previously existing early childhood websites and a new homepage layout for early childhood, school and tertiary sectors reframed as: "0-6 years: Early learning", "5-19 Years: School" and "16+ Years: Further education". EC is no longer framed as a sector or service but rather as the first set of a number of years of learning, seeming to effectively install learning continuity or lifelong learning as the new 'front-frame' and over-arching organising scheme of the MoE website. Detailed examination of changes to the website and the transitory way in which sections could be introduced and withdrawn with no apparent material trace (Alcock & Haggerty, 2013; Haggerty & Alcock, 2016) points to the way technologies operate as a key constitutive force in the education entanglement. Changes, some with a fleeting existence, have included a new focus on recently introduced school-sector National Standards and literacy and numeracy skills as all important for school learning; a turning away from traditional EC curriculum priorities to do with the integration of care and education, and the

prioritising of children's holistic development and wider wellbeing. Instead, EC programmes (and parents and parenting) are positioned as central to preparing children for future success at school. This shift is in line with international trends towards increasingly elevated levels of parental responsibility for preparing their children for academic success and school at younger and younger ages (Ang, 2014; Holt & Kelly, 2016; Osgood, Albon, Allen, & Hollingworth, 2013).

Further alignment-oriented policy activity has included the publication of three key reports: the Education Review Office (ERO) (2015) report, Continuity of Learning: Transitions from Early Childhood Services to School, the MoE commissioned Continuity of Early Learning Project reports, (Carr, Cowie, & Davis, 2015; Mitchell et al., 2015a,b), and the Report of the Advisory Group on Early Learning (MoE, 2015). The shift in official discourse from the use of the term *transition*, which invokes the idea of moving between entities that embody qualitative *differences*, to the use of the term *continuity*, which is concerned only with *sameness* stands out and is reflected in the report titles.

In all three reports a dominant concern is the potential for transition to school to threaten the continuity of learning (MoE, 2015). In canvassing the 'way forward' all three reports not only point to potentially positive prospects for creating continuities between the EC and school curriculum but to alignments with 21st Century learning competencies promoted by international organisations. Within the Continuity of Early Learning Project reports, assessment is presented as playing a strong role in creating learner identity and as future-focused. EC assessment practices endorsed are a mix of what could be described as 'traditionally' focused and future-focused. On the one hand, for example, is the focus on a breadth of learning outcomes with survey exemplars that reported the valuing of holistic learning, and the diversity of "children's '100 languages'" (Mitchell et al., 2015b, p.9). At the same time there is also a marked shift toward framing EC curriculum and assessment priorities as more strongly future oriented, transition-friendly and globally aligned.

One of the clearest examples of this comes in the opening of the second of the two project reports under the heading "Which educational outcomes are valued? and What educational outcomes should be assessed?" (Carr et al., 2015). Here, in the pattern of promoting 21st century competencies referred to above, a threefold alignment is proposed. That is an alignment of the Te Whāriki strands, with the five

competencies of the NZC, together with the five 21st century competencies proposed in the 2013 Gordon Commission Report, produced by assessment scholars from the USA and Canada:

1. Knowledge creation as participants in a knowledge creating culture [*The NZC*: (creative, critical and metacognitive) thinking; *TW*: exploration].
2. Moving flexibly and rationally between concrete reality and abstractions from it [*The NZC*: using language, symbols and texts; *TW*: communication].
3. Living with increasing complexity and turning it to advantage whenever this is possible [*The NZC*: participating and contributing; *TW*: belonging].
4. Cognitive persistence [*The NZC*: managing self; *TW*: wellbeing].
5. Collective cognitive responsibility: engaging in collaborative activities that are rich in cognitively challenging activities [*The NZC*: relating to others; *TW*: contribution] (5).

The rationale offered for these alignments is their common de-emphasis of the "three Rs of Reading wRiting and aRithmetic", in favour of "learning how to learn and to continue learning" (p.5).

The most recent reconfiguring of the EC curriculum has been the commissioning in July 2016 and the release in April 2017 of an update of Te Whāriki. The time frames for this were short and the scope of consultation limited. The Request for Quotes (RFQ) put out by the Ministry called for a small writing team of 3 to 5 'early learning specialists' to assist with the update. The RFQ indicated that it was not intended to change the structure, principles, strands and goals. The primary task was to be finding ways to strengthen learning continuity through reviewing the current learning outcomes and creating links between Te Whāriki and the New Zealand Curriculum and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to detail the changes between the draft update and the final version. In terms of tracing the shifts in policy and intra-active entanglment it is suffcient to note that the updated curriculum proposes a number of subtle and not-so-subtle shifts to bring Te Whāriki into closer alignment with the school curriculum and standards-oriented school sector assessment. These include a reduction in the number of learning outcomes from 118 to 20, and statements that suggest these having a more prominent role in curriculum planning and assessment. Other measures aimed at strengthening alignments between Te Whāriki and NZC include efforts to manufacture alignments between the principles of Te Whāriki and those of the NZC, despite their apparent differences, for example, the Te Whāriki principle of holism and the NZC principle of coherence. Further alignment-inducing

measures in the update include a newly introduced requirement that EC teachers "show where and how" their assessments of children can be linked/connect with the NZC (MoE, 2017, p.58).

Further entanglements of international alignments came to light recently with the revelation late in 2016 that the New Zealand government was one of 16 countries that had participated in scoping work for the OECD's International Early Learning and Child Well-being Study (IELS). Although this study was proposed in 2012, and member-governments consulted, wider early childhood and academic communities were not made aware of these developments. Plans are well advanced for this study for which it is proposed to use common measures to assess 4.5 to 5.5 year olds in six domains considered "predictive of positive life outcomes" and which are as follows: "self-regulation, oral language/emergent literacy, mathematics/numeracy, executive function, locus of control, social skills" (OECD, 2016, pp.18-19). It is also proposed to collect contextual information for the individual child, their home learning environment and their experiences of early childhood education. It is envisaged that the data collected, in conjunction with data collected through PISA, will "enable countries to link early learning outcomes to the capabilities of the same cohort of students at age 15" (p.110) and to provide comparative data about the performance of countries' education systems.

Concern has been expressed, nationally (Carr, Mitchell, & Rameka, 2016; Mackey, Hill, & De Vocht, 2016) and internationally (Moss et al., 2016), about the proposal to create what has been dubbed "Baby PISA" (Pence, 2016). The Annual General Meeting of the New Zealand Association of Educational Research passed a unanimously endorsed statement which called on the New Zealand government to not participate in the OECD IELS and to continue work which had already begun designed to produce appropriate assessment measures for early childhood education linked to the principles and strands of Te Whāriki (NZARE, 2016).[3]

To date there has been no public announcement concerning New Zealand's participation. The minutes of the February 2017 meeting of the MoE's Early Childhood Advisory Committee (ECAC) indicated that some ECAC members "expressed concern about the focus of the OECD work and that there had been no engagement with the

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[3] http://www.nzare.org.nz/policies-and-practices.aspx).

sector to date" and that no decision had been reached about New Zealand's participation. (Retrieved 14 August, 2017 from www.education.govt.nz). A subsequent Ministry response to our e-mail inquiry clarified that it had been decided that New Zealand would not do so (personal communication). With no further explanation offered for this decision one could perhaps speculate that the raising of concerns had a part to play here. In identifying the member countries choosing not to participate in IELS, Moss and Urban (2017) highlight the influential role the collaborative critique of national organisations of service providers, trade unions and researchers played in the German decision.

Concluding thoughts

We have examined the dynamics involved in the determining of New Zealand's recent EC curriculum and assessment policy priorities. We have suggested that the curriculum and assessment priorities arrived at involve an intra-mix of local, international and historical ideas, values, practices and technologies. We have highlighted the key influence of the imperative of market rationalities and remaining competitive in the global education race, and the role of international organisations, particularly the OECD, in these developments. We have also highlighted the entangled ways in which particular constructions of learners and learning are authorised and prioritised, the way alignments are forged and the way 'real' world contradictions and messiness is managed (Rizvi & Lingard, 2011).

Our analysis shows that EC curriculum and assessment priorities have been incrementally and "iteratively reconfigured through intra-action" (Barad, 2007, p.ix). Torrance (2017b) describes changes in public institutions as occurring in "immanent incremental fashion with 'practice based accretions'...so that almost without noticing it everything has changed" (p.82). This description captures the way that as the discourses of global neo-liberalism have taken stronger hold of early childhood sector curriculum/assessment priorities, there have been incremental changes. "Almost without noticing" these changes have resulted in a shift from the explicit rejecting and countering of school sector pedagogy to the promoting of greater continuity with school sector priorities and from aspirations of curriculum diversity to a narrower globally referenced assessment driven focus. Such incremental shifts have been reflected in changes from learning *opportunities* in the draft version of Te Whāriki in

1993, which speak of what is offered to children, to 118 learning *outcomes* in the final version in 1996, which is suggestive of what children will become, narrowing to 20 learning outcomes able to be used more instrumentally for curriculum planning and evaluation and assessing children's progress in the updated curriculum of 2017. This analysis also suggests initiatives that set out to challenge standardisation and normalisation in the initial iterations of EC curriculum and assessment priorities were themselves drawn in and seemingly reconfigured in the entanglement with the school sector and neo liberal discourses.

We argue that it is through EC becoming increasingly intertwined with the school sector that the effects of global discourses of neo-liberalism have intensified. We call for closer and more critical examination of such entanglements. Our point here is not that ideas such as life-long learning and continuity are 'bad' in themselves, but that they can be drawn on for radically different ends. Hence there is a need to interrogate the driving forces within these meta-policies and a pressing need to address their reductionist and governance-related effects. Lather (2016) argues that the practices of neo-liberal governing behaviours are not as solid or immutable as they appear. The twists and turns that we have recounted as EC curriculum and assessment priorities have become entangled with those of the school, the neo-liberal concept of lifelong learning and economic rationalities offer some support for this view.

Chapter Seven: Ranui Kindergarten

Introduction

In this chapter I work across different data sets to examine the curriculum, assessment and transition-related priorities at Ranui Kindergarten as a product of multiple assemblages, and explore connections between these priorities and the modes of operating of the six focus children. The first section focuses on officially sanctioned curriculum and assessment priorities: those determined by the umbrella kindergarten association in its policy guidelines, the 'governmental' priorities promoted in the kindergarten's three most recent Education Review Office (ERO) reviews, and the programme priorities identified on the kindergarten website. The section concludes with a brief introduction to the kindergarten's four-teacher team, Clare, Lucy, Zara and Elspeth, and what they saw as pedagogical priorities at kindergarten.

The second section introduces the six focus children, Zelda, Jacob, Caleb, Venya, SJ and Sabal, focusing on the formal assessments made of them in their individual portfolios, and how teachers spoke of them when interviewed. Parent input to the children's portfolios is also referred to in this section, though a fuller discussion of how parents viewed their child's time at kindergarten and starting school is provided in upcoming chapters.

The chapter concludes with a researcher and video section in which the data presented are a combination of researcher commentary and video excerpts. Seven videoed episodes of 'everyday' curriculum events the focus children were involved in are introduced as 'cases to think with' about the relationship between the children's diverse modes of operating and the pedagogical priorities of the kindergarten. A key endeavour here is to map/trace the material-discursive ways in which possibilities for different modes of being, doing, knowing, and relating are opened up and closed down in these events.

Curriculum and assessment priorities: Kindergarten Association

In 2013 Ranui Kindergarten was one of over 60 kindergartens under the jurisdiction of the Wellington Kindergarten Association (WKA). In the kindergarten community at that time 41% of families identified as Pākehā/European, 24% as Māori, 9% as Pasifika,

9% as Asian, 5% Indian and 12% as 'other ethnic groups'. Curriculum and assessment priorities for Ranui, as for other kindergartens managed by the association, were set out in the "curriculum implementation" policy document, *Te Manawa* (WKA, 2012). The stated aim of this framework, expressly derived from the national curriculum and assessment policy documents, *Te Whāriki* (MoE, MoE, 1996) and *Kei Tua o Te Pae* (KTOTP) (MoE, 2004-2009), was "to truly celebrate and nurture the mana of every child" (p.7). Closer reading suggests that the focus in Te Manawa is not so much on what curriculum priorities could or should be, but on providing kindergarten teaching teams with a "clear framework" of procedural criteria for assessment, planning and evaluation. Its concern is with the *mechanisms* of curriculum implementation. The model proposed builds on the process-based assessment model (notice, recognise and respond) drawn on in KTOTP, but with particular emphasis on the importance of *procedures* for documentation, planning and review. Curriculum, in this resource, is characterised by the overarching scheme of child-as-learner, with learning framed as something teachers should continuously be ready to recognise and respond to. Thus, Te Manawa echoes the assessment-oriented, child-as-learner focus highlighted previously as featuring strongly in educational and political assemblages, nationally and internationally. Biesta (2010) refers to such developments as marking the 'learnerfication' of EC services.

The title metaphor of the association's parent information booklet: "Creating lifelong learners" (WKA, n.d.) also references the child-as-learner as an overarching organising scheme. However, the booklet itself, like the association website, references an intermix of both 'old' and 'new' pedagogical priorities. For example, the booklet section "The kindergarten environment" refers to "staying true" to the Froebelian roots of the New Zealand kindergarten movement (p.13). Te Whāriki is referred to in the booklet as "the backbone" of the kindergarten programme, but framed here as "laying the foundation for successful future learning" (p.13). The booklet section "Continuity between kindergarten and school" includes the diagram from the school curriculum setting out alignments between the Te Whāriki strands and the New Zealand Curriculum key competencies (MoE, 2007). This section also refers to the kindergarten programme "actively" supporting the key competencies (Years 1-3) of the New Zealand school curriculum (p.16).

Curriculum and assessment priorities: ERO

The earliest of the kindergarten's three most recent ERO reviews features approving comments about the curriculum emphasis on play, diverse interests and supporting children's choices, and a programme in which children "freely choose from a wide range of planned, structured and spontaneous activities" (reference withheld). Special mention is made of the outdoor sports programme, the strong lead children take in this, and the rich breadth of accessible outdoor and indoor resources. The more recent reviews feature a strengthening emphasis on children's learning outcomes and a more subject-oriented focus/framing. Literacy, numeracy, ICT and science figure more prominently as key subject areas, together with an emerging focus on alignments with the school curriculum. All three reviews refer approvingly to the high levels of parent involvement. However, the substance of this approval shifts over the reviews toward a more instrumental focus concerning parental responsibility to support children's learning.

The "Areas for improvement" sections in all three reviews emphasise future-focused learning, assessment and evaluation as priority areas. Notable here is an intensifying focus on recording and planning children's learning outcomes, and strengthening consistency. Also notable are associated calls for strengthened lines of accountability involving a more management-oriented systems-based approach and closer alignment with government policy priorities. This now is prioritised over the focus in the two earlier reviews on children's actual curriculum experiences, teachers' moment-to-moment interactions and responsiveness, and the opportunities afforded by the physical resourcing.

Curriculum and assessment priorities: Ranui Kindergarten

Curriculum/assessment information on the Ranui Kindergarten website at the time of the study emphasised the programme interest in the natural world and sustainability, and the role of the kindergarten's outdoor grounds and gardens, as sites for active play, exploration and kaitiakitanga[4] (reference withheld). Special mention was also made of the kindergarten's location within 'easy-reach' of the local park, and the line

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[4] The responsibility on humans to serve as caretakers of the world's resources.

of bush adjoining the kindergarten, the site of the kindergarten's 'forest learning' programme (Ngāhere Ako). Other programme priorities highlighted included the aim of encouraging children to be "independent investigators …to work together to solve problems", and the valuing of acceptance, empathy and inclusion. Partnerships with parents, and encouraging families to become actively involved in their children's learning were also emphasised.

Formal assessment practices at Ranui Kindergarten predominantly centred around children's individual portfolios; the introductory section of each portfolio described these as made up of documented Learning Stories, defined as "narrative recordings of your child's learning", focusing on "development, interests, friendships, skills and attitudes". This section introduced the kindergarten's use of the notice, recognise and respond assessment model, and the dispositions standardly promoted in Learning Stories (taking an interest, being involved, persisting with difficulty, expressing a point of view and taking responsibility). Here, parents were advised of the kindergarten's wish to develop "a reciprocal partnership…to work together to enable your child to be happy, healthy, capable and confident" and of the kindergarten's philosophy of encouraging parents to become involved in their child's learning and the everyday running of the kindergarten.

Parents were encouraged to contribute to children's portfolios as part of the kindergarten's "multiple-voice" approach to assessment. Calls for contributions started with completing an "about me" entry-to-kindergarten information page with sections for parents to indicate their child's language, cultural and family background, their aspirations for their child's time at kindergarten, and what their child's interests were/made them happy. Requests were also made for family "photos and stories" of "adventures and special events", and parents were periodically supplied with questionnaires/feedback sheets for their updated "aspirations". Parent input was also sometimes sought by teachers adding a "Parent voice" section to a Learning Story, and parents were sometimes asked for feedback from their children, e.g., who they were friends with, what did they "like doing" and "want to learn"?

In keeping with the kindergarten's policy of a "multiple voice" approach to children's documentation, all members of the teaching team were expected to contribute to each child's portfolio. Teachers saw this as encouraging the collaboration, reflection, and breadth they valued rather than the commonly chosen

alternative of having each staff member responsible for particular children. The assessment cycle revolved around weekly team meetings where teachers would discuss as many of the children as possible including any children they had particular concerns about; they aimed to have at least two portfolio items per child per term.

Curriculum priorities: The teachers

Head teacher Clare had completed an EC teaching diploma in 1987, taught for 15 years and was in her thirteenth year at Ranui. Lucy had completed an EC teaching diploma in 1994, upgraded to a degree in 2004, taught for 17 years in both Aotearoa and England, and was in her seventh year at Ranui. Zara had completed an EC teaching diploma in 1990, taught for eight years (after a 10 year break working as a graphic artist) and was in her fifth year at Ranui. Elspeth completed an EC Diploma in 1976, taught full-time for 10 years, followed by various spells of relieving, and was at Ranui in a six-month relieving position.

When asked about the curriculum priorities at Ranui kindergarten the four teachers shared relatively common views about the importance of children experiencing a curriculum that involved multiple opportunities for active exploration and sustained engagement. They all referred to the Te Whāriki notion of children being/becoming capable and confident and emphasised the programme focus on children's interests. Elspeth spoke of "supporting children to find their way in to things they were keen on but unconfident in". Clare said her foremost aim at Ranui was "giving children choices *and* letting them know they've got choices". Lucy spoke of the curriculum as "multi-stranded", suggesting there were "always so many things happening on any one day". Zara and Elspeth highlighted the "freedom" children were afforded; Zara spoke of children as "empowered to choose", and Elspeth of children taking initiatives, "making whatever they want" and being able to independently access materials they needed.

Relationships were another curriculum priority all four teachers drew attention to, albeit framed somewhat differently. Clare emphasised building trust, highlighting the Te Whāriki strands of wellbeing and belonging, and saying these were relevant to relationships with families as well as children. She spoke of wanting the kindergarten to be "a place that parents can just come and go", of valuing the contributions families made, and of the insights and empathy she gained through better understanding the

situations of different families. Lucy spoke enthusiastically of seeing her relationship with the curriculum differently through becoming comfortable with the idea that teachers' interests were also important and that they too could introduce ideas. She gave the example of the much-valued bush walks started through a long-time interest of Clare's. Zara and Elspeth both referred to dramatic play as something they particularly enjoyed, and mentioned liking to have times of being involved just as "playmate" and "just for fun". However, they both identified tensions with the expectation that they maintain a focus on children's learning.

The priority put on building children's identities as learners came through strongly in all four teacher interviews. However, categorisations of what constituted significant learning seemed informed by somewhat different discourses. Clare and Lucy drew mainly on newly orthodox constructions of learning based around learning dispositions. Lucy, for instance, identified her top curriculum/assessment priority as "wanting the children to leave here with this positive sense of themselves as learners...having the confidence to ask questions, or to make mistakes...to leave knowing what to do if they don't know what to do". Zara, on the other hand, who described herself as "coming from an older style of training", said she sometimes "struggled to see …those dispositions… [and] fit things in". She made a number of references to developmental milestones such as "holding a pen correctly" and stages.

Clare and Lucy both emphasised the affordances of the physical environment at Ranui, positioning this as a defining aspect of the way the curriculum operated. Clare stressed the affordances of the outdoors and the importance of encouraging children "to notice the wonders around them and under their feet". She advocated for environments allowing children to follow their ideas, making particular mention of consulting with children when considering equipment purchases from the catalogues, and of children generally being "spot on" about what was needed. She spoke critically of narrow curriculum provision pre-set by teachers, which she linked to the fostering of "blinkered kids" rather than "creative thinkers and innovators".

Lucy shared Clare's passion for the outdoors. She referred to the garden space at Ranui as "a huge part of who we are as a kindergarten", saying how happy she was to be in a place that not only had a reasonable amount of space, but also a rich diversity of resources allowing for "lots of diffent types of exploration". She described the environment as an influence in its own right, saying it offered children "so many

opportunities...to really really engage them and teach them". Resonating strongly with the relational materialist interests of this thesis was the way Lucy described the environment as allowing children "to be, to be in lots of ways".

Zara also commented on the "interplay of environmental things on how they [the children] were". She contrasted environmental conditions at Ranui with the vastly different and very "stressful" conditions she encountered at two previous centres where she had worked; the outdoor area of one she described as "a really confined concrete space with a sandpit in the corner". Her comments stand as a salutary reminder of the highly variable conditions amongst different settings in the Aotearoa-New Zealand EC sector, further reinforcing the need for caution in how the 'findings' of this thesis are viewed.

Assessment priorities: The teachers

When asked about the assessment priorities at Ranui, all four teachers stressed the importance of getting to know the children well; children's individual portfolios were seen as reflecting that knowledge. Also prominent was the persistent foregrounding of children's identities as learners. Hence strengths and interests children showed in their ways of being, doing, knowing, and relating at kindergarten were often drawn on as a means of progressing learner identity rather than as interests and strengths in their own right. For example, a child's perseverance at something would often be highlighted ahead of a focus on what they did. As Zara put it, the key thing here was "not to squish that motivation".

In discussing their documentation for children's portfolios, Clare spoke with some ambivalence about official calls to sharpen the assessment focus. While appreciating the desire to have portfolios "be a record of children's learning during their time here", she was dubious about the push to have every portfolio item accompanied by a teacher's assessment commentary. She saw this as concerningly time-consuming, questioned the purpose, and worried that these measures would lead them to gear their documentation more toward ERO and external accountabilties. She believed this could potentially "stifle the excitement the team had for documentation"and some of the broader purposes they valued it for, in particular its use in individual and team reflection, and as a site of dialogue with and for children and families.

Official calls to have kindergarten/pedagogical documentation regularised and more concentrated on purely assessment-focused ends also seemed at odds with Lucy's comments about assessment at Ranui "not ever being settled…always a work in progress… refining what works for individual children and their familes and…for us". Lucy contended there was "no one right way" to do a learning story/narrative assessment. She spoke of priorities needing to be contingent, of needing to do "one thing in one instance then next time round something else".

Transition priorities: The teachers

When asked how Ranui Kindergarten approached children starting school and areas such as print-based literacy and numeracy, Clare, Lucy, Zara and Elspeth referred to a number of measures introduced to give children opportunities to become familiar with the school environment and what was expected of them. Clare outlined the kindergarten's transition to school programme, which generally commenced a term to six months before children started school. This involved teachers inquiring into the children's perspectives — children's views of and knowledge about — starting school, potentially including how the family was going with starting-school arrangements. The aim here was to recognise that, as Zara put it, the transition experience was "different for every child", though Clare reported often saying to parents "try to avoid building it up to this big transition, cos sometimes it is hard work". Lucy spoke of liaising with local schools and the impression she gained of quite an emphasis on mat-time. Clare and Lucy both referred to the resulting introduction-to-school photo-books and strong ongoing connections with the local Ranui School.

The theme of children gaining familiarity with things that would be given priority at school was further reflected in the programme emphasis on environmental print. Examples ranged from the indoor literacy table set up with what Clare described as "the things they might see in a classroom", e.g., letter and number formation charts, through to a suitcase of pens and paper able to be taken outside, and the flip-boards and outdoor blackboard children were encouraged to write their name on for turn-taking. Lucy stressed the importance of introducing literacy and numeracy concepts in ways that were "natural and meaningful for the children", and looking for ways to build and consolidate these concepts by what she termed 'taking it to them'. She gave the example of having children count how many times they jumped off the outdoor climbing boxes.

Zara suggested important things for children starting school were "...being able to get on with other people, being able to work together...making friends...how we feel about ourselves, voice our own ideas". She emphasised the importance of school visits, "getting used to the surroundings as much as you can...seeing your classroom, meeting the teachers".

Elspeth, coming back into teaching after a long break, spoke of feeling the need to be "more proactive" about children's transition to school. She gave the example of children learning to write their name, saying in the past her response to a child saying they could not write their name would have been "to think 'they aren't ready for it'. Now I would say 'yes you can' and I would say 'hold the pencil', and I will write it with them". Elspeth also spoke of the importance of children becoming more independent and the school curriculum focus on becoming self-managing.

For Clare a particular priority was identifying children who might struggle and finding ways to ease their transition. She advocated introducing them to some of the concepts/language likely to be important in the NE classroom, so that "it's not so foreign", suggesting she would use "whatever it takes". She gave the example of using colouring-in sheets — not generally approved practice in professional EC discourse — in combination with activities such as drawing and carpentry, to help individual children become familiar with foundational concepts such as the mathematical language of shapes. Further examples of promoting these foundational concepts are described in sections following.

The focus children: At kindergarten

In this section I introduce the six focus children, before turning to the assessments made of them in their individual portfolios and how teachers spoke about them, when interviewed. I focus here on teacher perceptions of the children's modes of operating, and how teachers saw their different ways of being, doing, knowing, and relating, fitting with curriculum/assessment priorities at kindergarten and school. As in the previous section, teacher aspirations to engage with children's diversity (and that of their families) figure prominently, as does the prioritising of child-as-learner and the promoting of learning dispositions. Questions of school readiness and transition appeared to be a matter for increasing consideration. Children's friendships were a further focus.

Zelda

Zelda was born in Aotearoa to French-born mum, Martine and Aotearoa-born dad, Mike; her five-person household included an older and younger sister. Parental aspirations for Zelda's time at kindergarten were listed as "Making friends, sharing and taking turns" and "be[ing] kind and caring to others".

Zara's portfolio entry for Zelda's first day at kindergarten is of Zelda at the painting easel working on a multi-coloured painting; Zara writes of Zelda's "amazing concentration and precision" in the way she manages to add new colours without intermixing them. Numerous subsequent entries focus on Zelda's art and craft interests and her many ongoing creative enterprises.

Teacher assessment commentary here emphasised various looked-for ways to do with being/becoming a learner. Aspects highlighted included: "being creative", "being innovative", "coming up with ideas", getting inspired by the ideas of others, having "an eye for detail", observing, imitating, replicating, modifying, "experimenting", "problem solving", "thinking", setting a goal, "listening", "working hard", "not getting upset when something didn't work out", "working carefully", "showing great precision", "striving for accuracy" "self-assessing and being confident in her abilities". Technical skills such as cutting and sellotaping also featured, but less prominently. In one Learning Story about Zelda's newly emerging interest in designing her own outfits, Clare described demonstrating how she had drafted her own designs on paper, and encouraged Zelda to do the same, suggesting if she did so, this would help Clare, the teacher, know what resources Zelda would need. This was one of numerous examples of children being encouraged to set goals, and make and follow plans.

Other portfolio entries pointed to Zelda having interests in dramatic family play and dressups, dictating stories to accompany pictures, reading all the bush-walk signposts, and writing. For instance Zelda's sample "treasure map" featured twelve lines of recognisable capital and lower case letters, including four renderings of her name.

Zelda's early creative enterprises were portrayed as predominantly "solitary tasks which [Zelda] worked on independently". The first Learning Story to focus on friendships, "Collaborating Together", reported a number of interchanges between Zelda and a companion at the painting easel, suggesting "sharing an interest together

is an important step towards forming and sustaining friendships". A portfolio entry one month later empathetically recorded this spell of sharing interests was cut short when Zelda's artist companion moved to school. The Learning Story "A Great Friendship" noted that with the influence of a new friend Zelda was venturing outdoors more, climbing and jumping. Teacher commentary here, as in a number of other friendship-focused narratives, suggested friendship had an important pedagogical role to play in its potential to broaden children's modes of operating, helping to open up new ways of relating with/in the world.

At the beginning of the new year and the start of her final six months at kindergarten, Zelda's portfolio entries commended her for beginning to help others with their craft projects. Featuring here was Zelda's newly forming friendship with Venya, a friendship both mothers worked to foster.

All four teachers spoke in their interviews of Zelda being confident and capable, and highlighted her creative bent for making things. Clare and Lucy emphasised how self-motivated Zelda was. Clare noted the four-month duration of Zelda's latest designing and making interest commenting on the way Zelda "excites herself". Lucy also noted Zelda's creative drive to "just go and make it", as well as her drive to "make it better", suggesting this was for her "a way into different ideas". Lucy quipped that Zelda was all set for school already, adding that while Zelda would not have the same freedom to make things at school, she was sure its importance to Zelda meant she would find a way (with support from home) to keep going.

Zelda's friendship with current constant companion Venya was raised by Lucy, Zara and Elspeth. Elspeth referred to them as "together very independent"...calling them "very alike", though Zelda, the more outgoing of the two. Lucy described the friendship as "very exclusive at the moment".

Jacob

Jacob was born in Aotearoa to Aotearoa-born mum Ruby and English-born mum Cara, a three-member household. Parental aspirations for Jacob's time at kindergarten were listed as: "Make new friends and socialise. Have fun!"

Lucy's portfolio entry of Jacob's first day at kindergarten congratulated him on waving his mum off as she left and described him as "finding lots to do". Subsequent entries noted his readiness "to try new things", his continuing busyness, suggesting he

has "A questioning mind", is "Ready, Willing and Able", "Full of ideas...questions" and "developing working theories". Other entries noted "his enthusiasm for dressups", costume-making and dramatic and superhero play, rocks and minerals, outdoor adventuring and tree climbing, and learning about "things Māori".

Various portfolio narratives here (as more generally) served to give visibility to the "many-stranded" curriculum Lucy referred to in her interview, as a multi-modal intramix of people, places, practices and things. One such narrative, for example, "[Jacob] Slows the Sun", in which Jacob set about re-enacting the well-known Māori legend of Maui slowing the sun, tells of Jacob having made his way outside with a long piece of wool, asking the relieving teacher Carla, "Can you help me catch the sun?" To Carla's response 'Who are you and how can I help?' Jacob responded, 'I'm Maui and I'm trying to slow the sun'. He pointed out the "piupiu" [5] he was wearing, constructed with a small amount of assistance from Lucy, then demonstrated the fierce facial warrior pūkana [6] he had, with Lucy, researched on the computer.

All four teachers spoke of Jacob being very bright and highly imaginative, suggesting he had a lot of "input" from home. Lucy referred to Jacob as having "a bit of everything", "an enthusiasm for life", and a breadth of interest including "things outside his immediate experience". She noted Jacob "did not get uncomfortable with the idea of being in a different situation" and thought he liked to "really explore things in depth...not wanting to get diverted to something else". She was impressed by Jacob's skills as a conversationalist, noting he had not been "talked down to" and describing him as having the "best turn of phrase ever". Zara also noted how open Jacob was to new ideas. Elspeth said he was great at dramatic play, "a good listener" and a "real perfectionist."

Clare said that whilst Jacob arrived at kindergarten with "incredible skills and an amazing knowledge base", he was also very reliant on adult support. She spoke of a teaching-team "goal" to encourage him to "be more independent of adults" and "interact more with his peers". Zara noted Jacob's friendship with Luis in and out of kindergarten, adding that Jacob was friendly toward all children, was "very flexible" and often acted as mediator. Lucy believed Jacob got on with everybody, but said he generally preferred playing with just one or two others.

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[5] a stranded skirt-like garment traditionally made from flax.
[6] a traditional gesture in which the eyes are made to bulge and the tongue is poked out.

Caleb

Caleb was born in Aotearoa to Samoan-born mum Lia and Māori dad, Alex; his four-person household included an older sister and a grandmother who lived next door. Parental aspirations for Caleb's time at kindergarten were listed as "Be safe. Have fun. Make friends. Learn lots 😊".

Zara's portfolio entry of Caleb's first day at kindergarten described him as "busy all day", and documented his skilfully assembling and operating the "tricky" mechanical sandpit digger, and climbing a tree and the roof of the small outdoor whare[7]. These activities Zara linked to the Te Whāriki principle of holistic learning and the strands of wellbeing and belonging, suggesting children are "supported and empowered to learn from what motivates and interests [them]". Many subsequent entries featured instances of Caleb's engagements with movement. These focused on him moving and challenging his own body as well as investigating movement in things around him. For example, in Lucy's account of an episode of outdoor waterplay entitled 'The Scientist', she detailed Caleb's physical experimentations and verbalised working theories about the force of water required to move boats at speed through a pipe.

Other entries in Caleb's portfolio featured several days spent working on a piece of canvas artwork for the art auction, a first (perfectly-formed) letter to mum, a small number of completed drawings and paintings, and episodes of bug-collecting, book-reading, making volcanoes and cakes in the sandpit, and a dramatic play traffic game. Friendship-wise, a Learning Story "Sharing is Caring" recorded Caleb bringing items from home to share with friends. On this occasion it was his 'Mr Men' books which he was reported as able to read "almost word for word"; he commented "Mr Topsy Turvy is my favourite".

All four teachers spoke in their interviews of Caleb being very bright and highly talented physically. Lucy referred to Caleb's "scientific mind", giving as example a tunneling project in the sandpit in which he could "just see" that the configuration of tunnel and pipes the others had put together was unworkable. She attributed this capacity to Caleb being "such a visual plus physical learner he can kind of see in 3D", then related this in turn to Caleb's constant immersion with/in movement. She offered

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[7] Māori word for house, in this instance playhouse.

examples of his various feats on the trapeze bar as illustration of how physically capable and confident he was, saying how much she enjoyed seeing the joy in Caleb's body when he was challenging himself. In Lucy's view, while Caleb could "focus on detail and slow down" — something she often witnessed in his interest and interactions with the natural world she felt he was at risk of having difficulty with expectations of him at school. As she put it:

> His natural way of being is so physical and based on being able to touch things and move them. I do think he might find that transition a bit hard…sitting down, being confined to an area, or a certain thing at a certain time. *Not that he isn't interested in doing all those things. Not that he can't*. (Emphasis added)

Clare was also convinced that Caleb was "clever", and spoke of his having "top athlete" potential and she was similarly apprehensive that his high energy level and impulsivity would mean "he's going to find it really hard to sit still at school". She said she had faced similar difficulties herself, as had her children. She recalled one of her children's teachers having great stratgegies to help "jiggling" children expend their energy and was hopeful that information passed on to the school about Caleb would help secure his having a similarly understanding reception. She also advised Caleb's parents of locally available sporting options that might help counterbalance the immobilty she saw him needing to learn to sustain at school.

Zara and Elspeth described Caleb in very similar terms to Lucy and Clare. Zara called him "very bright", "bubbling", "slightly impulsive", physically "amazing" and highly focused when it came to activities of interest (e.g,. bugs and memory card games). Elspeth called him "ultra-intelligent" and "enthusiastic with everything…a wee bit too boisterous and enthusiastic". Friendship-wise, Zara and Elspeth commented that initiating friendships was something Caleb sometimes struggled with; Elspeth suggested "he just needs a really good mate". Her comments triggered a recollection of reading Caleb's portfolio, and the comments he was reported making, when asked about photos of various feats he had performed on the climbing frame: "I miss Sophie. She is my friend".

Venya

Venya was born in India to Indian-born parents Aadhya and Varil; her four-person household included an older brother and younger sister, though her grandmother

from India visited regularly. Venya's parents listed their aspirations for her time at kindergarten as "craft work, colouring, outdoor play, dancing".

Zara's portfolio entry for Venya's first day of kindergarten showed photos of Venya at the painting easel and carpentry table. Many subsequent entries were of her ongoing painting, drawing and mixed-media artworks, a number accompanied by Venya's explanatory comments. It was unclear whether these comments were spontaneous or teacher-solicited.

Venya's artworks showed an increasing intermix of letters and numbers; several incorporated numerically ordered sets of items and considerable patterning. Accompanying teacher annotations included references to foundational links with literacy and maths and explicit connections with "what is important ...for when you go to school". The first such annotation was 18 months prior to Venya starting school. In her last few months at kindergarten Venya started selecting and adding artwork, reassured by teachers that if the portfolio pages ran out, more could be added.

Other portfolio entries referred to Venya having particular interests in the dollhouse, duplo and books, and finding a friend. Venya's keeness to find a friend was commented on in Zara's Learning Story account of a duplo play session in which she showed herself able to be assertive, careful and steadfast in her delicate negotiations to join two girls who customarily played fairly exclusively together. A later Learning Story reported Venya's growing friendship with Zelda and the way in which this encouraged Venya "to make a lot more use of the collage area". As noted previously this was a friendship that both girls' mums worked to support through connections outside kindergarten.

All four teachers spoke of Venya being very capable and creative. However, Lucy suggested that while Venya enjoyed craft activity and spent a lot of time making things with Zelda, painting was her main mode of creative expression. According to Lucy, craft-related activity for Venya was more about being "social with [Zelda]" and producing props for their games; as she put it, "more of a means to an end than for [Zelda]". Lucy also commented that Venya's English proficiency was helped by her friendship with Zelda. It was noticable that all four teachers spoke of Venya and Zelda together, tending to intersperse their discussion of Venya with discusssion of Zelda and vice versa.

Clare spoke of the considerable time Venya spent setting up dramatic play areas and in family play with small dolls. Clare believed her great interest in family play was a means of playing out/working through some difficult adjustments she had to make while transitioning from living in the care of her grandmother in India, to rejoining her parents and older brother in Aotearoa. Clare also commented how important it had been to support Venya's mother through this difficult time.

SJ

SJ was born in Samoa to Samoan-born parents, Sefina and Sione; his seven-person household included three older sisters and an aunty. SJ's parents did not complete the "Aspirations" section of the "About me" sheet.

Zara's portfolio entry of SJ's first day at kindergarten highlighted his enjoyment of painting and puzzles, and congratulating him on managing to complete a train puzzle of several pieces. A number of subsequent portfolio entries detailed SJ's ongoing interest in puzzles of increasing complexity, including multi-layered and floor-sized puzzles. Teacher commentary highlighted SJ's "focus" and "perseverance", including his explanation of how he knew where the puzzle pieces went, "I try and try and try and I get there".

Other portfolio entries referred to SJ having particular interest in sports and outdoor activities, and dramatic play. Teacher commentary here focused on SJ's generosity in taking turns with prized props/roles. Clare wrote, "You are a good friend [SJ]". In a prop-making episode SJ is encouraged to set goals and have a plan or design. Other portfolio entries showed efforts to encourage SJ to write his name and form basic shapes following the dots, and later, with support, to put these techniques to work in his growing interest in drawing. All this, from what I could see, SJ carried out with considerable carefulness.

All four teachers spoke in their interviews of SJ showing great empathy to other children. Lucy described him as having "the most amazing sense of compassion and justice", Clare as "well-liked...a peacemaker", Zara highlighted his capacity for teamwork, Elspeth gave examples of his caring helpfulness; all referrred to particular children SJ had befriended, in each instance a child who was new, shy and/or not confident in English.

Clare said when SJ first came to kindergarten, shortly after arriving from Samoa, there was lots that was new for him. She recalled his tentativeness and conversations she had with him that went, "'Can I go on that?' 'Sure' 'Can I do that?' 'Sure'". She said he was sometimes fearful of trying things. With drawing, for example, she recalled teachers' efforts "just to make it really fun". They started with taking some clipboards out onto the deck and were gratified to see how excited he became "about something he was anxious about". Clare expressed concern SJ might again become overwhelmed by what was expected of him at school. She spoke of their teaching-team goal to encourage his English language proficiency and said she had been introducing him to "basic shape concepts".

Lucy commented on SJ's interest in puzzles and his patience when learning something new. She said he would tend to look for help to do it the first time, as he did when he had started doing woodwork, but then generally liked to have opportunities to practise and got great satisfaction in "getting better and better and doing things not everyone can". She noticed this often when he worked with puzzles. Elspeth spoke of SJ's interest in making superhero play props, noting how delighted he was to find how closely he could match the original "when the tracing paper turned up". Friendship-wise, Lucy noted that SJ currently spent a lot of his time outside with "best buddies "Jack and Sita, but that the trio was "not exclusive". In SJ's portfolio there was a full A4-size photo of the smiling, arm-in-arm threesome, an unusual entry in its complete lack of teacher annotation.

Sabal

Sabal was born in Aotearoa to Indian-born parents Sila and Prakesh; his four-person household included a baby brother, and a grandmother from India on extended visits. Sabal's parents listed their aspirations for his time at kindergarten as "playing with other children, getting comfortable with kids his own age, participating in group activities, learning to draw and paint, and getting interested in music".

In Sabal's first learning story "How does this work?" Zara recorded Sabal's sustained attempts over his initial three or so days, learning to work the ball launcher "to get the balls SOARING". The second entry was a mixed-media artwork, which Sabal excitedly called out was both "cutting and drawing". Several subsequent portfolio entries tracked Sabal's ongoing 3D productions, from single to multi-layered

endeavours sellotaped onto small pieces of paper and wood, and small-scale puppets and props, to large elaborate 'loose part' constructions of robots, creatures, and machines.

Other portfolio entries referred to Sabal's interests in dramatic play and cooking, to his slight trepidation on his first bush walk, to his growing English proficiency, and to the connections he was making with other children. Teacher commentary highlighted Sabal's concentration, perseverance and problem solving. In one Learning Story, "Introducing the planning process", Sabal was encouraged by Clare (as Zelda was also), to "draw his ideas". The rationale offered was that this would help him refine his drawing technique and ideas, and allow Clare "to make sure we have plenty of resources availailable". Two worksheet-based entries encouraged Sabal in identifying and naming basic shapes, as well as using them in drawing. Sabal's ready adoption of these ideas as characterstic of what being a learner/learning is about was shown in his dictated response on a home questionnaire. To the question what does he "like to do at kindergarten", Sabal responded, "draw/paint/be a police/build"; to the question what would he "like to learn about", Sabal answered "shapes and triangles".

An early Learning Story focused on Sabal's "Developing Friendships", showed Sabal and Sally-Ann "playing for a sustained period of time in the family corner". While this was the only reference to Sally-Ann in Sabal's portfolio, Sabal's mother directed me to this photo in her interview, telling me how very attached Sabal became to Sally-Ann and how upset he was for several months after her family moved away. Later entries referred to Sabal finding regular companions in police team dramatic play and being "accepted into" this playgroup.

All four teachers spoke of Sabal's creative ideas and the varied things he made. Clare described Sabal as having "very strong engineering talents", suggesting "his brain almost works three dimensionally … you see it in 3D collage creations … [and] in the sandpit". Lucy also described Sabal as having "That 3D thing…seeing how things work". Lucy tried to distinguish Sabal's way of seeing things from Caleb's: "He doesn't see it in the same way as Caleb" who she said was "able to see… in his head how it could turn around". The distinction Lucy struggled to explain in words here, and one that did not relate readily to the standard prioritised dispositional framing of learner identity. Nevertheless, Lucy saw these different ways of understanding things as

significant and strived to differentiate them. These sorts of modal-related differences were particularly relevant to this study, for while they constitute significant modes of operating in children's ways of being, knowing, doing, and relating, they remain undervalued and underexplored.

Lucy's next comment elaborated on the way Sabal's creative costume-making process tended to position other design elements ahead of movement:

> He has these ideas...spends ages and ages making it...he gets it so that it works for him. It doesn't have to look like everyone else's.... Sometimes these things are so lightly constructed..so delicate we have to bring him back in to [suggest] 'add a bit more to make sure it will stay on you and not fall apart the minute you walk away'. He's great. It's enough for him. Happy to come back to an idea...work out ways to make it different.

Both Lucy and Elspeth said Sabal sometimes struggled to get into groups, though neither thought he experienced this as a problem. Lucy considered him "pretty self-contained...quite happy going from group to group on the basis of interest rather than who's there". Elspeth described him as "a floater...like my kids... another one who can play on his own but is also capable of joining in". Clare recalled the "wonderful" peacemaking and problem-solving ideas Sabal was able to come up with when "the boys" were having problems and she asked him 'how would you solve this?'. She added he would only get to contribute them 'if given a voice'. Reflecting further why this did not happen, Clare asked, "whether it's his little voice or the confidence". Yet her preceding statement "if given a voice" suggests dynamics beyond Sabal as an individual, reaching into questions of peer relations, and the practices of the wider kindergarten assemblage. As mentioned earlier, the tendency to underestimate the importance of peers was one noted in other studies (Stephenson, 2009), as was the need for the power dynamics of children's relationships to receive greater research attention (MacNaughton, 2003).

Portfolios: Parent input

Teacher efforts to use the portfolios as a way of enacting the kindergarten's priority of parent partnership met with a range of responses from the focus children's families. Zelda's family answered the call/invitation to contribute family "photos and stories"

of "adventures and special events" with captioned-snapshots of favourite activities and "firsts" from family holidays, adding certificates from Zelda's swimming and gymnastic classes. Jacob's provided fulsome coverage of various new experiences and trips away, including a semi-comic series focused on life during house renovations. Caleb's provided regular multi-photo accounts of numerous action-packed holiday trips and special family events, including a 20-photograph record of a whānau reunion on Caleb's dad's family marae. Venya's family provided a small one-off set of photos of the family celebrating the Hindu festival of Ganesh Chaturdi, Sabal's a small one-off set of the family taken in India with Sabal's grandparents. SJ's portfolio had no family photos.

Responses to the various information-requesting forms were also varied. Jacob's parents, for example, responded with detailed lists of currently favourite activities, books, films and music, in conjunction with updates on the [alphabet] letters Jacob knew and could write, and a very enthusiastic response to his interest at kindergarten "in all things Māori". Sabal's parents' replied to a questionaire querying their priorities for his last months at kindergarten wanting him to "be confident in all environments, learn additional language, learn to recognise numbers and learn to be a team player". Neither Venya's nor SJ's families appeared to complete any forms. Hence while parent input could be seen at times as usefully helping broaden one's appreciation of the diversity of children's lifeworlds, this unevenness of response suggested the need to consider the potential for such measures to advantage/disadvantage particular families, and in particular to serve to reinforce existing relations of privilege.

The question of differing priorities between parents and teachers and how such differences were addressed is germane here. Typically, such differences appeared not to be addressed directly in portfolios. One exception was Lucy's use of a 'Parent Voice' section in a learning story to document, then counter, a viewpoint put forward by Venya's mother Aardhya. Here Lucy reported a discussion in which Aardhya had noted daughter Venya was increasing in confidence and "naming colours and sorting by size". Lucy wrote this was "good to hear", but added — drawing on dispositions-focused assessment discourse — that what was "especially exciting" was that Venya was "willing to try new things". Lucy's comments here could perhaps be viewed as an indication of the asymmetrical relations and subordination of parents

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highlighted in other studies of parent involvement and educational partnerships as a function of assessment documentation (Karila & Alasuutari, 2012). Yet to work across the data sets and read Lucy's interview comments about teachers coming "under pressure" from parents to incorporate more 'high stakes' elements of the school curriculum might suggest a somewhat more entangled view of the power relations in play. So too might looking at some of the critical questions raised by strongly promoted moves toward the "pedagogicalization" of parents (Popkewitz, 2003, p.35), nationally and internationally.

Discussion

The teacher interview and portfolio data discussed in this section highlights a number of common pedagogical priorities as well as areas of tension and dissonance. Commonly suggested priorities were:

- getting to know children as individuals and what mattered to/for them — interests, ways of operating, friendships
- offering a responsively "many-stranded" range of curriculum choices
- strengthening children's learning dispositions and identities as learners
- attending to the role and resourcing of the physical environment.

Competing and contrasting priorities included:

- teacher views of priorities as contingent, needing to take account of the circumstances of the child, the family, the teachers, the setting, and the exigencies of events; and an official emphasis on consistency and external accountabilty in curriculum/assessment priorities
- teacher efforts to support children to become school-ready; and at the same time help children 'work around' these school priorities to enable them to continue with ways of being and doing seen as vital to them
- the focus on child-as-learner; and teachers' desire to sometimes put this aside in favour of other possible priorities e.g., taking time to 'just' enjoy being together
- competing and contrasting priorities amongst individual teachers, parents and children.

Reseacher videoing and visits

In this section I continue to explore the focus children's diverse modes of being, doing, knowing, and relating and the part that day-to-day curriculum/assessment priorities at kindergarten played in these ways of operating. I present seven videoed episodes that feature aspects of curriculum interest to the particular focus children as well as aspects of curriculum highlighted as programme priorities. I present and discuss these video episodes as cases to think with both about the priorities that unfolded, and dynamics that did and did not seem to serve as potentiating. I do not claim to 'know' the children (or settings), my aim being to "keep the question of meaning open as a locus of debate" (Davies, 2010, p.59).

The table below sets out the assemblages of people, places, practices, and things discussed in each episode. I use hyphens to denote that the assemblage parts identified are relationally entangled/co-constitutive, and ellipses (…) to indicate that the parts identified are incomplete. Discussion of these episodes also draws on video-log feedback offered by parents of the focus children and/or teachers.

	Participants	The episode assemblages: Doing curriculum/ assessment: People-places-practices-things
Episode 1	Zelda, SJ, teacher (Clare) and group	outdoors-sustainability-worms-gloves-compost-plastic-corporeality-cross species encounters-doing/investigating-intra-mixing priorities …
Episode 2	Venya, Zelda, Caleb, teachers (Lucy and Elspeth) and group	indoors-mat-time-Māori action songs-practice-conduct-school-leaders-lining up…
Episode 3	Zelda and Venya	indoors-collage-table-cardboard box-sellotape-dolls-friendships-having a plan …
Episode 4	Caleb and Sabal	indoors-marbles-race-kineticism-self and other-'human' and 'non-human'-players…
Episode 5	SJ, friend, teacher (Elspeth) and group	outdoors-basketball-sport-bodies-teamplay-sideline-teacher-multitasking-letter names…
Episode 6	Jacob and companions	outdoors-broom-machine-making things that do things-animating forces…
Episode 7	Jacob, best friend (Luis) and teacher (Clare)	outdoors-conversations-boots-sand-hand-brush-time/space-self-reliance…

Figure 2. Ranui Kindergarten: Table of video episodes

Episode 1: Compost, worms and gloves

The compost, worms and gloves episode relates (amongst other things) to the kindergarten programme emphasis on sustainability and on encouraging children's active investigation. In this teacher-organised activity Zelda and SJ are amongst a group of children gathered with Clare around a wheelbarrow of compost readying it for the garden and looking out for worms (and plastic). Aspects of the assemblage serving as a case to think here include what becomes possible through children's 'first-hand' encounters with worms, gloves, compost and plastic and the intra-mix of teacher/child priorities in what comes to matter.

Clip 1: Worms: Zelda

Many of Clare's interactions in Clip 1 are in keeping with the kindergarten commitment to fostering sustainability. This is seen, for example, in the caring kind of relating Clare looked to foster as children handled the worms: "Now we want to keep the worms in the dirt, remember. They don't like sunlight". The relation-of-use Clare sought to foster in this cross-species worm encounter can be distinguished from a relation-of-use in which the 'non-human' exists simply as an object of study. Such an approach resonates with what Taylor, Blaise, and Giugni (2013), inspired by Haraway, frame as

a move away from "the sort of curriculum that would have autonomous individual children learn *about* things", to one of learning "*with*" (p.60). This conception of the mutual entanglement of 'human'/'non-human' relationships fits with Clare's endeavours here to foster children's respect as well as understanding of the important ecological role worms play.

Another reason for selecting this episode was the video-log feedback Zelda's mum Martine provided, suggesting that for Zelda, this activity involved new fields of interest. Martine wrrote first of being "really amazed" how interested Zelda was in the worms: "she never seems to like touching insects at home", then of how "impressed" she was by Zelda's gentleness picking up the worms.

Clare's interactions in this episode also resonate with her commitment to children being able to make choices and try things out for themselves — a commitment many EC services would see as consistent with the exploration strand of Te Whāriki. Hence when Sita announced "I need gloves", Clare responded: "You don't really need them. You can use your fingers", yet then told her where to get them. Sita still opted for gloves, but discarded one shortly after, seeming to work out that fingers worked much better for the delicate task of feeling the small worms in the compost.

Figure 3. Episode one: Clip 1: Worms Zelda

For my part I noticed that the teacher-organised activity attracted children I seldom saw play together. Zelda and Sita, for example, are brought together in jointly handling a small worm. Such coming-togethers prompted me to reflect further on what the

dynamics might be that were encouraging children to widen their experiences, try out different modes of being and doing, and expand their circle of relationships to other species and things as well as people.

Another of Clare's interactions catching my attention, which seemed to allow space for children to approach things differently, is an interchange with Stella, following Clare asking: "can you remember why we need worms in our soil?" When Stella answers, "cos the birds can't get them", Clare's response: "it's a good hiding place for worms, that's a really good idea", appears to genuinely welcome the point Stella makes, even though her answer differs from the answer sought.

Focusing on this episode as an assemblage helps bring attention to the significant role played by more-than-human as well as human entities and forces, here, for example, bringing attention to 'the pull' of the worms drawing the children in. Considering the modalities in play helps bring attention to the relational ways of 'knowing' made possible here through sensory encounters moving beyond telling and/or observation alone. For Zelda, for example, the knowing of the worm is body-to-body, as small, moving, alive and vulnerable. Barad (2007) defines this knowing as "a matter of part of the world making itself intelligible to another part" (p.185). For Stella this comes in the form of contemplating the environmental damage of man-made plastic as something that would give the worms "sick tummies".

As a teacher-instigated activity there was much about this 'coming-together' Clare clearly played a significant part in orchestrating. I am reminded of Zara's comments concerning the weekly teacher-organised bush walks and the way these too had set in play a different relational dynamic:

> I really like going up to the bush and I really like how it can mix up different children into different groups. Certain children often just play with certain children in this environment, but when they go off into the bush they actually make other connections.

Such events serve to interrupt the commonly invoked adult-child dichotomy that frames child-intiated activity as automatically more empowering or democratic. At the same time, this is not to deny the well-documented asymmetries of adult-child power relations, or the ways in which adults influence and regulate children, (Duhn, 2006; Hansen, Hansen, & Kristensen, 2016), which are also explored in this thesis.

Clip 2: Gloves: SJ

At the start of Clip 2, SJ hovers, newly attired in gardening gloves, at the edge of the group. Wanting to show Clare, and seeming to trust she would be interested, SJ makes his way toward her around the group of children. She congratulates him enthusiastically on how he "did it all by himself", managing to get all five fingers in the right glove-finger at only four years of age. Suddenly, for no obvious reason, SJ begins to form shapes with his fingers. Clare follows along naming them "A triangle, an excellent triangle. A square".

Figure 4. Episode one: Clip 2: SJ: Gloves

What Clare seems to prioritise at this point is connecting with SJ, working out what he wants to convey. This first occurs with SJ's opening gesture of holding up his two gloved arms, then later as he forms shapes with his fingers. Yet if considering the question of who is following whose interests and what is taking priority, this episode also seems a case to think with about the prioritising of self-help skills and teacher-promoted, school-oriented concepts. To read across the different data sets, from SJ's conversational turn to shapes to the shape-focused work evident in SJ's portfolio and referred to in Clare's interview, suggests that the episode may be as much about SJ's effort to find a topic of interest to sustain a conversation with Clare as the other way around.

Episode 2: Whole-group mat-time

Episode two relates to the staple routine of whole-group mat-times, sometimes, as in this episode, held prior to morning tea. Mat-time routines tend to be popularly viewed (amongst other things) as helpful preparation for starting school; for example, through being an activity all children are required to participate in, and through children learning how to conduct themselves together in a group, sitting and paying attention. This mat-time assemblage features the customary curriculum focus on music-making, movement, and mat-time conduct, together with a particular focus on the practices of being a leader, school routines and lining-up. In this episode links to school are made explicit when Lucy explains the routine of lining-up as, "what the children do when they go to school. They stay in line so they can all take turns".

Clip 1: Mat-time song-learning: Venya, Zelda and Caleb
Clip 1 involves the performing of the modern Māori children's action song "Tohora nui" (The big whale"). This reflects wider programme efforts to promote "'things' Māori". Singing and movement were activities Venya, Zelda and Caleb had particular interest in, pursuing this in different ways out of kindergarten. Venya was involved in traditional Indian dance performance, Zelda in weekly dance classes, and Caleb in church singing and kapa haka.

As the clip begins teacher Lucy is up front taking the children through the various 'whale moves' for the song. Teacher Elspeth stands behind the group, out of camera sight, lending assistance as needed. This episode becomes a time for Venya to learn more about mat-time conduct when she roams too far afield when 'being' a swimming whale. Lucy lightly ushers her back into position. As noise levels begin to rise, Lucy also gives a noise-curbing "Sh" whilst announcing she needs "a leader" to perform the song up front with her. Venya, Zelda and Caleb are amongst the children who raise their hands eager to be chosen. Lucy chooses Venya, then Zelda. Caleb's way of putting himself forward to be chosen as leader is judged disapprovingly, overly-boisterous; Lucy tells and physically redirects him to "move back".

Figure 5. Episode two: Clip 1: Leading song-learning

Leading the song-learning is something Zelda, Venya and Caleb all seem interested in. Yet, what you have to do or be to become a leader seems a little difficult to fathom. Firstly in choosing song leaders, Lucy reassures those who miss out: "guys you will all get a turn". Shortly after, in choosing line leaders Lucy first asks, "Who did I see doing good leading?", now appearing to suggest leaders are to be chosen on the basis of doing the task well. However, when a child volunteers on this basis, Lucy agrees "yes you did", but follows up by suggesting the child's recent turn as song leader means she cannot now be chosen. Imagining myself as child-participant in this situation, wanting to understand the priorities in play and how to get chosen as leader, raised questions. Is 'getting a turn' something you need to bid for, as seems suggested by what many children here are doing? Or is it something you are entitled to and automatically get offered? In which case, are turns obligatory? Endeavouring as researcher, to read diffractively for the differences that matter (Barad, 2007), and thinking about the differences between the modes of operating that constitute 'good leading', 'good following', and 'good conduct', I am struck by how entangled and similar they all seem.

Clip 2: Lining up

Clip 2 starts with the children still in the process of forming two lines, with Lucy instructing children to "find someone's back". Elspeth assists, helping move children into

position. Notable at this point is the emphasis on children learning to regulate their bodies in ways they are told will be required of them at school. Notable a moment later is the way this is interrupted when one child calls out he does not want morning tea. Lucy responds with the instruction to everyone: "If you don't want to have morning tea, fine. If you do want to have morning tea…find a back". Now the priority has shifted to the kindergarten practice of children having the choice of when they eat. This is part of a traditional EC discourse of giving priority to children's play activities and avoiding untimely disruption. Yet also the calling out is perhaps something that speaks of a line of flight and a potentiating dynamic to set things off in a different direction.

Figure 6. Episode 2: Clip 2: Lining up

Episode 3: Making a dollhouse: Zelda and Venya

Episode 3 features Venya and Zelda at the collage table making a dollhouse and relates to the role of the collage table as a key site of craft and creative activity, well used by Venya and Zelda, and many other children. As I start videoing, Zelda and Venya are cutting into a cardboard box found in the outdoor storage shed. I ask what they are making. Venya tells me it is a house for "the girls", the three small dolls she holds in her hand. Zelda talks of making a dollhouse like this before at home, and her plan to make this an even better one. The materials gathered for the task sit in readiness on the table.

One reason for selecting this episode is to do with the way Zelda's approach to constructing the house matched those characteristically valued at Ranui and commonly promoted in officially sanctioned curriculum/assessment discourses. Here she is demonstrating the learning disposition of persisting with difficulty, and the strategy of having a plan, as she has often been encouraged to do. This approach also fits with the problem-solving approach of actively trying things out, developing strategies, using bodies, senses, tools and so on, promoted in Te Whāriki (MoE, 1996). Lucy's video-log feedback resonates strongly with these elements. She writes both of Zelda's "determination" and her "use of different strategies …trying different tools". Video-log feedback from Clare and Zelda's mum, Martine, also highlighted Zelda's persistence, together with relationship dynamics between the two girls, which they saw as problematic. I will return to this.

Clip 1: 'Making stuff': The dollhouse
During the first 6-minute clip Zelda takes over the challenging and arduous task of cutting through the corrugated cardboard to make the doorway opening; I present the accomplishing of the task in 'real time' to offer a fuller sense of Zelda's painstaking determination.

Here Zelda trials several different pairs of scissors, suffers considerable frustration, expresses a desire for help and verges on giving up. At one point she cuts her finger, experimenting with a two-handed, scissor-cutting technique, which involves placing the fingers of her spare hand on the outer edges of the two scissor blades to provide extra force to push them together (see picture). Later she fortuitously finds she can successfully rip some sections with her hands.

Venya, meanwhile, sits alongside playing with the three dolls. These, she describes at various points as "hugging", "pushing" and "fighting". When Zelda complains Venya is not helping, Venya gives no discernable response even though it is she who started cutting the door. Later when Zelda talks frustratedly of wanting to get someone else to help, Venya replies, "oh no not *my* best friend", which I take to be a protest that Zelda, as Venya's best friend, would seek to bring someone else in as playmate. Zelda reassures her that it is a teacher's help she is after.

Figure 7. Episode three: Clip 1: 'Making stuff'

Clip 2: Curtains

During the next stage of construction, sellotaping on the two brightly coloured, tinfoil curtains, Zelda again takes charge, assigning Venya the job of supplying pieces of sellotape. As Zelda reaches for the second curtain, Venya takes the opportunity to begin some of the sellotaping, strategically suggesting Zelda work on the new curtain, and she on the other. Zelda offers no direct reply, though tersely instructs Venya shortly after, "don't rip it". As the clip ends, Zelda physically stalls Venya's moves to reposition the sellotape holder and box to within easier reach.

Figure 8. Episode three: Clip 2: Curtains

Clip 3: Seats

Zelda's efforts to restrict what Venya is permitted to do continue in Clip 3, with the task of sellotaping in the three bottle-top 'seats'. As they finish counting the seats together and Venya reaches down, ready to start sellotaping them on, Zelda stops her saying: "No wait. Don't do it. Cos *I* do the sellotaping". Venya obligingly stands aside as Zelda sellotapes in the seats, but continues pursuing opportunities to take a more active role. At one point she steps in to help extricate a piece of sellotape that becomes twisted up in one of the curtains. Then when Zelda announces all that is needed to complete the house is sellotape for the last remaining pieces, Venya suggests: "And we need some pictures".

Figure 9. Episode three: Clip 3: Seats

Clip 4: Troubles

Troubles escalate in Clip 4 when Venya has all the materials she picks up taken from her by Zelda, and her efforts to take action, blocked. At this point Venya abandons the collage table and walks off a short distance away. On the face of it she looks surprisingly unaffected by what has happened.

Figure 10. Episode three: Clip 4: Troubles

Clip 5: Picture-making

Thirty minutes later Zelda and Venya are back together at the collage table working on the house. I missed seeing how this began, but Venya is now busily producing the pictures for the house she had earlier suggested it needed, while Zelda sellotapes them on.

Figure 11: Episode three: Clip 5: Pictures

Alongside Clips 1 to 4, Zelda's mum Martine notes on her video-log Zelda's "very good manual skills" and that she "doesn't give up with cutting that door with scissors", but then, shortly after, that Zelda is "overpowering [V] a lot". Alongside Clip 5 she writes "I love the teamwork between [V's] painting for the house and [Z] placing them".

In Clare's annotations alongside these clips she first writes that she "hadn't noticed how much [Z] was dominating [V]", suggesting the teaching team might need to talk these events through together, and perhaps look for ways of "giving [V] a stronger voice, helping [Z] to be more accepting of help/more flexible/ have more empathy. What it is to be a good friend and how to keep friends". Clare's next annotation considers alternative points-of-view. She now writes "was [V] not bothered or could she benefit from some strategies to help get her ideas across?", then adds Zelda is a "perfectionist...can't help herself...is not as flexible as [V]". In subsequent annotations on later episodes Clare notes counter examples in which Venya "asserts herself", and Zelda tries to be the accommodating one.

For my part I am first struck by Clare's efforts to explore the dynamics of the girls' relationship more fully and what this means in 'the bigger picture' for each girl. By my reading, rather than applying a simple acceptable/not-acceptable binary to the behavior, Clare seems to try to grapple with the complexity of the situation and its entanglement of lifeworlds, affective forces and intensities. Yet, reading diffractively across the data sets for difference-producing effects also left me pondering possible connections between the pedagogy of planning and goal-setting Zelda and other children were being encouraged in, its resonances with the approach Zelda seemed to be taking here, and the lack of flexibility Clare now saw as needing to be addressed.

Episode 4: The marble-race: Sabal and Caleb

Episode four features two focus children, Caleb and Sabal, playing with a multi-piece marble-race construction set and about a dozen marbles. This episode was not one noted as particularly significant by any of the teachers and was described by Caleb's mother in her video-log feedback as one in which the children did not seem "to be getting anywhere". Her comment was understandable. The activity seemed disorganised with little readily discernable progress in the children's endeavours — the marble-race appeared perpetually 'under construction'. The tendency for parents and teachers to find child-led play confused, noisy and of doubtful benefit is noted in

other studies. However, as Baker-Sennett, Matusov & Rogoff (2008) found–and as I argue to be the case here — closer examination of the improvisational character of the children's endeavours leads to their being seen as "far from chaotic" (p.1008).

Another key facet in choosing this episode was the *emergent* quality of the activity — a feature often found in children's play (Davies, 2010) and play-based curricula. As Davies highlights, and as I believe can be seen in this episode, the emergent quality of such curriculum activity can help to foster an "openness to what might happen next…an awareness of oneself-in-relation [and]…ways of knowing differently" (p.60). Davies describes this as a process of "emergent beings …differentiating selves in relations with others …opening themselves up to what they might come to know in an emergent series of interactions" (p.60). In this analysis I focus on the dynamics that unfold between Caleb and Sabal — two children who seldom played together and tended to do things quite differently. In contemplating how this coming together of differences unfolds I was reminded of Sacks' (2015) comments about the "seemingly improbable and incongruous partnerships" he had come across in the field of medicine and of the "very different minds, [that] together, were indispensable" (p.69) to the groundbreaking research breakthroughs produced.

A further facet that drew me to this episode was the role of the materials, in this instance not only the operation of the children's bodies but also the generative force that the marble-race and marbles brought into play. This episode provides a case to think with about emergent curriculum opportunities involving encounters with 'the other', where 'the other' involves not only human companions, but also materials (Hultman & Lenz Taguchi, 2010; Ohlsson, 2009). In this, as in other episodes, I was inspired by other researchers exploring the utility of relational materialist ideas for education to investigate how materials such as these are seen "as a constitutive factor in children's learning and becomings" (Hultman & Lenz Taguchi, 2010, p.527), and the agency or affordances of materials.

As I start to observe Sabal he is completing a 3D tower construction from the marble-race pieces. He seems highly satisfied with his construction, though as it strikes me later, its functionality as a marble-race seems limited (ref. Figure 12). Shortly after, as he moves on to explore a marble-race structure left by a previous group, he is joined by Caleb.

Figure 12. Sabal's tower

Clip 1: Becoming/being players: structures and collapses

Clip one starts as the two boys are in the early stages of exploring the left-behind structure. Its unsteadiness and frequent collapses pose considerable challenge. At some points the boys seem to meet the challenges jointly and synchronously. Yet more commonly they continue to play somewhat separately, quite differently, and not infrequently at cross purposes. Caleb focuses on the marble trajectories, moves around a lot and appears to contribute to a number of the collapses. Sabal focuses more on building and rebuilding the structure and frequently seems to take the role of 'fixer-upper', at times apparently with a considerable degree of forbearance.

Figure 13. Episode four: Clip 1: Structures and collapses

Clip 2: Partnering a marble-race

The more I observe Caleb's interactions with the marble-race and marbles, the more movement-focused I find his approach. This is seen in Clip 2, for example, where his response to the structural instability of the marble-race is to take hold of it as if a dance partner, propelling it with him as he posts marbles and tracks their trajectories. Movement is also prominent in the way Caleb sets about constructing the marble-race. This is seen at the end of the clip when he opts to reconfigure the marble path not by rebuilding the structure, but by moving and twisting its parts.

The design concepts Caleb comes up with also often seem more about making kinetic links than producing a conventional physically adjoined structure. For example, at times the connections between one component and the next are only actualised through the movement of the marbles. This is seen at the very end of the clip when Caleb sets about positioning pieces on the ground under (but not connected to) the marble-race, to catch the marbles coming through.

Figure 14. Episode four: Clip 2: Partnering a marble-race

Clip 3: Working together

As marble-race companion, Sabal seems to contend with Caleb's way of approaching things with considerable openness and forbearance. This is seen in Clip 3 when he enthusiastically adds "a gun" to the structure, only to have Caleb physically commandeer it to test out what it can do movement-wise.

Figure 15. Episode four: Clip 3: Working together

Clip 4: The turn of the marbles

Moments of synchronicity expand in Clip four as Sabal becomes drawn in as spectator alongside Caleb, watching the marbles in action. Glancing from one to the other, there is a burst of laughter from Sabal as they bend down, heads together, jointly engrossed in 19 seconds of rotating marbles. And then, the race collapses again.

Figure 16. Episode four: Clip 4: The turn of the marbles

The tendency to judge planning that is done in advance of action as more sophisticated has been noted elsewhere (Baker-Sennett et. al., 2008). Contrastingly, this episode offers glimpses of the sort of multimodal complexity Thrift (2006) describes, in arguing the case for improvisation, "a sense of propensity of the situation… a continuous rearrangement of things in response to events…which requires all manner of spatial operations: linking, contrasting, separation, combination, tension, movement, alternation, oscillation, worked out in a series of different registers"(p.144).

Episode 5 Basketball: SJ, Loto (and Sabal)

Episode 5 relates to the kindergarten's emphasis on outdoor sports and opportunities for movement, including the sheer/physical factor of having enough space. Basketball was one of SJ's special interests, a sport he greatly enjoyed and played outside kindergarten, as did fellow player and friend Loto. Capacities to consider not only related to their individual co-ordination and ball skills, but the practices of team play.

This episode reminded me of Cheville's (2005) study of intercollegiate basketball and the spatial, visual, kinetic and temporal dimensions and modes of knowing she points to as cultivated through the game. In a manner that resonates with the intramix of modes in this and the marble-race episodes, and those relating to the "3D thinking" discussed previously, Cheville describes master basketball players sitting in the locker room before games, eyes closed, visually rehearsing various on-court moves. Also resonating with this episode is the inter-player attunement Cheville highlights as part of the relational matrix fundamental to the game. This she attributes to perceptual processes developed through "the exhaustive synchronization of bodily activity across a season of play" (p.99), comments that seem to fit with Lucy's observation that SJ is always wanting to practise things and the importance of there being time and space for this. Cheville (2006) also makes the point that the task of novice basketballers is to understand their place "through the perspectives of others and in relation to the entire system of play" (p.31). Thinking rhizomatically, I ponder whether this could in some way connect with the ability to attune to others SJ and Loto were both known for.

Figure 17. Episode five: Basketball

The multi-stranded "and…and…and" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p.27) aspect of the curriculum comes through in this episode, as does the often incidental way in which matters of print-literacy were woven into curriculum activities. This features in the fleeting glimpse of teacher Elspeth multitasking on the sidelines, as she takes an interest in the basketballers, takes part in a jousting game with Sabal and companion that somehow involves discussing the letters in their name, and encourages another friend of SJ's standing nearby, who is somewhat reticent when it comes to basketball, to "have a turn". He does.

Episode 6: The broom-machine: Jacob and companions

This brief episode, with no teacher present, relates to the stated programme priority of encouraging children to undertake their own investigations and "work together to solve problems". Notable here was the ready availability of material resources, the traditional, staple, EC provisioning for what Fleet, Patterson, and Robertson (2012), drawing on Nicholson (1973), describe as the "serendipitous combinings" of "loose parts" (p.173). Jacob was a regular participant in these sorts of curriculum assemblages, that is working outdoors in collaboration and companionship with others, with a wealth of loose parts that lent themselves to making things that did things.

The clip starts as Jacob is proposing to playmates nearby that the vehicle they have put together needs a broom: "so you can sweep around". With the vehicle operator's welcoming response: "Thanks [Jacob]. I needed you", Jacob sets about putting his idea to work. However, there is disagreement over how the broom is positioned. The operator insists, "I can't have it like that", and changes it. Seeming bemused by the alteration Jacob asks: "What happens when you go forward?" The answer comes as the broom-machine erupts into action to the great delight of its human partners. Witnessing the exhilaration the broom-machine gives rise to, reminds me of Bennett's (2004) concept of "thing-power" and her observation that non-humans also "perform actions, produce effects and alter situations" (p.355).

Figure 18. Episode six: The broom-machine

What struck me in this episode, as I sought to pay attention to the capacities children exercise in the things they do together without a teacher present, was the combination of openness and conviviality with which Jacob's idea was offered, met, and productively reworked, the potentiating dynamic of 'the doing', and the way in which what became possible was co-constitutively shaped by the various material resources available. As Deleuze (1990) puts it: "All bodies in the event are to be understood as causes in relation to each other" (p.4), a view of agency as "the property of the assemblage" (Bennett, 2004, p.354). These productive intra-active combinings of people, things and ideas were a regular curriculum occurrence. In another such

event Sabal puts together "a machine that can make smoothies" using an assemblage of assorted containers, plastic guttering and a vacuum cleaner hosepipe. His sandpit companions are drawn in; Henry designs a 'stop' 'go' button and starts taking orders; Jacob and Felix become customers. A Learning Story the next day records the idea of a transforming button (changing robot into animal) making its way into Sabal's latest robot-rendering.

Episode 7: Conversations etcetera: Jacob, best friend Luis, and Clare

Episode seven features a curriculum assemblage that resonates with (amongst other things) the *Te Whāriki* recommendation that EC programmes provide opportunities for "one to one language interactions, especially between adult and child" (MoE, 1996, p.76). Jacob particularly sought and relished such opportunities, but I noticed the teachers generally worked to facilitate openings for such interactions. They were seen as important for teachers to get to know children personally. Of interest here also is the time, patience and willingness appearing to be spent prioritising children's self-reliance (Hansen et al., 2016).

The Clip begins at the end of session with Jacob, best friend Luis, and Clare heading to the sandpit for Jacob to remove the sand from his gumboots. Luis is 'mid-stream' telling Clare about one of his favourite TV programmes. His impersonation of one of the characters — "I'm actually the people from Elmo" — makes it temporarily difficult to decipher what he is saying. In the ensuing three-minute conversation between Luis, Clare and Jacob at the sandpit edge, topics range from who the various programme characters are, what Clare can remember from the days her children watched this programme, and whether they might, someday, all watch it at kindergarten together. Alongside this, Clare helps Jacob with strategies for removing the sand from his gumboots, and shows him how to use the small hand-brush from the storage shed to brush the sand from his socks. The conversation turns next to a piece of clothing another child has left behind and the need to retrieve it to stop it getting lost or wet, then, as they are about to depart indoors, to a discussion about where in the shed the hand-brush is located should Jacob or Luis need it again. Luis observes that whether they will be able to reach the brush "depends how high [the shelf is]". Clare reassures them the shelf is within reach, but Jacob instigates a test-run to the storage shed to "just see".

Figure 19. Episode 7: Conversations etcetera

The air of unhurriedness to the conversation and to the care taken over brushing down Jacob's socks was one of the first aspects that drew me to this episode. I was also struck by the way Jacob seemed to feel free to take the time to check Clare's assurances for himself rather than feeling bound to take them as correct. This prompted me to question the role of time in the circumstances that saw Jacob free to proceed in the way he saw fit. To what extent are such possibilities facilitated through teachers being able to engage in "slowing things down a little" (Gibbons, 2016, p.374). Jenks (2001) describes the operation of time in relation to practices of governmentality, as the difference between time as a "benign medium in which to be and grow" and Foucauldian time that manages and governs, "always intended and planned…and most serious of all … internalized to become the regulator and arbiter of all experience…" (p.74).

The use of the video episodes in this section as 'cases to think with' helps bring attention to the 'and…and…and-ness' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) and multimodality of curriculum in action. These episodes offer a range of opportunities for understanding curriculum more performatively. For example, the way it encompasses modalities such as time, space, affect, intensity and flow may or may not allow for "more immediate and curiosity-driven modes of becoming" (Rooney, 2016, p.197). Such opportunities are also important for efforts to more closely consider the possibilites opened up and closed down by more-than-human entities in the

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curriculum assemblage and the way this operates in entanglement with children's ways of being, doing, knowing, and relating. Hence there is opportunity, as I have shown in a small way here, to explore the resonances between the children's relational entanglements with entities such as the worms, marble-race and broom-machine and the Deleuzo-Guattarian/Baradian concept of thinking as a transcorporeal process involving human and non-human bodies.

Concluding comments

In this chapter I have examined interconnections that built and were built by the curriculum and assessment priorities at Ranui Kindergarten and have explored interconnections between these pedagogical priorities and the focus children's diverse ways of doing, being, knowing, and relating. Focusing on these interconnections across differing material-semiotic entanglements of people, places, things, and discourses within the kindergarten helped bring attention to the interplay of policy and practice priorities as variously competing and contrasting, and to the day-to-day priority-producing dynamics as a complex, heterogeneous and shifting assemblage. Intramixed priorities were evident, for example, with teacher efforts to keep to the sanctioned framing of child-as-learner and increasingly promote a particular set of learning dispositions, while at the same time being attuned to what mattered to/for children and their families.

A further intramix of priorities was evident in teacher endeavours to monitor and facilitate children's school readiness. That is, whilst teachers actively sought to reference and cultivate school-ready modes of operating, they also at times sought to temper external pressures (including from parents) seen as over-prioritising school-readiness. Notable here were teacher efforts to encourage children (and families) to continue fostering certain capacities special to them, such as with Caleb's kineticism and Zelda's creativity, even when perceived to be at odds with school priorities.

Children's peer relationships and friendships were another area where teachers endeavoured to find ways to engage with the sensibilites of individual children. If at times teachers underestimated just how much of a priority these relationships were for some of the children, they did, at others, seem to register and seek to assist children to work with the entanglement of different viewpoints, lifeworlds, and affective intensities they were enmeshed in. All four teachers referred

to peer relationships and friendships as significant, highlighting them as offering children capacity-building opportunities to find commonalities as well as openings to the new. They also noted the potential for such relationships to operate as sites of exclusion and repression. Teachers, seemed at times to find these intractably sticky situations to try to untangle.

Working across the different data sets seeking interconnections to do with relationships beyond-the-self brings attention to the Ranui Kindergarten priority of promoting a learner-identity of individual goal-setting and pre-planning. Notably, this resonates with what Taylor, et al. (2013) term the "resolutely individualistic" focus that has become increasingly predominant in current-day education assemblages (p.48), a phenomenon noted strongly in Chapters three and six.

My point here is to do with the way the strategies of individual goal-setting and pre-planning tended to be promoted as automatically beneficial and unproblematic. The concern I raise is about the way preset plans may work to pre-empt consideration of other possible alternatives; precluding the benefits of staying open to the emergent also highlighted the potential of what 'human' and 'more-than-human' others might bring to an event. As Biesta (2010) suggests, and as I continue to explore in the following chapters as I turn my attention to school, while the complexity reduction involved in predetermining action is something that can be useful, it is also important to consider reducing the number of available options for action in relation to the exertion of power and as a political act.

Chapter Eight: Ranui School

Introduction

This chapter explores a range of perspectives concerning the curriculum and assessment priorities in the Whānau rua NE class at Ranui School. In it I examine what the children were seen as needing to be, know and do as new entrants and how this unfolded for the five focus children — Zelda, Jacob, Sebastian, Venya, and SJ — during their time in this class.

Following the pattern of the previous chapter, I look to 'plug in' and work across different data sets as a way to explore the multifaceted assemblages of priorities operating at Ranui and in Whānau rua. Section one focuses on the assemblages of *officially sanctioned* curriculum and assessment priorities: firstly, the school-level priorities identified on the school website, and in its charter and documentation; secondly, the perspective presented by ERO in the school's three most recently received reviews; and thirdly the views of newly appointed Whānau rua teachers, Alissa and Susan, and what they saw as NE classroom priorities.

Turning next to the focus children, I discuss both how the children's progress in being/becoming a NE is assessed by their teachers, and how their parents viewed them to be managing classroom life. Key here is how parents viewed school priorities to have meshed with their children's ways of being, doing, knowing, and relating. This section ends with a brief report of the focus children's interview responses, and what they had to say about being at kindergarten and starting school.

The third section follows a similar pattern to the previous chapter, focusing on researcher visits and videoed observations. Five videoed episodes are offered as cases to think with about commonly occurring and key pedagogical priorities in the Whānau rua classroom and the ways in which possibilities for different modes of being, doing, knowing and relating are opened up and closed down.

Curriculum and assessment priorities at Ranui: Official perspectives

Ranui is a moderate-sized Year 1-8 suburban primary school. At the time of the study 65% of families identifyied as Pākehā/European, 15% as Asian, 10% as Māori, 7% as Pasefika and 3% as 'other ethnic groups'. The "Our School" section of the Ranui school

website identified the school as offering a whānau-like, extended family environment that is warm, welcoming, joyful and inclusive (reference withheld). Also identified was the school's commitment to being a "school of excellence", to viewing both teachers and students as "lifelong learners", and to children being nurtured and encouraged to develop to the best of their ability. More detailed website information on school curriculum and assessment priorities was provided in the school charter and annual plan.

Charter goals referred to developing students, firstly with strong foundational literacy and numeracy skills; secondly as "life-long learners" who were "self–managing and divergent thinkers"; and thirdly with values that enabled them "to make responsible choices". The school values set out in the charter were "Belonging: Whanaungatanga", comprising: "Self-worth: whakaaronuiake…, Respect: whakarite…, Openness: mahorahora…, Care and Compassion: aroha.., and Service: aroha atu"; and "Excellence: Panekiretanga", comprising: "'Give it a go': werohia…" and "Curiosity: whakamatemate…".

The assessment sections of the charter referred to the school's assessment system as extensive and robust, and to a commitment to raising Māori and Pasefika achievement. Assessment was also emphasised in the annual plan, which further detailed the school's commitment to ensuring achievement targets of government-identified priority groups and an overall 80% 'at standard' achievement target for children in given year groups.

A separate and sizeable section of the charter was devoted to school initiatives aimed at addressing the school's partnership commitments under the Treaty of Waitangi. These included the promotion of Māori language and kawa (protocols).

Recent ERO reviews described the school curriculum as underpinned by a focus on mathematics and literacy, as "reflects national priorities" (reference withheld). Also highlighted was the school's staff development focus to refine assessment processes for implementing National Standards (NS), and its curriculum focus on writing, mathematics and integrated programmes. As an "area for review and development", ERO recommended closer alignment between senior leaders' and teachers' development goals, and school goals and achievement targets, and a strengthened evidence base for evaluating effectiveness.

Reading back through the three most recent reviews, the tenor of the evaluations is consistent with recent research highlighting ERO's role in having schools reorientate curriculum and assessment toward external accountabilities and greater measurability (O'Neill, 2015; Thrupp & White, 2013), a pattern also noted in the ERO reviews of Ranui Kindergarten. These reviews suggested the school coming under close and critical scrutiny concerning the collection and monitoring of assessment data, particularly in relation to the targeting of Māori and Pasefika students as priority learners. The report noted areas of underachievement relative to other students, calling on the school to intensify the collection and monitoring of assessment data and "the impact of interventions" for these groups.

New entrant assessment: Ranui

The first formal assessment shared with NE families was the written report discussed as part of a parent-teacher progress meeting, six weeks after children start school. This four-paragraph report contains a brief comment on how the child is seen to be managing the expectations of a NE (paragraph 1); and short summative reports on the child's reading, writing and numeracy skills (paras 2, 3 and 4 respectively). Whānau rua class examples suggested these typically detailed the letters, numbers and high-frequency words the child knew. Teacher comments referred to curriculum planning as 'working towards' these formal assessments: "From assessment we are working on 'number after'. What we have been doing as a whole-class warm-up is helping them for the 6-weekly reports".

Children's end-of-year assessment report comprised five sections: "Mathematics", "English", "Topic", "Social and General Comment" and "Principal's Comment". Topic referred to the integrated (across-subject) study undertaken by each class. For Whānau rua, as discussed in upcoming sections, this was the health/science/technology topic 'smoothie-making'. The Social and General section was concerned with children's progress with learning-related work habits, e.g., staying at a task until it is finished, and their relationships with classmates.

Children's individual assessment portfolios comprised six assessment items:

- one hand-drawn self-portrait,
- one sample each of handwriting, writing and numeracy,
- a list of known 'Essential words' (for spelling and writing),

- classroom behaviour rating scales.

Whānau rua examples of these portfolio assessment items included instances of curriculum content geared toward the assessments carried out. For example, the writing sample set for the portfolio — the letter 'O' — is the letter children practise for a period of months prior to the end of the year.

An examination of the two sets of rating scales — "Independence" and "Give it a go" (an American-derived programme)—suggests these as more about meeting classroom expectations and compliance than broader notions of developing independent thinking and risk taking. For example, two of the five designated 'independence' behaviours were: "I put my hand up when I want to share my thinking or ask a question"; and, "when I hear an instruction, I follow it right away".

A system of take-home 'daily' notebooks across the junior school, aimed to help keep parents "in touch with" class activities and encouraged parents "to do the same" for relevant aspects of children's lives outside-of-school.

Teacher entries in the Whānau rua notebooks generally comprised:

- practical reminders, e.g., "Library books tomorrow"
- class-related information, e.g., "We didn't do writing today did practice"
- child-related feedback, e.g., "[V] was sad for a moment today then came right", "[C] got 10 stickers today for kind feet and kind hands"
- social exchanges, e.g., "Happy holidays".

Notebook exchanges varied from family to family and child to child. Amongst the focus children, for example, the total number of notebook entries ranged from 59 to 94. Three focus parents suggested they were most useful for 'first-time' NE parents.

Whānau rua priorities: The teachers

Alissa, the newly appointed teacher of the Whānau rua class, was a recent graduate with three years teaching experience. Most of this had been daily and short-term relieving work, primarily in junior classes, some at Ranui. Susan, the second teacher appointed to Whānau rua, had completed her teaching diploma 20 years previously and taught for some time in international schools, specialising in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes, generally with younger children. She too had relieved at Ranui.

I interviewed Alissa and Susan together, as they requested. When I asked Alissa what she considered key curriculum priorities for a NE classroom she talked of children "being happy, being safe, feeling loved and cared for". She likened both classroom and school to "a big extended family", adding that unless children come to feel "yes, I belong here", it could be "very difficult [for] learning to take place".

In identifying what she valued in the curriculum, Alissa began by saying: *"I value all the learning really"*. She talked of finding enjoyment in taking the children for music, games, art, dancing and reading, and of science *"at this age"* as *"lots of fun"*. Her outline of the Whānau rua timetable emphasised the variety of curriculum opportunities: "there's definitely time we put music on… PE, we get out as often as possible". She referenced the twice-weekly "Jump Jam" sessions (an internationally franchised aerobic dance/fitness programme), and fortnightly "Discovery Hour" in which the Whānau rua class met up with seven other Junior Syndicate classes. Discovery hour, Alissa explained, typically involved a varied range of activities, often including physical activities such as "patter tennis, indoor-hockey moon-hoppers", made possible by the spacious school hall, as well as various types of art, craft, construction, music, and sometimes special focus activities, e.g., science.

Later in the interview, however, Alissa went on to say:

> Probably the two key things that we have to teach is the literacy and numeracy. And then if you can fit anything else in. Cos the rest after that is trying to teach them to work on their own and work with other children or alongside other children.

The way Alissa talked here of fitting things around the teaching demands of literacy and numeracy resonated strongly with the hierarchy of curriculum priorities I observed during my visits. So too did the observation that getting children to work in the ways expected of them as NE class members was a major priority.

It was literacy matters Alissa referenced when explaining her (and the school's) acceptance of 'where children are at':

> There's nothing wrong with them not knowing…only knowing one letter. I assessed Briar the other day and she gets letters and numbers completely mixed up. And that's where she's at and there's nothing wrong with that. And we accept where the children are at…Even if it's 5 weeks down the track and yes they are still getting numbers and letters mixed up.

Literacy was again uppermost in comments Alissa made about SJ's progress:

> Someone like [SJ] … he's never done anything like that before. He is starting to do that, starting to feel like he's a learner: 'I'm a writer. I can come and see the next word'. Even if he can't do it properly he still feels like I'm a learner.

The way Alissa brought together 'becoming learner' and 'becoming literate' in this excerpt appeared to suggest that 'becoming literate' was what 'becoming learner' was all about, and that only once SJ engaged with literacy did he become a 'real' learner.

In responding to my question about the NE assessments undertaken, Alissa referred only to those relating to literacy and numeracy. Firstly, she referred to taking children aside, ideally during the first week, to see what letters and high-frequency words they knew, later comparing this with their performance in the six-week assessment. Secondly, she described the "diagnostic assessment" she used to allocate children to a maths group, also ideally undertaken within the first week:

> …counting from 1 how far they can go…if they can count backwards as well…can they get me nine pegs…can they actually add four and three together. It's basically just to get a rough grouping. Cos I wouldn't want to plug them in to a group…that was one to one if they were stage 3.

Alissa's emphasis on matching the child to the right level was consistent with later interview comments in which she and Susan explained the whole-school, assessment-focused professional development they had undertaken three weeks previously. This had involved training in moderating work against the NS for literacy and numeracy and as Alissa explained it, having teachers "on the same page as a school …from new entrants right through".

When I asked Alissa about the focus children's EC assessment portfolios and what she learnt from them, she talked of being able to see what children were interested in. Asked about particular interests she remembered, Alissa recalled how much Venya liked to draw. Yet her next comment seemed to frame drawing not as a strength, but rather as tending to prove problematic when it came to classroom priorities: *"If you put the writing table as part of the activity she won't be practising those words, she'll be drawing pictures"*.

Susan added that *both* Venya and Zelda enjoyed drawing, and "really spark each other's interest". However, like Alissa, she seemed to see tensions between these individual interests and timetabled priorities: "which is great *if* we are doing one of those activities."

Susan, in her interview also started with the importance of belonging and identified the "social emotional side" as a key priority in the NE classroom. She talked of the importance of relationships: "teacher to the student… peers, and with the teacher to the parents", saying "the learning's not going to happen…is more effective when those are in place." Susan's view was that teachers having good, supportive relationships with parents "actually passes on to the kids". As a parent who had to settle her own children into different schools in different countries she said she had considerable empathy for what transition involved for parents.

The next "really big thing" Susan emphasised in the NE curriculum was independence. This she defined as children learning to take individual responsibility, as well as listening and following instructions, aspects she described as happening "at every point during the day". Susan suggested children who came in with self-help skills such as "hanging their bags, knowing where their shoes are, able to open their lunchboxes…feed themselves…and sit at the table" were at a "huge advantage". Alissa responded that she believed children learned these things through taking part in the daily routines, and that it was important to take children "where they are at".

Literacy and numeracy were areas that Susan, like Alissa, emphasised as "key". However, Susan foregrounded what she termed the "crossovers" with other subjects and other learning modalities. Drawing on the example of a literacy activity Alissa described previously, Susan said:

> it's a literacy thing …but it's also a science thing. It's also … a kinaesthetic, tactile thing as well. So you are multi-tasking, you are multi-connecting. That just enriches the learning and enriches the programme. In a way the reading and writing … and numeracy are key areas, but they are not solely numeracy and literacy.

Susan's reference to different subjects and modes working to enrich each other was consistent with the way she drew attention to the children's individual portfolios, suggesting these offered a "more holistic view" in the range of samples they contained. Yet this notion of breadth and plurality did not come through strongly in

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the actual classroom examples she gave during the interview. For example, when Susan discussed children's progress at this age, it was writing/reading she referred to:

> That's the most exciting thing about this age is just the progress. Right down from their fine motor skills … holding their pencils… to doing their handwriting… some of them changing their pencil grip, which was almost fist-like …and they weren't even decided which hand they were going to use for their writing. Yeah so … the improvement, and at every point. Even the reading… It's just really exciting.

Similarly, in drawing attention to the classroom use of music and movement, and the visual and kinaesthetic, Susan focused not on the benefits they offered, but the way they were "employ[ed] …to keep the children…focused". She gave as example the classroom clapping routine of having children "clap and stop and listen".

Susan concluded by suggesting the main difference between children's experiences in EC services and school was the freedom of choice:

> I think probably the difference between coming to school … and being at kindy or playcentre or crèche is that the choice is a little bit freer. So it's about going and choosing and taking what you want to when you want to. Whereas we are trying to establish an idea that this is our maths time so the activities that are available are whatever they are and the same with the reading… and I think that that's a little bit different for them and you can see that some of the kids need help with that transition.

This notion of the degree of choice afforded children as a key difference between the kindergarten and NE classroom settings is explored further in the upcoming discussions of parent and child interviews and observation data.

Being/becoming a Whānau rua new entrant: The focus children

The classroom circumstances each of the focus children met as they started school were considerably different. For example, in Zelda's first week of school she spent most of her time in the classrooms and with the teachers she got to know through the visitors' mornings, and some of her time downstairs in the new classroom, with Alissa, as it was getting set up. Two months later when SJ, the last of focus children joined

the class, it numbered seventeen. By the end of the year numbers had risen to 29; Whānau rua itself had transitioned from being a one-teacher to two-teacher class.

Zelda in Whānau rua

Alissa assessed Zelda as having settled in well, saying she was "academic", "capable", "really loves doing literacy and numeracy" and "does her work neatly". Alissa viewed Zelda as "reliable", talked of putting her together with other children as "a good role model" and of Zelda enjoying the role. Susan agreed, but also noted Zelda could be "scared to try", and not want to "risk getting it wrong". She oserved that in writing Zelda "won't use dominant sounds to try spelling a word out" and that in 'Jump Jam', Zelda "still stands and watches and does not take part".

Zelda's mum Martine described Zelda as having the "right attitude toward learning", as "eager to work" and "understand[ing] the correlation between 'I put work in' and 'I get results'". She said that as parents, they were pleased to see Zelda on the "track where she is successful" and wanted this to continue.

Martine suggested that Zelda's determination to be successful in the NE classroom could in part be to do with the less-than-positive school experiences of her 10-year-old sister, Yvette. Certainly the difficulties Yvette encountered 'getting behind' in some of the standards expected for reading, writing and maths and not getting on with one of her teachers, featured prominently in several of Martine's interview responses. These experiences appeared to considerably influence the way she (and Mike) looked to handle Zelda's start at school as parents. Hence, even though Martine viewed Zelda as unlike Yvette, i.e., "*not* being scared of being wrong" and "*never* scared to share ideas", Martine said they now believed that parents could not leave it to the school to ensure their children would be — to use NS terminology — "on or above the level". They were committed to giving Zelda as much help as they could.

Later in the interview, when providing feedback on the NE-classroom videoed observations, Martine offered a somewhat contrasting view of what NE classroom priorities meant for Zelda:

> My biggest comment is I understand her home behaviour after seeing what she does in class…I understand why she has tantrums at night… I really do. She's so focused and she's trying so really hard to be a good girl, to raise a hand and to

> share knowledge and things like that. And then she sees me in the playground
> at 3 o'clock and she thinks I don't have to do this anymore. [I can] be the real
> me.

Shortly after, Martine reiterated the idea of a disjuncture between the 'real' Zelda and the way Zelda 'was' in class. She contrasted the video footage of Zelda in the classroom with footage of Zelda and others at morning break-time in 'the forest' (a favourite playspace with many NEs). According to Martine, the trees and playground were somewhere else "you see the real [Zelda] ".

Martine went on to contrast Zelda at school, always having to do what the teacher said, with the *"freedom of choice of activities"* at kindergarten. She called this *"the most important thing"* about Zelda's time there: "Every morning she was going to work. She was going to the craft table. That was her thing… she was really able to do that as much as she wanted". Martine said what she had learnt from watching Zelda was that while you might have "to work on every aspect of the curriculum", if there were particular things someone was good at, connecting to these brought connections to learning.

Martine's view was that when Zelda started school "they were not doing enough art" to support Zelda's interest. Hence, alongside the extra-curricular activities Zelda already had (dance, swimming and soccer), Martine enrolled her in Monday evening art classes. These quickly became the weekly highlight. Martine said of the first hour-and-a-half session that despite Zelda's initial misgivings about unfamilar surroundings, "the lady teachers she had never met before", and being in the group of 15 or so children of varying age, "within minutes, she was hooked".

According to Martine, Zelda had no problem with the idea of moving class having enjoyed her brief period in this classroom, and with these teachers during school visits when she first started. Zelda expressed concern over whether she would have any close friends in the new class.

Jacob in Whānau rua

Alissa's assessment of Jacob, the second focus child to join the Whānau rua class, was that he was "confident" and "articulate". She said Jacob was sometimes "a bit slow" when it came to mat-time and some of the daily classroom routines, but put this down to "a lot going on" in Jacob's head. She described the way he thought as "out-of-the-

box". She called him "lovely", saying he "gives things a try" and "does his best to stay focused".

Susan talked of Jacob having "a real sense of self, who I am and how I like to do things", of his "empathy" and "higher level thinking", of him being "helped a lot at home", and "doing well". In response to Alissa's comments about Jacob's difficulties keeping up with the classroom pace, Susan suggested that while Jacob was "a bit slower doing things" and could "appear quite dreamy", he was "just working it out" and "giving him time" was what was needed.

Jacob's parents, Ruby and Cara, identified several things about him they did not want diminished — his creativity, imagination, "social aptitude, emotional intelligence and the capacity for empathy they viewed as beyond what you would expect for someone his age. They especially delighted in his questioning curiosity and aptitude for conversation: "if learning was by conversation that is where he would be in his element" (Ruby).

Because this was something they as parents valued enormously, they were disappointed hearing Jacob's comment when watching one of the classroom videos, that "she (his teacher) is not really interested in what I say". This was not something they had heard him say before.

Ruby expressed concern about how Jacob's non-conformist ways might impact on how he fared at school:

> I know [Jacob] is interested in learning. He's obviously a smart kid … but he's
> not that interested in playing ball when it comes to sitting down and just doing
> a task or doing writing. He does it his own way…He's a much more creative
> thinker than I am and I don't want to stymie that. But I don't want it to be a
> problem.

For the first six months after Jacob started school, Ruby said she became increasingly concerned about him "keeping up" with what was expected in reading, writing and numeracy:

> …when we went to the 6-week check-in thing that was what they showed us
> …It was all about his writing and his reading and his numeracy. And then there
> was a bit in the back, like they had this scale, and that was more to do with his
> sociability, independence.

Ruby's feedback on watching the school video-clips was that she found the teaching activities very "discipline orientated". She thought Jacob often looked bored and blank, but so too, she thought, had a number of other children. Ruby and Cara were both critical of the amount of sitting and waiting expected of the children, though Cara spoke approvingly of teacher efforts to introduce more interactivity in the small-group, equipment-based maths activities that children appeared to find engaging and fun.

Both parents identified the pace of classroom activity as something Jacob had issues with, as had his teachers. Referring back to their video-log notes, they commented that just in watching one of the mat-time videos Jacob became "all anxious" saying "I always finish last". Ruby commented, "so that seemed like a bit of a clash ... the time-pressure-cookery thing... [Jacob] likes to soak up everything beforehand... he'd be like 'think about it'. He's thinking about all sorts of things".

Cara, as an ex-secondary teacher, noted the pressure on teachers to cover the curriculum and the impact she saw this having on the NE teachers' busyness. She compared how hurried they seemed and how little time they had to spare to talk at the beginning of the day, with "fond memories" of the many relaxed conversations she and Ruby (and Jacob) had with the teachers at kindergarten. Both appreciated the take-home notebook for the chance to let teachers know things like when Jacob was not sleeping well and when they were moving house.

Cara and Ruby concluded by saying they believed what gets prioritised can also be about individual teachers and their different approaches. They expressed hope that Jacob's next-year teacher might be a "more optimum match". Jacob also seemed to regard the move positively, though fervently wished he could be in the same class as his best friend from kindergarten, who was about to start at Ranui, but in a different class.

Caleb in Whānau rua

When it came to Caleb, the third focus child to join the Whānau rua class, Alissa suggested there were "two sides of the coin". She called him "a beautiful little boy", saying he was "bright, connects to concepts easily" and that "academically [his] writing is taking off, maths is already there". She viewed him as "a real leader", but added that he "becomes negative if he doesn't see he's getting sufficient attention". She talked

of him "poking other children on the mat", of times "he couldn't keep his hands to himself", and of resulting disciplinary measures, such as being put under the supervision of the teacher on duty during break-time, referred to as "walking with the duty teacher", and being "put on the sticker chart". As far as I could gather, such measures were not uncommon, at least for some boys.

Susan commented that Caleb had "no problem keeping the whole class waiting", and that he had difficulty "maintaining stamina of focus". Contrastingly, she noted how much he loved the 'Jump Jam' sessions, how he "always keeps time to the music" and talked of wanting to "transfer what he's doing there to the classroom".

Much of the interview with Caleb's parents, Lia and Alex, was taken up with Lia describing the difficulties they and Caleb encountered during his time in Whānau rua. Lia said after spending time in Whānau rua helping Alissa out after she broke her arm, she became convinced that much of Caleb's trouble at school was to do with his having to sit still. She recalled suggesting to Alissa that if Caleb was playing up in class, to let him run around the playground or classroom block to let off steam, and Alissa laughing. Lia was critical of the degree of control exerted over children's movements, in particular the length of time children were expected to be "trying to be still". She thought this came through in the NE videos.

Lia contrasted the experiences of kindergarten and school. She said when Caleb was at kindy they were told "he's busy, he's scientific, he likes to test boundaries", but that at school it "seemed like most of the focus was on his mistakes". She saw the "valuable experiences" for Caleb at kindergarten as "play, experimenting 'what happens next?', movement, [and] kinetic learning".

Lia said how unhelpful she found it to be continually called aside after school (with Caleb still on the mat) to be told of that day's "incidents". Part of her frustration here, was not knowing what the terms and phrases meant. What did it mean to be "not making sensible choices"? Lia's priority was knowing enough to make sense of what had gone on and, most importantly, working out possible ameliorative action e.g., organising play dates to help build or mend friendships. In contrast, it seemed to her the expectation was that they just put their energies behind school-designated measures such as the sticker chart. To Lia, these measures were just about compliance.

After Caleb's experiences in Whānau rua, a NE class Lia and Alex both regarded as not having worked out well, they were dismayed when informed Caleb was to remain in the same class after the beginning-of-year changeover. They were in turn greatly relieved when their request to have Caleb move was agreed to. Lia's view was that, "from day one in that class things started to improve".

Venya in Whānau rua

Alissa assessed Venya, the fourth focus child to join the Whānau rua class, as having "settled well and relatively quickly". She described her as someone who "wants to give things a go...here to learn, not just muck around", observing that Venya "gets on with things...makes good choices sitting on the mat ...puts herself where she can follow and listen". Susan agreed, saying that because "home really values reading and writing", this had "transferred" to Venya and become something she too had come to value. Susan did add that while Venya was "relatively independent", she frequently asked for help, often needing this "to set her going at each point". Susan recalled writing times when Venya did not know what to do and "just lay down on the chair", and other times Venya was overwhelmed and in tears.

Alissa suggested Venya "wants people to look after her", adding that Venya herself was kind and caring toward others and would come looking for a teacher if another child was upset. She said Venya "likes to imitate", calling her "a bit of a follower". Both teachers mentioned needing to dissuade Venya from looking to spend breaktimes with her older brother.

Venya's mum Aadhya also suggested Venya had a tendency to become easily upset and cry, attributing this to a mixture of shyness and determination. She gave the example of the tears and upset resulting from her efforts to encourage Venya to eat more at lunchtime by giving her "more things to choose from in her school lunchbox". Tearful and distressed Venya had told her, "'I don't want to be in trouble, don't give me more food I don't want to eat'". Not wanting to cause issues at school, Aadhya complied, giving Venya "very little food" to take with her but "feeding her more breakfast" and "giving her lunch as soon as she comes back from school".

Aadhya talked of Venya having "a lot of different skills", emphasising the responsibilty they as parents had "to bring all these things out" and described this as "a lot of work" for both herself and husband Vijay. Aadhya suggested children in India

had to work a lot harder than children in New Zealand, because of systems being highly competitive and schooling a lot more demanding, most especially "standards" for maths and reading. Aadhya and Vijay believed that for Venya and her older brother, 10-year-old Chapal, to meet these "standards" both children would need to work "a lot harder" than they were expected to at school in New Zealand. They had enrolled Venya in the after-school maths programme her brother had been attending since starting school, a $130-per-month programme comprising twice-weekly sessions centred around a system of daily homework sheets.

Aadhya said she and Vijay were also working together to build Venya's interest and confidence in sport. Venya already attended weekly swimming lessons and was a keen and capable swimmer. Vijay had started looking into the possibilty of Venya joing the soccer team Zelda belonged to. However, Aadhya believed Venya's physique was better suited to something indoor and gym-based and had started her own enquiries into the programmes available locally.

Aadhya was keen to support Venya's aptitude for singing: "I want her to know she can sing". Aadhya saw this as something Venya had that was different and special, something no-one else in the family had, and was looking to enrol her in a class that taught in Indian style. This had yet to eventuate; the classes were expensive and some distance way. In the meantime music CDs from the local library sufficed.

In comparing Venya's time at kindergarten and at school Aadhya said that while Venya was happy at kindergarten, she believed she was happier to start school: "she's reading and writing … she's very happy about that. She's happy. She's like a big girl doing the real things, not in the kindergarten."

With regard to moving to the new class, Aadhya commented how fond Venya had became of Alissa and how upset she was to be moving out of Alissa's class. Aadhya said she did not know why Venya grew so fond of Alissa, though remembered Venya telling her that Alissa "never shouted". She also laughingly recalled Venya's many admiring comments about Alissa's prettiness, and how impressed she was when Alissa dressed in a sari for the Indian festival of Divali.

Going by the history of events in Whānau Rua and kindergarten Aardha was convinced Venya's happiness (and performance) in the new class would depend on how class friendships unfolded. For her part, Aardha wanted to help Venya become more confident in herself and less reliant on friends.

SJ in Whānau rua

SJ was the last focus child to join Whānau rua. Alissa described one of SJ's strengths as his independence, regarded him as "a calming influence on other children" and said he "has the skill to persevere even if he can't do something". She also said he liked puzzles, was a "good thinker, mathematically", and was "able to articulate what he's doing". Susan agreed that SJ possessed a "good level of focus" and could "be self-motivated." She believed "home is supportive of him and his learning".

Alissa added her concern that SJ might be becoming distracted by a fellow classmate in the same maths group, describing both as "very active boys". She was contemplating moving SJ from what she saw as a "quite disruptive" group, to "put him with Zelda".

SJ's mum, Sefina, described SJ as "very sociable". She said friends were what SJ liked about school and what she too had most valued about his time as a NE and at kindergarten. Sefina said SJ enjoyed being at home, played board-games, did a lot of drawing, and liked puzzles. She also commented he was very much "an outside boy" and particularly liked riding around on his bike. Sefina said SJ was also often in (and enjoyed) the company of his older sisters. Joining them at the local netball courts to practise shooting goals was a regular highlight. So too was soccer playing and the early Saturday morning matches SJ excitedly got out of bed for, even in the cold.

Sefina thought SJ was doing well at school e.g., "knows how to spell his name … how to write 1,2,3". However she queried the early concentrated exposure to such high levels of expectation in the areas of reading, writing and maths. She said she really wanted SJ to enjoy school and did not "expect a lot of him at this stage".

Sefina was pleased SJ received an award for 'outstanding student' at the end of his time in the NE classroom. She said SJ "felt good" about it, though added she herself was not quite sure what these awards were for. Her older daughter also received one of these awards in YR6, but was then told, that same year, for the NS assessment, "she is below the national standard".

Sefina went on to talk about attending the hui the school convenes for Pasefika whānau to report on NS results. She saw these as "well intentioned", but said that being told as Pasefika parents that Pasefika children are "rated the lowest" was "demoralising". Sefina's view was that the meetings did not allow parents' views to be sufficiently well canvassed, or give enough consideration to what could be done to improve things.

Sefina had reservations about SJ's move to a new class. She believed that with SJ starting later than a number of the other children, the change came too soon. She said SJ had been sad to be leaving behind some of his closest friends, and thought he'd found it distracting and challenging to be moving into a new class.

Focus children interviews

The table below gives a summary of the focus children's interview responses when asked what they remembered liking/disliking/finding hard at kindergarten and in Whānau rua, and what advice they would offer a younger family member or friend starting school. SJ did not take part in these interviews, as he became upset when reprimanded by his teacher for asking to bring a friend with him to the interview.

Children	Memories /likes/dislikes/ difficulties kindergarten	Memories/likes/dislikes/dif ficulties school	Advice/assistance for a friend/younger family member starting school
Zelda	I liked how we maked a lot of stuff with all the stuff that you could create with. With all the little pieces that you can use … boxes, string and beads The squishy, colourful play dough… the dress ups, Big, really big gloves	It was cool when I just started school looking around and … making some friends. There was lots of cool fruit that you could play with and lots of cool beads you could make into necklaces. When I just started to do writing. It was kind of quite hard. I didn't know how to spell words. I just sounded them out.	Try and make friends for her… some people that will care for her. If she didn't get friends, I would help her find some…making friends is hard. You need to listen carefully so then you don't forget what you need to do. And if you are dropping something off to a class and if you don't remember the class then you'll have to try to remember what it was.
Jacob	I liked the wagon thingies the trolley, firemen's jackets … roadwork things and things in the sand pit. I liked playing and making stuff, like making machinery.	It was hard when I did reading. I didn't know how to read then. I didn't know how to write. I know quite a lot about science. I like getting science books from the library.	I could help him so I'd need to tell him all of the rules... He needs help from his teacher he doesn't know all all of his words yet ...we have abc cards. I could show him what they look like.
Caleb	Being outside	Morning tea, lunch, the monkey bars and the library	Don't be nervous. Make new friends. Be brave.
Venya	Decorating things, making things, clothes for my kittie	I just learn and then I do morning tea.	Maybe I could teach her how to count backwards. I could teach her if she cries for things.

Children in their interviews referred only to things at kindergarten they liked, embodied modes of doing, making, creating, playing and being, and also, and importantly from a relational material perspective, the things they did this *with*. Things highlighted from their time at school included the new and the cool, but also things being hard, not knowing, reading, writing, rules, needing and getting help, feeling nervous, friends, finding release and break-times. The children's 'starting-school' advice offered both differing and similar suggestions concerning ways to navigate classroom expectations. Each child's responses carried resonances with how they themselves looked to make sense of and navigate the expectations they met: listening, being careful, abc cards, getting help, quelling nerves, being brave, making friends, learning to count backwards, and crying. The question of how classroom expectations played out in Whānau rua is explored further in the video excerpts and discussion in the section following.

Researcher visits and video

In this section I present and discuss a selection of five clips featuring aspects of the NE programme highlighted as significant and prioritised. Clips one and two, from the first video-recording, focus on a mat-time literacy/music session in which Alissa takes the children through the initial stages of learning a new song:"Friendly feet". The choice of song-focus and discussion that follows are notable in picking up on the matter of making friends at school, a matter of considerable priority for NEs, going by what the focus children and their parents said and as suggested in much of the wider transition literature (Peters, 2010). Clip 3, from the same mat-time session comes after the class has gone through the song two further times and the curriculum focus shifts to maths and the maths-themed story: "Goldilocks". Clips four and five focus on the "Special Topic" integrated curriculum activity: Smoothie-making. This is a session both teachers take part in, and Susan leads.

The five clips are largely unedited. That is to say while the clips are acknowledged to constitute a particular selection, the events they feature are shown in 'real' time, with nothing cut out. While a truism to say 'no two mat-times are the same', the whole-class mat-time featured in the first three video clips seemed similar in tenor to a number of others I observed. This was so in that it showed a number of commonly-occurring practices, classroom and mat-time routines and protocols, and

illustrated ways of children being, doing, knowing, and relating that were regularly promoted and prioritised. A key focus here is the curriculum prioritising of core literacy and things verbal, and the insight all five clips offer into the emphasis put on the way children conduct themselves.

Episode 1: Mat-time literacy

The day of the first video-recording session starts as usual on the mat with roll-call, the school-promoted practice of the teacher greeting children individually in different languages, and children responding in their language-of-choice. Next comes the routine reciting of the school karakia[8] and singing a short Māori waiata, followed by the particular literacy and numeracy activities timetabled for that day.

As part of carrying out these routine and timetabled activities, Alissa as teacher devotes a great deal of time and attention to the way the children conduct themselves. These often highly particular, looked-for ways of children being, doing, knowing, and relating as NEs are given considerable priority. For example, to begin with, unhappy with the way the class stands for the karakia, Alissa instructs the children to sit back down: "E noho[9] please", and try again: "This time when you stand can you make sure you stand without talking and making noises". With certain children still not seen as doing as they are supposed to, Alissa picks up the good behaviour chart "You have been spotted" to record the names of children "making sensible choices" i.e., those who "left their clothes alone [and] weren't annoying anybody". At the start of Clip one Alissa is seated, chart-in-hand, reminding the class she will be "looking for children making good sensible choices today… throughout the day".

Clip 1: Mat-time: Song-learning

While matters of friendship and music form part of this lesson mix, it is matters of verbal literacy and concerns of conduct that are at the forefront. The first round of song-learning in Clip one features a lengthy question and answer sequence in which Alissa seeks to have the children work out the key theme of the song from its title, "Friendly Feet". After introducing the song Alissa asks: "What do you think this song is about? If you've got an idea put your hand up."

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[8] ritual prayer anthem
[9] Sit down

The unconventional pairing in the song title of "friendly" and "feet" provokes laughter and comment from several children, and in the prolonged question and answer sequence that follows, it is this title focus on feet that children's answers frequently reference. However, this is not the answer Alissa is seeking, as the following two exchanges illustrate:

AT: What do you think this song could be about?

…

C1:   Feet that's happy

AT: What else could it be about?

AT: About your feet being friendly. What do think that might mean or what might it look like?...

….

C2   Your feet are friendly

AT: What else could it be? What does friendly feet mean?

A number of children strive to come up with the answer Alissa is looking for, but without success.

Figure 20. Episode one: Clip 1: Mat-time song-learning

Clip 2: Song-learning contd.

A similar pattern of questioning occurs in the second round of song-learning in Clip 2, after Alissa has played the song through asking children to "work out why it could be called 'Friendly feet'". This clip opens with Alissa attempting to give the children a steer toward an answer that does not involve feet:

> What do you think this song is mainly about? Is it just about feet?

Her question meets with a chorus of laughter and an answering "no" from a number of the children, as if they too see such a prospect as outlandish.

The next child called on to answer duly endeavours to respond to Alissa's call to 'go beyond' feet: "It's about everything in your whole body". However, when Alissa probes further: "Yeah. And?", he defaults to: " 'n' your feet".

Alissa's next question makes her desire to have the children move their focus away from body parts more explicit: "What else do you think this song is about apart from your body?" This too fails to elicit the looked-for response.

Alissa then tries reading out the lines of the song containing "the one key word" she is after:

> I'm going to read you two lines of the song and see if you can work out cos they are repeated quite often in the song. (reads) "Friendliness is a cure for loneliness. Would you like to meet my friendly feet?" Or it says, "Friendliness is a cure for loneliness I've got fingers and palms on the end of my friendly arms." Then it says same line down here (points) "Friendliness is a cure for loneliness. Friendship starts in the style of a friendly smile."

These song-lines contain the specific *word* Alissa is after (friendliness), the word that to her encapsulates the meaning of the song. Yet these song-lines also refer to particular bodily ways friendliness may be expressed and a focus on the modes of 'doing friendship': "fingers and palms on…my friendly arms", "friendly feet", and a "friendly smile". It is these references to embodied expressions of friendship the children seem to pick up on in their next batch of answers: "feet and arms", "kind hands", "kind smile". While possible to consider this an alternative way of viewing the song, there seems no open-ness to doing so. At this point, Alissa gives up her quest for

the answer she has in her head and divulges the response she is looking for: "There's a word that said about friendliness. That's the main idea in this song".

Figure 21. Episode one: Clip 2: Mat-time song-learning contd

This emphasis on the verbal ahead of other modes, and having children come up with particular answers rather than encouraging them in their own ideas, does not only occur in the literacy-oriented discussion about the song theme. It also happens in the discussion immediately following, in which Alissa asks the children what they could do if at lunchtime they were lonely and had no-one to play with. When Toby suggests "Find a friend from our class", Alissa responds as if he only partly answers the question. She urges him beyond his suggested *action* of *finding* a friend to attend to what he would *verbally say:*

> AT: You could find a friend from our class. So what could you *say*?

This prioritising of the verbal (and children's conduct) continues when Zelda, the next child, is invited to answer:

> AT: What would you say?
>
> Z: You could say please.
>
> AT: Please what?

Z   Please could I play with you.

AT: Please can I play with you. What a beautiful idea that is [Zelda]. That is a wonderful idea.

The expectation that children's answers (and conduct) comply with certain very specific ways of operating is instanced again when Venya, who has an older brother at school, volunteers "You could play with your big brother or sister". Alissa replies "No. We are learning how to play with children in this classroom... other children who are 5 years old." Venya's response is closed down because it contravenes the school policy that NE children may only play with older brothers or sisters for the first couple of weeks of school. While doubtless there are good intentions behind such an injunction, there are also important questions here about the effects of closing down children's options and initiatives. I return to explore these more fully in the final chapter of the thesis.

Clip 3: Mat-time: Maths

By the time it comes to reading the maths-themed Goldilocks story in Clip 3, Alissa has taken the children through two further rounds of song-learning. They read the song through line-by-line after Alissa, then sing it together with the music. In the process, levels of restlessness escalate. Fewer and fewer children are "joining in".

The shift from song-learning and literacy to maths seems to come somewhat abruptly. Perhaps to help offset the restlessness, Alissa starts the maths session with a counting game. As a break from sitting she has the children stand up and form a human number line, counting round the circle "forward to 32 and back from 10 ". The counting activity appears to do little to dissipate the tenor of disengagement.

As the Goldilocks story gets underway, the class settles. Alissa makes a point of putting expression into the voices of the different characters, something she mentioned she enjoyed doing when interviewed. The children seem quickly drawn into the story, many craning to glimpse the pictures Alissa holds up for them to see at the end of each page of reading. The fact that a number of children already know the story seems to fuel an eagerness to contribute.

Figure 22. Episode one: Clip 3: Maths

Considering the official curriculum focus for this activity was maths, I found the relative lack of attention to maths content in this episode something of a puzzle. The points of interest children raise are concerned with action and plot — the chair-breaking event and "what happens to baby's bear's porridge". Alissa's suggestion that to find out they must "listen and read" also seems more orientated to literacy than maths.

In contemplating the way priorities unfold, I consider the possibility that Alissa's attention to aspects of the activity that captivate the children is perhaps a temporary measure to win back their attention for the timetabled maths task. I also consider whether Alissa, in these moments, may perhaps simply have been 'won over' by the children's interest and enthusiasm. Both seem possible. As I will discuss in the

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concluding chapter, thinking with the concept of assemblage offers useful reminders of the co-existence of competing and contrasting forces and of the human subject as a site of multiplicity. That seemed to me the case with the Whānau rua classroom, an entanglement of highly stratified and highly stratifying relations, where at times a rhizomatic moment could take hold.

Episode two: Smoothie-making

The final clips show the second of two sessions of smoothie-making. In this session the class are to make and taste banana smoothies, having made blueberry smoothies the previous week to start the topic. Clip one opens with the children sitting, clustered together, around two joined-up classroom tables, ready to start.

In the opening stages of the session organisational logistics take priority. First, there are arrangements over seating to sort. When Alex, having difficulty fitting his chair into the congested space, protests "there is not enough room", and looks to shift his chair elsewhere, teacher Susan comes from the other side of the table to resolve things. Physically manoeuvring Alex and chair back into position, Susan assures him that even if he will not "be right up to the table", he "will be close enough".

Next come arrangements for the two children who are intolerant of dairy ingredients and "can't have yoghurt," followed by the disrupting discovery that two of the three bananas the teachers put aside for the activity are missing. This is resolved by the teachers seeing if any of the children have bananas in their lunchboxes, and two children who do, obligingly agreeing to their use.

Figure 23. Episode two: Clip 1: Smoothie-making

Figure 24. Episode two: Clip 2: Smoothie-making contd.

In the course of the smoothie-making activity there are various aspects that resonate with the science element of the lesson. After the children discuss the colour of the smoothies the previous time they made them, they are asked to predict what colour they think the smoothies would be this time, one child's prediction is referred to as an "interesting theory", and the activity includes test-by-taste. Yet, more fundamentally, opportunities for active investigation are limited. In essence it is the teachers who 'do' the actual smoothie making. Apart from the practical task of children passing each other the smoothies, and doing the tasting, the children's role seems mainly to watch, and answer questions (and wait). Hence, for example, when Zelda leans her head over the top of the blender curious to inspect its contents, teacher Alissa moves quickly forward, lightly places her hands on Zelda's arms to guide her to sit back, and instructs her not to.

An opportunity for discussion is opened up when Susan directs the children to discuss with a partner what colour they think the smoothie will turn out to be:

S: Turn round. And say to your partner what colour you think it is.

This sets off a buzz of conversation around the table, but it is cut short almost before it begins. Without time to finish the discussion task, children are called on to report back:

TS: OK B[ella] who was the person you shared with?
B: points
TS: What's her name?
B: [Sasha]
TS: [Bella], what colour did Sasha think it was going to be?

Bella, who as far as I could gauge had not yet had the chance to hear her partner's answer, responds: "White".

Looked at from an integrated curriculum perspective, certain aspects of the way in which lesson priorities play out in this episode seem quite puzzling. Openings for children to further their scientific, mathematical or technological understandings seem given little priority. Matters of determining quantities, measuring ingredients and operating the equipment are matters the teachers carry out between themselves,

rather than involving the children. They also seem to go about them in a surprisingly ad hoc ('unscientific') manner.

Responses children receive to their answers are also sometimes puzzling. When Susan asks Levi why only a little bit of sugar is added, his answer: "Cos it's sweet", seems to offer the reasonable suggestion that this is because it already has enough sugar. Yet Susan offers no direct affirmation of this, asking instead, in a manner reminiscent of the find-the-answer-the-teacher-has-in-mind in the song-learning episode above: "Why else would we only put a little bit of sugar in?". Edward's effort at a more health-oriented response, "Because it's not good for you", also elicits a similarly puzzling non-committal response. Willes's (1983) suggestion in her transition study was that NEs needed to come to understand that: "teachers rarely evaluate a response in an unmistakeably negative way, and that uncertain or non-committal evaluation is to be interpreted as negative" (p.183).

There is considerable emphasis in this activity, as in the two mat-time episodes above, on the way children conduct themselves. Rising noise levels, and children's initiatives to smell, handle, and explore, elicit a noise-curbing "Sh-sh-sh-sh-sh" and movement-curbing reminders to sit and wait quietly and patiently. When Zelda eagerly 'calls out' "add sugar", in answer to Susan's question, "now what we are going to do?" she is passed over in favour of the children "sitting quietly", putting their hand up.

It is notable too that while having children learn to adhere to classroom protocols is an important priority in the smoothie-making activity, protocols are not always given precedence. This is seen, for example, when Gavin announces (unasked) that he remembers trying a smoothie like this before, and Susan responds encouragingly, asking "Have you? And what can you taste?". Hence as with broader day-to-day classroom-life, priorities could sometimes shift from situation to situation, and person to person, for no easily discernable reason. Such instances help bring attention to the entangled and complex relations of priority children encounter by way of the moment-to-moment inconsistencies, the complex and the contradictory, that also form part of the curriculum assemblage of the classroom.

Fieldnotes

Much of the pattern of events in these videoed episodes and much of that described by teachers, parents and children was in keeping with what I observed during classroom visits.

The prioritising of 'core' curriculum literacy in Whānau rua was, for example, clearly evidenced by the sheer volume of class time devoted to it. On the days of my visits, with the exception of those that took place during weekly visitors' mornings, the class seemed to focus on little else. Hence, for example, the day the big-book reading session took longer than expected, the timetabled 'fitness' activity did not occur.

Regular scheduled events, generally organised at whole-school or junior syndicate level, therefore played an important role in enabling children to move beyond the confines of the classroom and brought a more diverse range of modes and activities and possibilites into the NE progamme. The weekly school library sessions, Jump Jam, discovery hour, kapa haka, concerts, sports days and end-of-year production were met with enthusiasm by a number of children, for example Caleb. Teachers Alissa and Susan commented very positively on the interest children took in these activities. At the same time they also expressed concern about events such as the end-of-year production getting in the way of the regularly scheduled times for reading, writing and maths, and as impacting negatively on key progress they were to look to have the children make.

The pattern of children being given little encouragement to problem solve and find their own solutions suggested in the videos was also consistent with my wider observations. As NEs, the children seldom seemed free to make their own decisions, even about their personal everyday routines. For example, unlike kindergarten, children were to ask permission to go to the toilet and if a classmate is already out there, wait until they return. For some children and on some occasions such restrictions clearly made for difficulties. On a number of occasions I noticed children 'holding themselves', as I saw Venya do when awaiting permission from Alissa to go to the toilet; the child whose return Venya awaits is already back in class, unnoticed by busy, preoccupied Alissa.

Routines around eating were the subject of close monitoring. Children ate in the classroom, supervised by the teachers. Instructions were offered on what to eat, in what order, how much to eat, and how long to take:

AT: Jacob put that down. Sandwiches first.

N: Scuse me I'm full.

AT: No you need to eat your cheese. You need energy.

AT: Toby stop eating you need to go outside to play. The bell's going in six minutes.

While the aim of food-related protocols in Whānau rua was to encourage children to eat, when aspects such as pressure of time became part of the mix, priorities altered. The NE classroom protocol of children needing to eat a designated quota of food at morning break-time, and the remains of their lunchbox at lunchtime, commonly resulted in children coming under pressure to eat quickly and in silence:

AT: I wonder who is going to be the best eater. We are eating without talking so we get more time outside.

Time pressures sometimes superseded the usual classroom protocols children were taught to follow. For example, when Levi sits with his hand up for some time waiting to speak he is told:

AT: "Hands down we are just eating".

Such strictures around eating-times worked against other possible priorities. For example, the opportunity for these to be times for children to be in each other's company, get to know each other socially and make friends. These eating protocols were also restrictive for teachers, requiring they remain on duty in the classroom, frequently leaving little or no time for them to go to the staffroom to have a break themselves. This added further to the already considerable time pressures the teachers struggled with.

Two classroom activities in which children notably did get to choose were "maths choosing" and "free choosing". While there is not the space here to discuss these in detail, the significant role materials played in the greater levels of active engagement these activities generated was particularly notable. This in turn circles back to a point de Freitas (2013) makes in relation to maths education concerning the importance of ways outside of language, of coming to know the *ontological* status of mathematical entities, as crucial to the growth of mathmatical modes of understanding. That is, drawing on DeleuzoGuattarian/Baradian thinking I seek to put

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to work in this thesis, what one might refer to as the necessity for the performative, the doing, the encounter and the role of more-than-human others.

Maths choosing was timetabled most days, the choices on offer generally set out beforehand by the teacher. Children were often directed to particular activities:

"I am going to choose four children for the water trough".

"Free choosing" occurred on the weekly visitors' mornings, and, with teacher permission, when children managed to complete allocated tasks ahead of time. At these times children were generally free to choose from a wider range of activites. Again limitations were frequently set as to what was on offer, through the equipment made available: "Don't take anything off the shelf, just what is out".

Concluding comments

This chapter highlights the priority put on NE reading and writing, in many respects positioned and performed as the 'real learning' of the Whānau rua classroom. This curriculum and assessment priority was strongly promoted on the school, policy and political front, a priority seen to resonate with developments internationally, and a priority that parents seemed increasingly drawn into taking responsibility for.

Learning to be/become a NE in Whānau rua, while closely tied into these priorities, was also bound up with needing to meet classroom expectations around conduct, in the terminology of the official curriculum 'managing self' (MoE, 2007). In Whānau rua this was manifest in exacting levels of compliance and close and almost constant classroom scrutiny. This involved children (and their families) being inducted into what were often highly regulated modes of operating, and sometimes created tensions between ways of being, doing, knowing, and relating viewed as priorities by children and families and those of the Whānau rua classroom.

Material resources and modalities of time and space were further notable elements of the classroom assemblage subject to a considerable degree of control. From a material-semiotic perspective, the Whānau rua classroom seemed strongly invested in things verbal, giving very little recognition or priority to realms of understanding and intra-activity unable to be subsumed under the "transcendental coding" of language (de Freitas, 2013, p.290). I come back to discuss these matters further in the final chapter.

For teachers, the classroom assemblage seemed riven with pressure. This included pressure to keep to and keep up with wider school and offical procedures and initiatives, the pressure of being new to, and unfamiliar with the particularities of the school, and as discussed previously, the pressure to secure ongoing employment. Teachers also found the continuous influx of new children and families challenging. These were pressures teachers were intra-actively affected by and fed into. These conditions of pressure were part of a mix that had real and palpable effects on daily classroom life and the children living it. This included the closing down of many possible alternative priorities and ways of doing things.

Chapter Nine: Tapatahi School

Introduction

This chapter explores a range of perspectives concerning the curriculum and assessment priorities in the Rm13 NE class at Tapatahi, what children are seen as needing to be, know and do as NEs, and how this unfolds for Sabal, the focus child in this setting.

Following the pattern of the previous two chapters, I 'plug in' and work across different data sets as a way to explore the assemblages of priorities at work in Rm13 and at Tapatahi. The first section focuses on the officially sanctioned curriculum and assessment priorities: those on the school website and in its charter, those promoted in the school's three most recent Education Review Office (ERO) reviews, and those identified by the NE classroom teacher, Mrs G. The section concludes with an introduction to Sabal, and an outline of teacher assessments of his progress.

The second section of the chapter is based around my researcher visits, video data and field-notes. Six videoed episodes and field-note data are presented as cases to think with about the key curriculum and assessment priorities in the NE classroom and the ways in which different modes of being, doing, knowing, and relating become opened up and closed down. This section also includes a particular focus on Sabal's experiences in being/becoming part of the Rm13 classroom assemblage, including the dynamics of being/becoming a classmate.

The concluding section is focused on the interview with Sabal's parents', their perspective on the school's curriculum/assessment priorities and how they see these working out for Sabal. This too brings attention to the role of friends and peers.

Curriculum and assessment priorities at Tapatahi: Official perspectives

Tapatahi is a large Year 1-8 suburban primary school. At the time of the study around 77% of its families identified as Pākehā/European, 12% as Asian, 6% as Māori, and 5% as 'other ethnic groups'. The "About us" section on Tapatahi's website identified the school values as "respect", "responsibility", "empathy", "integrity" and "excellence" (reference withheld). The "Our curriculum" section was divided into "core curriculum" and "rich curriculum", with English, Mathematics and Statistics referred to as core

subjects and "the foundation of all learning". Information in the assessment section of the website had a strong focus on NS and included links to relevant sections of the MoE website.

The school charter highlighted Tapatahi's commitment to a broad and balanced curriculum, seen as needing to reflect the importance of "high-quality" literacy and numeracy skills, children becoming engaged and inquiring learners, and being provided with "a wide range of opportunities in the arts culture and sport". Assessment also featured prominently in the charter with references to children needing to understand "what they need to learn, why they need to learn it and what their next learning steps are". The charter also referenced the use of "target setting at class team and school level" in reading, writing, and mathematics. The strategic plan identified the annual targets, for example, for the year following data gathering, Tapatahi's target groups for literacy were the higher-than-average proportion of Māori students, and Yr 1 cohort children achieving below NS.

Recent ERO reviews described the curriculum at Tapatahi as "learner-centred, challenging and focused on developing lifelong learners", as consistent with currently sanctioned national curriculum priorities (reference withheld). The school was highly commended for its professional development focus on assessment and its response to ERO's previous calls for strengthened links between student achievement data and target-setting. Also commended was the establishing of "a new target-setting process…to promote student learning", reporting that "Every student's progress is under scrutiny" with "students with more complex needs, those who achieve and learn differently receiv[ing] carefully planned assistance".

Room 13 priorities: Mrs G

Mrs. G, the Rm13 teacher, had taught at Tapatahi for five years, and for all her 11 years of teaching had taught children in their first two years of school — the age range she preferred. The biggest adjustment Mrs. G identified children facing, in moving from early childhood services to school and becoming a new entrant, was having less choice:

> I guess the biggest thing is … not always having complete choice over what you
> want to do, when. In kindy and things they do have some mat times and some
> set times, but generally if you want to play outside you go outside, if you want

to play inside, you play inside. But whereas in school we are all on the mat or we're [pause] they do not get the same free play. And while you might get some choices … here it's seven choices not (pause). And sometimes they find that a bit tricky. Like, "but I don't want to do that at the moment". It's like "yeah, but now that you are at school". So that can be one of the challenges, not having so much choice as to what you do.

The significance Mrs. G attributed to children needing to adapt to more limited choice resonated both with the account of Susan at Ranui, and other accounts in the transition literature (Leafgren & Bornhost, 2016). Her subsequent suggestion that Rm13 children might expect to have in the region of "seven choices" seemed puzzling as it was greater than the range of choices I generally saw available to children, greater than in the other NE classroom in this study, and greater than reported elsewhere (Mortlock, 2016). Perhaps the use of the term 'choice' referred to the range of activities *made availa*ble to children over the course of a day. If so, this notably differed from the kindergarten conception of choice as to what was available for *children* to choose from. Mrs. G's comments about mat-times and how frequently the whole NE class would be found gathered together on the mat also resonated with NE practices at Ranui and with the central place of mat-time highlighted in the transition literature (Mortlock, 2016). These dynamics are further explored in upcoming sections.

For Mrs. G curriculum priorities for the NE classroom were a mix of the key competencies and learning to read and write:

A lot of it for me, first off, is the key competencies — the managing themselves, being able to be responsible for their own belongings, joining in, working in a group. Being able to express themselves orally as well. If they are in place the rest will be easier. Obviously there is still the alphabet knowledge, reading and writing, but a lot of it is on the key competencies - having the right things you need to have at school each day, being independent, so packing your own school bag, bringing your own schoolbag in, in the morning. And problem solving, so if something happens what can you do to sort it out. And just giving things a go, cos if they are willing to take those risks, the learning will happen easier and … they are willing to make a mistake and try again. That for me is the big thing we focus on. That aside there is still learning to read, the basic writing skills…

Consistent with the discourse of 'learning to learn', the key competencies Mrs. G foregrounded were those seen as helping ensure, "learning will happen easier". However, her comments regarding children needing to be "willing to take those risks" and "try again", open unanswered questions as to what *those* risks were, and *what* children were to be willing to "try again".

When asked about the place in the NE curriculum for different modes such as the visual or kinaesthetic, Mrs. G described certain modes as "very big", also notably highlighting an assortment of material elements as integral to the opening up of these modalities:

> So we try to cater as much as we can to all of them. We try to have a visual aspect to it, a moving aspect to it… a lot of hands on equipment …for those children. Listening as well, not just doing things from any one way. Especially the visual is very big. We have photos on the task boards [and] always try and have the day written up visually and talk through it. So, very big. But at the same time when we are doing maths and things and talking and playing, we also have lots of equipment, playing with the equipment in a problem solving way and a lot of moving round. So if we are on the mat then we go off to the tables.

When I asked Mrs. G what led to this way of working, she traced it to the traditions she grew up with as a beginning teacher, to her teacher training and the modeling of her tutor teacher:

> Lots of moving, lots of play and lots of talking. And lots of things to touch. And also lots of things hanging'. Always big on lots of children's work around the room, so that they can see their own things. And music as well — we sing the alphabet as well. And nursery rhymes — because they know the nursery rhymes…match it to the words

Mrs. G's reference to an era of "lots of play" resonates with May's (2011) account of programmes of play being promoted in "progressive" junior classrooms, a practice May says waned in Aotearoa-New Zealand in the 1990s (p.241). Yet while Mrs. G highlighted a focus on play and modes beyond the verbal as an important part of NE classroom practice, these modes and materials were positioned as helping facilitate particular learning priorities, rather than offering valued ways of being, doing, and knowing in their own right. In the example above, for instance, music serves to assist

in learning the alphabet, and nursery rhymes are valued for their potential to contribute to learning to read.

Other comments in Mrs. G's interview also alluded to the idea of things needing to be fitted around the demands of the core curriculum:

> … And I try to break things up as well so if we have … done a sitting-down, writing thing, then we have free play afterwards. Or we might then do some dancing and jumping round. And things like that … that up and down in terms of that intensity of focus.

The NE classroom assessment practices outlined in the next section further illustrate this concentration on core curriculum priorities.

New entrant assessment: Tapatahi

NE assessments at Tapatahi normally started the first week of school. As Mrs G explained, this began with a standard initial assessment involving the checking of "letter-sound knowledge, basic numeracy skills, pencil grip, drawing/motor skills and writing their name". Those who managed this were assessed to see "if they recognise any words".

> From this point on, literacy assessments were "ongoing":

> [We] check sight words, probably every 3/4 weeks. Same with alphabet, to see if there's movement. Once they have got over say 13/14 sight words, then we would look at doing some running record assessment. Once they are reading on red books we do regular running records [to] see their reading strategies… probably …every 4-6 weeks.

Progress was closely monitored against NS, with teachers "keep[ing] an eye on whether children are on track for the first round of reporting at 40 weeks". If in doubt, an "interim" assessment was done at 20 weeks. The MOE-promoted maths programme the school used — *Junior Assessment of Mathematics (*JAM*)* (MOE, 2013) — had inbuilt assessments for all modules.

Mrs. G also spoke of "tracking things like the key competencies", describing this as observing and ticking off things like: "Can they answer a question in a sentence form? Can they continue a conversation, work independently, follow a 'simple'

instruction? Are they taking risks? Are they joining in conversations? That sort of thing." Here again, the prominence of the verbal was notable in the examples given.

The first formal assessment shared with NE families was the 'Six weekly report" discussed at a parent-teacher meeting scheduled six weeks after children start school. The template Tapatahi used for this report had four of the same reporting categories as the end-of-year-report. The opening section focused on how the child was progressing with the "Social and learning" behaviours of the classroom and included the two subsections: "Student Goals" and "Parent and Whanau Support". These categories were consistent with the school and wider policy emphasis on children and parents taking responsibility for being future-focused and achieving looked-for learning, as referred to in Chapters three and six.

The three remaining report sections focused in turn on reading, writing and numeracy, in keeping with the assessment focus of NS. Each section gave the child's achievement rating for that area and ended with recommended "Next Steps/Wishes". The end-of-year report contained two additional reporting categories: "Rich curriculum" and "Physical education". Neither of these categories included 'next steps'.

Assessment portfolios of samples of children's work included unassisted writing samples collected each term, though as Mrs G explained, the main intention of portfolios was "to show the other things they have been doing", in particular the key competencies. For this they regularly used photos. Hence for the key competency 'managing self':

> We sometimes get the children to demonstrate ... for example ... 'Can you show me how you would look if you were managing yourself on the mat?' And so you would take a photo of them showing how they would. So some of it's like a sort of self- assessment as well.

To assist with transition, NE children's families were also asked to bring the children's EC portfolio to the first school visit and would generally leave this for a week or so for the teacher to read. Mrs.G said she found it useful to look through children's EC portfolios to see the sorts of experiences they had had.

Sabal

When Sabal started school, he was the last child to join the Rm13 NE class. School policy is to cap NE class numbers at 20. Sabal's start to school at Tapatahi differed from that of the five other focus children in the study in that he knew none of the other children in his class. Mrs. G described the classroom Sabal joined as "busy", and the other children — by then — as generally familiar with classroom routines. She called Sabal "a naturally quiet child" saying that with other children he was "quite shy" and would wait for them to come up to him rather than initiating a conversation.

When asked what she learnt of Sabal from his kindergarten portfolio, Mrs. G noted his interest in construction. She commented on how "engaged [and] very good with the blocks" Sabal was, saying that when they had free play this was "probably where you see him getting really animated with other children".

On my first visit after Sabal started, Mrs G talked of finding Sabal shy and unconfident. She said she did not quite know how to respond when in checking what words, letters and sounds Sabal recognised, he told her, "my dad hasn't shown me that yet". Her manner toward him on a one-to-one basis was kindly and patient. She tried to put him at ease and worked hard to get him to converse. Yet I saw this became difficult for Mrs. G to sustain in the midst of hurried whole-class dynamics. For example, when Mrs. G asks at mat-time who in the class found an activity "tricky", Sabal puts his hand up, starting to explain further. However, Mrs. G's question looks only for a 'hand-up' response and the conversation has already moved on.

Toileting became problematic. The second week in Mrs.G said Sabal would not ask to go to the toilet and they were having to send him out every 45 minutes. The following week Mrs G told me Sabal had started wetting his pants, and was going through "lots of sets of clothes". These difficulties lessened gradually over a period of weeks, but continued sporadically for the remainder of the year. I had not recalled this being an issue at kindergarten. In my final interview with Sila and Prakesh, Sabal's parents, they said he had occasional accidents at kindergarten, but on starting school it had become a real problem.

In Sabal's six-week report Mrs. G wrote that he is "a very quiet class member who has at times found the transition to school a bit daunting". The report goes on to say that Sabal is gaining in confidence and "will now approach the teacher and other students and initiate conversations", and has "now formed some good friendships

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within the class". The rest of the report focuses strongly on reading, writing and numeracy, as does Sabal's end-of-year report. The parent/whanau support suggested is literacy/numeracy related — having Sabal read his readers each night, practise retelling the stories and have lots of counting practice. "[N]ext steps" for Sabal almost all centre on literacy and numeracy and are highly specific. That is to increase alphabet/letter-sound knowledge and counting ranges. Sabal's "learning and social" goal is to ask the teacher if unsure what to do. At the start of the new school year, when Sabal and his parents meet with his new teacher, Sabal is again set these exact same goals.

Researcher visits and video

In this section, following the pattern of the previous chapter, I draw on video and field-note data to explore further a number of key aspects of the curriculum and assessment priorities Mrs. G identified in her interview: the prioritising of 'core curriculum' literacy and assessment, the centrality of mat-time, the emphasis on 'managing self' and learning to follow instructions and issues of choice. The opening sections present six video clips filmed during a morning session in Sabal's fourth week at school. The first four focus on different phases of activity centred around the weekly poem, the second two include a particular focus on Sabal's involvement in these activities. Sabal also features in clips five and six f, which are focused on peer dynamics and being/becoming a classmate — for Sabal, a key priority.

Clip 1: "Poem-day"

The day of the video-recording is Friday — as Mrs. G reminds the children, "poem-day". Once through the daily roll call and a brief round of children who choose to, sharing their news, mat activities turn to focus around the day's poem — "a Spring poem". Mrs. G introduces the notion of Spring as a time when trees blossom, before commencing the reading and discussion of the poem featured in Clip 1. Central here is the literacy discussion Mrs. G instigates concerning the poem's use of the word 'glorious'. Mrs. G encourages the children to use this word — which she terms a "wow" word — in their writing. Key also, as part of this discussion, is Mrs. G's feedback to the eight children she invites to answer her question "what could glorious mean?" This indicates some answers rate more highly than others.
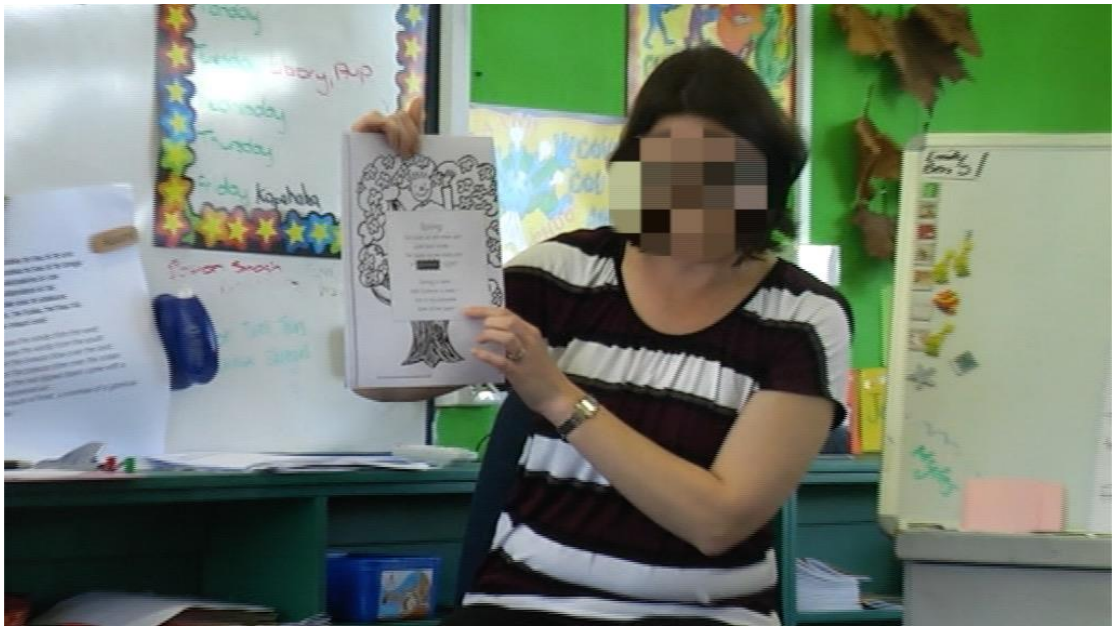
Figure 25. Clip 1: "Poem day"

The interactional dynamics in Clip one can in many respects be seen as consistent with studies of mat-time pedagogy, finding this to be "highly reliant on the verbal" (Mortlock, 2016, p.108) and "predominantly teacher directed…especially when academic outcomes were prioritised" (p.16). What is also notable is that for children to grasp these academic priorities and how the assessment process operates, they must attend closely to Mrs. G's nuances of tone and the 'unsaid'.

Priorities seem somewhat mixed in Mrs. G's response to Ben in the poem discussion. At first Mrs. G meets Ben's contribution to the Springtime discussion with enthusiasm, even though he contravenes the mat-time protocol of children being expected to put their hand up to speak: "You are right [Ben] the days do become longer". This suggests children may perhaps, at times, be able to insert themselves into mat-time discussions. However, when Ben seeks to further the discussion, starting to give his version of how planetary rotation works, Mrs. G quickly moves to bring the conversation to a close, whilst correcting Ben's assertion that the sun moves: "lots of things turn, but the sun is the one that stays in the middle".

Perhaps Mrs. G's initial over-riding of mat-time protocols is to do with how useful and 'on-topic' she considers Ben's first comment. And perhaps Ben's second comment, seeking to add in the question of planetary rotation, is one Mrs. G possibly judges as too 'off topic' — too removed from the literacy focus. Equally, Mrs. G's response may have been motivated, in part at least, by concern that a protracted

discussion with Ben risked losing the attention of the others. It's not clear to what extent this was or was not the case.

While important to appreciate the pressure mat-time dynamics impose on teachers, it is also important to consider what it is these often taken-for-granted modes of operating foster and make difficult. For example, the way that in this instance the closing down of the discussion sees knowledge on planetary rotation framed authoritatively as 'right' and 'wrong' and a matter of certainty, rather than a matter of differing and contested views and provisional. This in turn raises questions as to the priority put on enquiry, and critical and divergent thinking and where the openings are for these to occur.

Clip 2: Task instructions

The activity in the second clip follows directly on from Clip one, and features Mrs. G relaying the children's instructions for the follow-up activities to the poem. Their first task is to decorate/colour-in the person and blossom tree on the poem worksheet — "beautifully, thinking about star work". As part of her task instructions, Mrs. G directs the children's attention to the assessment criteria for 'star work': "in star work we try to colour inside the lines, colours need to make sense, and we try not to leave white spaces".

The children's second task is to "make a blossom" using the small pink squares of paper Mrs. G shows them, following the process she demonstrates. In this further set of instructions Mrs. G carefully provides both model and words, though not all are straightforward. For example, Mrs. G *verbally* instructs the children to "start with a pencil and then use a sharpie", but *demonstrates* a different process, explaining: "I'm going straight to a sharpie". Sabal goes straight to a Sharpie.

The clip ends with a final revisiting of the instructions. Mrs. G first asks the children: "Can you remember all those things you have to do this morning?" She then coaches them back through each step using a combination of verbal cues, questions, strategic pauses, and the task materials as prompts.

MGT: First we are going to (pauses and points to the worksheet)

Colour, decorate. (pauses) Put it in our poem folder. (pauses)

Make a little? (holds up the pink paper square)

Children: Flower.

This done, Mrs. G gets the children to indicate whether they think they are up to the task: "Put your thumb up if you can do it." All thumbs go up, Sabal's included. Her closing comment to the class offers both reassurance and instruction: "Remember, if you forget some of them, we can help remind you".

Figure 26. Clip 2: Task instructions

Coming to terms with the choices available — the task Mrs G referred to as the one some NEs found most challenging — comes to the fore in Clip 2 when Maryann interjects asking Mrs. G *why* she wants them to make the pink paper blossoms. Mrs. G answers the question positively and fully, explaining the blossoms are needed to complete the card they have been making for their soon-to-retire teacher-aide. When Maryann calls out again, shortly later, asking, "can we do movement?", Mrs G responds with what serves as an attention-deflecting "soon", and returns quickly to discussing the task instructions.

Clip 3. "Sensible Colours"

In Clip 3 Mrs. G is at Sabal's worktable encouraging the children to learn to use the assessment criteria for star work she had previously outlined. Key here is how the assessment criteria of "*sensible* colours" plays out, in particular Mrs G's querying of Archie's choice of orange to colour in the face on the worksheet, and Archie and Sabal's responses.

Figure 26. Clip 3: "Sensible colours"

Reflecting on this event later I am struck by the way in which the combination of the teacher's pre-determined conception as to what was to constitute "sensible colours" and the assessment criteria work to preclude the children exploring 'real-world' diversity of skin-tone (and/or tree colour). Even brown-skinned Sabal being at the table seems not to disrupt the normative discourse of skin-tone needing to be "light-coloured". These dimensions of the curriculum/assessment assemblage can be seen here as working together to encourage reductionism, stereotype and colour bias, and as working against the acceptance and exploration of difference. This shutting down is further illustrated in the way Archie hastily reaches for a "white" crayon and Sabal a "lighter" colour to fit requirements.

Also drawing my attention, as I work to pay attention to the role of the material within this curriculum assemblage, is the role of the worksheet. In particular, the European appearance of the worksheet figure gets me wondering what part this feature may have had in prompting Mrs. G's stance that a light colour needed to be used for colouring in the face. It is the racial bias of such 'white-centredness' that MacNaughton (2005) brings attention to in her analysis of the British-produced primary school texts from her childhood, and the role she saw these playing in the

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many 'white' and 'Anglo' ways of thinking, knowing and being that were part of daily Australian school life. MacNaughton identifies these texts as part of the mix giving rise to the conviction of "whiteness as ordinary...I knew without knowing that being 'white' was good, desirable and normal" (p.157).

A survey of Sabal's workbooks at the end of his time in Rm13 shows an extensive use of worksheets, a high percentage of which come from programmes of work produced outside Aotearoa-New Zealand, predominantly the UK and Australia. In addition to raising questions of the sort MacNaughton (2005) does, the use of these worksheets also raises questions about the normative conceptions of learning underpinning the standard, formulaic ways worksheet tasks are organised, atomised and put in linear sequence.

Star-work criteria are invoked again as Archie completes his worksheet and Mrs. G calls him over to talk him through the exercise of assessing his colouring-in against star-work criteria on the wall chart (See Figure 27). Mrs. G begins the process by holding Archie's worksheet up against the wall chart example asking, "Does it make sense?" Archie, seeming bemused, answers, "no" — perhaps in a bid for the 'right' answer. Mrs. G ignores the 'no', reinitiating, "we've got green leaves, pink blossoms". She then encourages Archie to look to see, "have we got no white spaces?" Archie makes no response; Mrs. G points out two "white patches". Handing Archie back his work she asks, "what do you reckon?" Archie does not respond.

Figure 27. "Star work"

While it is possible to view this process as one of simple explication, i.e., of a teacher helping a child understand the assessment criteria, to do so overlooks the way in which these criteria are promoted as "sensible" and self-evident; it overlooks their contestability. Moreover, it overlooks the way in which what is deemed "sensible" may operate in concerningly normative, exclusionary, and problematic ways, as was the case with "sensible" colours.

Clip 4: 'Managing self'

Clip 4 features the completion of the colouring-in task with Mrs. G assisting Sabal to find his poetry folder and successfully manage the "tricky" task of manoeuvring his finished worksheet into a folder sleeve. In keeping with Mrs. G's interview, this clip illustrates the way in which the mastering of everyday classroom routines forms a significant part of the NE curriculum, generally framed as the official curriculum

competency "managing self". It is also illustrative of 'knowing as performing' and the importance of the kindly, pragmatic, capacity-building, 'hands-on' support I witnessed Mrs. G regularly offer children in her classroom.

Figure 28. Clip 4: Becoming 'self managing'

My suggestion here is that curriculum and assessment practices to do with the key competency notion of 'managing self' — seen to involve the prioritising of learning to follow instructions — and an assessment emphasis on preset standards, work against children's opportunities and capacities to engage with 'real world' divergence, multiplicity open-ness and difference. Questions of open-ness to 'the other' are further explored in the next section in relation to peer dynamics.

Clip 5: Classmates

Other events in the poem-day videoing highlight the way in which Sabal's efforts to be what was looked for in a NE were not only to do with teacher expectations and curriculum, but also with how to be a classmate. The final two video clips show three of Sabal's efforts to initiate connections with different classmates during the course of the Friday morning mat activities and the responses he met.

The first classmate connection which comes at the opening of Clip five, shows a very brief animated exchange between Sabal and Kiann, in response to the student

teacher's instructions to stand up "shake their bodies" and dance (ref. Figure 29, left-hand photo). Sabal and Kiann's enjoyment and animation in getting to move around, re-energise themselves and mingle with each other, was a response commonly witnessed when children were given such opportunities.

Sabal's effort to connect with a second classmate, Jarvis, is not as successful (ref Figure 29, right-hand photo). Sabal moves across the mat to sit on the floor next to Jarvis, and watching him raise both arms up in the air, does the same. It is not apparent why Jarvis is sitting on the floor raising his arms. The other children are still standing, following the instructions of the student teacher. What is apparent is Jarvis' negative response as he catches sight of Sabal sitting alongside — the two, rejecting push-away gestures in Sabal's direction and his highly displeased facial expression (blurred for ethical reasons).

Figure 29. Clip 5: Classmates

Clip 6: Classmates contd.

The third classmate interaction, in Clip six, happens at the end of mat-time as children are leaving the mat to make their way to their allocated worktables. Vinnie — another of the boys Sabal has been making efforts to connect with — is lying face-down on the mat; Sabal does the same. When Vinnie sits up and discovers Sabal lying nearby, he reaches over to rouse Sabal, tapping him on the back. Sabal sits up, a tentative half-smile on his face. Vinnie's response cannot be seen as his back is to the camera, but

this serves to shut down any further overture from Sabal, as the two boys get to their feet and head away.

Figure 30. Clip 6: Classmates continued

Researchers Svahn and Evaldsson (2011) highlight the way in which practices involving peer exclusions operate as part of the flow of subtle, sometimes covert, and sometimes seemingly innocent actions, embedded in everyday peer group interactions. This was the sort of pattern I witnessed in a number of other exchanges involving Sabal during my visits. Interactions often occurred 'under the radar' and non-verbally. This was seen for example when Adam was partnered with Sabal for the bean-bag dance. He studiously avoided meeting Sabal's gaze or interacting with him any further than the dance required, and angled himself instead toward his two friends dancing alongside, laughing and interacting with them.

Justin's actions as 'table helper' when he had the task of handing out pencils to those at his worktable were also all about the non-verbal. Justin bypassed Sabal, moved around the table, handed one to Archie, one to Alice and one to George, then just as he was leaving, rolled one across the table to Sabal.

The way children are inducted into the roles of monitors of each other, arbiters of the rules and "judges of normality", has been noted elsewhere (Leafgren & Bornhost, 2016, p.5). The question I kept coming back to, in terms of the focus in this study on curriculum and assessment priorities, was the extent to which this could be seen as exacerbated by the recent intensifying emphasis on assessment and the prioritising of standardised criteria. Examples I noticed included Kiann coming to report to Mrs. G that Sabal is "doing it fast" (i.e., too fast for 'star work'), and another in which Alice queries Justin on where he has written his name and whether this is the right place, later also looking over at Sabal's work, grimacing and commenting to her companion, "that's not star work".

The possibility of doing things differently is suggested in Davies's (2010) account of the inclusive practices she observed in a Reggio Emilia preschool in Sweden. Davies suggests that a crucial element of the generous-heartedness she found amongst the children was to do with the school's open-ness "to new ways of being and knowing", as part of a strong philosophical commitment to "difference as a value" and "empathy for the other" (p.62). There is a similar ethos of connectedness and empathy in the examples Rameka (2011) gives in her study of assessment in kohanga reo,[10] highlighting the prioritising of indigenous Māori values such as *manaakitanga,* to emphasise relations of care and respect, and being a friend.

Pedagogical priorities: Fieldnotes

The pattern of prioritising and intermixing literacy, assessment, self-management and instruction-following, coming across in the videoed episodes, was also observed during classroom visits. This was readily evident during numerous mat-times in the intermixing of literacy and instruction-following with tasks such as noting and discussing letters, sounds, words and literacy/writing conventions, e.g., "put your hand up if you can find the next capital" or "some more rhyming words", and listening to and discussing various pieces of writing, e.g., "put your hand up if you know why the lion got…".

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[10] Māori language immersion centres

Literacy and assessment were also closely inter-linked, as illustrated in the following excerpt from one of Mrs. G's regular one-to-one teaching sessions:

> You know all the letter names... now, the letter sounds. When you started school you knew two and now you know nine. Let's look at the ones you found tricky last time...I am pretty sure you know this one cos you told me this the other day.

Soon after Sabal starts, he is assessed as needing supplementary literacy support and is having thrice-weekly sessions with a teacher aide. In the first of the sessions I observe, which takes place on the floor in the corridor outside the classroom, Sabal and classmate Sunil busily practise writing out 'essential' words on small whiteboards. Sabal applies himself with alacrity to all he is asked to do.

On another occasion I watch Sabal "making something" — the thing he said he most enjoyed about kindergarten. It was with blocks during a brief period of free choice prior to morning break — the activity Mrs G had identified as one in which Sabal particularly enjoyed connecting with other children. Mrs G stops, when passing, to talk to Sabal about what he is doing:

MG: What have you built Sabal?

S: shrugs

MG: Is it just a creation? I wonder how high you can make it?

I am struck by the ready dismissal of that which is "just a creation" and the endeavor to fold the activity back into matters to do with core curriculum.

Barad's (2007) concept of entanglement was a useful way to think about the dynamic of activities being folded into and merging with one another, in particular the way various activities were intra-actively reworked in the process. Daily tidy-up time, for example, became a time of assessment, instruction-following (and literacy). Pre-set criteria specified exactly how to qualify; those who did, had their names 'written up': "To get your name on the board you have to put more than one thing away and put it in the right place ... [and] stop playing straight away".

Feedback was, at one and the same time, assessment and instruction, identifying what further was expected:

> I can still see the blocks out of the block box
>
> I'm looking still. Are the chairs pushed in?

Even in longer classroom music and movement sessions, when one might have expected to focus more centrally on the affordances of these modes, there was a recurring circling back to the same core priorities, particularly instruction-following. This was highlighted as a key objective of the regularly practised repertoire of action songs, music-tape dances, 'bean-bag' routines and stick games:

> MGT: Do you know when we do that song we are following instructions? I am going to give you another instruction. When you hear your name, put your [beanbag] in the box. You know the fantastic thing about that? I didn't even need to say put them in neatly.

Notable in this excerpt, as elsewhere, was the way Mrs G's assessment feedback brought the children's attention to the greater goal of carrying out such activities without needing to be instructed.

Children were encouraged to become part of a class practice of monitoring self and others. Mrs. G checks, "did I miss anyone who was cleaning up?", then together she and the children count the number of names on the board. As the year progressed, children were increasingly expected to know, without being told, what they need to do: "A couple of people have finished their reindeer, but they haven't cleaned up their workspace".

In the performing of these priorities, Mrs G drew on a number of modes. She was, for example, very adept at finding openings to incorporate inter-active, action-oriented modes into mat-times to balance the physical inactivity these imposed, whilst still keeping to task. Mrs. G would frequently be giving the children things to do: "While I am finding the song, count backwards from 20".

The movement 'breaks' Mrs. G referred to in her interview were also strategic in helping to mitigate the more intense periods of focus and self-management sometimes expected of the Rm13 NEs. These too were commonly tied back to the above set of priorities. This is seen when Mrs. G sends the children off around the classroom, telling them, "I want you to touch a blue table, yellow box and green shelf". Children were not only to *demonstrate* their understanding of instructions, but practise assessing and reporting what they could remember. In this instance, raised hands indicated who remembered the first, second and third instruction, and who "got a little muddled".

Children seemed to particularly enjoy the game-like aspects Mrs G added into music and movement activities. For example, with the action-song 'heads, shoulders, knees and toes', there would sometimes be, for example, a quickening of pace and/or contradictory verbal and gestural instructions. Sometimes the song would be performed with the words progressively substituted by actions — in the last round 'sung' wordlessly, with actions only, sometimes with music, sometimes without. Mrs G and the children referred to these greater levels of complexity as making it "tricky", and the children as "getting tricked".

Leonard (1970) writes of break-times often operating more as 'outlet from' and 'consequence of' the constraints of the classroom and the need to let off steam and of them often ultimately functioning as a further technology of compliance. Certainly, in terms of the thesis focus on the opportunities afforded children to explore different modalities, it often seemed questionable how much of an opening to explore other modalities the sometimes very brief interludes actually allowed: "We have one minute, you can draw anything you like".

Active modalities also featured as assessment-related activity with children singled out as desirable models and demonstrators or invited to volunteer as models: "Who would like to demonstrate [heel-toe walking] first?" Such demonstrations were not only treated as assessment opportunities for individual children to showcase and be commended for their expertise, but as instructional opportunities for others: "Look how *carefully* he's going…what's helping him keep his *balance*? ... It was a brilliant demonstration thank you [Jessie]. Let's give him a clap."

Care was taken not to ignore the 'non-commended' children. This included encouragement to all children to stay motivated and be monitors of their own performance. This is seen, for example, when Mrs. G and the student teacher identify some children as performing the new dance step correctly and Mrs. G adds the reassurance: *But because we didn't say your name doesn't mean to say you weren't doing it perfectly.*

Where children were not meeting expectations, this would, at times, be publicly pointed out: "Waiting for [Jason]". On occasion, children being censured would be singled out and required to demonstrate the behaviour expected. For example, when the class lines up in readiness for their weekly school library session and Alex jostles his way in at the front of the queue, he is first matter-of-factly

instructed to "go back and try again", then congratulated warmly on rejoining the line in the appropriate way, "that's so much better".

Because action-oriented activities were prone to generate higher levels of animation and exuberance they would often invoke positively-framed reminders that children were to keep their bodies sufficiently 'managed':

MG: We are going to have fun doing our dance but we are not getting silly.
        We are going to manage ourselves.

MB: (visiting teacher): I think we can do that, can't we?

Through numerous revisitings of my field-note examples of children modeling, I notice all are injunctions to children to follow and do the same, rather than endorsement or encouragement to try doing something differently. This emphasis on instruction-following and the question of its effects on creativity, and openness to difference and the new, are discussed further in the next section in the interview with Sabal's parents — matters I also return to discuss in the concluding chapter.

Another feature of classroom-based movement activities I recall vividly from my researcher visits was the shortage of space; how aware I was of the physical confines of classroom and the challenges this presented. As I listened to teacher reminders of the need to manage oneself "sensibly", I had to make a concentrated effort to find somewhere to put my researcher-body that did not get in the way:

"Who's standing in a sensible space?"

"Find a space where you won't bump into anyone".

Such dynamics resonate with the point Fenwick, Edwards, and Sawchuk (2011) make that the material elements of the physical and built environment generally operate as "part of the hidden curriculum of education" (p.152). In this classroom limitations of space were seen to work against children being able to move and express themselves freely. Even in activities in which they are invited to make greater use of their physical bodies, children are requested to move '"sensibly'" and "'keep themselves to themselves'".

Sabal becoming a Rm13 new entrant: Family perspectives

In their final interview Sabal's parents, Sila and Prakesh, spoke of the difficulties they saw Sabal facing in becoming a Rm13 NE. They described the school curriculum as overly restrictive, believing that as a result Sabal was not able to "be himself". In their view Sabal's strengths were "not known". He was, they thought, in danger of losing his creativity, and what Sila referred to as his ability to "think outside the square".

Sila viewed the curriculum as emphasising narrowly particular forms of knowledge, arguing "knowledge is not necessarily in a particular form. It can be in any form". Sila saw this narrowness, combined with the highly structured nature of the curriculum, as working against Sabal's creativity:

> I think because even now the way he is in school I feel it's taken his creativity. His creativity has taken a back seat. So as he progresses through the years he'll have to work really hard to find his creative side and bring that out again. Before that he'll have to become confident in his environment. And then maybe he brings his strength out.

> A related issue for Sila was the school's emphasis on conformity:

> Because there are lots of rules. … He keeps asking me, 'can I go to the toilet?' Yes [Sabal], you can go to the toilet. 'Can I wear this shirt?', 'Yes, you can wear this shirt'. And suddenly when his brother will do something and, 'No, it's against the rules'. Suddenly he's gone from an environment where he did not know rules, did not know boundaries, and was a free thinker, into a place where he's restricted. And I don't know if that's the right way of doing things at school, and that's the big difference for me.

Prakesh believed the NE curriculum worked against a child who was "not strongly vocal", suggesting the need for "more of the building stuff and doing things that happened at kindergarten". "Literacy and numeracy is important" he adds, "and no-one is debating that you have to be good at it". However he called for more "balance" and "breadth", and scope for what he termed "free learning", to enable children "to do things on their own".

The friendship challenges Sabal faced at Tapatahi were highlighted by Sila and Prakesh as a key issue. When their final interview took place at the end of Sabal's five months in Rm13, and toward the end of the 6-week Summer holiday break, the family

were preparing for Sabal's return to school, a new teacher and a new class. At this point Sila and Prakesh were of the view that sending Sabal to a school where he knew no-one had made things "a lot tougher" than they anticipated: "…on the forming relationships and being comfortable in an environment we didn't really think that far to see that it would have such a huge impact".

They talked of Sabal making friends at school becoming problematic. He starts telling them he has "no friends" in class and that he is being picked on during break-times by some of his classmates. Sila and Prakesh describe Sabal's efforts to "counteract" this with plans to "dress like 'Ben Ten' and 'Spiderman' …. and put his angry face on". Sila decided to investigate further, going to pick Sabal up during lunch-break:

> For a few days I went during the lunch break to pick him up purely because I wanted to see what he does … He actually goes and hides. For an hour. Until it's nearly time to start class and then he comes. He hides so that he doesn't get picked on. And I felt really sad because one of the days it was raining, and he was outside, I think, hiding somewhere.

Prakesh contrasted Sabal's difficulty connecting with other children in Rm13 with the connections he'd made with other children during the just-completed, month-long Christmas holiday the family had in India. He talked of the ease with which Sabal was able to join his cousins and other children in neighbourhood play, the "many things" he could do, and how happy he was: "There it's very common, every evening come five o'clock or six o'clock they just go down and they play". Toward the end of the time they had in India Sabal tells his parents he does not want to go back to school in New Zealand, and asks "can I go to school here?"

Prakesh suggested the neighbourhood connections they found in India "kind of helps at school". He compared this with the difficulties the family experienced when it came to getting children in touch with each other in New Zealand. They found this a much more closely managed affair:

> … it's always an activity that needs to be created… everything is so structured you have to talk to the parents and they have to be monitored… there are play-dates and things like that… It's very formalised…closed.

As Prakesh put it: "the environment in New Zealand is such that we don't tend to react very well together".

Prakesh did not dwell on the issue of cultural or ethnic differences, or directly discuss what part these may have played in Sabal's difficulties. He instead went on to suggest Sabal's younger brother, Abhik, was unlikely to experience the same difficulties — describing him as a "buoyant", "stronger" personality, who will have the additional benefit of an older brother at school. Yet notably Prakesh did not discount the possibility that Abhik too could face similar sorts of challenges.

A further observation Prakesh made about the bullying behaviour of some of Sabal's classmates was that he thought this was aided by their positioning as the established group:

> Now someone can be a bully because they are absolutely comfortable with their environment. So the likelihood of them becoming a bully is very high. If you are placed in the same environment where everyone is new, the thing is no-one's the boss to start off with. They…are given a chance in forming their friends …everyone's nervous… everyone's in the same boat.

As the family prepared to embark on the new school year, Prakesh and Sila said they were hopeful that Sabal would "find better friends" in the year ahead. When I had spoken to them previously they had been actively seeking out-of-school classes for Sabal to fulfill his passion for making things. Now they were looking into out-of-school options to offer Sabal support for literacy and numeracy.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the interconnections that built and were built by the curriculum and assessment priorities operating in Rm13. In it I highlight the classroom prioritising of core curriculum literacy, and assessment standards, modes of doing, being, knowing and relating, promoted as 'self-managing', together with the ways in which greater multimodality was folded into the NE assemblage. My suggestion here, which I discuss further in the following chapter, is that the Rm13 adopting of narrowly focused curriculum priorities and strongly promoted normative standards worked against "fostering a culture of engagement with differences" (Duhn, 2008, p.92), serving to curtail children's opportunities and capacities for engaging openly with 'real

world' diversity, including in their relationships with each other. This chapter also further highlights the important role of peers, but more particularly, that just as children are "supervised and controlled", they are at the same time "the controllers and supervisors of each other (Tesar, 2014, p.365).

Chapter Ten: Discussion and (In)Conclusion

In this chapter I return to the thesis focus, looking again at what the curriculum and assessment priorities were for the kindergarten and two NE settings in this study, and the ways in which these priorities interconnected with the modes of operating (ways of being, doing, knowing, and relating) of the focus children. In a similar pattern to previous chapters, the first three chapter sections focus in turn on the intra-actively entangled assemblages of the *official*, the *settings*, and *children and their families*. In these sections I discuss the way particular constructions of learners and learning were authorised and prioritised, highlighting the ways in which the DeleuzoGuattarian constructs of assemblage and rhizome and Barad's notion of intra-active entanglement were key tools in undertaking this analysis. In the fourth section I focus on the *research assemblage*, revisiting the notion of research as an ethico-onto-epistemological project (Barad, 2007), to discuss some of the complexly entangled research-relations, ethical dilemmas and limitations of this study. In the course of this discussion and in the fifth and final section of the chapter, I offer my *concluding reflections* on the understandings I have drawn from this study

Curriculum and assessment priorities: Assemblages of the official

The tracing of shifting curriculum/assessment priorities in the EC and school sectors in Aotearoa-New Zealand undertaken in the thesis provided key insights into the ways in which developments in global and national assemblages became part of the "always emerging conditions of the present" (Rizvi & Lingard, 2011, p.7) for the three settings in this study. This tracing process began in Chapter six with the paper forming that chapter offering a chronological tracing of national and global developments manifesting in recent transition-related policy priorities in Aotearoa-New Zealand in the EC and school sectors. Key here was the contention that EC sector curriculum and assessment priorities have become more relationally entangled with the school sector, with an increasingly dominant discourse of continuity, and with the agenda-setting dynamics of the global education assemblage. Commitments in *Te Whāriki* and *Kei tua o te pae* to support plurality and to identify and protect EC curriculum and assessment priorities as distinct from those of the school sector were progressively overtaken by

the policy push for a seamless education system (Gibbons, 2013; Mawson, 2006). Curriculum and assessment priorities across both EC and school sectors became increasingly drawn into new normativities promoted by neoliberal rationalities and transnational organisations like the OECD (Wood & Stray, 2015), the governance-related effects of global discourses of key competencies and Lifelong Learning (Tuschling & Engemann, 2006) and the pervasive impact of internationally aligned measures of assessment and evaluation (Gorur, 2013).

Deleuze's (1992) analysis of the onset of this era of Lifelong Learning —he used the term "perpetual training" (p.5) — offered useful insight into the dynamics of control in play as "ultra-rapid", "free-floating" and form-changing. He likened them to "a sieve whose mesh will *transmute* from point to point" (emphasis added) (p.4). Such was the transmuting effected, for instance, with school transition in Aotearoa-New Zealand in the 2015 MoE website restructuring. This saw EC as an identifiable sector disestablished, and reconfigured as "Early Learning 0-6 Years", now differentiated only as a set of numbers marking the first segment of a trajectory of lifelong learning.

[11]A further crucial point about the dynamics of such societal assemblages made by Deleuze (1992) was that even where measures arose out of intentions to bring about greater freedom, they could themselves end up as apparatuses of control. Hence developments that "could at first express new freedom" — he gave daycare as an example— "could participate as well in mechanisms of control that are equal to the harshest of confinements" (p.4).

My tracing of curriculum and assessment priorities in relation to the 'assemblages of the official' suggested a similar sort of deterritorialising/reterritorialising entanglement with the development in Aotearoa of alternative forms of assessment for the EC sector. Without wishing to oversimplify a complex set of dynamics, the introduction and use of the now strongly promoted Learning Stories framework provides a case in point. Developing this framework began as a quest to find an assessment alternative to the standardised testing regimes making inroads into EC pedagogy internationally. Carr (2001) explained this as finding an alternative that would "mirror and protect" the complexity of learning and

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[11] (https://education.govt.nz/framework/main.php?url=/

teaching, "acknowledging contradiction, ambiguity, inconsistency and situation specific factors" (p.13). The narrative mode of assessment arrived at was well received as such an alternative (Arndt & Tesar, 2015). Yet critical questions remained over the effects of positioning children exclusively as learners, and viewing events solely as learning opportunities (Buchanan, 2011) and the limitations entailed in tying Learning Stories to a framework of learning dispositions constructing learners and learning in quite particular, potentially reductive ways (Bone, 2001; Cullen, 2001). Further policy-related entanglement saw Learning Stories discourse move into closer alignment with governmental priorities for learners and learning, expressly continuity with school (Carr, Davis, & Cowie, 2015). For individual settings, entanglements with state practices associated with accountability, such as those illustrated in the ERO reviews cited in this study, pressed for greater standardisation, and evidence of learning continuity and progression. This pushes the Learning Stories looked for towards becoming the sort of post-hoc accounts Leander and Boldt (2013) describe as "press[ing] ambivalence, unawareness, randomness, spontaneity, improvisation and contradiction out of the picture" (p.28). There is, as a result, an important sense in which this moves the priority away from the real-life complexity of children's ways of doing, being, knowing, and relating, the very complexities the Learning Story developers set out originally to encapsulate.

Curriculum and assessment priorities: The assemblages of the settings

In this section I explore the ways in which curriculum/assessment priorities differed between the three settings and what this meant for the transition-related experiences of the six focus children. This includes a particular focus on the framing of learner-as-body and the materialities of place (human and more-than-human) across the three settings.

In thinking about the way curriculum/assessment priorities were performed differently across the three settings I return to the distinction Deleuze and Guattari (1987) made between ways of operating that are rhizomatic — open, experimental multi-directional and unpredictable —and systems that are structured, hierarchical, based on a logic of reproduction, and territorialising. It is the rhizomatic that gives rise to 'lines of flight' rather than "pretraced destiny" (p.14). Lines of flight are a figuration like that of the rhizome, which provides a way of considering how certain encounters

and conditions expose us to affects in unpredictable ways, helping us to think anew and move in new directions (Olsson, 2009). A crucial point here lies in what Deleuze (1994) saw as the productive power of *difference*. Hence, while assemblages such as the curriculum/assessment assemblages considered here will inevitably involve some form of order and system, it is "the power *to differ* from which concepts emerge" and which "opens the system", which is here held to be key (Colebrook, in Parr, 2010, p.5).

Thinking with Barad's (2007) concept of intra-active entanglement brings particular attention to the potential for competing and contrasting forces, such as those of hierarchy/territorialising and deterritorialising/rhizome, to become knotted, work on and reconfigure one another. In terms of curriculum and assessment priorities it underscores the way priorities not only operate simultaneously and sometimes seemingly incongruously alongside one another, but also intra-mix, change and transform one another. Hence as Barad's notion of intra-action crucially highlights and as explored in upcoming sections "it is the action *between* (and not *in*-between) that matters" (Dolpijn & van der Tuin, 2012, p.14).

Kindergarten priorities

At Ranui Kindergarten, curriculum and assessment priorities were, as discussed, a complex and shifting entanglement of 'the old', 'the new' and the serendipitous; those that followed the historically valued, or newly orthodox and those arising out of the individual, local and emergent. Moves toward greater regulation and hierarchy inter/intra-mixed with openings for lines of flight and the rhizomatic. In keeping with developments in the wider national and international assemblages referred to in the previous section, there was increasing emphasis on assessment and documentation, the constructing of children's identities as learners and the fostering of certain learning dispositions. There was also a strengthening focus on cultivating school-ready modes of operating. Contrastingly, traditional values and practices to do with supporting children's interests and seeking to engage with their diverse modes of operating, also continued as a priority. So too did head teacher Clare's commitment to wanting children to know they had choices, and not wanting to produce "blinkered children."

The question of how to approach school readiness was one that tied into an *intramix* of old and new, and competing and contrasting priorities. Curriculum-wise, for example, teachers focused on the 'high stakes' subjects of reading/writing and

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maths and made efforts to liaise with local schools to ascertain the school priorities for children starting. At the same time teachers also actively resisted moves they saw as leading to school priorities coming to predominate and were concerned not to lose sight of their traditional commitments to curriculum activities being of interest to, meaningful for, and ideally, often 'led by' children.

Particularly notable were teacher efforts to support children (and their families) to find ways for the children to keep being/doing the things seen as special and important to them, but potentially at risk in the transition to school. As Lucy put it, this was about children being able to continue developing the modes of operating that were for them a "way into different ideas". My reading of this was that teachers perceived a disconnect between certain of the children's ways of being/doing/knowing/relating and the NE classroom priorities they would be expected to meet.

Points of both resonance and dissonance between officially promoted priorities and individual teachers' sensibilities were also manifest in Clare's and Lucy's comments about assessment. For example, Lucy's contention that assessment documentation at Ranui Kindergarten was "always a work in progress", and that there was "no one right way" to do it, was at odds with the consistency of approach ERO reviews were calling for across the association. It also contrasted with the strongly prescriptive ways of approaching Learning Stories often taken up in EC services. Whilst teachers acknowledged calls such as those in KTOTP to have assessments "include clear goals" (MoE, 2004-2009), and saw times this could be useful, they resisted the idea that this practice could or should be carried out in the standardised and finalising way increasingly promoted officially. At the same time considerable teacher effort was directed toward producing portfolio assessments aligned with the discourse of lifelong learning, key learning dispositions, and the ideology of children becoming persistent 'plan-full', 'goal-setters'.

My concern about the priority put on children being/becoming 'plan-full', goal-setting or persistent, raised in Chapter seven, is not that these are not worthwhile capacities. My issue is with the totalising way such modes of operating are promoted as unquestionably beneficial rather than as potentially useful in certain circumstances and in certain kinds of learning (and not in others). Persistence, for example, may in some circumstances tip into a resistance to alternatives or unhelpful rigidity. This

could perhaps have been the case with Zelda's approach to constructing the dollhouse, where being attached to her plan seemed at certain points, to get in the way of allowing others input.

While the encouragement children were given to work to pre-existing plans or to pre-design their own creations may seem difficult to take issue with, attending to what such pre-deliberation works to preclude is important. Of particular concern here was diminishing openness to the unexpected and what 'the other' (human or more-than-human) may bring to an encounter. As suggested in various of my analyses in all three settings, being compelled to work with the too closely pre-set works against more open, emergent, responsive, creative and curiosity-driven modes of exploration. This includes limiting children's opportunities to learn to attune to the agency, affordances and 'acting back' of materials, as called on, for example, with Caleb and Sabal in their encounter with the marble-race.

The body at kindergarten

The role of the body in the kindergarten curriculum seemed to be afforded priority in a mixed range of ways. There was considerable emphasis on the body as potential and the body being/becoming more co-ordinated, skilled, and self-reliant, what Lenz Taguchi, Palmer, & Gustafson (2016) refer to as "bodies being performed to become perfected and definite wholes" (p.710). Yet there were also often freer openings and encouragement for 'doing' bodies to become engaged "in exploring new and other possibilities of what a body might be and become productive of" (p.710). For example, while Caleb did not have unfettered reign to explore his connection with the kinetic, its productive potential as a mode of being, doing, knowing and relating was taken seriously. This was not the case at school.

As observer I was struck by the sheer amount of 'doing' typically going on in the often generous expanses of time available for children to choose what they became involved in — such bustling vitality resonating with Barad's (2007) insistence on the importance of the doing in the effecting and the becoming. The multi-stranded "and…and…and" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p.27) nature of the kindergarten curriculum and its emphasis on plurality and children having choices was also suggestive of the rhizomatic. This was manifest in the multiple, embodied, multimodal, mind-body ways children took up openings to experiment, explore and 'take on' the

new. It was manifest also in the affective forces Ohlsson (2009) points to as integral to the "vitality of thought and event" of the rhizomatic (p.42). Glimpses of such moments of vitality, immediacy and intensity were offered in the videoed curriculum events discussed in Chapter six, for example, in encounters such as Zelda's with the worm, Caleb and Sabal's with each other and the marble-race, and Jacob and companions with the broom-machine. Such moments resonate strongly with Deleuze's (1994) contention that it is what we encounter that causes us to think further: "something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of fundamental *encounter*" (p.139). Key in considering the way such encounters unfolded, as suggested in my analysis of a number of the videoed episodes, is not only a fuller consideration of the capacities, senses, dynamics and forces of the human body but a closer more relationally based consideration of the vital role of non-human or more-than-human forces. As Bennett (2010) observes, considering the "congregational agency" of an assemblage requires engaging with the ways in which it "owes its agentic capacity to the vitality of the materialities that constitute it" (p.34).

Curriculum and assessment priorities at school

In both NE classrooms curriculum/assessment priorities were seen to focus strongly on children making the requisite progress in learning to read, write, and perform the basic numeracy skills. This focus was manifest in the highly structured programmes of work and the use of close and highly regulated assessment monitoring systems developed to align with school and officially promoted policy priorities.

Also key, though approached in different ways in the two classrooms, was the seemingly constant, compliance-oriented emphasis on children learning to perform the ways of being, doing, knowing and relating expected of a NE. In both NE classrooms, this involved children needing to be able to connect in to a complex interactional milieu to get to understand the school ways of operating valued and prioritised. It also required being able to navigate shifting and frequently conflicting expectations and priorities. At Ranui, for example, assessment criteria encouraged children to "give it a go" and demonstrate "independence", alongside daily practices requiring compliance with multiple, highly specific classroom protocols. Further tensions included expecting children to keep quiet and still, yet participate, and to prioritise individual achievement, yet be responsive, helpful, and share.

All three NE teachers referred to mat-time as a defining feature of the classroom curriculum, a perception supported by the proportion of time I observed whole-class mat-times absorb, and consistent with other classroom studies (Mortlock, 2016). Mat-times in the NE settings in this study, as in Mortlock's mat-time observations in three NE/Yr1 Aotearoa classrooms, were characterised by "a strong focus on instruction and curriculum" (p.189). In the NE classrooms in this study that "curriculum" focus mainly revolved around reading and writing.

Mat-time sessions in the two NE settings were also notable for the way discussions largely focused on the production of correct responses and the 'already known', rather than children exploring or sharing their different understandings. While the latter did seem to occur in a limited way at Tapatahi, knowledge tended to be presented as a matter of certainty rather than as provisional or as a matter of differing or contested views. To get the 'right' answer seemed at times no more than bringing one's response into line with the thinking of the teacher.

Differing priorities between the two NE classrooms were manifest in the amount of leeway children were allowed in their movements on the mat and more broadly in the overall level of physicality incorporated into curriculum activities. Children at Tapatahi were freer to interact with each other, there was a less intense focus on classroom conduct and overall they were less closely supervised. As a NE teacher, and perhaps in part because her background lay in an earlier more play-based junior classroom tradition (May, 2011), Mrs G made proactive and strategic use of interactive activities, play and game-like elements, and regular movement breaks to mitigate what she described as the "intense" periods of "sitting...writing". Such measures often seemed highly effective in helping maintain children's engagement. However, as highlighted previously, critical questions remained concerning the extent to which the use of different modes during in-classroom breaks and out-of-classroom activities constituted a departure from pre-existing core curriculum priorities. For Sabal, notwithstanding the kind intentions and accommodations of his teacher, the classroom/school assemblage was still about his fitting in with existing priorities.

The body at school

In both classrooms, the schooling or disciplining of the body was a key priority for children learning to conduct themselves as NEs. Whilst the time and attention focused

on bodily conduct was greater in the NE classroom at Ranui than at Tapatahi, and perhaps closer than generally found in NE classrooms, observations from other classroom studies suggest that such practices are not out-of-the-ordinary (Hargreaves & Affouneh, 2017; Leafgren & Bornhost, 2016).

Several classroom interactions observed in this study resonated with Boldt's (2001) suggestion that the perception of the body frequently invoked at school, was as "that thing which seems forever to get in the way of learning" (p.94). This, Boldt suggests, is an indication of a mind-body dualism widely adhered to in school discourses (and elsewhere), whereby the body is positioned as the somewhat problematic 'add-on' to that which does the real work of learning, the mind.

The curriculum activity in which this was most apparent, in both NE classrooms, was whole-class mat-times. Here the modes of being/becoming NE learner called for bodies not to be in physical contact with each other, to maintain the designated attentive posture e.g., ideally, arms and legs crossed, straight-backed and unmoving, ready to participate as and when expected.

Implicit in this 'schooling' of the body was a focus on building the willingness to comply with and a knowledge of the necessity to comply with school ways of being, doing, knowing and relating (Boldt, 2001). As noted previously, such regulatory practices resonate strongly with Foucault's (1977) writing on the production of docile, ultimately self-governing bodies and the disciplinary role of various technologies. Bodily management practices at Ranui and Tapatahi included positioning potentially 'errant' children toward the front of the mat under closer teacher surveillance, and forestalling potentially troublesome combinations by sitting certain children separately. Children in Whānau rua seen to be misbehaving at mat-time were made to sit away from their classmates at the back of room. Stronger sanctions involved children being made to walk with the duty teacher during break times. On these occasions bodies normally able to take advantage of a time of greater freedom of movement and choice were subject both to the surveillance of the teacher and public exposure. This is not to say regulatory practices were absent from the kindergarten setting, but these tended to be 'softer', more flexible, less intense and more intra-mixed with other priorities. The sections following explore further how the material-discursive affordances of the kindergarten assemblage made more openings for lines of flight.

Materialities of place across the settings

Hurdley and Dicks (2011) point to the different analytic that opens up by focusing on the power of the material, as they put it, inverting "corridors of power to power of corridors" (p.279). In this study I sought opportunities to effect this inversion by paying attention to the resources of each setting and its built environment, and the role played by material-discursive elements such as time and space. My analysis across the settings showed ways in which these sorts of materialities related to the curriculum/assessment priorities operating and how this mattered to children.

As discussed in Chapter seven the material environment at Ranui Kindergarten was treated by teachers as a key element of the curriculum assemblage and afforded considerable priority. Teachers worked hard to source materials they saw as providing choice, connecting with children's interests, and encouraging children to be active, to create, to experiment and to explore their surroundings. This plentiful variety of indoor and outdoor resources played a pivotal and generative role in the multiple daily, individual and collective 'makings' and 'doings'.

Other environmental features linked to identifiable priorities included a focus on sustainability and the outdoors, efforts to improve resourcing toward a bicultural curriculum, an active emphasis on children utilising portfolios as a means of building learner identity, and a strengthening focus on equipping children for future learning and the transition to school. The last was seen, for example, in the recent introduction of school-oriented templates aimed at assisting children to be school-ready. These were, as teachers observed, a departure from traditional practices favouring more open-ended, less didactic materials.

As a just-established classroom, with a new-to-the-school teacher, material resourcing of the Whānau rua classroom at Ranui was initially relatively limited apart from the resourcing of core curriculum literacy and maths. While the classroom was not unresourced, resources took time to come, especially for "free choosing", and by kindergarten standards were in limited supply. This impacted, for example, on how adventurous and creative children could be in their block-play and limited their capacity to work collectively with one another. Materials were typically brought out for a particular activity, for a limited period, and with a designated end, as illustrated in the videoed episode of smoothie-making. Additional variety was provided through the weekly 'discovery hour' and other out-of-classroom activities. However, such

opportunities were limited, especially when considered alongside the time children spent in the confines of the classroom. Access to the outdoors was almost entirely restricted to break times. A further significant aspect of the classroom environment was the ongoing influx of new children; the arrivals of these often-anxious and sometimes distressed newcomers and the compunction to press on with timetable priorities were commonly in tension.

Material resources in Rm13 at Tapatahi were not altogether dissimilar. There was a more abundant supply of equipment and children were somewhat freer to choose and access materials independently, especially during periods of free choosing. However, as at Whānau rua materials were typically provided for a pre-set purpose, or if more freely, only for a very limited time. These NE practices were in notable contrast to the kindergarten practice of having materials available for extended periods, for children to explore in their own way and at their own pace. Such contrasting ways of positioning and using materials brought a powerfully different dynamic to what it became possible for children to be, do and learn.

Classroom space in Rm13 was more limited than in Whānau rua, allowing little scope for movement. This was a limitation Mrs G worked around with much-practised skill to give children regular in-class movement breaks. Time confined to the classroom was also offset at Tapatahi by a greater number of scheduled out-of-classroom activities such as timetabled spells for outdoor sports. Features noted as 'part and parcel' of Rm13 priorities, included the routine use of instruction-related displays such as the daily timetable chart and the assessment guidelines for "star work" referred to previously, plus the ongoing attention put into the displays of children's work.

Template worksheets were a staple in both NE classrooms, and a significant example of the way everyday curriculum activity and ways of knowing were critically shaped through material elements. These were materials of the sort Haraway (2008) refers to as ruled by the logic of reproduction rather than "a coming into being of something unexpected" (p.368). The predominance of the template aligns with following the pre-set path and a curriculum of sameness rather than diversity and difference. A number of the individual templates in classroom use were from mass-produced programmes of work, several internationally sourced. At Tapatahi the use of templates in conjunction with the star-work assessment criteria suggested this was operating as a material-discursive practice serving to obscure 'real world' differences

and complexities. My contention here, which I elaborate on in the section on peer relations, is that such practices were reductive and worked to diminish tolerance of difference amongst the children.

Curriculum and assessment priorities: Assemblages of the focus children and families

The move from kindergarten to school was experienced in very different ways by the individual children and their families. For Venya, the move was spoken of as a welcome fit. Venya's mother Aadhya reported her happy to be "reading and writing…like a big girl doing the real things." Parents of the other focus children spoke of the move bringing pressures and difficulties. SJ's mum Sefina thought that as one of the later children joining Whānau rua, SJ was given too little time to settle in before being moved on to a new class. Zelda's, Jacob's, Caleb's and Sabal's parents all made reference to their children not being able to 'be themselves' in the NE classroom. Zelda's mum Martine was convinced that Zelda's after-school 'melt-downs' were the aftermath of a constant effort to be the classroom "good girl" rather than "the real Zelda". Jacob's mum Ruby was concerned about his "keeping up" with what was expected in reading, writing and numeracy, and worried that to fit in as a NE, Jacob would need to become a less creative, questioning, curious, non-conformist thinker. Caleb's mum Lia was concerned that the NE classroom focus was continually on Caleb's mistakes, not his strengths. She contrasted this with the approach at kindergarten, where she believed Caleb's strong exploratory drive and passion for things kinetic had been recognised and valued. Lia was also critical of the long periods of time children were required to sit still on the mat, seeing this as a key cause of Caleb's behavioural struggles.

Sabal's parents also spoke of his not being able to "be himself" in Rm13 at Tapatahi, of seeing no space for the inventive creativity they regarded as such a defining strength. They believed the school emphasis on conformity was discouraging Sabal from being the "free thinker" they saw him supported to be at kindergarten. Their further and major concern was the issue of peer relations and Sabal being "picked on" by certain of his classmates. Peer relations and friendships were a priority also highlighted by other parents, and even more so by the focus children themselves, as I discuss in the next section.

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A further dynamic of parent priorities concerned the out-of-school activities and educational 'add-ons' parents instigated, activities parents viewed as providing important avenues for their child to pursue areas of strength and/or interests, and/or aspects seen as not fully catered for at school. For Zelda, there were the Monday night art classes; for Venya, extra weekly maths tuition with daily homework and for all the children some form of sport. While activities such as out-of-school sport may not be altogether new, the use of educational add-ons is noted elsewhere as a growing international trend. Popkewitz (2003) attributes this to what he terms the pedagogicalisation of parents, referencing, as others have, the increased educational responsibilities parents are seen as needing to take up to prepare their children for school and the workplace market. These developments resonate with earlier discussion in the thesis of the way educational assemblages have become tied into economic rationalities and an internationally promoted discourse of Lifelong Learning. By my reading, the efforts of Venya's parents to ensure that she and her brother kept up with their Indian compatriots in a competitive international arena were illustrative of these global intra-connectivities. The responsibility to ensure the children 'kept up' was something other parents also seemed entangled by in complex and oftentimes contradictory ways. Zelda's mum, Martine, for example, seemed torn by competing desires: on the one hand, her perception that it was their responsibility as parents to ensure Zelda was able to keep up with expectations 'out there' as to where she needed to be academically — a responsibility she did not see they could necessarily rely on the school to meet — and on the other hand, her desire that Zelda be free from the pressure to meet classroom expectations and able to "be herself".

Parent involvement across the settings

The priority afforded parent involvement varied across the three settings, most markedly between kindergarten and school. "Open-door" opportunities for interchange between parents and teachers and parent involvement in day-to-day events were an identified priority at kindergarten, especially promoted by head teacher Clare. Parents were also encouraged to view themselves as fellow partners in their children's learning, and to take an active involvement in their child's assessment portfolio. Teachers emphasised the importance of 'two-way' interchange as helping them connect with and broaden their understanding of children's wider life-worlds.

Such practices were not unproblematic. For example, the unevenness of family input to the portfolios highlighted the need to consider the way differing modes of involvement could potentially advantage or disadvantage particular families and perhaps serve to reinforce existing relations of privilege. Furthermore, while teachers here aimed to respect parents' decisions concerning their level of involvement and remain mindful that what suited one parent might not be appropriate for another, the trend identified internationally has been for increased expectation of participation to become more obligation than opportunity (Karila, 2012; Vahlberg, 2012). In a similar vein, recent related policy initiatives in Aotearoa, while unable to be explored fully here, are noteworthy for their introduction of strongly coercive measures to boost EC participation that target 'vulnerable' families, as part of a wider welfare reform programme (Ministry of Social Development, 2014) [12]

Day-to-day parent involvement in the NE settings was limited. The Whānau rua classroom operated as a largely parent-free zone apart from the ongoing weekly visitors' mornings. Teacher busyness at drop-off and pick-up times generally meant parents were not encouraged to prolong their stay. Four focus children's parents noted the absence of informal opportunities to discuss matters to do with their children, commenting that the information they received at the 6-week parent-teacher interview was predominantly focused on literacy- and numeracy-related outcomes. Three spoke of it as narrow and format-driven. The role of the home-school notebooks in exchanging information was highlighted as useful by 'first-time' NE parents Ruby and Cara. Yet entries were, in the main, organisational communications aimed at ensuring parents and their children kept up with classroom expectations, e.g., remembering library books on library day, sending/having the appropriate food and clothing. Notebook entries would also at times advise parents of difficulties and request their support. For example, there were notes to Jacob's parents to remind him to keep his glasses on in class, and to Caleb's parents enlisting support for various behavior management measures, e.g., the sticker chart, aiming to have Caleb make what were deemed "sensible decisions".

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[12] http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/better-public-services/long-term-welfare-dependence/index.html

I observed little parent involvement in Rm13 at Tapatahi, apart from Sabal's settling-in visits. Here a pressing question to emerge was why Sabal's parents were so reticent about raising the issues Sabal was experiencing with bullying with Mrs G, his class teacher. There was no explicit indication in their interview responses why this was so. Yet, as I discuss shortly, the question is a key and concerning one.

Children

The interview responses of the focus children suggested 'making it' at school was perhaps as much a matter of making friends as getting on top of the priorities of the classroom. These dual priorities resonate strongly with the "two hierarchies" of peer relations and "official knowledge and learning" Reay (2006) identifies as the hallmark of classroom power dynamics (p.175). The "official knowledge and learning" collectively highlighted by the focus children, concerned both the behavioural compliance required of the NE classroom learner and the particular and very specific literacy, numeracy knowledge/practices they were required to master. For example, Jacob's advice on what a newcomer needed to be, do and know, referred to the importance of, knowing "all the rules", "all of his words", and the alphabet. Venya also emphasised the importance of highly specific core curriculum knowledge, suggesting she might usefully teach her younger sister "to count backwards". Zelda's advice emphasised ways of operating requiring that you "listen carefully" and "try to remember".

The interview responses of a number of the focus children also gestured toward aspects of becoming a NE as stressful and a challenge. Having and making friends was highlighted as important and helpful. For example, Caleb proposed advising a younger family member starting school: "Don't be nervous. Make friends. Be brave". Zelda also stressed the importance of friends in the help she thought she could offer her younger sister when starting school, i.e., "try and make friends for her". She described friends as "some people who will care for her" and the process of making friends as "hard". Zelda's use of the term care here prompted me to reflect on considerations of care and where these featured in the priorities of the curriculum/assessment assemblage. So too did listening to Sabal talk of wanting to be in a new class where he would be able to make new friends and not be bullied. In terms of *official* assemblages, it is notable that the focus on care in national EC policy

priorities, formerly a strongly emphasised element, is all but disappearing from a curriculum/assessment discourse that speaks now only of learning (Gibbons, 2013), a trend also noted internationally (Karila, 2012).

My sense of the responses of the focus children in this study is as a call to attend more closely, critically, and humanely to the complexities, issues, stresses and challenges faced with the predetermined priorities children are expected to engage with on moving to school. This includes the need to take more seriously the diverse priorities, life-worlds, and capacities children themselves come with. My impression of the children's move from kindergarten to school was that their capacity to take action was considerably more restricted. Modes of operating special to particular children, and previously viewed as strengths, were now often experienced as 'out of sync' with classroom priorities. Certainly this was the case for a number of the more action-focused, curiosity-driven modes of operating that were staple fare at kindergarten.

To be clear I am not proposing that curriculum/assessment priorities be driven entirely by the priorities of children, but I do advocate taking seriously the modes of operating that are important to children in their ways of being/becoming in the world. The suggestion here is that this involves greater regard for dimensions such as what children experience as enlivening as well as what they experience as debilitating. This includes engaging with matters of peer relations.

Peer relations

Peer relationships were often fostered at kindergarten by children connecting through common interests and shared activities, dynamics in which the assemblage elements of time-space-place and resources played a crucial part. At the same time, making and maintaining friendships was something children could struggle with. Peer dynamics and children's friendships sometimes operated in ways that were exclusionary and limiting, potentially making getting to join in a daunting and challenging task for an outsider or newcomer. Notable too was the role certain children were seen to play in helping others who were struggling to connect. For example, teachers spoke of SJ as having a great capacity for empathy and a highly tuned and very proactive regard for others.

The teachers at kindergarten actively encouraged children to sort out their relational difficulties amongst themselves and endeavoured not to be overly interfering. At the same time teachers also regularly assisted in the process of children finding and becoming playmates, for example helping children to find their way into games or activities, as teacher Elspeth did in the video-recorded basketball episode. Teachers sometimes became part of play themselves to assist the process. Moreover, it was often *teacher*-orchestrated events such as the bush walks and sustainability activities, that were seen to play a role in helping bring different children together, open the way for encounters with the new, and offer children opportunities for being and doing things differently.

The role curriculum/assessment priorities played in peer relations also featured in the discussion of Tapatahi in Chapter nine. Notable here was the way in which highly normative, strongly promoted assessment criteria served to induct children as arbiters of the standards and monitors of each other (Leafgren & Bornhost, 2016). My sense was that the continual application of such a public and tightly standardised 'measuring up' process was highly regulatory, that it worked to foster an intolerance toward difference, and that it served to marginalise certain children. The video-recorded episode of Sabal colouring in the template, and what got to be designated as "sensible" skin colour, provides a powerful illustration of this. It is difficult to envisage such marginalising of difference allowing children (or adults) much space to entertain the possibilty of the new. Nor does it invite engagement with the multiplicity which Braidotti (2010) terms "the ethical ideal"; namely "to increase one's ability to enter into modes of relation with multiple others" (p.45).

An examination of peer dynamics across the three settings suggests the need for closer attention to the ways in which hierarchies amongst peers were created and strengthened, and to the practices of exclusion and bullying. As illustrated in the videoed episodes, exclusions could be enacted in embodied ways that were subtle, nuanced and covert, frequently operating under the radar of the teachers. These episodes call attention to the potential for the practices of any group, including children, to be repressive in their effects. Such events serve as a reminder of the nature of adult-child worlds as always already entangled (Barad, 2007), rather than simplistic adult-child binaries. This was the case with the adult-child dualisms MacNaughton (2005) and colleagues reported in their studies, where children's

repressive and exclusionary race-based or gender-based practices were discounted as part of 'being children', a matter of childhood innocence and unknowing, and not to be made too much of. Notions of childhood as a time of innocence and a space to be protected from harsh realities can work against efforts to develop more relationally oriented pedagogies and curricula that engage with compelling and complex issues (Duhn, 2012). Contrastingly, framing theories of subjectivity and agency within relational entanglements opens the way to considering the complex intra-connectivites in play and addressing the ways these work to shape children's future possible becomings: "the complexity of a field of forces becomes the focus in assessing response-abilty in the face of power imbalances....Agency is enactment in the possibilities and responsibilities of reconfiguring entanglements" (Lather, 2016, p.126).

The research assemblage

As a key entry point for considering the dynamics of this research I return to Barad's (2007) concept of research as an ethico-onto-epistemological project, and the notion of researcher, 'researched', research instruments and research data as mutually co-constructive forces and as always already intra-actively entangled. Here I consider three brief examples of the operation of such intra-connectivities in this study. I first touch on the way I as researcher experienced being "worked on" by the unfolding of events and research data (Lenz Taguchi, 2012, p.272) and the way in which this prompted me to shift to a stronger research focus on the body and a more central focus on curriculum/ assessment priorities. I then describe two situations encountered in the course of the study I found personally and ethically 'entangling'. The first was to do with the use of video as a research tool at Whānau rua; the second, the final research interview with Sabal's parents. These events I see as supporting Barad's call to scrutinise the ethical entanglements that fundamentally shape the research we do, and those calling for the '*non-ideal*' often unwritten dimensions of research practice to be the subject of more sustained consideration (Horton, 2008; Rose, 1997).

Ethico-onto-epistemological entanglements: The research focus

In terms of research focus I started this project seeking to explore the way literacy was conceptualised and enacted in the curriculum/assessment assemblages of the

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kindergarten and NE classrooms and the way this shaped children's modes of learning and becoming in the transition from EC to school. However, the time I spent at Ranui Kindergarten immersed in a curriculum milieu of bodies, encounters, and relatings, combined with watching multiple hours of video footage to compile the video logs, compelled me to rethink the study focus. My original intention to focus on *literacy* — albeit *multiliteracies* — increasingly started to feel like stepping away from the confluence of forces and vital embodied practices of the day-to-day curriculum I had entered into. My issue here with a multiliteracies focus is one Leander and Boldt (2012) highlight, when pointing out that while the move in multiliteracies discourse to position body-as-text works to expand the notion of text, it simultaneously serves to smooth out or reduce the ontological differences between bodies and signs. To shift closer to the ontology and multiplicity of the body in this study, I sought to expand the analytic frame by focusing on children's ways of being, doing, knowing, and relating. The move to include video in the thesis itself, as discussed previously, also grew out of these issues and the idea of getting closer to the actual performance of curriculum/assessment priorities, a focus on being and doing Braidotti (2006) terms a process ontology.

The decision to focus more centrally on curriculum/assessment *priorities,* was another prompted by the unfolding of research events. This arose from becoming conscious of the need to attend more closely to the power relations in play and to the way different constructions of learning and learners were authorised and enacted. A key impetus for this shift was witnessing the explicit priority put on the conduct of conduct, the following of instructions and compliance in the NE classrooms, and the part this played in shaping the children's modes of operating. Such priorities lent support to the view Duhn (2006) advances that "the child is one of the most tightly controlled modern subjects" (p.16) and that the child as learner-subject is produced through power relations "that strive to organise multiplicity into cohesion" (p.16). This study identifies ways in which the child as part of the transition to school assemblage is becoming more intensively and more globally governed.

Ethical entanglements with the 'non-ideal'

Methodological texts dealing with the use of video in research with young children typically suggest this is particularly ethically complex. I agree. However, it was the

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situation of the Whānau rua teachers that I unexpectedly found particularly entangling — a situation I felt was resolved, as Horton (2008) puts it, in a 'non-ideal' way.

As noted previously, the Whānau rua teachers were newly casually-employed teachers charged with the task of getting the just-opening NE class underway in challenging circumstances. It was a less-than-ideal situation in which to get to know about the research and decide whether to be involved. They were, I became convinced, swayed in their decision to participate through wishing to 'keep in with' the school. When they later expressed apprehensions concerning the video-recording of classroom practice and what this might portray, my awareness that I could not control how the video-recordings would be viewed and that some events might not be viewed positively made me feel duplicitous. I suggested we meet to talk things through, but when both teachers indicated they were too short of time I simply reminded them they had power of veto over any material they had particular issues with — a process that would be carried out when we worked through the video logs together in the post-viewing sessions. As things developed, the teachers did not retract their consent for the videoing to take place. Nor did they, having viewed all the recordings, identify much to veto. In terms of being able to use the research data this was an enormous relief. However, I remained uneasy. Were they sufficiently reassured by what they saw? Or were they acting under duress? Was this to do with me? School management? What of *my* ethical role in this? Was leaving the teachers to decide, in the way I had, taking enough responsibility for their interests? Or was I overly invested in my research interests, too taken up with what I looked upon as my responsibilities to the children and parents? Was I too focused on the asymmetries of power involving children and not enough with those entangling teachers? Certainly I set considerable store on the reassurances I received from the children when I rechecked with them at the end of the study as to whether *they* were still OK about the video-recordings being used — Jacob's response especially. "Yes", he'd said, "That's fine. I want my teacher to know." These doubts and unease still remain four years later after I meet in turn with the teachers from each setting and report back on the assemblage of data and analyses emerging out of the time I spent with them.

The second of my ethical entanglements shared resonances with Horton's (2008) account of the 'non ideal' events in his Doctoral research, where he writes of letting pass instances of bullying and racism and of the self-questioning and sense of

failure this prompted in him as researcher. In the current study concerns of bullying and racism were raised by Sabal's parents, who spoke of Sabal being bullied and the difficulties they experienced trying to 'fit in' culturally in Aotearoa. It felt (and feels) imperative that these issues receive research attention. Yet as I sit across from the Rm13 teacher who so generously opened her classroom, and endeavour to explain the white-centredness I had construed from the practice of "sensible colours", doubts about my chosen course of action grow. She is clearly upset by the excerpts from Sabal's parents' interview and struggles to understand why they had not come to her. She is further upset by the idea that her actions around the practice of "sensible colours" might inadvertently serve to foster racial bias. Mindful of the kindly, hard-working, highly thoughtful practice I had witnessed in her classroom, I find myself wishing I was not doing this. Returning to Lather's (2016) framing of agency as "enactment in the possibilities and responsibilities of reconfiguring entanglements" (p.126), I ask myself 'would/could I have done any better in the same circumstances?'; 'Quite possibly not'. Yet the responsibility to actively work to reconfigure such entanglements toward better possible futures remains and hence my decision to include these 'non ideal' events within this thesis.

Now at the end of my study I am left considering the cautious optimism I started out with concerning the ability of this thesis to illuminate something of the complex interplay of forces and phenomena in the curriculum/assessment priorities at Ranui Kindergarten and the two NE classrooms; and also the interconnectivities with the diverse modes of operating of the focus children. Was this optimism warranted? In some ways, I think, yes. This thesis offers critical insights into the complex ways the global, the local and 'here and now' specificities operate *in entanglement* to produce pedagogical priorities and learner-subjectivities. It also offers insight into the ways in which agency is linked to plurality — the potential for multiple ways of being, doing, knowing, and relating to effect capacity-building differences — and, conversely, how children's modes of operating and possible being/becoming are limited by restrictive pre-given norms. This said, I concur with Stephenson's (2010) concluding comment in her account of the dynamics of power and control in the EC centre she studied in her PhD research: "as always, there is another story waiting in the wings to be told" (p.30). In this instance the first account pressing on me as needing to be better told is that which focuses more centrally on

the life-worlds of the teachers and the often pressured and repressive forces of the assemblages within which they operate. Expectations of teachers are also oppressive (Tesar, 2014). The second goes back to the matter of interconnectedness that is not only at the heart of relational materialism, but the mainstay of many indigenous epistemologies (Tuck, 2010), including Māori (Rameka, 2011). It goes back to what Tuck refers to as "giving credit where credit is due" and issues with appropriating indigenous knowledges (p.646). Tuck's words resonate with those of indigenous scholarship in Aotearoa (Ritchie & Skerritt, 2014) calling for attention to be paid to the role kaupapa Māori has and could play as an enacting force in the educational assemblages of Aotearoa. Whilst barely touched on in this research, these are key intra-connectivities that constitute a pressing area for future research.

Concluding comments

These final comments foreground some of the understandings and conclusions I have drawn from this study and address what I see as the significance of this thesis. The understandings and conclusions I have drawn begin with questions of curriculum/assessment and transition priorities needing to be treated, in policy, practice and future research, as an ethico-onto-epistemological matter. Rather than accepting the particular learner subjectivities and modes of operating promoted by curriculum/assessment priorities such as perseverance, goal-setting, self-managing, the 'sensibilising' of the body and the predominance of the verbal as an indisputable good, we must ask what ends these priorities serve and what is effected by these priorities. My argument is that we need to address the way such priorities serve to homogenise and control learners and learning and diminish children's capacity to act, both in the here and now and for possible futures. This argument is not about a pedagogy of autonomous, individual self-serving, but rather a pedagogy of ethical relations able to "speak to our place in the world with others, human and more than human" (Bone & Blaise, 2015, p.29).

This thesis draws attention to some of the promising ways the relational materialist project offers for engaging with complexity and heterogeneity, and "studying the *multiplicity of modes* that travel natureculture as the perpetual flow it has always already been" (Dolphijn & van der Tuin, 2012, p.113) (emphasis added). The in-text use of videoed events is one of the ways this multiplicity of relating is

explored experimentally in the thesis. The use of video in this study enhanced opportunities to engage with the dynamic and multiple modes that are "the very specificity of each person" (Davies, 2014, p.1) and with the way these operate in entanglement with other human and more-than-human bodies and phenomena. This was evident in the opening video provided for considering the generative force of worm, marble-race, broom-machine and template, as well as time, space, affect and intensity. The research use of video in this study also bears witness to the generative force of the technologies themselves (Angaard, 2013). My analysis of video "as part of an entangled state" (Barad, 2007, p.89) and as performative, is part of working to redress what de Freitas (2016) refers to as the concerning lack of attention paid to the ways in which partnering with such a technology works to direct the sorts of research we do.

This study adds complexity to the notion of embodied modes of operating. The relational account of the body put forward in this thesis draws on a Deleuzian (1988) view of the body-as-assemblage that allows no primacy of mind over body, or body over mind. The body-as-assemblage emphasises not only the "materialist but also vitalist groundings of human subjectivity" (Braidotti, in Dolphijn & van der Tuin, 2012, p.33). It is viewed as a site of forces and intensities, and as fundamentally relational, "an affective field in interaction with others" (p.34). This is a view of the body and learning that requires, amongst other things, rethinking cognitivist and future-dominated pedagogies — such as those manifest in the demand for "sensible bodies" children in this study met with in the process of transitioning — where interest in bodily action is compliance-focused and dominated by the degree to which it can be seen as "enacting rationality" (de Freitas, 2016, p.566).

The body as assemblage is always a body "becoming with", a body-in-relation. As Leander and Boldt (2012) put it, it's always a case of "the-body-*and*" (p.29) (emphasis added). This *"and"* crucially directs attention to the body's capacities to transform and to act, as capacities borne out of continual intra-activity with/in the world and its human *and* more-than-human entities and forces. It is a view of the body that problematises pedagogical approaches premised on the notion of the bounded self-reliant individual, the separative discourse of self-managing learners, and humans "as the measure of all things" (Haraway, 2008b, p.174). Such a relational sense of self calls for curriculum/assessment priorities that foster ethico-onto-epistemological

(Barad, 2007) attunement to the interdependence of self, other and the world. This thesis proposes that such attunement entails a fundamental openness toward engaging with difference and the new, and the possibility of educational priorities being performed differently. The call here is for alternative, more capacity-building, life-enhancing and relationally oriented ways of engaging with children's modes of being, doing, and knowing in the pedagogies drawn on, in and beyond transition. Crucially, whatever 'the new' arrived at in the way of curriculum/assessment priorities, the question of what is being made to matter and to what effect will require ongoing attention that is ethical and caring as well as critical and creative; "there is not an easy ending" (Tuck, 2010, p.649) to these entanglements.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Table of data collection methods

Table: Data collection methods

(adapted from Flewitt, 2006, p.30, following Silverman, 2000)

Method	Features	Purpose
Familiarisation visits/ initial observations	Extended period of contact and relationship-building in the focus settings	Becoming acquainted with settings and their practices; forming relationships with and gaining confidence of participants; becoming a familiar presence; providing information about the research
Video-recorded observations	A fuller, more multimodal record of situated interactions	Understanding complexities and dynamics of processes of interaction; providing a focus of and catalyst for discussions with teachers, children and parents
Photographs	Details of environments and documentation, and events that that fall outside video coverage	Gaining deeper understandings of dimensions better able to be accessed through visual data
Field notes	Memo-like, noting down of participant comments; details of	Supplementing video/audio data

	interactions during weekly researcher-visits	
Research diary	A combination of reflective journal and log of research tasks — written mostly 'off-site'	Progressing on-going reflections and analyses; timetabling project-management tasks
Interviews	Semi-structured individual and group interviews (audio taped) and informal conversations	Gaining deeper understandings of the perspectives of those involved
Documents	Curriculum/assessment/transition-related documentation (centre/classroom-generated) Website information Policy documents (school/association-generated) ERO reports	Furthering understandings of the pedagogical practices in each setting and interconnections with wider institutional, societal and cultural discourses/practices
Consultation	Structured meetings and informal (face-to-face/phone/email) conversations with participants during and after data collection and analysis	Developing analytic themes, incorporating different perspectives

Appendix B: Table of fieldwork time frame

Table: Research time frame

Research phases	Research activities
Phase one: Kindergarten (February to May 2013)	Information/consent meetings all kindergarten participants Familiarisation and follow up weekly visits Initial interviews: teachers Round one videoing Video follow-up meetings: teachers Initial interviews: focus children families Information/consent meetings: school personnel *apart from* Whanau rua NE teachers
Phase one and two overlap (May to August)	Weekly kindergarten visits continue Round two videoing: kindergarten Round two video follow-up meetings: kindergarten teachers Initial interviews: focus children families (included round one video feedback) Familiarisation visits: schools Information/consent meetings: Whanau rua teachers Information/consent meetings: Rm 13 and Whanau rua 'non-focus' families Initial teacher interviews: NE

Phase two: NE classes (August to December)	Weekly visits: schools Round three videoing: schools Ongoing information/consent meetings: Whanau rua 'non-focus' families Round three video follow-up meetings and final interviews: NE teachers
Phase two (b): Year 1 classes (February to March 2018)	Final visits: schools Final interviews: focus children families Final interviews: focus children

Appendix C: Victoria University Faculty of Education Human Ethics Committee (January 2013).

FACULTY OF EDUCATION PO Box 17-310 Wellington 6012, New Zealand
Website www.victoria.ac.nz

22 January 2013

Maggie Haggerty
Senior Lecturer
Victoria University of Wellington Faculty of Education
C/- School of Educational Policy and Implementation
Donald Street
Wellington

Dear Maggie

RE: Ethics application SEPI/2012/92 RM 19627

I am pleased to advise you that your ethics application **'Transitioning from an ece setting to school in Aotearoa / New Zealand: A focus on literacies and multimodality'**, with the required changes, has been approved by the Victoria University of Wellington Faculty of Education Ethics Committee. Please note that the approval for your research to commence is from the date of this letter.

Best wishes for your research.

Yours Sincerely
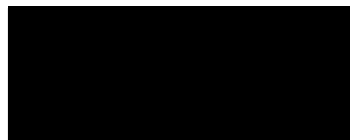
Dr Sue Cornforth

Co-Convener
Victoria University of Wellington Faculty of Education Ethics Committee

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Transitioning from an ece setting to school in Aotearoa/New Zealand: A focus on literacies and multimodality: Information sheet for ece teachers

Kia ora.

As explained in my earlier communications with members of your teaching team I am currently undertaking my PhD at Victoria University and I am writing to invite you to participate in a study looking at children's multimodal interests (e.g. drawing, construction, designing and making things, music, drama) and literacy learning and the ways these are responded to in the early childhood and new entrant school curriculum. I plan to undertake this research in two ece and two new entrant settings and to follow four key participant children and their families (two per setting) through the transition from one setting to the next. My hope is that this research will be of value to teachers in both settings, teacher educators, researchers in literacy and multimodality and policy makers.

I plan to complete most of the information-gathering in the two early childhood centres between February and July 2013 (involving a total of 12 or so visits), and in the two new entrant classrooms between July and December 2013 (also involving a total of 12 or so visits). I will follow the four key participants and their particular interests in multimodality and literacies at the ece centre, at school and at home, over the course of the whole year, and will follow their experiences (and those of their families) through the transition from ece to school.

I will observe the curriculum 'in action', and with permission, and when convenient, I will collect written observations, photographs, examples of work, and sometimes audio and video recordings. I will talk with the children and teachers (as convenient and when they are happy to do so) about what they are doing and what I have observed and recorded.

While the activities of the two key participant children in each setting will be a central focus for much of this information gathering, I am also interested in the diversity of multimodal and literacy interests generally evident in children's everyday curriculum activities.

Any written observations, photos, examples of work, audio or video recordings collected will only be used, for the purposes agreed to, with the consent of those involved- children and their parents and teachers.

My supervisors are Dr. Judith Loveridge and Dr. Alison Stephenson.
The contact details for my chief supervisor, Judith Loveridge and I are:

Dr. Judith Loveridge	Maggie Haggerty
Faculty of Education	Faculty of Education
Victoria University	Victoria University
Donald St.,	Donald St.,
Karori	Karori
judith.loveridge@vuw.ac.nz	maggie.haggerty@vuw.ac.nz
Ph: 4636028	Ph: 4639624/0274529614

This research has been assessed and approved by the Victoria University Faculty of Education Human Ethics Committee. If you have any ethical concerns please contact Dr. Allison Kirkman, Chair of the VUW Human Ethics Committee.

What would participating in the research involve for you
I would first like to meet with you and other members of the teaching team prior to you signing the attached consent forms, to discuss the research project and what it involves more fully. I see this as a useful opportunity for you to ask any questions you have and also a time for us to start to establish how we can best to work together.

As a qualified early childhood and primary teacher, working in teacher education and with experience in early years research, I understand the challenges of teaching, and am mindful of the need for my activities to fit in with the circumstances of the day. I do not want the research to be a burden on you as teachers, or the children, or their families. To help with this, it will be important early on in the research-perhaps at our first meeting- to look to establish some mutually useful working boundaries for the research. For example that we work out processes around how the videoing is to be conducted re the right of all participants to call a break or stop to videoing, and the role we adults (researcher, teacher, parents) are to play in monitoring children's wellbeing through the research process.

While the contribution you make to the research needs to work for you and is open to negotiation, the following is a guideline as to the involvement envisaged:

- an initial and concluding individual interview of about an hour

- me visiting the centre for approximately twelve observation sessions, including 6 or so video recording sessions (in the first half of the year)

- opportunities to preview copies of the video recordings, individually or collaboratively (approximately 4 one-hour video recordings for each of the two key participant children and up to two 'setting' videos of everyday centre sessions)

- monthly research meetings to discuss the video recordings and any other mutually agreed upon aspects of the research (about six two-hour meetings outside centre hours)

- opportunities to view and comment on a draft of the research findings

Teachers, children and their families who take part in this study have the right to:
- decline to participate in any given research activity (observation, conversation etc) at any time
- ask any questions about the study at any time
- withdraw from the study at any time before the end of data collection

Participant privacy

Participating schools and ece centres will not be identified in the research. However given the use of visual data in this project processes for the collection, previewing and use of photos and video clips need to be considered particularly carefully and ethically. In essence no person will be identified in written text or visual images without prior consent and in the case of children without the additional prior consent of their parents.

For this project, consents for the collection and use of photo and video recordings are sought separately for different uses and participants will be given opportunities to preview all visual data they are identifiable in before consenting to this being used. In the case of children, consent to use visual (and other) data would need to be accompanied by the consent of their parents. In addition I would not ask to show any visual material I did not consider respectful of the participants.

Sharing of and access to research information and its storage

All information gathered during the research process will be held in confidence and participants will have access to the data collected about them at any time. Children

and teachers featuring in photo and video recordings will have the opportunity to view, comment on and offer their interpretation of these items.

Written, audio and visual information will be confidential to the research and publications and presentations arising from it, subject to the nature of consents given.

Written, audio and visual recordings from this research will be retained by the researcher and stored securely in electronic and paper form. Data will be destroyed after 10 years, except for those items where separate written agreement has been given by all parties involved.

I will hold an introductory information meeting in each setting to explain the research to participating families and teachers and answer questions, and will provide regular newsletters to participating families to keep them in the loop about the progress of the data gathering. Participating early childhood centres and schools will receive a summary of the findings of the study when completed, as will the participating teachers, the parents/families of focus children and any other participants who request this. Participating early childhood centres and schools will also be offered a copy of the full thesis. This can also be provided to any other participants who request it.

I am happy to meet to discuss things further or to answer any questions you have at any time.

Maggie Haggerty

Consent form for ece teachers

I have read the information sheet and understand the nature of the study and what the study involves. ☐

My questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I understand I may ask further questions at any time. ☐

I understand all participants have the right to decline to participate in any research activities and withdraw from the study at any time before the end of data collection. ☐

I understand that the research project is intended to be of value to, rather than a burden on, the participating centres, schools, teachers, children and families, and that the researcher therefore undertakes to consult with participants during the course of the project to help keep the research processes in tune with our interests as participants and ethically sound. ☐

I understand that children and teachers featuring in photo and video recordings will have the opportunity to view, comment on and offer their interpretation of and ideas about these recordings. ☐

I understand that visual images in which people can be identified will not be used in the research report or presentations or publications arising from it without the prior consent of the people concerned and in the case of children without the additional prior written consent of their parents. ☐

I understand that copies of photos and videos I will be given from the research are for my personal use and that no material that identifies anyone other than me is to be made any more widely available ☐

I understand I am able to get to see all the photos and videos involving me and they will not be shared with anyone unless I say they can. ☐

I give permission for the following items of information to be collected as part of this research and consent to these items being used for the purposes agreed to.

PLEASE CIRCLE Yes or No for each category	To be collected and analysed for this PhD project	To be used in presentations and publications
Observations of me	Yes/No ☐	Yes/No ☐
Interviews/conversations with me	Yes/No ☐	Yes/No ☐
Audio recordings I feature in	Yes/No ☐	Yes/No ☐
Photos I feature in	Yes/No	Yes/No
Video recordings I feature in	Yes/No	Yes/No

I understand that written, audio and visual information will be confidential to the research and publications and presentations arising from it, subject to the nature of the consents participants give.   ☐

I understand that participants will have access to the data collected about them at any time and that a regular newsletter will be provided to participating families to 'keep them in the loop' about the progress of data collection   ☐

I understand that I will be provided with a summary of the research findings as will the families of the key participating children , ece centres and schools, and any other participant who requests it.   ☐

I understand a full copy of the thesis will be offered to the participating ece centres and to any other participant who requests it. I will let the researcher know if I want a copy.   ☐

I understand that written, audio and visual recordings from this research will be retained by the researcher and stored securely in electronic and paper form and that data will be destroyed after 10 years, except for those items where separate written agreement has been given by all parties involved.

☐

I agree to participate in the research conducted by Maggie Haggerty.

☐

NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

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Project title: Transitioning from an ece setting to school in Aotearoa/New Zealand: A focus on literacies and multimodality.

24 February, 2013

As explained in my earlier communications, I am currently undertaking my PhD at Victoria University and am writing to request your consent to invite the teachers, children and families at XXXXXX Kindergarten to participate in my PhD research. The study focus is children's interest in different modes of learning and literacies (i.e. not only verbal or written modes like talking, listening and reading, but modes like drawing, investigating/ designing/ making things, acting things out, music, dance). I am interested in the ways these are responded to in the early childhood and new entrant school curriculum.

I plan to undertake this research in two ece and two new entrant settings and to follow four key participant children and their families (two per setting) through the transition from one setting to the next. My hope is that this research will be of value to teachers in both settings, teacher educators, early years researchers in literacy and multimodality and policy makers.

What will be asked of the teachers children (and families) involved?
I will observe the curriculum 'in action', and with permission, and when convenient, I will collect written observations, photographs, examples of work, and sometimes audio and video recordings. I will talk with the children and teachers (as convenient and when they are happy to do so) about what they are doing and what I have observed and recorded.
While the activities of the two key participant children in each setting will be a central focus for much of this information gathering, I am also interested in the diversity of multimodal and literacy interests in evidence generally in children's everyday curriculum activities.

Any written observations, photos, examples of work, audio or video recordings collected will only be used, for the purposes agreed to, with the consent of those involved- children and their parents and teachers.

I plan to complete most of the information-gathering in the two early childhood centres between February and July 2013 (involving a total of 12 or so visits), and in the two new entrant classrooms between July and December 2013 (also involving a total of 12 or so visits). I will follow the four key participants and their particular interests in multimodality and literacies at the ece centre, at school and at home (at the family's discretion), over the course of the whole year, and will follow their experiences (and those of their families) through the transition from ece to school.

My supervisors are Dr. Judith Loveridge and Dr. Alison Stephenson.
The contact details for my chief supervisor, Judith Loveridge and I are:

Dr. Judith Loveridge Faculty of Education Victoria University Donald St., Karori judith.loveridge@vuw.ac.nz Ph: 4636028	Maggie Haggerty Faculty of Education Victoria University Donald St., Karori maggie.haggerty@vuw.ac.nz Ph: 4639624/0274529614

The study has been approved by the Faculty of Education Human Ethics Committee of Victoria University. If you have any ethical concerns please contact Dr. Allison Kirkman, Chair of the VUW Human Ethics Committee.

Participant input and comfort

As a qualified early childhood and primary teacher, working in teacher education, with experience in early years research, I appreciate the challenges of teaching, and am mindful of the need for my activities to fit in with the circumstances of the day and for the research not to be a burden on teachers, children, or families. I therefore want to negotiate mutually useful working boundaries for the research with the participants early on in the project and will consult and check in with them in an ongoing way to make sure they are happy with the way the research is proceeding.

Teachers, children and their families who take part in this study have the right to:
- decline to participate in any given research activity (observation,
  conversation etc) at any time
- ask any questions about the study at any time
- withdraw from the study at any time before the end of data collection (expected to be the end of February 2014)

Participant privacy

Participating schools and ece centres will not be identified in the research. However given the use of visual data in this project processes for the collection, previewing and use of photos and video clips need to be considered particularly carefully and ethically. In essence no person will be identified in written text or visual images without prior consent and in the case of children without the additional prior consent of their parents.

For this project, consents for the collection and use of photo and video recordings are sought separately for different uses and participants will be given opportunities to preview all visual data they are identifiable in before consenting to this being used. In the case of children, consent to use visual (and other) data would need to be accompanied by the consent of their parents. In addition I would not ask to show any visual material I did not consider respectful of the participants.

Sharing of and access to research information and its storage

All information gathered during the research process will be held in confidence and participants will have access to the data collected about them at any time. Children and teachers featuring in photo and video recordings will have the opportunity to view, comment on and offer their interpretation of these items/the recordings.

Written, audio and visual information will be confidential to the research and publications and presentations arising from it, subject to the nature of consents given.

Written, audio and visual recordings from this research will be retained by the researcher and stored securely in electronic and paper form. Data will be destroyed after 10 years, except for those items where separate written agreement has been given by all parties involved.

I will hold an introductory information meeting in each setting to explain the research to participating families and teachers and answer questions, and will provide regular newsletters to participating families to keep them in the loop about the progress of the data gathering. Participating early childhood centres and schools will receive a summary of the findings of the study when completed, as will the participating teachers, the parents/families of key participant children and any other participants who request this. Participating early childhood centres and schools will also be offered a copy of the full thesis. This can also be provided to any other participants who request it.

I am happy to meet to discuss things further or to answer any questions you have at any time.
Yours sincerely
Maggie Haggerty

Consent form Wellington Kindergarten Association

Please tick if you agree

We have read the information sheet and understand the nature of the study and
what it involves for the centre, teachers, children and families. ☐

Our questions have been answered to our satisfaction and we understand we may
ask further questions at any time. ☐

We understand that the research project is intended to be of value to, rather than a
burden on, the participating centres, schools, teachers, children and families, and
that the researcher therefore undertakes to consult with participants during the
course of the project to help keep the research processes in tune with the interests
of participants and ethically sound. ☐

We understand that children and teachers featuring in photo and video recordings
will have the opportunity to view, comment on and offer their interpretation of and
ideas about these recordings. ☐

We understand that visual images in which people can be identified will not be used
in the research report or presentations or publications arising from it without the
prior consent of the people concerned and in the case of children without the
additional prior written consent of their parents. ☐

We understand that written, audio and visual information will be confidential to the
research and publications and presentations arising from it, subject to the nature of
consents given. ☐

We understand that participants will have access to the data collected about them at
any time and that a regular newsletter will be provided to participating families to
'keep them in the loop' about the progress of data collection ☐

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We understand that participating teachers, key participant children and their families, ece centres and schools will be provided with a summary of the research findings, as will any other participant who requests it. ☐

We understand a full copy of the thesis will be offered to the participating schools and ece centres and to any other participant who requests it. ☐

We understand that written, audio and visual recordings from this research will be retained by the researcher and stored securely in electronic and paper form and that data will be destroyed after 10 years, except for those items where separate written agreement has been given by all parties involved. ☐

We understand that the centre is able to withdraw from the research at any stage before the end of data collection (expected to be February 2014) without needing to give a reason, as is any individual participant ☐

We agree that ▓▓▓▓ Kindergarten can participate in the research conducted by Maggie Haggerty ☐

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Transitioning from an ece setting to school in Aotearoa/New Zealand: A focus on literacies and multimodality: : Information sheet for parents/whānau/caregivers of key participant children

Kia ora. My name is Maggie Haggerty. I am a PhD student and lecturer in education at Victoria University . As we discussed earlier on the phone I am writing to invite your child to participate in a study focusing on children's interest in different modes of learning and literacies (i.e. not only verbal or written modes like talking, listening and reading, but modes like drawing, investigating/ designing/ making things, acting things out, music, dance). I am interested in looking at the ways children's different interests and modes of learning are responded to at their early childhood centre and when they start school. I plan to undertake this research in two ece and two new entrant settings and to follow the experiences of four key children and their families through the transition from ece to school. I am asking your child and family to be one of the four key participant families.

I plan to complete most of the information-gathering in the two early childhood centres between February and July 2013 (involving a total of 12 or so visits), and in the two new entrant classrooms between July and December 2013 (also involving a total of 12 or so visits). I will follow the four key participant children and their particular interests in multimodality and literacies at the ece centre, at school and at home (at your discretion as a family), over the course of the whole year, and will follow their experiences (and yours as a family) through the transition from ece to school.

This research project is being undertaken for my PhD through Victoria University, where I work as a lecturer in education. I hope this research will be valuable to teachers in both settings and to early years researchers and policy makers.

My supervisors are Dr. Judith Loveridge and Dr. Alison Stephenson.

The contact details for my chief supervisor, Judith Loveridge and I are:

Dr. Judith Loveridge	Maggie Haggerty
Faculty of Education	Faculty of Education
Victoria University	Victoria University
Donald St.,	Donald St.,
Karori	Karori
judith.loveridge@vuw.ac.nz	maggie.haggerty@vuw.ac.nz
Ph: 4636028	Ph: 4639624/0274529614

This research has been assessed and approved by the Victoria University Faculty of Education Human Ethics Committee. If you have any ethical concerns please contact Dr. Allison Kirkman, Chair of the VUW Human Ethics Committee.

What will the research involve for you and your child?

While the contribution you and _____ make to the research needs to work for you and is something we can continue to negotiate as we go along, the following is a guideline as to the involvement envisaged:

- a preliminary meeting with me to go through the consent forms before you sign them (see attached), to make sure everything is explained clearly enough and to give you and _____ a chance to ask any questions you have (about an hour).

- an initial and final interview meeting open to anyone in the family.
  This will focus on things like:
  - activities of particular interest to _____,
  - activities you are interested in as a family,
  - your ideas about videos, photos and other information from the research (up to two hours)

- me visiting _____'s ece centre about twice a month for the first half of the year. Once _____ and I get to know each other well enough, and he/she is happy for me to begin, I will start to gather:
  - some written observations,
  - samples of work,
  - notes of conversations we have together –at times audiotaped
  - video recordings (currently proposed to be for about an hour during four or so of the visits
  The focus of each visit will need to be flexible to fit in with teachers and children.

  - me visiting _____'s new entrant classroom about twice a month for the second half of the year. Again I will look to gather similar sorts of

information, but again the focus of these visits will depend on the circumstances of the day and what suits teachers and children. As and when appropriate some information gathering activities - such as opportunities for children to view and discuss video recordings and photos- will be scheduled during breaks outside class hours.

- _____sometimes being invited to look at and talk with me about photos, videos, things from his/her portfolio, samples of work videos (as and if interested)

- you looking at your copies of the video recordings of _____ prior to our interview meetings (as suits you-we can talk about this more at our introductory meeting)

- you and _____ taking photos of _____'s 'projects of interest' over the period of the research (we can discuss whether and how you would be comfortable doing this at our first meeting and if needed I can provide a camera)

- opportunities to be kept in the loop about the progress of data gathering via a regular newsletter to see and comment on a draft of the research findings

Participant input and comfort

As a qualified early childhood and primary teacher, working in teacher education, and with experience in early years research, I appreciate the challenges of teaching, and am mindful of the need to fit in with the way things are on the day and for the research not to be a burden on teachers, children, or families. I want to work on ways to make the research work for everyone early on in the project and will consult and check in with you in an ongoing way to make sure you are happy with the way the research is proceeding.

Teachers, children and their families who take part in this study have the right to:
- decline to participate in any given research activity (observation, conversation etc) at any time
- ask any questions about the study at any time
- withdraw from the study at any time before the end of data collection

Participant privacy

Participating schools and ece centres will not be identified in the research. However given the use of visual data in this project, processes for the collection, previewing and use of photos and video clips need to be considered particularly carefully and ethically. In essence no person will be identified in written text or visual images

without prior consent and in the case of children without the additional prior consent of their parents.

For this project, consents for the collection and use of photo and video recordings are sought separately for different uses and participants will be given opportunities to preview all visual data they are identifiable in before consenting to this being used. In the case of children, consent to use visual (and other) data would need to be accompanied by the consent of their parents. Additionally I would not ask to show any visual material I did not consider respectful of the participants.

On the consent form is a 'permission chart' detailing the various forms of information I am asking to collect in the study and the different ways I am seeking to use them (in the PhD report, and for presentations and publications). We can go through this together at our first meeting to work out what you (and your child) are happy to give permission for.

Sharing of and access to research information and its storage

All information gathered during the research process will be held in confidence and participants will have access to the data collected about them at any time. Children and teachers featuring in photo and video recordings will have the opportunity to view, comment on and offer their interpretation of these items/the recordings.

Written, audio and visual information will be confidential to the research and publications and presentations arising from it, subject to the nature of consents given.

Written, audio and visual recordings from this research will be retained by the researcher and stored securely in electronic and paper form. Data will be destroyed after 10 years, except for those items where separate written agreement has been given by all parties involved.

I will provide regular newsletters to keep you and other participating families in the loop about the progress of the data gathering. The participating early childhood centres and schools will receive a summary of the findings of the study when completed, as will the participating teachers, the parents/families of focus children and any other participants who request this. The participating early childhood centres and schools will also be offered a copy of the full thesis. This can also be provided to any other participants who request it.

I am happy to meet with you as a family if there are things you wish to discuss or to be contacted at any time if you have any questions.

Maggie Haggerty

Consent form for parents/whānau/caregivers of key participant children

Please tick if you agree

I have read the information sheet and understand the nature of the study and what the study involves for my child and us as a family. ☐

I understand that the research project is intended to be of value to, rather than a burden on, the participating centres, schools, teachers, children and families, and that the researcher therefore undertakes to consult with participants during the course of the project to help keep the research processes in tune with our interests as participants and ethically sound. ☐

I understand that written, audio and visual information will be confidential to the research and publications and presentations arising from it, subject to the nature of the consents participants give. ☐

I understand that visual images in which people can be identified will not be used in the research report or presentations or publications arising from it without the prior consent of the people concerned and in the case of children without the additional prior written consent of their parents. ☐

I understand that children and teachers featuring in photo and video recordings will have the opportunity to view, comment on and offer their interpretation of and ideas about these recordings. ☐

I give permission for the following items of information to be collected as part of this research and consent to these items being used for the purposes agreed to.

PLEASE CIRCLE **Yes** or **No** for each category For any categories you want to give permission for each and every individual item chosen (in addition to photos and videos) please mark the small boxes in the appropriate sections.	To be collected and analysed for this PhD project	To be used in presentations and publications

Observations of my child	YES/NO	☐	YES/NO	☐
Interviews/conversations with my child	YES/NO	☐	YES/NO	☐
Centre/classroom documentation involving my child	YES/NO	☐	YES/NO	☐
Audio recordings of my child	YES/NO	☐	YES/NO	☐
Photos of my child	YES/NO		YES/NO	
Video recordings of my child	YES/NO		YES/NO	

I understand that participants will have access to the data collected about them at any time and that a regular newsletter will be provided to participating families to 'keep them in the loop' about the progress of data collection ☐

I understand all participants in particular my child and our family have the right to decline to participate in any research activities and withdraw from the study at any time before the end of data collection. ☐

I understand that copies of photos and videos we are given from the research are only for personal family use and that no material that identifies anyone other than my child is to be made any more widely available ☐

I understand that our family will be provided with a summary of the research findings as will participating teachers, ece centres and schools, and any other participant who requests it. ☐

We understand a full copy of the thesis will be offered to the participating ece centres and to any other participant who requests it. We will let the researcher know if we want a copy. ☐

We understand that written, audio and visual recordings from this research will be retained by the researcher and stored securely in electronic and paper form and that data will be destroyed after 10 years, except for those items where separate written agreement has been given by all parties involved. ☐

I understand all participants in particular my child and our family have the right to decline to participate in any research activities and withdraw from the study at any time before the end of data collection. ☐

My questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I understand I may ask further questions at any time. ☐

We agree that _____ can participate in the research conducted by Maggie Haggerty . ☐

NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

CONTACT DETAILS _____
_____

DATE: _____

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Consent form for key participant children

Hi _____

My name is Maggie Haggerty and I am going to be spending time at _____ doing research.

I am interested in finding out about the things you and other children do and like doing and learning at _____ and some of the things you do and like doing at home. Later when you start school I would also like to visit you there to see the things you and other children in your class do and like doing at school.

Please say or mark the answer you want.

I would like to watch and sometimes photograph or video the different things you and the other children do when you are at the centre.
Would it be OK for me to watch and sometimes photograph or video you at _____? I will ask you first. And you can say no when you don't want to. And you can ask me to stop taking photos or videos at any time.

OK?   YES/ NO?   👍 Like   👎 Don't Like

Sometimes I will invite you to see and talk about the photos and videos you are in. But you can say no if you don't want to.

OK? YES/ NO?   👍 Like   👎 Don't Like

I will ask if I can visit you and your family at home, about three or so times. But you can say no when you don't want me to.

OK?   YES/ NO?   👍 Like   👎 Don't Like

I will ask you and your family if you would like to take photos of things you like making and doing at home. But only if you want to.

OK?   YES/ NO?   👍 Like   👎 Don't Like

Sometimes I will ask to record us talking together so I can listen carefully later to what we said. But I will ask you first. And you can say no when you don't want to.

OK?   YES/ NO?   👍 Like   👎 Don't Like

You will get to see all the photos and videos involving you and they will not be shared with anyone unless you say they can.

OK?   YES/ NO?   👍 Like   👎 Don't Like

Is it OK if I sometimes look at your portfolio? I will ask you first. And you can say no when you don't want me to.

OK?   YES/ NO?   👍 Like   👎 Don't Like

Later, when you start school I will be visiting you and the other children in your classroom. And you and your teacher and I can talk about what you would like to do when I am visiting.

OK?   YES/ NO?   👍 Like   👎 Don't Like

The study has been explained to me and I agree to be in it

CHILD'S NAME:
(please print)

CHILD'S SIGNATURE

OR CIRCLED SELECTION   👍 Like   👎 Don't Like

Consent form for ece children (not a key participant child)

Hi _____

My name is Maggie Haggerty and I am going to be spending time at
_____ doing research.

I am interested in finding out about the things the children at _____ like
doing and learning at the centre
I would like to see and sometimes video the different things you and the other
children do when you are at the centre.

Please say or mark the answer you want.
Would you be happy for me to watch and sometimes video you at _____?

OK?   YES/ NO/ DON'T KNOW?   👍Like   👎 Don't Like

I will ask everyone at _____ if it's OK to video before I start, and you can tell
me yes or no.
And you can ask me to stop videoing at any time.

OK?   YES/ NO/ DON'T KNOW?   👍Like   👎 Don't Like

If you are in a video I will invite you and any other children who are in it to watch it.
But you can say no if you don't want to.

OK? YES/ NO/ DON'T KNOW?   👍Like   👎 Don't Like

Sometimes I might ask to record us talking together so I can listen carefully later to what we say.

OK?   YES/ NO/ DON'T KNOW?   👍Like   👎 Don't Like

If there are photos and videos you are in you can get to see them and they will not be shared with anyone unless you say they can and so do your parents.

OK?   YES/ NO/DON'T KNOW?   👍Like   👎 Don't Like

Is it OK if I sometimes look at your portfolio? I will ask you first. And you can say no when you don't want me to.

OK?   YES/ NO/DON'T KNOW?   👍Like   👎 Don't Like

The study has been explained to me and I agree to be in it

CHILD'S NAME:
(please print)

CHILD'S SIGNATURE

OR CIRCLED SELECTION   👍Like   👎 Don't Like

Appendix H: Information and consent forms 'non-focus' families

Transitioning from an ece setting to school in Aotearoa/New Zealand: A focus on literacies and multimodality.

Kia ora. My name is Maggie Haggerty. I am wanting to invite your child to participate in a study focusing on children's interest in different modes of learning and literacies. (i.e. not only verbal or written modes like talking, listening and reading, but modes like drawing, investigating/ designing/ making things, acting things out, music, dance). I am interested in looking at the ways children's different interests and modes of learning are responded to at their early childhood centre and when they start school. This research project is being undertaken for my PhD through Victoria University, where I work as a lecturer in education.

I plan to undertake this research in two ece and two new entrant settings and to track five key participant children and their families as they move from ece to school. I hope this research will be valuable to teachers in both settings and to early years researchers and policy makers.

What will be asked of the teachers children (and families) involved?
I will observe the curriculum 'in action', and with permission, and when convenient, I will collect written observations, photographs, examples of work, and sometimes audio and video recordings. I will talk with the children and teachers about what they are doing and what I have observed and recorded (as convenient and when they are happy to do so).
While the activities of the two key participant children in each setting will be a central focus for much of this information gathering, I am also interested in the diversity of multimodal and literacy interests generally evident in children's everyday curriculum activities.
Any written observations, photos, examples of work, audio or video recordings collected will only be used, for the purposes agreed to, with the consent of those involved- children and their parents and teachers.

I plan to complete most of the information-gathering in the two early childhood centres between February and July 2013 (involving a total of 12 or so visits), and in the two new entrant classrooms between July and December 2013 (also involving a total of 12 or so visits). I will follow the five key participants and their particular interests in multimodality and literacies at the ece centre, at school and at home (at the discretion of their family), over the course of the whole year, and will follow their experiences (and those of their families) through the transition from ece to school.

My supervisors are Dr. Judith Loveridge and Dr. Alison Stephenson.
The contact details for my chief supervisor, Judith Loveridge and I are:

Dr. Judith Loveridge	Maggie Haggerty
Faculty of Education	Faculty of Education
Victoria University	Victoria University
Donald St.,	Donald St.,
Karori	Karori
judith.loveridge@vuw.ac.nz	maggie.haggerty@vuw.ac.nz
Ph: 4636028	Ph: 4639624/0274529614

This research has been assessed and approved by the Victoria University Faculty of Education Human Ethics Committee. If you have any ethical concerns please contact Dr. Allison Kirkman, Chair of the VUW Human Ethics Committee.

Participant input and comfort

As a qualified early childhood and primary teacher, working in teacher education, and with experience in early years research, I appreciate the challenges of teaching, and am mindful of the need to fit in with the way things are on the day and for the research not to be a burden on teachers, children, or families. I want to work on ways to make the research work for everyone early on in the project and will consult and check in with you in an ongoing way to make sure you are happy with the way the research is proceeding.

Teachers, children and their families who take part in this study have the right to:
- decline to participate in any given research activity (observation, conversation etc) at any time
- ask any questions about the study at any time
- withdraw from the study at any time before the end of data collection

Participant privacy

Participating schools and ece centres will not be identified in the research. However given the use of visual data in this project processes for the collection, previewing and use of photos and video clips need to be considered particularly carefully and

ethically. In essence no person will be identified in written text or visual images without prior consent and in the case of children without the additional prior consent of their parents.

For this project, consents for the collection and use of photo and video recordings are sought separately for different uses and participants will be given opportunities to preview all visual data they are identifiable in before consenting to this being used. In the case of children, consent to use visual (and other) data would need to be accompanied by the consent of their parents. In addition I would not ask to show any visual material I did not consider respectful of the participants.

Storage of and access to data

All information gathered during the research process will be held in confidence and participants will have access to the data collected about them at any time. Children and teachers featuring in photo and video recordings will have the opportunity to view, comment on and offer their interpretation of the recordings. Families of the key participant children and teachers will be given personal copies of the photos and videos they feature in.

Written, audio and visual information will be confidential to the research and publications and presentations arising from it, subject to the nature of consents given.

Written, audio and visual recordings from this research will be retained by the researcher and stored securely in electronic and paper form. Data will be destroyed after 10 years, except for those items where separate written agreement has been given by all parties involved.

If you did not get a chance to talk with me at the 'Wheelathon' about the research I am happy to meet separately with you or to be contacted at any time if you have any questions.
I will provide regular newsletters to keep you and other participating families 'in the loop' about the progress of the data gathering. You are also welcome to a summary of the findings of the study and should you wish to have one, a copy of the full thesis.

Maggie Haggerty

**Consent form for parents/whānau/caregivers of participating ece children
(not one of the 'key' participant children)**

Please tick if you agree

I have read the information sheet and understand the nature of the study and what
the study involves for my child and us as a family.

I understand that the research project is intended to be of value to, rather than a
burden on, the participating centres, schools, teachers, children and families, and
that the researcher therefore undertakes to consult with participants during the
course of the project to help keep the research processes in tune with our interests
as participants and ethically sound.

I understand that written, audio and visual information will be confidential to the
research and publications and presentations arising from it, subject to the nature of
the consents participants give.

I understand that visual images in which people can be identified will not be used in
the research report or presentations or publications arising from it without the prior
consent of the people concerned and in the case of children without the additional
prior written consent of their parents.

I understand that children and teachers featuring in photo and video recordings will
have the opportunity to view, comment on and offer their interpretation of and ideas
about these recordings.

I give permission for the following items of information to be collected as part of this
research and consent to these items being used for the purposes agreed to.

PLEASE CIRCLE **Yes** or **No** for each category For any categories you want to give permission for each and every individual item chosen (in addition to photos and videos) please mark the small boxes in the appropriate sections.	To be collected and analysed for this PhD project	To be used in presentations and publications

Observations of my child	YES/NO	☐	YES/NO	☐
Interviews/conversations with my child	YES/NO	☐	YES/NO	☐
Centre/classroom documentation involving my child	YES/NO	☐	YES/NO	☐
Audio recordings of my child	YES/NO	☐	YES/NO	☐
Photos of my child	YES/NO		YES/NO	
Video recordings of my child	YES/NO		YES/NO	

I understand that participants will have access to the data collected about them at any time and that a regular newsletter will be provided to participating families to 'keep them in the loop' about the progress of data collection ☐

I understand that a summary of the research findings we will be provided to the key participant children and their families, teachers , ece centres and schools and any other participant who requests it. ☐

I understand a full copy of the thesis will be offered to the participating ece centres and to any other participant who requests it. We will let the researcher know if we want a copy. ☐

I understand that written, audio and visual recordings from this research will be retained by the researcher and stored securely in electronic and paper form and that data will be destroyed after 10 years, except for those items where separate written agreement has been given by all parties involved. ☐

I understand that the families of the key participating children and teachers will be given copies of the photos and videos they feature in for personal keeping, but any material the researcher considers likely to be detrimental to any child's interest will be edited out. I also understand that if this material contains identifiable images of my child I can ask to have these anonymised. ☐

I understand all participants in particular my child has the right to decline to participate in any research activities and withdraw from the study at any time before the end of data collection. ☐

My questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I understand I may ask further questions at any time. ☐

We agree that _____ can participate in the research conducted by Maggie Haggerty . ☐

NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

CONTACT DETAILS _____
_____

DATE: _____

If you wish to be sent a summary of the study findings please tick the box below and include, if you have one, your email address. If you wish to be sent a copy of the full thesis please let the researcher know.

☐

Email _____

FACULTY OF EDUCATION, TE WHĀNAU O AKO PAI
VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON, PO Box 17-310, Donald St, Karori, Wellington 6147, New Zealand
Phone +64-4-463 9500 **Fax** +64-4-463 9649 **Web** www.victoria.ac.nz

Project title: Transitioning from an ece setting to school in Aotearoa/New Zealand: A focus on literacies and multimodality: Information sheet for Schools

7 February 2013

As explained today on the phone, my name is Maggie Haggerty and I am a lecturer in education at Victoria University, where I am currently undertaking my PhD. This information is to follow up my request for consent to invite the teacher, children and families of the new entrant class at XXXXXX to participate in my PhD study. The study focus is children's interest in different modes of learning and literacies (i.e. not only verbal or written modes like talking, listening and reading, but modes like drawing, investigating/ designing/ making things, acting things out, music, dance). I am interested in the ways these are responded to in the early childhood and new entrant school curriculum.

I plan to undertake this research in two ece and two new entrant settings and to follow four key participant children and their families (two per setting) through the transition from one setting to the next. My hope is that this research will be of value to teachers in both settings, teacher educators, early years researchers in literacy and multimodality and policy makers.

What will be asked of the teachers, children (and families) involved?
I will observe the curriculum 'in action', and with permission, and when convenient, I will collect written observations, photographs, examples of work, and sometimes audio and video recordings. I will talk with the children and teachers about what they are doing and what I have observed and recorded (as convenient and when they are happy to do so).

While the activities of the two key participant children in each setting will be a central focus for much of this information gathering, I am also interested in the diversity of multimodal and literacy interests in evidence generally in children's everyday curriculum activities.

Any written observations, photos, examples of work, audio or video recordings collected will only be used, for the purposes agreed to, with the consent of those involved- children and their parents and teachers.

I plan to complete most of the information-gathering in the two early childhood centres between February and July 2013 (involving a total of 12 or so visits), and in the two new entrant classrooms between July and December 2013/February 2014 (also involving a total of 12 or so visits). I will follow the four key participants and their particular interests in multimodality and literacies at the ece centre, at school and at home (at the family's discretion), over the course of the whole year, and will follow their experiences (and those of their families) through the transition from ece to school.

My supervisors are Dr. Judith Loveridge and Dr. Alison Stephenson.
The contact details for my chief supervisor, Judith Loveridge and I are:

Dr. Judith Loveridge	Maggie Haggerty
Faculty of Education	Faculty of Education
Victoria University	Victoria University
Donald St.,	Donald St.,
Karori	Karori
judith.loveridge@vuw.ac.nz	maggie.haggerty@vuw.ac.nz
Ph: 4636028	Ph: 4639624/0274529614

The study has been approved by the Faculty of Education Human Ethics Committee of Victoria University. If you have any ethical concerns please contact Dr. Allison Kirkman, Chair of the VUW Human Ethics Committee.

Participant input and comfort
As a qualified early childhood and primary teacher, working in teacher education, with experience in early years research, I appreciate the challenges of teaching, and am mindful of the need for my activities to fit in with the circumstances of the day and for the research not to be a burden on teachers, children, or families. I therefore want to negotiate mutually useful working boundaries for the research with the participants early on in the project and will consult and check in with them in an ongoing way to make sure they are happy with the way the research is proceeding.

Teachers, children and their families who take part in this study have the right to:
- decline to participate in any given research activity (observation, conversation etc) at any time
- ask any questions about the study at any time
- withdraw from the study at any time before the end of data collection (expected to be the end of February 2014)

Participant privacy

Participating schools and ece centres will not be identified in the research. However given the use of visual data in this project processes for the collection, previewing and use of photos and video clips need to be considered particularly carefully and ethically. In essence no person will be identified in written text or visual images without prior consent and in the case of children without the additional prior consent of their parents.

For this project, consents for the collection and use of photo and video recordings are sought separately for different uses and participants will be given opportunities to preview all visual data they are identifiable in before consenting to this being used. In the case of children, consent to use visual (and other) data would need to be accompanied by the consent of their parents. In addition I would not ask to show any visual material I did not consider respectful of the participants.

Sharing of and access to research information and its storage
All information gathered during the research process will be held in confidence and participants will have access to the data collected about them at any time. Children and teachers featuring in photo and video recordings will have the opportunity to view, comment on and offer their interpretation of these items/the recordings.

Written, audio and visual information will be confidential to the research and publications and presentations arising from it, subject to the nature of consents given.

Written, audio and visual recordings from this research will be retained by the researcher and stored securely in electronic and paper form. Data will be destroyed after 10 years, except for those items where separate written agreement has been given by all parties involved.

I will hold an introductory information meeting in each setting to explain the research to participating families and teachers and answer questions, and will provide regular newsletters to participating families to keep them in the loop about the progress of the data gathering. Participating early childhood centres and schools will receive a summary of the findings of the study when completed, as will the participating teachers, the parents/families of key participant children and any other participants who request this. Participating early childhood centres and schools will also be offered a copy of the full thesis. This can also be provided to any other participants who request it.

I am happy to meet to discuss things further or to answer any questions you have at any time.

Maggie Haggerty

Consent form Schools

Please tick if you agree

We have read the information sheet and understand the nature of the study and
what it involves for the centre, teachers, children and families. ☐

Our questions have been answered to our satisfaction and we understand we may
ask further questions at any time. ☐

We understand that the research project is intended to be of value to, rather than a
burden on, the participating centres, schools, teachers, children and families, and
that the researcher therefore undertakes to consult with participants during the
course of the project to help keep the research processes in tune with the interests
of participants and ethically sound. ☐

We understand that children and teachers featuring in photo and video recordings
will have the opportunity to view, comment on and offer their interpretation of and
ideas about these recordings. ☐

We understand that visual images in which people can be identified will not be used
in the research report or presentations or publications arising from it without the
prior consent of the people concerned and in the case of children without the
additional prior written consent of their parents. ☐

We understand that written, audio and visual information will be confidential to the
research and publications and presentations arising from it, subject to the nature of
consents given. ☐

We understand that participants will have access to the data collected about them at
any time and that a regular newsletter will be provided to participating families to
'keep them in the loop' about the progress of data collection ☐

We understand that participating teachers, key participant children and their families, ece centres and schools will be provided with a summary of the research findings, as will any other participant who requests it. ☐

We understand a full copy of the thesis will be offered to the participating schools and ece centres and to any other participant who requests it. ☐

We understand that written, audio and visual recordings from this research will be retained by the researcher and stored securely in electronic and paper form and that data will be destroyed after 10 years, except for those items where separate written agreement has been given by all parties involved. ☐

We understand that the centre is able to withdraw from the research at any stage before the end of data collection (expected to be February 2014) without needing to give a reason, as is any individual participant ☐

We agree that XXXXXXX School can participate in the research conducted by Maggie Haggerty ☐

NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

FACULTY OF EDUCATION, TE WHĀNAU O AKO PAI
VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON, PO Box 17-310, Donald St, Karori, Wellington 6147, New Zealand
Phone + 64-4-463 9500 **Fax** +64-4-463 9649 **Web** www.victoria.ac.nz

Project: Transitioning from an ece setting to school in Aotearoa/New Zealand: A focus on literacies and multimodality: Information sheet for parents/whānau/caregivers of new entrant children at XXXXX

Kia ora.

My name is Maggie Haggerty. This letter is to invite your child to participate in a study looking at the ways children's different interests and modes of learning are reponded to in the curriculum of their early childhood centre and when they start school. I am interested in children's different modes of learning or literacies (i.e. not only verbal or written modes like talking, listening and reading, but modes like drawing, investigating/ designing/ making things, acting things out, music, dance). This research project is being undertaken for my PhD through Victoria University, where I work as a lecturer in education.

What will be asked of the teachers children (and families) involved?

I am undertaking this research in one ece and two new entrant settings and
will be visiting your child's classroom regularly through terms three and four. There may also be a possible follow up visit in February 2014. During these visits my key focus will be the children I have followed moving from early childhood to school. However I also have general interests in children's 'everyday' activities as new entrants. I will therefore be looking to observe new entrant classroom curriculum 'in action'. With permission and when convenient, I will collect written observations, photographs, examples of work and sometimes audio and video recordings. I will talk with the children and teachers (as convenient and when they are happy to do so) about what they are doing and what I have observed and recorded. Any written observations, photos, examples of work, audio or video recordings collected will only be used, for the purposes agreed to, with the consent of those involved – children and their parents and teachers.

I hope this research will be valuable to teachers in both settings and to early years researchers and policy makers.

My supervisors are Dr. Judith Loveridge and Dr. Alison Stephenson.
The contact details for my chief supervisor, Judith Loveridge and I are:

Dr. Judith Loveridge	Maggie Haggerty
Faculty of Education	Faculty of Education
Victoria University	Victoria University
Donald St.,	Donald St.,
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judith.loveridge@vuw.ac.nz	maggie.haggerty@vuw.ac.nz
Ph: 4636028	Ph: 4639624/0274529614

This research has been assessed and approved by the Victoria University Faculty of Education Human Ethics Committee. If you have any ethical concerns please contact Dr. Allison Kirkman, Chair of the VUW Human Ethics Committee.

Participant input and comfort

As a qualified early childhood and primary teacher, working in teacher education, and with experience in early years research, I appreciate the challenges of teaching, and am mindful of the need to fit in with the way things are on the day and for the research not to be a burden on teachers, children, or families. My intention is to consult and check in with you in an ongoing way to make sure you are happy with the way the research is proceeding.

Teachers, children and their families who take part in this study have the right to:
- decline to participate in any given research activity (observation, conversation etc) at any time
- ask any questions about the study at any time
- withdraw from the study at any time before the end of data collection

Participant privacy

Participating schools and ece centres will not be identified in the research. However given the use of visual data in this project, processes for the collection, previewing and use of photos and video clips need to be considered particularly carefully and ethically. In essence no person will be identified in written text or visual images without prior consent and in the case of children without the additional prior consent of their parents.

For this project, consents for the collection and use of photo and video recordings are sought separately for different uses and participants will be given opportunities to preview all visual data they are identifiable in before consenting to this being used. In the case of children, consent to use visual (and other) data would need to be accompanied by the consent of their parents. Also I would not ask to show any visual material I did not consider respectful of the participants.

Storage of and access to data

All information gathered during the research process will be held in confidence and participants will have access to the data collected about them at any time. Children

and teachers featuring in photo and video recordings will have the opportunity to view, comment on and offer their interpretation of the recordings. Families of the four key participant children and teachers will be given personal copies of the photos and videos they feature in.

Written, audio and visual information will be confidential to the research and publications and presentations arising from it, subject to the nature of consents given.

Written, audio and visual recordings from this research will be retained by the researcher and stored securely in electronic and paper form. Data will be destroyed after 10 years, except for those items where separate written agreement has been given by all parties involved.

If you are unable to attend the introductory meeting explaining the research to families with children in the new entrant class, I am happy to meet separately with you or to be contacted at any time if you have any questions.

I will provide a newsletter each term to keep you and other participating families in the loop about the progress of the data gathering. You are also welcome to a summary of the findings of the study and should you wish to have one, a copy of the full thesis.

Maggie Haggerty

**Consent form for parents/whānau/caregivers of participating ece children
(not one of the 'key' participant children)**

Please tick if you agree

I have read the information sheet and understand the nature of the study and what the study involves for my child and us as a family.

I understand that the research project is intended to be of value to, rather than a burden on, the participating centres, schools, teachers, children and families, and that the researcher therefore undertakes to consult with participants during the course of the project to help keep the research processes in tune with our interests as participants and ethically sound.

I understand that written, audio and visual information will be confidential to the research and publications and presentations arising from it, subject to the nature of the consents participants give.

I understand that visual images in which people can be identified will not be used in the research report or presentations or publications arising from it without the prior consent of the people concerned and in the case of children without the additional prior written consent of their parents.

I understand that children and teachers featuring in photo and video recordings will have the opportunity to view, comment on and offer their interpretation of and ideas about these recordings.

I give permission for the following items of information to be collected as part of this research and consent to these items being used for the purposes agreed to.

PLEASE CIRCLE **Yes** or **No** for each category For any categories you want to give permission for each and every individual item chosen (in addition to photos and videos) please mark the small boxes in the appropriate sections.	To be collected and analysed for this PhD project	To be used in presentations and publications

Observations of my child	YES/NO	☐	YES/NO ☐
Interviews/conversations with my child	YES/NO	☐	YES/NO ☐
Centre/classroom documentation involving my child	YES/NO	☐	YES/NO ☐
Audio recordings of my child	YES/NO	☐	YES/NO ☐
Photos of my child	YES/NO		YES/NO
Video recordings of my child	YES/NO		YES/NO

I understand that participants will have access to the data collected about them at any time and that a regular newsletter will be provided to participating families to 'keep them in the loop' about the progress of data collection ☐

I understand that a summary of the research findings we will be provided to the key participant children and their families, teachers , ece centres and schools and any other participant who requests it. ☐

I understand a full copy of the thesis will be offered to the participating ece centres and to any other participant who requests it. We will let the researcher know if we want a copy. ☐

I understand that written, audio and visual recordings from this research will be retained by the researcher and stored securely in electronic and paper form and that data will be destroyed after 10 years, except for those items where separate written agreement has been given by all parties involved. ☐

 I understand that the families of the key participating children and teachers will be given copies of the photos and videos they feature in for personal keeping, but any material the researcher considers likely to be detrimental to any child's interest will be edited out. I also understand that if this material contains identifiable images of my child I can ask to have these anonymised. ☐

I understand all participants in particular my child has the right to decline to participate in any research activities and withdraw from the study at any time before the end of data collection. ☐

My questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I understand I may ask further questions at any time. ☐

We agree that _____ can participate in the research conducted by Maggie Haggerty .

☐

NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

CONTACT DETAILS _____
_____

DATE: _____

If you wish to be sent a summary of the study findings please tick the box below and include, if you have one, your email address. If you wish to be sent a copy of the full thesis please let the researcher know.

☐

Email _____

Appendix K: Interview question outlines: Teachers

Focus areas for initial interviews: Kindergarten teachers

Personal background
-particular interests...activities you enjoyed/participated in...now
and/or as a child you see as making a significant contribution to
your development as a person/teacher?
 Maybe also to what aspects of curriculum you value?
Any other particular important influences?

Teaching background-
Where, when what did your initial teacher education involve?
Your teaching experience ?
Any other professional/educational experiences of particular
relevance?
Curriculum and assessment in ece/this kindergarten
Tell me about the curriculum at ▨▨▨▨... a 'typical' day at
kindergarten.
children's experiences people, places, things, activities

Are there any aspects of curriculum you would identify as being a
priority for this kindergarten?
And for ece generally...principles/values/activities...?

Any particular reflections on or ideas about the importance of
emphasising print-based literacy/numeracy here in ece? For and at
school?

Any reflections on or ideas about modes such as visual,
kinaesthetic, aural, tactile...doing, making, designing..music,
movement as ways of experiencing/learning?

Tell me how you go about assessment you do here?
What would it typically involve in a week/month/term...

Any particular struggles/frustrations you/the kindergarten faces on
the curriculum or assessment front?

Transition to school

What do you see as needing to happen for children to experience a
positive/successful transition to school (sketch/describe what that
might look like)

Key participant children
XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXX

How would you describe…key participants
Have you observed any particular key modes of learning for any of them…any particular strengths/interests/favourite activities/ struggles

CONCLUDING
Any additional thoughts/questions comments/things I've missed?

Focus areas for NE teacher interviews
Personal background
Any particular interests or activities you particularly value/ enjoy/participate in….now and/or as a child, that you see as making a significant contribution to your development as a person /teacher? Maybe also to aspects of the curriculum you value/enjoy? Any other important influences?

Teaching background
Can you tell me what your initial teacher education involved? Your teaching experience? Any other professional/educational experiences of particular relevance?

Curriculum and assessment
From a curriculum point of view what do you see as the key priorities for children in the new entrant classroom? What is your view about children having curriculum opportunities to work in and with modes involving domains like music, movement, the visual, kinaesthetic, tactile, making, doing, or designing?

Can you talk me through the ways you assess children in their first year of school?

Re the recent introduction of National Standards. Do/how do you see these as influencing the way assessment and curriculum are approached in the first year or so of school…thinking about you personally, this class, the wider school and education sector.

What would you advise parents/families/ ECE teachers do to best support children through the transition to school?

What do you see as the biggest challenges children tend to face?

What are your impressions of the five children who are key participants in this research. How do you see them as learners…particular strengths or challenges:

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXX

Any additional thoughts/questions/comments/things I have missed?

Transitioning from an ece setting to school in Aotearoa/New Zealand: A focus on literacies and multimodality.

Kia ora _____ and _____,

Things to discuss when we meet together

_____ as a baby, a toddler, a now-4-year-old...particular interests/influences/events.
What a 'typical' weekend day for _____ would be like.
Or a typical day during the holidays.

How you would describe yourselves as a family.
The sorts of things different members of the family typically value and like doing.
The sorts of things _____ typically does with other members of the family.

What aspects of _____ you thought came through in the video recordings.
Whether there were any surprises in the video recordings.
Or any noticeable differences between the way _____came across in the recordings and what you expected.
Or differences between kindergarten and home

What your understanding is of what children do and learn and kindergarten.

Any particular reactions? Any comments?

Reflections and advice
If you were able to change two things about the last 6 months _____ had at kindergarten or his/her experiences starting school, what would they be?

Any advice to offer:
-other parents
-early childhood teachers
-new entrant teachers/schools

Anything you would like to add.

***Do you have _____'s notebook and if so could I please take a copy? I'd also like to be able to scan a copy of _____'s end-of-year report and his/her workbooks, if you have them.

CHILDREN
(this can be feedback they give me directly but also something you pass on from them)
What did you most like doing at school?
What was hardest [most fun]?

Questions for children

So you remember that I have been trying to learn about what it's like for children going to kindergarten and then starting school and going to school?

And I came and took quite a lot of videos to help show people what happens at kindergarten and what it is like for children and what starting school is like for children. And what it was like for you [and for other children].

So I'd like to ask you about how it was for you going to kindergarten and starting school and going to school.
And about the videoing I did.
And you can just do thumbs down/or tell me if there's anything you don't want to answer
Would that be OK?

Videos
Did you watch
With your family by yourself/who with
Which bits did you like/not like
Which bits do you think your mum and liked most. Anything you think they didn't like?
Was there anything on the videos you would not like other people to see

Kindergarten and school experiences
Like to do most:
At kindergarten
At school
What about At home
And With mum and dad
What about things you didn't like. Or the hardest things.

What do you feel about your new class after the holidays

A little sister or a friend going to kindergarten/ starting school what do you think you or you mum or your dad or the teachers/the school/kindergarten could do to help them...to make it really good for them

Appendix N: Video-log annotations: Example

DATE: 26 – 3 – 13   FOCUS:

CLIP No + Duration	ACTIVITY Materials	PARTICIPANTS A	NOTES
1 29	Climbing 28	Shr	)
2 45	Jh Sh Bn Crb Arg	house horse	
3 1·28	+ story disagreed hull	) Jh Bn Se Gs (Hs)	
4 48	Bn J Se Ls		
5 8·1	B Se Ssh		
6 1·07	Jh Bn	Bail Climbing .	
7 1·24	Ss Bn Se	hunter	Jungle
8 32	h	forest police	
9 31	h	food / beds	
10 50	Us	hay bed	