

Editorial

Innovation out of challenge.

Sean Dolan | New Zealand Tertiary College

In recent years, the threat of Covid-19 has loomed large in Aotearoa New Zealand. In attempts to prevent the widespread transmission of the virus, the Government announced a series of lockdowns that brought about the physical closure of early childhood centres throughout the country. Encouraged to continue teaching and learning through remote technologies, the early childhood sector stepped up to the challenge to provide support for children and families at a time when many were enduring feelings of isolation and separation. In this special issue of *He Kupu*, we look at how the early childhood sector responded to the challenges of lockdowns. Each of the articles takes a slightly different perspective of the pandemic, recounting student teachers' and the sector's response at large.

Providing us with a broad overview of the benefits and challenges of online learning from tamariki (children) and whānau (family), Zahra Herrman examines recent local and international literature to articulate common obstacles and affordances realised by teachers when shifting to online learning. The article finishes with a list of recommended strategies for teachers to support online learning for tamariki. Maddie Hendrie and Marjolein Whyte turn their attention to the use of student created videos to promote whānau involvement. Providing examples of students' work during the lockdown, the authors show how increased connectivity between home and centre environments during the pandemic opened up multiple learning opportunities and supported parents' engagement with the curriculum.

Focusing on whānau wellbeing, Sanitra Deo and Christine Vincent-Snow recount the experiences and reflections of students and teachers in early childhood centres during the pandemic. The authors found that teachers and centre management went out of their way to support the holistic wellbeing of the children and their families, creating innovative solutions in response to the dramatic downturn in material conditions many families experienced.

Also in the practitioner section, Amy Thynne, Joy McLelland and Ra Keelan view student innovative practices to support whanaungatanga (relationships and partnerships) via remote technologies. This is framed using the Māori lens of *being, knowing* and *doing*. Through a series of kōrero tahi (discussions), the authors explored how the mana (prestige) of children and families was upheld. The final article in the practitioner section takes the perspective of the lecturing team who were also impacted by the physical restrictions due to the lockdown. Seen through the values of New Zealand Tertiary College, Fiona Woodgate and Barbara Scanlan demonstrate how a values-led approach was evoked to provide holistic support for students on Field Practice placements.

The first piece in the article section by Sean Dolan, forefronts the notion of student teachers developing adaptive expertise, a pedagogical stance that has been refined in recent discourse in Aotearoa New Zealand and included as a desirable quality to be fostered in initial teacher education. The article suggests that in responding to the fluid environment of the pandemic, Field Practice learning outcomes prompted students to resituate and create teaching practices in innovative ways and consequently supported shifts in their development as learners.

This is followed by a critical discussion of the role of artefacts in early childhood education and their potential as tools to support teachers' appreciation and knowledge of the complex social and cultural backgrounds of their

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learners and their families. Reflecting on their own sense of cultural identity engendered by cultural artefacts that have taken significance in their lives, Phoebe Tong and Keshni Kumar illustrate the narrative values of cultural artefacts. Through the bidirectional gaze of remote technology, the writers encourage student teachers and teachers to work with learners from all cultural backgrounds.

The final article in this section is written by Trish Thomas and Alesha Chaston. Surveying students from the most affected parts of the country, the writers bring their focus to teaching approaches and strategies used through remote technologies for teaching children te reo Māori. The article highlights the innovative practices students stepped into to continue teaching and nurturing te reo. The writers make the case that through the disruption caused by the pandemic, new practices enabled through the use of technology strengthened existing partnerships with whānau and have a definite role in teaching te reo Māori in early childhood education in the future.

This issue of *He Kupu* concludes with two book reviews. Chelsea Bracefield recommends teachers look at Broderick, J. T., and Hong, S. B. (2020). *From Children's Interests to Children's Thinking: Using a Cycle of Inquiry to Plan Curriculum*. While Julie Plows discusses the latest offerings from Kucirkova, N. Rowsell, J., and Falloon, G. (Eds.) (2019). *The Routledge International Handbook of Learning with Technology in Early Childhood*.

I hope you will find the articles in this issue will lead you to reflect on some of the advantages that can be realised through closer connections between teachers and families afforded by remote technologies.