

# **Trusting Parents – Trusting Children: the potency of truly, really, really, truly Partnered Learning Stories.**

Anna Jo Perry

Manukau Institute of Technology

Dr. Jens Hansen

Woodhill Park Research Retreat

# An understanding of some note...

- We need you to know about our understanding of the concept of *re-storying* that underpins this presentation... To us:
  - it's all about making better sense of a context, an event, a phenomenon or a process so that enriched learning can occur for all involved;
  - in other words, it's all about enhancing meaning development through shared interactions.

# This presentation considers...

- *Partnerships with children and parents;*
- Developing that partnership through *learning stories;*
- We'll traverse some of the key literature and design ideas but not very much of it;
- The project, i.e. what we did and how we did it;
- Some questions for future consideration.

P.S. Thinking is allowed!!

# Partnerships with parents

- These were mandated through DOPs (Ministry of Education, 1998) and are now embedded in the new regulations (Ministry of Education, 2008);
- Embedded in *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996);
- Promoted through the Early Childhood Code of Ethics (New Zealand Teachers Council 2003-4)  
(from Keesing Styles', 2004, p. 5).
- An important section of the Strategic Plan for early childhood education (Ministry of Education, 2002)

# History & what some of the literature highlights:


- Post-war years 3 reviews in particular of government involvement in ECE culminating in an era of greater governmental control of curriculum:
  - 1947 – Bailey Report (a blueprint for ECE)
  - 1988 – Education to be More
  - 1988 – Before Five
  - 1993 – Draft of *Te Whāriki*

## History literature highlights (continued):

- Ethos of Te Whāriki represents a philosophy encompassing socio-cultural approaches (Vygotsky, 1967);
- Learning Stories were devised as a form of assessing dimensions of the socio-cultural approach.
- That remains the status quo for most teachers working in ECE.

# The status quo...

- In Aotearoa New Zealand, teachers are charged with writing stories about children's learning events;
- These stories are either written by one teacher alone or after discussion with other teachers;
- They can remain essentially a single voice: the professional although parents are invited to comment on the stories.
- They move from the teacher's world to ...



*“...the swampy lowland of real life in an early childhood setting, where problems are not well-formed, children’s motivations are ambiguous, interpretations are uncertain. Contexts are complex, and practitioners are busy...”*

(May & Carr, 1998, page unknown)

# When there is no language in common...

- ...teachers construct stories from a *professional perspective* which is informed by their experience and their professional knowledge;
- That's not necessarily a bad thing but it just may not (even to a teeny, weenie extent), be valid for those involved
- Or if it is valid, it might not be as rich as it could be;
- So how, realistically, do we address this?

# A case in point...

- We want to share how engagement was facilitated with newly arrived refugee parents and their children;
- Three lenses were used to achieve this: the *child's eye*, the *parents'* perspective, and finally, the *teacher's* (so called) 'informed' viewpoint.

# The project

- Context:
  - Mangere Centre for Refugee Education;
  - Visual analysis background;
- The catalyst:
  - We questioned the use of dispositions alone as a valid assessment technique;
  - A moment of real learning occurred;
  - This 'illuminated' differences between what was seen by the three sets of stakeholders.

So what do you see?



# So is it about teacher-centricity?

- When there is no language in common between the children and the teacher, more often than not, the teacher's possibly flawed viewpoint (as written) becomes super-ordinate;
- Let's consider some 'Magnetic Letters' to illustrate this.

# What comes out of this?

- As a consequence of involving others, a richer deeper understanding of these children's families and their learning needs unfolded and the potency of learning stories became appreciated afresh;
- The emergent principle is that ...  
... they must become equal, indeed, more than equal partners.

# What comes out of this?

- What do you think and how can we find funds to further investigate this matter?
- What do we need to do to get, for instance, AKO Aotearoa to fund research into such matters?
- What other pointers can you give to us in the School of Education about possible future directions? For instance...
  - What research resources may be needed?
  - What training and Continuing Professional Development might be warranted?

# References

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