

EDITORIAL

This second issue of the journal of *International Research in Early Childhood Education* demonstrates, among other things, the continuing strength of scholarly research from New Zealand. While not dominating this issue, the various contributions provide a clear indication that New Zealand early childhood research is growing as a source of important debate about a range of technical, historical and pedagogical issues of increasing relevance to the whole early childhood community worldwide.

Brent Mawson's article addresses the issue of independent collaborative play with respect to the range of environmental influences that impact on children and their learning. This discussion provides a recent account of empirical study of play and considers a range of critical factors that should be of interest to many practitioners and scholars alike. This is followed by a worthy and interesting historical account, by Kerry Bethell and Alison Sewell of the life of an early childhood educator, that casts the issues about gender and women's voices in the early childhood professional community into bold relief.

Sue Cherrington and Deborah Wansborough evaluated professional development programming for the delivery of New Zealand's *Te Whariki*, and this article provides a valuable overview of the process they undertook. This is followed by a very useful discussion of patterning abilities in early childhood mathematics among Australian indigenous children, by Elizabeth Warren and Jodie Miller. Ann Harlow then provides a rare (and therefore important) discussion of the use of interactive whiteboards in early childhood settings, which should be of considerable interest to many practitioners. Together with Harlow's piece, Mary Hatzigiannis and Kay Margetts article about the use of computers – with a focus on children's self-esteem – makes a nice contribution to current debate about how digital media is changing the nature of early childhood education.

The articles in this issue cover a range of matters and reflect some of the most important issues about the practice of early childhood education. Questions of professional development as raised by Cherrington and Wansborough add an important piece about the tension between implementation of early childhood curriculum and the skills of staff burdened with the task of delivery. In future issues these topical questions will be raised again in ways that will attempt to open up greater discussion and inform professional practice in a range of contexts.

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