

Report on Sabbatical Spring 2017

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Sabbatical objective

Gain knowledge of other countries' early childhood educational system, in particular, New Zealand, Aotearoa. Aotearoa is where language immersion schools started in the movement to preserve the Māori language, and our Hawaiian language immersion preschools (Pūnana Leo) and DOE immersion schools built on the foundations that started there. Colleagues and students will benefit from photos and sharing in classes and in the community about the experience. The World Forum on Early Care and Education will be in Auckland May 9-12, 2017 and it includes optional tours of early childhood programs, and the trip to Aotearoa will be structured around that conference.

Report

I was able to visit six different early childhood programs in Aotearoa. In addition to the programs visited in Auckland area through the World Forum tour, I connected with colleagues in Christchurch and in Rotorua (Rawhia TeHau-Grant was on UHMC campus in Fall 2016).

On April 26, Jenny Walker, retired from Rangiruru College in Christchurch, took me to two programs, Swannanoa Preschool and Pebbles Preschool. Jenny retired early from Rangiruru, as the campus was demolished in the 2011 earthquake and the college re-prioritized its programs in rebuilding. They let Jenny's 2011 students finish their programs, and then the early childhood program was closed. Jenny had developed a one year nanny curriculum about 20 years ago, which was subsequently adopted by other NZ colleges and standards for the curriculum were adopted nationally. The NZ teacher education structure has levels. Level 3 is roughly equivalent to our Associate's degree.

New Zealand has a national early childhood curriculum framework called Te Whāriki (1996), based on Māori values and practices and child development knowledge. I was interested in seeing how this curriculum framework is implemented in programs. One of the first things I learned about the Māori language is that "wh" is pronounced as "f". It was really interesting to listen for the similarities and differences between Hawaiian and Māori words (with my limited Hawaiian language vocabulary). A revised version of Te Whāriki had just been released, and before I left Christchurch Jenny sent me a pdf of the revised version. In Hawai'i, we have two documents – one for the keiki, called the "Hawai'i Early Learning and Development Standards" and covers ages birth to kindergarten entry. The other document is "E Mālama i Nā Keiki – Essential Principles of Practice for Hawai'i's Early Childhood Professionals" which address the the attitudes, skills, and knowledge the adults working with keiki need to have. Te Whāriki combines the expectations for tamariki (children) with the expectations for the kaiako (teachers). The revised version is more inclusive of other cultures, while still honoring Māori culture and language.

In the U.S., we have Head Start, a free early childhood program for low-income families. The federal government also provides child care subsidies that are distributed by the state, according to family income levels. Aotearoa has a more equitable system that doesn't prioritize by income. Families of children age 3 - 5, regardless of family income level or residency status, can apply for 20 hours/week (up to 6 hours/day) of free access to an early childhood program or kōhanga reo (Māori language immersion). The program has to apply to the government for the subsidies.

<https://parents.education.govt.nz/early-learning/early-childhood-education/20-hours-ece-2/> There is also a subsidy for lower income families that can be combined with the 20 hour subsidy for a total of 30 hours per week.

Swannanoa was a fairly new school, built about 10 years ago, about 100 tamariki (children) from babies to kindergarten entry. It was a school break, so there were fewer children than on a normal school day. The school was well equipped indoors and out, and the bulletin boards displayed information on the Te Whāriki strand (Belonging) that was the current focus. The Māori alphabet was displayed, and a laminated sheet outdoors labeled "Sandpit phrases" gave common phrases in Māori and English. Jenny pointed out that several of the teachers had been a professional development opportunity focused on Sāmoa, and there were displays of Sāmoan words and phrases and photos of the teachers in Sāmoa.

The tamariki were diverse, and there was an Asian girl, about 3 years old, who latched onto me and followed me around as we toured her classroom. This experience, in addition to another in Auckland, demonstrated the strength of wanting to link with people that look familiar. Most of the kaiako (teachers) were white.

In this and the Auckland programs visited, the tamariki were flowing between indoors and out, and the kaiako (teachers) were relaxed, interacting with the tamariki easily and appropriately. The outdoor environment is definitely utilized for multiple learning opportunities.

Pebbles Preschool was also the site of another of Jenny's graduates. This was a small Montessori based school in a remodeled house. Jenny's graduate is in the infant room, and the kaiako were using ukulele and singing, most tamariki came to the singing, others were crawling or toddling around. We stepped outside with the teacher for a bit, and an infant followed, crawling easily while his teacher kept an eye on him, scooping him up when needed. In U.S. infant centers, often people are required to wear paper booties and there is a big emphasis on keeping the environment sanitized. It's much more relaxed in Aotearoa.

Friday, May 5, Rawhia TeHau-Grant of Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology took us to her marae's kōhanga reo (Māori immersion preschool) and kura (Māori immersion primary school), on Lake Rotoiti. Rawhia explained how her own tamariki attended the kōhanga and kura, and how she'd been working with the staff and sharing best early childhood practices with them. Now they let the tamariki play freely for much of the time, instead of expecting them to play in one area, then clean up and move to the next area (for tamariki 18 months and up to kindergarten entry). The lead kaiako, an older woman who had been teaching for many years, made time to talk with us, and she talked about how she now

knows to let the tamariki make choices and play. It was great to see how she had internalized the concept and put it into practice. She also explained how they are very place-based, exposing and educating the tamariki about their place, the mountains, the lake in front, and their community.

Rawhia had explained that there was less family involvement with more parents working, and also more parents are choosing centers that emphasize child development and education, rather than the kōhanga. There appears to be a perception that the kōhanga focus on language and culture and other programs focus more on child development. The comment about family involvement was really interesting, as our Pūnana Leo o Maui is well known for its maximum family involvement, and I have the director come in to my Child, Family, Community class to share about how much families do in the program.

We went to the kura, to a classroom of one of Rawhia's sons, with 5-6 year olds. The kaiako was an experienced teacher who had been an aide for some time, then went on to complete her education to be able to be a full teacher. As in Hawai'i, the qualifications for preschool and primary school teachers are different. The primary school teachers have to have the equivalent of a bachelor's degree. The tamariki had a chorus of "Rawhia!" The lesson was based on the "Very Hungry Caterpillar", a very familiar book in the U.S. too. The class then moved over to a chart that looked similar to the Pūnana Leo syllabary and they practiced some words.

Rawhia took us to Toi Ohomai campus and we sat and talked story with Dell Raerino, who was also on UHMC campus with Rawhia in the fall. He is the head of their Bicultural, Bridging and Foundation department. I learned that 90%+ of their funding is from the government, and they were surprised when they were on Maui to find that our proportion is much lower, and how grants are sought to support programs.

Rawhia had explained to me how with their child development faculty (7 of them, 3 are Māori), they used to have someone come from the Bicultural department to talk to the students about incorporating Māori culture and language. Then she realized that it had become something they get through, not really implemented or internalized. So she and her Māori colleagues over three years shared and worked with their non-Māori colleagues and encouraged them to come to a place where they could share with students what Māori values and language meant from their perspective, and incorporate into the college curriculum on an ongoing basis, instead of a one time talk. She said it's just their department right now that has done this. They recently went through a big merge with another college, and some programs don't see the relevance of teaching Māori culture and language.

It really made me think about opening a dialogue with our Hawaiian Studies faculty and seeing how we could start something like that with our Early Childhood program, and include our lecturers, so that incorporating important Hawaiian values and key vocabulary can be an integral part of the program. We could start a pilot, and then maybe figure out how to expand to other programs.

Dell also shared how in the 1990s there was a big surge of people wanting to earn a degree in Bicultural studies, but then it died down to where they don't have a degree anymore. I was really surprised at that, and we discussed the cause – it appears that as in the U.S., the push has been to support degrees that lead to jobs, and since they're government funded, they have little leeway. Education for bettering one's knowledge and self is (or liberal arts education) is less and less supported by government funding. Such a contrast to our now established AA in Hawaiian Studies and the University of Hawai'i's commitment to become a premier indigenous serving institution.

May 9 was the pre-conference tour of programs for the World Forum on Early Care and Education. Participants met at 7:30 a.m., and I walked around, smiling, looking for a friendly face, even though I really wanted coffee! Not many people looked at me, and then an Asian woman smiled at me and so we started talking. I met Felicia Joe is Early Childhood Principal at a private school (Tzu Chi School) in Jakarta, Indonesia, and this is her first World Forum. The school is trilingual – Indonesian, Mandarin, and English, so teachers have to be trilingual. It serves children from preschool up through high school and is an international school. Felicia shared how she struggles with the rigid expectations of school in Indonesia, and how learning through play is something that she wants to implement in the early childhood school, but it's very challenging with the primary teachers demanding children be sitting at desks and doing seat work. As the conference went on, she could see that many others struggle with the same issue.

Felicia and I hung out together the whole day, and this was the other incident that showed me the value of seeing someone who looks familiar. We touched base throughout the conference and it was fascinating for me to learn about her school – trilingual! Amazing.

The two programs we toured were both part of chains. One was next door to a major shopping mall, and the other was in a suburb. One had a copy of the Treaty of Waitangi framed and in the main hallway. Both programs displayed Te Whāriki goals that the classrooms were working on, and Māori words were displayed. Both had classrooms open to the outside, and tamariki were flowing easily between in and out (most were outside). Both served infants to kindergarten entry. The interesting thing about New Zealand kindergarten entry is that they have a rolling entry – each quarter the kindergarten admits tamariki who have turned 5. Tamariki are eligible to enter school when they turn 5. Much more developmentally appropriate than the way our elementary schools are run.

One program's indoor environment had wood paneling on all walls, and just one bulletin board in each classroom, usually with teacher's names, photos, schedule for the day. A guide explained that the bare walls were intentional, that they want to foster a more home-like feel. Both programs provided meals, and this program had was completely vegetarian. Their chef prepared some ono snacks for the group.

I had the opportunity to talk with a Māori colleague from New Zealand Tertiary College (teacher college based in Auckland), about what I had learned so far about kōhanga and family involvement and the move of families towards English programs. He lived seven months in Ka'a'awa on O'ahu with Hawaiian activists, going to Washington D.C. with them to advocate for Hawaiians. He acknowledged that even

for them as teacher educators, they were moving more towards supporting the English schools. I didn't have time to explore with him in more depth. Really intriguing.

Lessons learned from tours and meeting with colleagues

1. Even with government support of the treaty and national ECED curriculum Te Whāriki, carrying out the initiatives started in early childhood education need continued support beyond the early childhood years. I was fortunate to be able to visit a kōhanga and kura in addition to English programs. The Māori work hard to hang on to their culture and language. Solid support via the treaty and national early childhood curriculum are part of the movement, and it's not necessarily easier – it's different.
2. We in the ECED program can start working with our Hawaiian Studies colleagues to infuse and incorporate Hawaiian values and vocabulary in our teaching.
3. I expected to see Māori culture and language more prominent in the larger New Zealand culture and it was surprising to learn where Toi Ohomai and NZ Tertiary are at. It was also really interesting to see where the kōhanga and kura status in the communities and to learn that some Māori families are choosing English programs because of the perception that child development and education is more encouraged in English programs. Made me appreciate how Pūnana Leo preserves language, culture, and promotes child development.
4. The marae (community meeting house) is very important in Māori culture. Knowing which marae you belong to is crucial. Rawhia in Rotorua explained how Māori in Auckland have a harder time finding and connecting with their marae in that large city. Protocol for entering a marae is important. Aotearoa was the last Pacific island nation to be populated and it's so much colder than the others!
5. Seeing a familiar face or hearing familiar language really helps in a new environment. For young keiki, seeing familiar faces and hearing their home language is crucial.

The World Forum formally began on Tuesday night. Each evening and morning there were plenary sessions, then there were breakout sessions during the day. 67 countries were represented, about 100 delegates did not make it due to visa issues. One speaker from Haiti talked about how well she got to know the NZ consulate and her family history through all the information requirements for her visa.

The World Forum began in 1999 in Waikiki. I was involved in the planning, as I was the president of Hawai'i Association for the Education of Young Children at the time. I arranged the center tours on O'ahu – from Maui, in a time before extensive email use. The Forum has a calabash bowl that my cousin was contracted to make and it has traveled the world since. The WF has been in Waikiki twice, and also a "Men in Early Childhood Education World Forum" conference was held in Waikiki. At all of these, I was engaged in helping out, and didn't stay for the evening sessions. This was the first time I was participating in the full experience.

The WF is designed to have people interact, engage with each other, and develop relationships across the globe. Breakout sessions are developed through participants' submissions, which are then grouped into sessions of 3-5 presentations per 1.5 hour session. The presenters in the session I facilitated were

from the U.S., N.Z., and Belgium (doing work in Nigeria). 45 minute breaks are scheduled to encourage dialogue and connection. Plenary sessions featured delegates' work and groups from different countries shared song and dance. Māori culture, protocol and greeting (Kia ora!) were featured throughout.

The biggest lessons I learned from the World Forum were:

1. Early childhood educators across the globe advocate for keiki in a variety of ways. In the U.S., we have very different issues from places such as Nepal, Bhutan, Indonesia, South Africa.
2. Some Americans can be very loud and apparently like to hear the sound of their own voice. There were some American presenters that I respected highly for their sensitivity and responsiveness to other cultures, and others that made me embarrassed to be a fellow American.
3. The knowledge that keiki learn through play is shared by early childhood educators across the globe. Depending on the country and culture, people have different challenges in putting this into practice.

How the experience and knowledge will be used:

1. Start discussion with Julie Powers, and Hawaiian Studies faculty on how we can incorporate and interweave Hawaiian values and vocabulary into our teaching. Be aware of and look for ways to expand what is developed beyond our discipline.
2. Make sure that I continue to emphasize social justice and being able to take other people's perspectives in my own teaching. Make sure to give students the opportunity to identify and be proud of their own culture and heritage while respecting, honoring, and learning about our host culture in Hawai'i.
3. Continue to explore and promote respect, honor, and knowledge about Hawaiian culture in early childhood programs across the state. Make sure that the leadership that has brought our Pūnana Leo to a place of promoting language, culture and child development is acknowledged and appreciated in a variety of contexts.
4. Create slide shows as appropriate for college classes and other venues.

Other sabbatical activities:

- Hawai'i Association for Education of Young Children board meetings (VP Public Policy)
- Peer review visit to California college for NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation.
- DHS Advisory Committee meeting (representing community colleges).
- Visited Makawao School part-time teachers to see their new laptop program for tutoring.
- Lunch/connect with UHWO colleague Susan Adler and alumnae and UHWO and Hawai'i CC lecturer Brooke Rehmann.
- PATCH board and committee meetings (state board member)
- Hosted meeting of ECED lecturers and faculty, agreed on information that should be throughout coursework in ECED.
- Keiki Fest 2017 with Julie Powers.
- Continued liaison via email for UHMC/MEO Head Start. Activities included coloring eggs with keiki, doing Easter egg hunt for keiki, re-keying of Head Start.

- Did 3-5 student advising through emails.
- Coordinated and facilitated annual ECED Advisory Committee meeting.
- Participated in Early Childhood Data Coordinating (ECDC) meetings via phone or computer.