Assessment for learning in infant and toddler education and care:

A study of teachers' talk and practice at one centre

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A Research Project

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Abstract

The introduction of *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b) to the early childhood sector in New Zealand created a move to viewing children's learning through a socio-cultural lens. With this change Carr (1998a) introduced the early childhood sector to learning dispositions and a new format for assessing children's learning.

This study focuses on how teachers in an infant and toddler centre connect key ideas from *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b) into assessment practices. A case study is used to analyse data gathered from centre policy documents, a group interview, and several children's profile books.

Three focus ideas are presented including, parental contribution in their child's profile books, terminology used in the documents and how the centre is adapting to taking up a socio-cultural approach to assessment. Findings show parental contributions to the profile books are in fact one aspect that is linking the family and community to the centre. Terminologies used in the centre's documents show a mixture of developmental and socio-cultural terms and reflect the language used by the teachers who are interviewed. The teachers' approach to a socio-cultural understanding about assessing children's learning is revealed to be developing through professional development run at the centre. Ultimately, the study shows the teachers to be in the early stages of a transition from developmental based practices to a socio-cultural approach to assessment.

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Chapter One: Introduction

It is said that a child who has gained learning dispositions through motivation, situation and skill is "'ready, willing and able' to learn" (Carr, 2001, p. 9). In New Zealand early childhood settings, dispositions to learn are important learning outcomes and hence are encouraged rather than taught through an environment that nurtures "well-being and trust, belonging and purposeful activity, contributing and collaborating, communicating and representing, and exploring and guided participation" (Ministry of Education, 1996b, p. 45). The New Zealand *Early Childhood Curriculum: Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b [hereafter referred to as Te Whāriki]) creates a basis for which teachers can assess children's learning in relation to these dispositions. This project explored the way teachers connected key ideas from *Te Whāriki* into assessment practices in an infant and toddler centre.

I discuss in this chapter how assessment is portrayed through policy and theory in relation to early childhood settings. Research studies that look at the effect of policy and theory changes in New Zealand and overseas are discussed along with how early childhood practitioners have adapted their practices to accommodate these.

Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 1996b) is based on a socio-cultural approach to teaching and learning. One aspect of this socio-cultural approach as outlined in *Te Whāriki*, are the "aspirations for children" (p. 9). A key driver that forms the aspirations for children and hence early childhood pedagogy and assessment is "for children to grow up as competent and confident learners and communicators healthy in mind, body and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society" (p. 9). By combining these aspirations with the learning dispositions of taking an interest, being involved, persisting with difficulty, communicating with others and taking responsibility (Carr, 2001), this creates a platform for 'assessment for learning'. The notion of 'assessment for learning' reflects 'formative assessment' which the Ministry of Education (2004) describes as a process of "noticing, recognising, and responding [to children's learning]" (p. 6). Teachers *notice* what the children are involved in, *recognise* that some of it is learning and *respond* to what they recognise. When this learning is recorded, the documentation can be collated into portfolios also referred to as profile books [the term used in this report]. These profile books are a collection of artefacts produced by the teachers, children and parents including written and pictorial evidence of children's learning in the early childhood

centre. Therefore assessment of these experiences must support the aspirations. This is why assessment for learning has become essential to early childhood education in New Zealand.

In early childhood settings throughout New Zealand, the 'assessment for learning' approach puts the child's learning at the centre of all assessment purposes and practices. Assessment is primarily for recording the learning that occurs within a centre and is evidence recorded in individual children's profile books. One significant approach to recording these dispositions as evidence of assessment for learning is using a learning story format. Learning stories (Carr, 1998a) are based on the learning dispositions that link to *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b). Cowie and Carr (2004) define learning stories as "structured narratives that track children's strengths and interests: they emphasise the aim of early childhood as the development of children's identities as competent learners in a range of different arenas" (p. 97). Teachers record the experience that has occurred and reflect back on the learning looking through the five dispositions. By engaging in this process the teachers can break down the events that happened, relating them to what learning took place and can extend the child's interests and learning by assessing what could happen next. In this project I am interested in finding evidence within the children's profile books of assessment for learning.

I now introduce my personal and professional interests in the research topic. I describe elements outlining children's learning in early childhood settings in New Zealand, and my interest in infants and toddlers.

Rationale for the study

During the last ten years there has been significant change to policy in early childhood education within New Zealand. Legislation under the *Education Act* (1989) (New Zealand) has seen the *Education (Early Childhood Centres) Regulations* 1990; 1998a (Ministry of Education) amended to change with societies expectations of early childhood services. Quality indicators were introduced to the sector as the *Revised statement of desirable objectives and practices (DOPs) for chartered early childhood services in New Zealand* [hereafter referred to as DOPs] (Ministry of Education, 1996a). During this time *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education 1996b) had been created and introduced to centres as a working document. This has had the effect of shifting the theoretical basis for teaching, curriculum and assessment in the field away from a developmental approach towards a more socio-cultural one. I was a practising teacher when a developmental approach, also known as

developmentally appropriate practice, was prominent. Planning was based on observations of what children could do in the areas of physical, social, emotional, language and intellectual development. This theory of planning (and teaching and learning) was based on the work of Jean Piaget, who had a major influence on early childhood development from the 1950's (Smith, 1996). Piaget's theory was based on the idea that children's ability to learn was limited by their stage of cognitive development. Interpretation of Piaget's theory to teaching in early childhood education created an approach known as Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP). Smith writes DAP was an approach premised on "universal predictable changes...at particular ages and stages regardless of context" (p. 53). However as already indicated the policy context for teachers in early childhood education in New Zealand has changed. This led to my interest in understanding how teachers who work in early childhood settings today interpret *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b) and implement assessment for learning using a socio–cultural approach.

My other motivation and inspiration for this project is my daughter, Isabel, who was born in the middle of 2007. She has given me a new interest in under two-year-olds. Isabel has shown me how children, even as young as six weeks old, have a way of responding when they have positive experiences with people they have bonded with. Having one on one time with Isabel allows me to observe her progress, interests and personality. It has left me wondering if teachers working in infant and toddler centres with multiple children to educate and care for are able to capture and assess the learning that is occurring in a socio-cultural context.

Policy shifts towards assessment for learning in New Zealand early childhood centres

As stated previously shifts in early childhood education have been made to policy through the regulations, introduction of the DOPs (Ministry of Education, 1996a), and of a national early childhood curriculum. Children between the ages of birth and six years in New Zealand can attend a range of early childhood services. These services vary and include but are not inclusive to those mentioned: Kindergarten, privately owned and operated services, Playcentre, and language nests for example Kohanga Reo. These services are supported in their uniqueness by *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b) which encourages services to develop "a curriculum appropriate for their particular philosophy" (p. 17). However at the same time the curriculum seeks a level of consistency across the different types of services especially with respect to assessment for learning.

Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 1996b) was the first curriculum to be specifically designed for early childhood education in New Zealand. The curriculum "provides the framework for defining learning and what is to be learned" (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 9). There are four main principles that create the basis of *Te Whāriki*: Empowerment; Holistic Development; Family and Community; and Relationships. These principles form the main structure from which strands and goals are weaved creating a mat, 'whāriki', from which children's learning is formed. *Te Whāriki* describes teachers assessing children's learning minute by minute as they listen, watch and interact with individuals or groups of children. The curriculum goes on to say "continuous observations provide the basis of information for more in-depth assessment" that the teachers can use to make decisions about how best to meet the child's needs.

Theoretical shifts towards assessment and learning in New Zealand early childhood centres

A shift in theoretical understandings was supported by the policy changes previously outlined. The change in theory towards children's learning has occurred since I graduated and began teaching. As mentioned earlier, my understanding of children's learning was formed by Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP). There is an argument that says using DAP "frequently produces static, one dimensional representations of complex sequences of interactions" (Fleer and Robbins, 2004, p. 24). I will now discuss the move from DAP to using a socio-cultural approach to assessing children's learning as it meant the release of support documents by the Ministry of Education to inform teachers of these changes.

When *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b) was first published, teachers began to explore children's learning through a holistic lens and this saw a shift in assessment recording from checklist based observations to a more anecdotal approach (Te One, 2002). The Ministry of Education has over the years, produced other resources designed to inform teachers about the curriculum and their responsibilities to children and families in the context of early childhood education. A number of these documents specifically relate to teaching, planning and assessment. All of these documents make reference to assessment for learning. The first of these was the DOPs (Ministry of Education, 1996a) which set out guidelines for management and teachers in early childhood settings to provide quality care and education.

The support document to the DOPs was *Quality in Action: Implementing the Revised Statement of Desirable Objectives and Practices in New Zealand early childhood services* (Ministry of Education, 1998b [hereafter referred to as Quality in Action]). The release of *Quality in Action* seemed to coincide with teachers using profile books as an assessment tool (Steele, 2007). In this document teachers were encouraged "To celebrate children's learning achievements, [by] educators open[ing] a file for each child" (p. 39). Each file or profile book is a collection of artefacts portraying the child's learning through photos, drawings, written assessments including observations that record the children's experiences in the early childhood setting (Ministry of Education, 2004). This forms one approach for teachers to implement assessment for learning because they can plan together with the children by comparing what learning has happened with future programme planning.

The third resource designed to inform and educate teachers about curriculum and assessment was *Kei Tua o te Pae Assessment for Learning: Early childhood exemplars* (Ministry of Education, 2004 [hereafter referred to as Kei Tua o te Pae]). This document was designed to assist teachers with developing their practice of 'assessment for learning'. The document is based on the principles of the early childhood curriculum and is a significant initiative that values "assessment as a powerful force for learning" (p. 2). It describes assessment as sitting 'inside the curriculum' an idea first introduced to the sector by Carr (1998b) in a professional development resource called "*Assessing Children's Learning in Early Childhood Settings: A professional development programme for discussion and reflection*". It is thought that teachers have come to understand that assessment not only describes learning but that it constructs and fosters it as well (Ministry of Education, 2004). I propose to find out how this might be happening in an infant and toddler centre. Since this change in theoretical thinking has been introduced to the sector a range of research has been carried out in this area.

Literature Review

Research (Carr, 1998a; Davis, 2006; Fleer and Robbins, 2004; Steele, 2007; Te One, 2002) has been conducted in a number of early childhood settings in New Zealand and abroad to gauge the practical implications of the changes from DAP to a socio-cultural approach to policy and in particular assessment. Research in New Zealand relating to a socio-cultural approach to teaching, learning and assessment stemmed from the introduction of the national curriculum for early childhood services and the effects this has had on teachers, children,

parents and the community. The research studies that follow are examples of centres moving through the change to a socio-cultural approach to assessment.

The main influence to this change has been Margaret Carr's (1998a) work. Commissioned by the Ministry of Education to see what assessment would look like in the face of *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b) this became known as the *Project for Assessing Children's Experiences* (PACE). The research was conducted from 1995-1997 in centres within the Waikato and Bay of Plenty regions. Three phases formed the structure of the research. Phase one developed a framework for *what* to assess and the learning story framework was created. Phase two was trialling and adapting the framework in five early childhood settings. Phase three was the development of workshop ideas and professional development resources which consisted of three videos and an accompanying information booklet (Carr, 1998a). The second phase of this project involved the learning story framework being trialled in five centres as case studies. Carr's research within these centres found that when assessment and curriculum are combined "different patterns of assessment practice" (p. viii) are identified. Two main decisions the teachers in this study had to make when using the learning story framework for assessing children's learning were, *what* to assess and the *purpose* of assessing children's learning (Carr, 1998a). The 'what to assess' element saw most of the teachers linking the settings philosophy and programme to what was important with respect to children's learning. The 'purpose of assessment' related to the why and how teachers assessed children's learning. By combining these two elements the teachers made informed decisions about children's learning and could therefore effectively plan the centre's programme based on this information. Teachers who were aware of the working theories and learning dispositions were able to capture these through the learning story framework when assessing children's learning. Learning stories have been introduced to the early childhood sector since the late 1990's so in this project I was interested to see how the centre I conducted my project in used this framework.

The learning story framework is one way that a socio-cultural approach to assessment has been captured. Another example of teachers learning to observe and assess children's experiences is through a multitude of lenses as explained in Marilyn Fleer and Jill Robbins' (2004) work. This study used a "participatory appropriation model" (p. 28) that looked at how 80 student teachers in Australia, used "their growing understanding of the different cultural tools available to guide them to observe and plan for children's learning" (p. 28). Fleer and Robbins introduced their fourth year early childhood student teachers to Rogoff's

(2003, cited in Fleer and Robbins, 2004) "three foci of analysis [that looks at learning] from a personal perspective, then an interpersonal orientation, and finally a cultural or institutional perspective" (p. 27). Fleer and Robbins (2004) found that the student teachers' observations that were completed on placement using these foci created "more vibrant, reflective and complex" (p. 33) results which helped the students orient observations to a socio-cultural approach. This allowed the student teachers to be more "critical, contextual and embedded" (p. 35) in planning experiences for the children compared with traditional forms of observations. By comparing different forms of assessment I will be able to see if the teachers in my project have become more 'critical and contextual' in their assessment practices.

Sarah Te One's (2002) study took the aspects of curriculum and assessment, and examined how teachers used portfolios [profile books] as an assessment tool in one early childhood centre. By using "an ethnographic interpretive approach" (p. 2), Te One discovered that the portfolios informed the curriculum and therefore the emphasis was on the process not the product. The study highlighted how teachers had to change their assessment practice from checklists to anecdotal narrative observations in order to accommodate the new social and cultural context of *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b). In this study Te One found the teachers in this centre saw portfolios as "celebrating a child's development; acting as a memory bank for the child; and encouraging self assessment for the child" (p. 11). Profile books can show evidence of an early childhood setting changing from DAP to a socio-cultural way of recording assessments.

In another early childhood setting, Keryn Davis (2006) explored assessment using a case study approach. Davis specifically looked at how teachers made decisions about the centre's programme from the narrative assessments they conducted on the children they worked with. Having used a range of research methods including initial group interviews, observations, document analysis, group workshops and discussions on videos she was able to show that much of what the teachers practiced reflected a mixture of positivistic and interpretivistic values. Positivistic approaches are generally more traditional methods of recording children's learning experiences for example running records were seen in the assessments even though they were sometimes recorded in a learning story format. The learning story format is considered an interpretivistic form of documenting assessment because it "is founded on the desire to gain deep understandings of why things are the way they are and how people perceive these within context" (p. 52). The profile books analysed by Davis were descriptive rather than narrative and didn't seem to show much depth in the content. Davis

described the learning stories as "written like a 'running record' where the teachers had recorded precise, detailed description and the teacher writing the story had spoken about herself in the third person" (p. 105). Davis' (2006) study demonstrated that where the teachers had perceived they were using narrative assessment formats to write up children's learning, they were actually writing them up using traditional methods. The teachers had an understanding of narrative assessment but couldn't 'translate' it into practice. This highlights that change can be slow but the progression from a developmental approach to a socio-cultural assessment format may be visible in the children's profile books.

In an action research based case study conducted by Lynne Steele (2007), an examination of how children's portfolios could be made more accessible to the children and their families within the centre was undertaken. Steele recognised that the "child's voice", a crucial aspect of the portfolios (Carr, 2001), was missing from the portfolios and therefore she wondered about the accessibility of the portfolio books. At the time the study began the portfolios were kept in an office in a filing cabinet and were available on request by either the child or the parents. Through interviews with the children aged between three to five-year-olds she discovered the children knew what their portfolio was and what was in them. The children particularly referred to the photographs included in the portfolios as Steele explains "what seemed really significant to the children were the photographs not only of them but of their friends" (p. 48). A questionnaire to parents saw them supporting "the portfolios being fully accessible" (p. 50). Steele involved the children in making the portfolios more accessible in the learning environment for them to share with friends, parents or a teacher. The response from the children was a sense of ownership, community and respect. "A significant benefit of making the portfolios accessible was it made their [the children's] learning more visible" (p. 58). The outcome of this study showed that by "Involving children in the portfolio process makes visible to children the value of their contributions to their learning" (p. 93) and therefore their 'voice' was being heard. Children's voices within profile books are an important element of assessment for learning and having the books accessible means the children can revisit and reflect on past experiences to strengthen their learning.

These studies show teachers coming to terms with what it means to change assessment practice to fit with a socio-cultural approach consistent with the policy direction in New Zealand early childhood education. They tell us that change is slow to happen; assessment varies from centre to centre; and *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b) focuses the

teacher on a socio-cultural approach to teaching, learning and assessment. Based on these aspects around assessment this study will explore the following question.

Main question

How do teachers in an infant and toddler setting connect key ideas from *Te Whāriki* to assessment practices?

Chapter Two: Methodology

In this chapter I discuss the methodology of the study and methods I used to conduct this research project. I give an overview of the methods used in gathering the data, the participants involved in the interview, and the way I interpreted the data based around my research question of how key ideas from *Te Whāriki* inform assessment practices in an infant and toddler setting.

Methodology

I chose to use a qualitative research approach when conducting this project. Qualitative research can be described as "dealing with the direct experience of people in specific contexts, and where [researchers] understand, explain and demystify social reality through the eyes of different participants" (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2007, p. 19). This type of research has the unique feature of being conducted in the natural setting with as little disruption as possible (Merriam, 1998). This means participants could continue their practices as normal while the research study progressed. This approach offered me an opportunity to gather "rich information about the social processes in specific settings" (Neuman, 2003, p. 140), and allowed me to collect data about how participants in an early childhood setting assess children's learning and record it in the children's profile books.

Method

The method I used in this research project was a case study. Merriam (1998) explains this method allows the researcher to "gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved" (p. 19). I chose to use a case study for this project because it allowed me to understand through interviewing and analysing documents how the participant teachers linked key ideas from *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b) to the children's profile books. A case study method can go into depth in one area of study and in this case I was exploring assessment in children's profile books and how it relates to the socio-cultural approach outlined in *Te Whāriki*. Using a case study method allowed me to work with real people in real situations (Cohen et al, 2007) and therefore study how participant teachers in this early childhood centre assess infants and toddlers' learning.

Sources of data

There were three main parts to my data gathering. Firstly I chose an early childhood centre that used profile books to record children's learning and that catered specifically for infants

and toddlers. I gathered the centre policy documents which included the philosophy and policies relating to the centre planning and assessment. This led me to my second form of data gathering where I interviewed three participant teachers from the centre. Finally I was able to analyse several profile books and compare them to the information I had already collected.

Participant Centre

The centre I approached to conduct this research in was one of several operated by a corporate group. Located in a major New Zealand city, the centre was licensed for twenty-five under two-year-olds and the children could attend either full or part-time. Six teachers worked full time at the centre, five had the Diploma of Teaching (Early Childhood Education) and one was completing their first year in centre based training.

Procedure

Making contact

Once I received ethical approval from the University of Canterbury College of Education Ethical Clearance Committee I contacted the centre manger and asked permission to conduct my research in the centre. Information letters and consent forms (Appendix A) for the centre manager, the participant teachers, and the parents of the children's profile books I would be using were compiled and distributed.

Participant Teachers

The criterion for selecting teachers for the interview was that they needed to have been teaching at the centre for at least twelve months. This meant the participant teachers would have contributed a number of entries into the children's profile books and they would be familiar with the requirements placed on them by the centre with regards to assessment practices. The team leader of the infant and toddler setting approached three teachers about the project and they agreed to be part of the interview. Anna, Sarah, and Joanna (pseudonyms) had all trained at the same training establishment but had graduated over consecutive years. Sarah had graduated in 2004 and held a senior position in the infant and toddlers setting, Anna had graduated in 2005 and Joanna in 2006. This was the only centre that all teachers had been employed in since graduating. Once the consent forms had been signed, a date for the group interview to take place was arranged. It was decided that after

work at the centre was most convenient location for everyone involved. I asked Joanna, Sarah and Anna to select one child each whose profile book they had contributed at least six entries to and whom were nearing two years of age. This criterion meant I would then have a sample of the written assessment entries recorded in the children's profile books. I asked the teachers to obtain written permission from the parents of these children and I provided the information letter about the project and the consent form which I collected before photocopying the profile books.

Interview

Interviewing Anna, Sarah and Joanna allowed me to ask questions when the behaviour or feelings of the teachers involved could not be observed (Merriam, 1998). I chose to conduct an interview with the participant teachers rather than a questionnaire, as it gave me the flexibility to gather information through questions that could be reworded, expanded and directed to draw more information (Cohen et al, 2007). Sarah, Joanna and Anna were interviewed as a group to encourage open discussion and therefore provide a broader understanding of assessment practices within this infant and toddler centre. Glesne (1999) says that interviewing more than one person at a time can be very useful as some topics are better discussed as a group. I decided to use a semi-structured interview technique (Merriam, 1998) in the group interview. This meant I had a range of questions that were "flexibly worded" (p. 74). This allowed me the ability to conduct the interview with some structured questions however I also had the flexibility to guide the discussion as the interview progressed. I used a range of interview techniques as described by Glesne (1999) including open interviewing which meant I was prepared to "follow unexpected leads" (p. 93) during the interview and "depth probing" (p. 93) which meant through gesturing with a nod or by saying 'yes', or 'sure', I encouraged Anna, Joanna and Sarah to extend on points of interest. The interview was recorded using a digital audio recorder. This meant that the interview could flow and I would not lose important data. Glesne supports this idea by saying a tape recorder "provides a nearly complete record of what has been said and permits easy attention to the course of the interview" (p. 78).

The interview was conducted in the infants and toddler setting. It took one hour to complete. As I had made the questions for the interview semi-structured (Appendix B), I was able to build on comments the teachers made during the interview. The interview was taped using a digital audio recorder. In conducting a group interview meant it was important that the audio

recorder was positioned so all teachers' voices would be well received by the microphone to achieve good audio coverage for later transcription. The interview transcript was not shown to the teachers for them to add to or clarify any of their contributions. This meant that they could not challenge what I had transcribed from the audio tape and therefore the findings were purely based on my ability as a researcher to transcribe correctly the information gathered during the interview process.

Documents

When I first approached the centre manager and received consent for participation, I requested copies of the centre policy documents relating to planning and assessment. I was given the following documents *Centre Philosophy*; *Parent Communication Policy;* and *Programming Policy*. Hard copies were made with the centre logo and name removed to maintain confidentiality. I was able to take the copies off site to analyse. I also gathered and analysed children's profile books. I asked the teachers to choose one profile book each. The criteria stated the child was to be nearing the age of two and the teachers had contributed at least six entries to the profile book. The profiles were collected from Joanna, Anna and Sarah and I photocopied these on site. Again I was able to take the photocopied version of the profile books off site to analyse.

Ethics

I applied for ethical approval for this study through the University of Canterbury College of Education Ethical Clearance Committee. After seeking and securing the centre's involvement, I gave the centre manager, along with the participant teachers I interviewed, and parents of the children's profile books I used, an information letter explaining the project and asked them to sign a consent form. The consent form acknowledged the person had received an information letter with details outlining the project, made it clear that the participant's identity would be protected and that they could withdraw their data at any time. Kvale (1996) explains that informed consent ensures the participants are aware of the overall purpose of the project, the way the research is designed, and the possible risks and benefits of the investigation. I collected several children's profile books and photocopied these to work with but maintained the children's anonymity by omitting photographs and changing names to pseudonyms. I also gave the participating teachers pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality which would protect their identity from the reader. However as Tolich and Davidson (1999) state, interviews can never be completely anonymous because the interviewer will still know

who said what and in this study so will the participant teachers involved in the group interview. The data collected was kept confidential as it was only available to be analysed by myself and my supervisor. The data will be destroyed after five years as required by the University of Canterbury College of Education Ethical Clearance Committee and will be securely stored in a locked filing cabinet at my home until such time.

Data analysis

To begin my data analysis I defined key terms that reflected the socio-cultural assessment ideas embedded in *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b). My interest in studying the connections between teachers' assessment practices and *Te Whāriki* led me to anticipate the terms I had listed being reflected in the documents I would analyse. I listed and defined each of these predetermined terms (Table 1) and associated a colour with each so I could identify their use throughout the documents. I also wrote definitions for the key terms so that if the teachers did not use the exact language I could refer to the table to see if the meaning behind what they were saying related to a predetermined term. These were colour coded using the same colour as the term and I recorded an 'm' in the margin to represent 'meaning'. The last four predetermined terms reflected the way assessment could be recorded using a socio-cultural approach. These terms relate to the practice of recording data and are regarded as evidence of learning. The table of predetermined key terms I used when analyzing the data created a narrow field for coding. It also created a starting point to help me identify similarities and differences across the three main types of documents I was analysing.

I also had to consider what to do if the predetermined terms were not used and how I would accurately identify new words and concepts that were included in the documents. As I read the data I made a list of emergent terms and colour coded these. The emergent terms included other socio-cultural concepts as well as developmental terminology. By identifying these emergent terms I was able to record the terminology the teachers used when discussing assessment and key ideas from *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b).

Table 1: Definitions of predetermined and emergent terms

Predetermined Terms	Definitions	Emergent terms	Definitions
Empowerment	Feedback to children that enhances their sense of themselves as capable and competent learners	Formal observations (developmental)	Observations written in developmental terminology e.g. running records
Holistic Development	All aspects of development are acknowledged through the strands of Te Whāriki and reflected through the child's learning dispositions.	Development records (developmental)	Assessments specifically refer to physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and language development
Family and community	Families participate in assessment and evaluation of the child's learning. Recognition of the child's participation in the community outside the centre environment	Staff influence on children's learning and development (developmental)	Teacher directed terminology used in policy document
Relationships	Conversations between children, teachers, and families about the child's learning and evidence of assistance and teaching shown between the learner and others	Positive focus on what children can do (socio-cultural)	A socio-cultural approach as teachers look at the children through positive lens
Dispositions	Evidence of the child taking an interest; being involved; persisting with difficulty and uncertainty; expressing their ideas; and taking responsibility	Revisiting learning i.e. what next (socio-cultural)	Carr (1998a) uses the term 'what next' in the learning story format
Notice, Recognise, Respond	The child is noticed and their play is recognised as learning and responded to appropriately.		
Multiple lens	Evidence of more than one worldview or perspective is incorporated into the learning story or the application of personal, interpersonal and cultural lenses are shown.		
Collaborative assessment	More than one voice is shown throughout the learning story(s) including teachers, and parents voices		
Narrative approach	The writing style is done in a narrative way and is less formal than other forms of observations		

The written documents were subject to content analysis, a form of analysis which is the "process of summarizing and reporting written data" (Cohen et al, 2007, p. 475). Using content analysis when examining the centre policy documents, interview, and children's profile books meant I could use a systematic procedure to analyse the data (Merriam, 1998). Content analysis also required me to use detailed coding systems, make comparisons and, identify other patterns that emerged in the data (Glesne, 1999). This allowed me to make connections and find similarities and differences between all documents. Although this system was systematic it also allowed for "accidental uncovering of valuable data" (Merriam, 1998, p. 120).

Using a comparative analysis system I was able to order the documents to show the progression from the policy documents, with the teachers' talk, to the evidence illustrated in the profile books. By using "multiple sources of information" (Creswell, 2007, p. 73) this allowed me to make a more detailed description of the centre's assessment practices.

During the data analysis a number of themes and ideas emerged across all three documents. I chose to focus on three of these ideas which best related to assessment, using a socio-cultural approach as depicted in *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b). The first of these focus ideas was parental contribution. This idea relates specifically to the family and contribution element of *Te Whāriki*. The second idea I focused on was the terminology used across all three documents. This theme showed how socio-cultural terminology was used in both written and verbal forms within the centre. Finally I explored how a socio-cultural approach was being incorporated into the centres' practices especially within the assessment of infant and toddlers learning.

Quality Research Design

Using a range of data allowed me to check the trustworthiness and dependability of the information and safeguarded my findings and discussion in relation to this project and the data collected during it. To maintain trustworthiness and dependability within this study I used triangulation when analysing documents, I had peers review my work as I progressed with my study, and I constantly reflected on my own bias towards the study (Glesne, 1999).

Limitations

I limited my sample group to allow for an insight into this one centre's assessment process. The number of participant teachers and selection of profile books was carefully chosen so I would have enough data to make trustworthy and dependable conclusions to my research question. Interviewing the other three remaining teachers in the infant and toddler centre may have given a different perspective of their understanding of the assessment practices within this centre. A limitation that I had not foreseen was the centre was going through a state of change in the area of assessment. This meant that there were limited examples in the profile books which demonstrated the new assessment format that had been introduced.

In the following chapter I draw on my understanding of the material I analysed at the time the research was done. I identify these ideas under three focus ideas that came through from the documents. The first focus idea related to the parental contributions within the profile books, secondly the terminology and approach used by the teachers in their assessment practices are highlighted, and finally evidence of the teachers' understanding of learning stories and other socio-cultural aspects of assessment are revealed.

Chapter Three: Findings

In this chapter I examine the three focus ideas of parental contribution, terminology in and the approach to assessment, and taking up a socio-cultural approach to assessment. When I analysed the documents, these key ideas were found and were relevant to the socio-cultural aspect of *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b). I was able to relate these findings to my research question of how do teachers in an infant and toddlers setting connect key ideas from *Te Whāriki* to assessment practices? I drew my findings from the policy document level, through to the interview and finally from the evidence shown in the profile books. This enabled me to compare and contrast the policy documents through to the practical aspects of assessment. I will however begin by making comparisons between the centre philosophy and relevant centre policies relating to assessment as I found some discrepancies between the two.

The centre policy documents that guide the teachers' practices created the starting point in relation to where the teachers' practices were grounded. I found that the *centre philosophy* seemed socio-culturally based, but this conflicted with the *Planning Policy*, and *Parent Communication Policy* which were written in a style that mostly reflected a developmental focus. This meant there was inconsistency within the documents that could hinder change. When the teachers started learning about how to incorporate a socio-cultural approach to assessment through their professional development activities this meant they were not adhering to the centre policies. Further, the policies were not consistent with current government expectations and theoretical understandings.

Parental contributions

The first focus idea that came through the documents was how parents made contributions to their children's profile books. A key idea embedded in *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b) is family and community and how parental contribution relates to this element. I found the *centre philosophy* made reference to the relationships between parents, teachers, and children by saying 'the role of the parent or educator should be to support them [the children] as they teach themselves'. Parental involvement in both the *Programming Policy* and *Parent Communication Policy* was mentioned and related to the element of family and community having a place in the centre. In these two documents parental contribution was referred to with regard to the programme and the 'Individual Development Portfolio' [profile books].

During the group interview there was discussion amongst Sarah and Joanna about parental contribution in the profile books. Sarah said "there is a lack of parental contribution in the profile books". However Joanna acknowledged there were a small number of parents who made contributions "Like one or two parents have put stuff in books". Anna, Sarah and Joanna all made reference to ways parental contributions could be encouraged. One way was by creating opportunities within the records by leaving a space at the end of an observation and a specific question directed to the parents to share their thoughts and ideas relating to the learning that occurred. Sarah made the suggestion that "where initially we'll start is to actually direct something to a parent or parents so they actually do theirs, they'll see their name… saying what do they [the child] like doing at home?" Another idea that Sarah and Joanna discussed was to have a parent evening where the parents could come to the centre and "do a page in their child's profile book but have a primary… caregiver around to talk about their child" (Sarah). When asked about the accessibility of the profile books to the parents Sarah and Joanna agreed that the parents should have access to the books "because it is their child's book and their book" (Sarah) "It's not our book" (Joanna). This also led to a discussion about where the profile books are currently stored, in the teachers' office, and about making them available in the classroom because as Joanna explained "parents usually get them once a year or get them at Christmas unless they ask for them". The teachers discussed changing their practices with regard to making the profile books more accessible to parents and encouraging them to make written contributions to the books. This relates to the socio-cultural aspect of *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b) where infants and toddlers establish responsive and reciprocal relationships that are central to their learning.

In two of the three profile books I analysed, parental contributions had been made. One contribution came in the form of responses to specific questions to the parents about the child's family and routines at home. Questions included "What have you and your child enjoyed the most at the centre? What I would like for my child at his/her current level of development is?" The other example of parental contribution were letters from the mother to the child telling the child from the mothers' perspective what her child's personality and character was like and how this made her feel as a parent. One letter reads

> "Well you are now 8 months old, where has that time gone. Though you are now 8 months you choose not to roll over and as for sitting, wow heck no way, you get in a right old royal grump with me. You are starting to really show an understanding of asserting yourself and have learnt how to twist daddy round your chubby finger…"

This shows that some parents are making contributions to their child's profile books. Comparing these entries to what Anna, Joanna and Sarah discussed with regard to parental contributions they wanted to make the profile books more accessible to all parents and encourage them to contribute to the written assessments.

Parental contributions can be interpreted in a number of ways. Making a connection between the centre and home allows for the infants and toddlers to have a socio-cultural link and therefore relationship between their parents and teachers. The second focus idea relates to the terminology the centre used throughout the documents.

Terminology in and approach to assessment

As I was interested in learning out about the connections teachers made with key ideas from *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b) to assessment practices it made sense to analyse the terminology used throughout the documents. The *philosophy* reflected the action of empowerment by saying children would "drive their own learning". On the other hand the policies were more developmentally focused with reference to "developmentally appropriate experiences; observations and developmental records" to name a few. This was in conflict to the first statement in the *Programming Policy* which states "The programme reflects the Centre's philosophy..."

In the interview, there was an emphasis on development in the manner the teachers talked about assessment. Anna described her belief about the learning that occurs for infants and toddlers. She concluded that infants and toddlers' learning involved "Acquiring new skills, [and that the children were] continually learning". Sarah elaborated by saying that learning is "Extending interests. Progress [and] development. It's step by step learning and new skills. That's what I mean by progress, development".

Anna explained how they went about collecting information for the profile books. She described the process as writing "formal observations" to record children's learning which were recorded once a month and were a "snapshot" of the child's learning. Sarah talked about children's development not being the focus for this snapshot of learning, rather what the children could do by saying "we're not to focus on the milestones as such in terms of walking... because she [the previous owner] knew she didn't want to focus on something that they [the child] would achieve eventually anyway". However Sarah and Joanna then went on to say that recording the children's development was important and they would document it.

"They [the owner] like to see the development... from crawling maybe up to walking maybe to running... especially... in the nursery". The terms used by Anna, Joanna and Sarah reflected the use of developmental milestones rather than a socio-cultural approach. This meant their conceptualisation of learning was still based on a DAP approach in this infant and toddler setting.

I found the profile books showed the teachers documented childrens' learning using a formal observation style with the text written solely about the child. An example in Georgia's profile book illustrates this.

> "Georgia loves to paint, and has a preference for using brushes, rather than her hands. Georgia uses firm strokes, making the most of the paint, and fills most of the page."

Most of the observations were about routine events or first experiences, for example, first swing experience at the centre. Developmental achievements including rolling, walking, spoken language, or reactions to sensory play also featured regularly. Photographs and the children's art work were included to illustrate the experiences that had taken place. Statements from the curriculum were listed beside the observation as strands and goals with no connection made to associate them with the learning that had occurred. The teachers recorded the developmental progress of infants and toddlers but the socio-cultural links from *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b) were not reflected within the observation. This reflected their understanding of learning as stated in the interview. It also demonstrated that the last four predetermined key terms I used to analyse the data were lacking from the assessments. The third focus looks at how the teachers identified possible changes to their practices to move from developmental practices to a socio-cultural approach.

Taking up a socio-cultural approach to assessment

During the interview Sarah, Joanna and Anna explained that the centre was currently moving from formal observations, for example running records or a summary of events written using a developmental model, to writing learning stories. Joanna gave an example of when they would record evidence of a child's learning using the learning story format

> "There might be a child over there by the blocks for example (points to block area) and umm they might be there for a wee while and you can see them actually trying to stack them up and they try and try and all of a sudden they've got it and that might be like an observation we've just watched them start from one and they're problem-solving and trying to figure it out and they get it and that could be like different skills they've learnt".

Anna went on to describe what their formal observations were like by saying "it was more about what they [the children] were doing, and you know, a child is using their right hand, that was important". Sarah felt that through writing learning stories they would be "writing it [the learning] in a completely different way and the words [were] different". Later in the interview the teachers explained how they were beginning to introduce learning stories to their profile books. At the time of the interview Joanna, Sarah and Anna had completed one professional development session about learning stories and they would make the transition to using them by doing "exactly...what we did previously but now we [will] just add the 'what next'" (Joanna).

Joanna, Anna and Sarah talked about dispositions, their understanding of the term, and how dispositions linked to *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b). Referring to a sheet (Appendix C) with the *Te Whāriki* strands, learning dispositions, and actions and behaviours listed on it, Sarah explained how the dispositions and Te Whāriki linked together "So if you involve these areas of interests and actions and behaviours in the story you are still bringing it back to the national curriculum because it...doesn't give you black and white Communication goal 4, Children develop...". When asked how this practice would link to the centre philosophy the teachers remarked that the inclusion of dispositions linked well because "we are trying to keep it [the philosophy] strong" (Sarah). "Almost improve it" (Anna). The interview revealed the teachers wanted to change their practices with regard to assessment to fit with a socio-cultural approach to infants and toddlers learning.

I found some evidence within the profile books of dispositions reflected in the observations. Most regularly the ideas of *taking an interest*, *being involved* and *expressing ideas* were included in what teachers wrote. An example of this was in an entry in Sam's profile book.

> "Today for creativity we had flour in the trough for the children to explore. Sam reached in with her hands to discover the new texture. I then put Sam inside the trough, she expressed her enjoyment through smiling and laughing. We used lots of descriptive language during this activity. Sam curiously looked at the flour and reached out as I sprinkled it out of her hand."

There were other examples of similar observations within the three profile books. The entries tended to describe what was happening rather than the learning that was occurring through a socio-cultural lens.

The three focus ideas drawn from the documents show that this centre is using a mixture of developmental and socio-cultural practices when it comes to assessing infants and toddlers

learning. There was evidence of parents contributing to their children's books, and the teachers using some of the terminology relevant to *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b). There was also discussion amongst Sarah, Anna and Joanna about future changes they wanted to implement within the infant and toddler setting to incorporate a more socio-cultural approach to assessment.

Chapter Four: Discussion

My interpretation of these findings are based around the three focus ideas of parental contribution, terminology in and the approach to assessment, and taking up a socio-cultural approach. These will be discussed in this section and compared to other research and theory published on these topics.

In this study I explored how teachers in an infant and toddler setting connect key ideas from *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b) to assessment practices. To maintain quality practices within a centre, the Ministry of Education (1998b) has defined policies in the DOPs and sees these documents as essential tools for management and educators as "they assist the service to meet its charter requirements and the aims of its statement of philosophy" (p. 63). *Te Whāriki* states that each strand of the curriculum has an implication on how centres are managed and organized and this includes the settings philosophy, policies and procedures. The curriculum also "emphasizes the critical role of socially and culturally mediated learning and of reciprocal and responsive relationships for children with people, places, and things" (p. 9). Therefore the policies need to reflect this and represent a more socio-cultural approach to teaching and learning. In this context it is perhaps not surprising that the findings show Anna, Sarah and Joanna were in a period of transition both in a practical sense and in their thinking about assessment as their ideas about children's learning were being challenged.

Parental contributions

One way teachers connected key ideas from *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b) was by focusing on parental contributions to the childrens' profile books. The teachers thought that the majority of parents didn't contribute to their children's profile books. At the time of the study the profile books were not freely available to the children or parents which created a barrier because the parents were unable to read on a regular basis what was being interpreted as learning by the teachers. Steele (2007) explains that the environment and location of where the profile books are located can have a significant part to play in their use. Anna, Sarah and Joanna felt that this was an area for improvement and they discussed in the interview how they could improve this aspect of their assessment practice. Cowie and Carr (2004) say that having the profile books accessible could allow children and families to suggest developments and alternatives that link ideas and knowledge from home and allow teachers' interpretations to be clarified. This is supported by Steele who felt in her study

there was an increase in the parent's becoming "more involved in their children's learning and experiences at the centre" (p. 60) when they had a voice through the profile books. Whilst this is yet to occur in the centre that I studied, Sarah, Anna and Joanna were positive that the parents would respond to being included in the assessment process.

Even though the teachers felt that parental contributions to profile books were lacking in two of the three profile books I analysed, I still found entries made by the child's parents. The entries in Lindsay's profile book were parent driven and personal to the child where as Sam's profile book had teacher directed questions about the child's general interests and involvement at home. Steele (2007) felt that there was an increase in parent communication in her centre when questions were asked regarding activities at home and in her study these were added to the learning stories as the parent's voice. In my study the entries created a link between the home and centre environment showing the connection with the family and community as being important to the infant and toddlers learning. This idea is highlighted in Davis' (2006) study where the teachers felt the profile books supported a responsive and reciprocal relationship between them and the parents.

Terminology in and approach to assessment

A socio-cultural approach to assessment was shown by the teachers beginning to use relevant terminology found within *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b). The language used throughout the documents was a mixture of developmental and socio-cultural terminology. The teachers were yet to progress to using multiple lenses when assessing children's learning. At this stage they were still developmentally focused and viewed the learning from the child's perspective without including the people, places and things that influence the learning that was happening. Fleer and Robbins (2004) explain that observations that do not take into account the cultural aspect of the learning strip the richness from the observation and hence a static representation of what happened in a particular situation occurs.

Making a shift from recording learning through formal observations to documenting learning in a narrative way could see a move towards embracing a more socio-cultural approach to assessment. Anna, Sarah and Joanna made some links between a socio-cultural approach to learning based on *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b) and learning dispositions. Even so, most of the language they used during the interview was still developmentally based. The evidence in the profile books showed observations recording developmental progress and there were no examples at the time the data was collected of a learning story. Davis (2006)

also found this conflicting issue in her study where there was a "central tension that develops when positivist values and the interpretivist values of *Te Whāriki* collide" (p. 87). This was evident in the profile books because the teachers had not included *Te Whāriki* within the written observation but instead quoting it beside it making the link disjointed and disconnected from the learning. Carr (2001) explains that teachers can shift the documentation from being outside the learning to one where assessment becomes an integral part of learning and hence the child becomes a "learner-in-action" (p. 157). The teachers interviewed didn't recognise this as an area of concern or development within their practices which leads me to believe they had not thought about the position *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b) took in the documentation or the reason they included it in its current format.

Taking up a socio-cultural approach to assessment

The third focus idea related to teachers moving towards assessing infants and toddlers learning through a socio-cultural approach as outlined in *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b). Joanna, Sarah, and Anna were positive about the professional development they had received regarding learning stories and could use the new terminology related to this change. The teachers in Te One's (2002) study also valued "professional development as an essential vehicle for keeping them in touch with professional expectations" (p. 20). From this one professional development session Anna, Sarah and Joanna were able to name the learning dispositions. Sarah used a chart to illustrate and explain how *Te Whāriki* related to the dispositions and how the behaviours seen in the infants and toddlers setting could be recorded in a learning story. Carr (1998a) acknowledges the benefits of professional development by saying it provides opportunities to build and share knowledge with other professionals and helps develop skills over time. Anna, Joanna and Sarah were beginning to understand the new terminology relevant to socio-cultural teaching and learning and over time they were prepared to change their practices to include it in their assessments.

The way Anna, Sarah and Joanna intertwined dispositions and other socio-cultural terms and developmental aspects into their conversation created a sense of overlapping that encompassed both the old and the new ways of assessment. Creating opportunities to put into practice the socio-cultural terms will lead the teachers to naturally incorporate it into other areas of the infant and toddler setting.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

The findings and discussion of this study indicate that the teachers at this infant and toddler centre are making steps towards connecting key ideas from *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b) into their assessment practices. Elements of parental contribution, terminology used in the documents and aspects of a socio-cultural approach to assessment have been discussed. These ideas highlight the process and aspects of change that this centre is experiencing as they adjust their practices in relation to assessment.

Even though *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b) was introduced to the early childhood sector over a decade ago there are still misconceptions about its purpose in regards to assessment. This centres' interpretation of the curriculum and support documents issued by the Ministry of Education (1996a, 1998a, 1998b, 2004) shows that even though information can be available, professional development within centres creates better opportunities to make effective changes. For the teachers in this centre, they are at a stage where continuing with professional development should be encouraged to assist them to move forward to create an understanding and build knowledge around socio-cultural practices that fit with their centre's philosophy.

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Appendices

Appendix A   Information sheets and Consent forms

Appendix B   Interview questions

Appendix C   A Learning and Teaching Story Framework

Appendix A

Assessment for learning in infant and toddler education and care

Information for Centre

Hello

My name is Vida Schurr. I am a student at the University of Canterbury Educational Studies and Human Development. I am researching teachers' assessment of infant and toddler learning. I would like permission to photocopy the centre philosophy and policies and procedures that relate to assessment to use as part of this research.

I will be analysing the content in the centre's policies and procedures and the centre philosophy in connection to a group interview of three teachers from the infant and toddler classroom, and several children's profile books. This information will help me to understand what is included in children's profile books and what teachers' think is important when assessing for learning. I will ask a number of parents to allow me to photocopy their child's profile book so I can work with them away from the centre. I will use all the information to assist me when writing and talking about this research. The raw data will be kept for a period of five years following completion of the project and then destroyed inline with University of Canterbury's standard research practice.

The centre will have a code name so no-one else will be able to identify it when I write my report of this research.

If you give permission for the centre to take part in the research, please sign the consent form below. I will also give the teachers involved and the parents of the children whose profile books I will be using a consent form to sign.

If you have any questions about this project you can talk to me. If you have any complaints you may also contact the Chair of the University of Canterbury Ethics Committee; see contact details below.

If you change your mind about including the information you share as part of the interview with me, that's fine, too; all you have to do is say so.

Thank you for assisting me in this project.

Signed: _____

University of Canterbury College of Education

Date: _____

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1. This project has received ethical approval from the University of Canterbury College of Education Ethical Clearance Committee.

2. Complaints may be addressed to:
   Dr Missy Morton, Chair, Ethical Clearance Committee
   College of Education, University of Canterbury
   Private Bag 4800, CHRISTCHURCH   Telephone: 345 8312

Assessment for learning in infant and toddler education and care: A study of teachers' talk and practice at one centre.

Assessment for learning in infant and toddler education and care

Centre Consent Form

I give permission for _____ centre to be used in the project, *Assessment for learning in infant and toddler education and care.*

I have read and understood the information given to me about the research project and what the philosophy, policies and procedures will be used for.

No findings that could identify the centre will be published.

I understand that participation in this project is voluntary and that I can withdraw the centre from the project at any time without repercussions.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Please return this form to the centre manager.

---

1. This project has received ethical approval from the University of Canterbury College of Education Ethical Clearance Committee.

2. Complaints may be addressed to:
   Dr Missy Morton, Chair, Ethical Clearance Committee
   College of Education, University of Canterbury
   Private Bag 4800, CHRISTCHURCH   Telephone: 345 8312

Assessment for learning in infant and toddler education and care: A study of teachers' talk and practice at one centre.

Assessment for learning in infant and toddler education and care

Information for Teachers

Hello

My name is Vida Schurr. I am a student at the University of Canterbury Educational Studies and Human Development. I am researching teachers' assessment of infant and toddler learning and I would like to interview you as part of this research.

I will be conducting a group interview with teachers from the infant and toddler classroom and will be using this information to understand what is included in children's profile books. I will be using an audio recorder to tape the interview and I will make a transcript of this recording so I can refer back to it later during my analysis of data. I anticipate the interview will last 2 hours. I will seek your assistance in selecting appropriate profile books to use as part of the content analysis part of this project. I will require the parents to allow me to photocopy their child's profile book so I can work with them away from the centre. I will use the information to assist me when writing and talking about this research. The raw data will be kept for a period of five years following completion of the project and then destroyed inline with University of Canterbury's standard research practice.

Each of the teachers will have a code name so no-one else will be able to identify you when I write my report of this research.

If you agree to take part in the research, please sign the consent form below. I have will also give the centre and parents a consent form to sign.

If you have any questions about this project you can talk to me. If you have any complaints you may also contact the Chair of the University of Canterbury Ethics Committee; see contact details below.

If you change your mind about including the information you share as part of the interview with me, that's fine, too; all you have to do is say so.

Thank you for assisting me in this project.

Signed: _____

University of Canterbury College of Education

Date: _____

---

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    Dr Missy Morton, Chair, Ethical Clearance Committee
    College of Education, University of Canterbury
    Private Bag 4800, CHRISTCHURCH   Telephone: 345 8312

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Assessment for learning in infant and toddler education and care

Teacher Consent Form

I _____ give consent to participate in the project, *Assessment for learning in infant and toddler education and care.*

I have read and understood the information given to me about the research project and what will be required of me.

No findings that could identify me or the centre will be published.

I understand that participation in this project is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the project at any time without repercussions.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Please return this form to the centre manager.

---

1. This project has received ethical approval from the University of Canterbury College of Education Ethical Clearance Committee.

2. Complaints may be addressed to:
   Dr Missy Morton, Chair, Ethical Clearance Committee
   College of Education, University of Canterbury
   Private Bag 4800, CHRISTCHURCH   Telephone: 345 8312

Assessment for learning in infant and toddler education and care: A study of teachers' talk and practice at one centre.

Assessment for learning in infant and toddler education and care

Information for Parents/Caregivers

Hello

My name is Vida Schurr. I am a student at the University of Canterbury Educational Studies and Human Development. I am researching teachers' assessment of infants and toddler learning and I would like to use your child's profile book as part of this research.

I will be talking to some of the teachers in the infant and toddler classroom and will be using this information to understand what is included in children's profile books. I will be photocopying the profile books so I can work with them away from the centre. Photos will not be included; however a written description of them will be recorded in its place. An example of the kind of description I may write is: two children sit opposite each other at a table with a puzzle between them, child on left is reaching for puzzle piece, puzzle half complete, child on right is frowning. I will use the information to assist me when writing and talking about this research. The raw data will be kept for a period of five years following completion of the project and then destroyed inline with University of Canterbury's standard research practice.

Each of the children will have a code name so no-one else will know whose profile book I will be using in my report of this research.

If you agree for your child's profile book to be included in the research, please sign the consent form below. I will also be giving the teachers and centre a consent form to sign.

If you have any questions about this project you can talk to me. If you have any complaints you may also contact the Chair of the University of Canterbury Ethics Committee; see contact details below.

If you change your mind about sharing their profile book with me, that's fine, too; all you have to do is say so.

Thank you for assisting me in this project.

Signed: _____
          University of Canterbury College of Education

Date: _____

1. This project has received ethical approval from the University of Canterbury College of Education Ethical Clearance Committee.

2. Complaints may be addressed to:
        Dr Missy Morton, Chair, Ethical Clearance Committee
        College of Education, University of Canterbury
        Private Bag 4800, CHRISTCHURCH   Telephone: 345 8312

Assessment for learning in infant and toddler education and care: A study of teachers' talk and practice at one centre.

Assessment for learning in infant and toddler education and care

Parent/Caregiver Consent Form

I give permission for _____ profile book to be used in the project, *Assessment for learning in infant and toddler education and care.*

I have read and understood the information given to me about the research project and what the profile book will be used for.

No findings that could identify my child or his/her centre will be published.

I understand that participation in this project is voluntary and that I can withdraw my child's profile book from the project at any time without repercussions.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Please return this form to the centre manager.

1. This project has received ethical approval from the University of Canterbury College of Education Ethical Clearance Committee.

2. Complaints may be addressed to:
   Dr Missy Morton, Chair, Ethical Clearance Committee
   College of Education, University of Canterbury
   Private Bag 4800, CHRISTCHURCH   Telephone: 345 8312

Assessment for learning in infant and toddler education and care: A study of teachers' talk and practice at one centre.

Appendix B

Interview Questions

1) Tell me what you think counts as learning where infants and toddlers are concerned.

2) How would you define assessment? In your opinion what is the main purpose of assessments?

3) Think about the last time you did an assessment on a child. How did you go about this process?

Possible probe questions

Why did you record this information?

What other way could you record the information?

Why did you think this was important to record?

What changes to the programme did you make as a consequence of the assessment you did?

Appendix C

A Learning and Teaching story Framework

(Adapted from Carr, May and Podmore, 2000)

Strands of Te Whāriki	Learning Dispositions	Actions and Behaviours
Belonging Mana Whenua	**Courage and Curiosity** To find something of interest here	Taking an Interest
Well-being Mana Atua	**Trust and Playfulness**	Being Involved
Exploration Mana Aotūroa	**Perseverance** To tackle and persist with difficulty or uncertainty	Persisting with Difficulty, Challenge and Uncertainty
Communication Mana Reo	**Confidence** To express an idea, a feeling or point of view	Expressing a point of view or feeling
Contribution Mana Tangata	**Responsibility** For justice and fairness and the disposition to take another point of view	Taking Responsibility