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# Pedagogical intentions

## *Enacting a “refreshed” bicultural curriculum positioned at the crossroads of colonial relations, biocultural education, and critical literacy*

**Mere Skerrett**

This article emphasises some of the shifts highlighted by the Ministry of Education in the refreshed *Te Whāriki: He Whāriki Mātauranga mō ngā Mokopuna o Aotearoa—Early Childhood Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2017) (*Te Whāriki 2017*). Some of those shifts include the ideas of *Te Whāriki 2017* being a curriculum for all children, having a stronger bicultural framing, the intentionality of curriculum design, the importance of community engagement, the centrality of kaupapa Māori theory and its relationship to identity, language, and culture. This leads into a focus discussion of the importance of language and languages policy under the heading of critical kaupapa Māori theory. Drawing on the characteristics of the pīpīwharau, and through an example of pedagogical storytelling, this article theorises a whakataukī. Finally, the relationship of critical literacy to transformational praxis is explicated, arguing that it is through such pedagogy that the aspirations of the “refreshed” *Te Whāriki 2017* as transformational can be enacted. This article rejects the construct of linguistic hierarchies, and challenges the perpetuation of colonialism’s corrosive languages policies and their privileging practices. It promotes the paradigm that all languages are powerful and that all early childhood centres, not just kōhanga reo, are language nests so it is incumbent upon kaiako and community alike to commit to the tenets of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, to social justice, and critical pedagogy for transformation.

### **A curriculum for all children**

**Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari he toa takitini**

I come not with my own strengths but bring with me the gifts, talents and strengths of my family, tribe and ancestors (Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 12)

Some of the “big” ideas around the refresh of *Te Whāriki: He Whāriki Mātauranga mō ngā Mokopuna o Aotearoa—Early Childhood Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2017) (*Te Whāriki 2017*) are that it is designed as a rich

bicultural curriculum for every child, supported with the idea that “In Māori tradition children are seen to be inherently competent, capable and rich, complete and gifted no matter what their age or ability” (p.12). At a special briefing on *Te Whāriki 2017* a Ministry of Education official, Nancy Bell, said “What worries the Ministry of Education most is that for many children the curriculum is boring, not rich enough in many services” (personal communication, June 2017). In *Te Whāriki 2017*, protection and promotion of children’s health and wellbeing; equitable access to learning opportunities;

recognition of children's language, culture, and identity; inclusivity, responsiveness, and diversity, are framed in a rights-based discourse, along with the observation that "These rights align closely with the concept of mana" (*Te Whāriki 2017*, p. 12). However, it does not explain that concept, nor how it equates to a rights-based curriculum for *all* children, simply to state that centres will offer a curriculum that recognises these rights and enables the active participation of *all* children.

### Stronger bicultural framing

There is a stronger bicultural framing in *Te Whāriki 2017*, with Te Tiriti o Waitangi implications for equitable education outcomes for Māori children as well as for sustaining te reo Māori for *all* children. *Te Whāriki 2017* argues that:

Learner identity is enhanced when children's home languages and cultures are valued in educational settings and when kaiako are responsive to their cultural ways of knowing and being. For Māori this means kaiako need understanding of a world view that emphasises the child's whakapapa connection to Māori creation, across Te Kore, te pō, te ao mārama, atua Māori and tūpuna. All children should be able to access te reo Māori in their ECE [early childhood education] setting, as kaiako weave te reo Māori and tikanga Māori into the everyday curriculum. (p. 12)

The above is a powerful statement which, in recognising the deeply connected relationship between language, culture, and identity and the importance of weaving te reo Māori and te ao Māori (Māori world views), makes explicit the tenets of Articles 2 and 3 of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, where the intent was never about eradication, but all about the promises of working together for the benefit of each iwi and all learners. However, it has long been understood that the two texts, Te Tiriti and the Treaty, led to different positions, two differing understandings; the Māori text leading to a fundamental European misunderstanding of the nature of Te Tiriti which is, as argued by Anne Salmond (2017), above all expressed in the Māori text of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Further it is argued that the use of the term "*rite tabi*" in Te Tiriti is about placing te reo Māori and tikanga Māori on an equal footing with the English language and tikanga Pākehā. This

is now reflected in the quote above from *Te Whāriki 2017*.

### Intentionality in curriculum design

The shift in terms of *intentionality* in the design of the curriculum and responsiveness to learners' ways of knowing and being was stated as an important shift at the *Te Whāriki* briefing. There is a clear imperative to include te reo Māori for every learner, not just Māori learners, with te reo Māori being woven into meaningful contexts on a daily basis in centres. The quote above from *Te Whāriki* refers to a diverse and unique cosmological worldview that was developed over thousands of years. This is a stronger promotion of te reo me ngā tikanga Māori than with *Te Whāriki: He Whāriki Mātauranga mō ngā Mokopuna o Aotearoa—Early Childhood Curriculum* (Learning Media, 1996) (*Te Whāriki 1996*), and indeed stronger than any other curriculum document in this country. It is in line with Mason Durie's 2001 Māori Education Framework, where he argued that being Māori is a Māori reality and that education should be as much about that reality as it is about literacy and numeracy. In his goal "To live as Māori" Durie talks about children having access to a Māori world, access to language, culture (including tikanga), marae, whānau, and resources. That was nearly 20 years ago, so the refresh does provide a much-needed step-up in terms of the place of te reo Māori me ōna tikanga in education today. However, public policy in this country is woefully wanting in terms of bilingual/multilingual languages policy in education. There is much more to do. Woven into the fabric of the system at the design phase (the early colonial period of the 1800s) was a deeply rooted desire to promote a one-nation state, one-language policy (English) which necessitated the eradication of te reo Māori, but the tide has turned, even though the impacts of colonialism are not easily mitigated and pose ongoing challenges.

### Community engagement

Another big idea in *Te Whāriki 2017* is a shift from the thinking that this is what we do here, to asking the following question: What learning is valued in this local community? So the implication is that parents and whānau are more engaged in their children's learning. *Te Whāriki 2017* restates the idea that "For Māori an inclusive curriculum is founded on Māori values and principles and is strengths-

based. Kaiako seek to develop mutually positive relationships with mokopuna and to work with whānau to realise high expectations" (p. 12). Being involved in communities and community languages is thus a very explicit element of *Te Whāriki 2017*, turning the idea of teachers being all powerful, all knowledgeable, delivering a one-size-fits-all curriculum, on its head. The imperative is to actively take note of whānau pedagogies, and ways of being and knowing. It is not about fitting children into a fixed curriculum, but more about designing curriculum to be versatile, flexible, and adjustable to where children are at. It is a move away from developmental theory to sociocultural theories of teaching and learning. Even here, overlapping theories can exist in the same space and time, giving rise to the importance of working through a pedagogy of vigilance and understanding the relationship between critical theory and kaupapa Māori theory.

### Critical kaupapa Māori theory: Language, culture, and identity

Kaupapa Māori theory is a theory of change. *Te Whāriki 2017* posits that the implementation of kaupapa Māori theory emphasises practices that enable Māori to achieve educational success as Māori, which is a huge departure from the one-size-fits-all assimilatory model of the past. At its core is the retention of the Māori language and culture, which provides a foundation for positive transformations bringing about educational, sociopolitical, and economic advancement. Moreover, that kaupapa Māori theory is situated within the land, culture, history, practices, and people of Aotearoa New Zealand, constituting a distinctive, contextualised theoretical framework driven by whānau, hapū, and iwi understandings. Central to kaupapa Māori theory and practice is the idea of Māori achieving educational success as Māori, again in line with Mason Durie's 2001 Māori Education Framework; and the notion of all children being able to speak te reo Māori, also included in the Ministry of Education's (2013) Māori education strategy, *Ka Hikitia*. Here there are important implications for teacher professional development, as argued in the following quote: "Promoting and supporting the ongoing learning and development of kaiako is a key responsibility of educational leaders" (*Te Whāriki 2017*, p. 59). However, in terms of teaching and learning te reo Māori, it

is very difficult to facilitate “children’s learning and development through thoughtful and intentional pedagogy” (*Te Whāriki 2017*, p. 59) when one has neither the content knowledge, nor the pedagogical content knowledge to facilitate such learning.

## Discussion

A recent document published by the Royal Society of New Zealand (2013) titled *Languages in Aotearoa New Zealand* looks at the position of te reo Māori and New Zealand Sign Language as the statutory languages of New Zealand. That publication reinforces the idea that te reo Māori is in crisis, with 92% of Māori children being in a monolingual English system. The Royal Society goes on to look at some of the considerations including the following three themes:

- 1 Language capability in a superdiverse society.
- 2 Contemporary research aiding examination into language practice in society.
- 3 The fragmented nature of language policy within New Zealand society and the opportunities for a national, unified approach.

### Superdiversity in Aotearoa

The impact of globalisation in Aotearoa has led to increasing diversity, which seems to be happening at a much higher rate here than many other nations. It also indicates the level of cultural complexity perhaps surpassing anything previously experienced. Along with increasing diversity comes increasing linguistic diversity. Language forms the basis for human communication—and is also central to human identity. We are now home to 160 languages (Royal Society of New Zealand, 2013). That amount is growing. More recent statistics put that amount at approximately 200 (Statistics New Zealand (2013). However, there is little unification of policies, making the practice in New Zealand challenging (Royal Society of New Zealand, 2013). It is argued here that the policy and practice in education is particularly challenging for those involved in and promoting additive bilingual education programs given the fragmented nature of policy development. This is especially apparent in the early childhood care and education (ECCE) sector where the Education Review Office (2012) found that Māori language was not used meaningfully, connections with whānau

Māori, hapū, or wider iwi Māori were limited, and Māori children and whānau were generally subsumed into the service’s “generic” language, culture, and identity. Part of the problem has been the failure of successive governments to mandate te reo Māori as part of the core curriculum in the compulsory sector, with implications for the ECCE sector. The Royal Society paper makes a clear argument for state support of language learning, language use, and the need for language-based public policy. However, it does point out—more of an irony—that the state already does involve itself in the public policy of languages (p. 4) through the mandating of an English-only curriculum across the compulsory sector. It seems what we actually have is more of what I would term ad hoc public policy, out of sync with the intent of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, lacking cohesion and, as a consequence, lacking any real direction forward for all concerned. As intimated, this not only poses problems for the ECCE sector, but is challenging for the whole of the education sector, especially for qualifying (and qualified) teachers. The report reinforces the evidence of the positives of bilingualism in education—that bilinguals with good capability in both languages have superior creative thinking, language, and multitasking skills. Good capability in any language means having communicative competence, or being able to translanguage where two or more languages are used for meaning-making in everyday experiences, shaping those experiences and ways of thinking about the world (Lewis, Jones, & Baker, 2012). Communicative competence means going beyond the use of language simply for symbolic splashes, or superficial language functions which do not allow speakers to make meaning. For example, limiting the use of te reo Māori to rote-learned songs, prayers, commands, or the insertion of Māori words or phrases into English grammatical sentences has limited function in a meaning-making pedagogical environment. However, this seems to be what typically happens in ECCE. Multilingualism means having a good understanding of the grammatical structures and world views of more than one language (Hornberger, 2006) and using them for meaningful purposes. The report points out that:

whilst the New Zealand Curriculum requires access to language learning for all students, the non-mandatory nature of entitlement means that significant numbers of students are still able to

complete their compulsory education without encountering language study, and for many who do, time spent on language study is limited (Royal Society of New Zealand, 2013, p. 6).

Anecdotal evidence shows that most students coming straight from the compulsory sector are predominantly monolingual and monocultural. Critical education must necessarily be interventional; in terms of promoting bilingualism and biculturalism as a platform for launching into multilingualism. This requires cohesive policy development and an absolute commitment; to language regeneration, to equity, to social justice, and to the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Without it, the practice in ECCE becomes tokenistic and even harmful, not only for Māori children, but for all children. Our futures are short-changed in terms of the promise of *Te Whāriki*.

Contemporary research to aid examination into language practice in society is one of the points raised by the Ministry of Education. At the briefing for the refreshed *Te Whāriki*, Nancy Bell made the statement “ITE [initial teacher education] is a place where student teachers need to be engaged in the research around additional language learning, otherwise they have this untheorised practice which is not very helpful” (personal communication, June 2017). This is a critical factor also for the Education Council in terms of programme approval. It is argued here the fragmented nature of languages policy, de facto, and de jure, within New Zealand society highlights the need for a national, unified cross-sectoral approach to policy development at the wider societal level, within education institutions, and within communities. Although it needs a whole of country, anticolonial approach for change, it can only do so by taking one step at a time. As the saying goes, Rome was not built in a day.

### From theory to practice: Critical kaupapa Māori pedagogy

Critical pedagogical theory is a theory of transformation. *Te Whāriki 2017* states “Critical theory perspectives challenge disparities, injustices, inequalities and perceived norms” (p. 62). These critical perspectives such as kaupapa Māori, the focus here, are reflected in the principles of *Te Whāriki 2017*. On that note Henry Giroux (2017) asserts that real education, critical pedagogy, must be about resistance to authoritarianism and harmful

structures that reinvent themselves. Critical pedagogy is both political and pedagogical. It is inseparable from the project of social change. After Giroux, how can we put the political and the pedagogical into play so as to make lasting connections between learning, critical thought, agency, and social responsibility?

*Te Whāriki* refreshed recognises the frame of “rangatiratanga” and translates the value of rangatiratanga as “chiefly authority, right to exercise authority, sovereignty, autonomy, leadership, control, independence” (p. 67). I have elsewhere argued (Skerrett, 2017a) that a rangatiratanga frame addresses injustice and contests the positioning of children as subservient; and it also challenges the notion that teachers ought to be all-powerful masters in control of children’s learning. Somehow, though, that notion persists. But *all* children have the right to move beyond the master/servant relationships of colonisation, as well as moving beyond the notion that some children are “vulnerable” and some children are “powerful”. It also rejects the construct of linguistic hierarchies and accepts the paradigm that all languages are powerful. Related to this acceptance, it is further argued that all early childhood centres are language nests, and that no language ought to be privileged over the other/s as is currently the status quo.

*Te Whāriki 2017* also emphasises Māori children’s whakapapa connections to all things Māori, to Māori cosmologies, Māori histories, Māori ways of being and doing, and Māori thinking—these are all tied up in the world views reflected in the language. The following whakataukī is an example of how whakapapa can be woven into critical kaupapa Māori pedagogy. In the way that, as a practitioner in the ECCE Māori language sector, for every “kaupapa” there is a “whakapapa”, there is intentional research to be done, and critical literacy acts to be woven into the practice.

### **Ka tangi-wainene a Pīpīwharaua, ka kanikani a Tānerore**

*(When Pīpīwharaua warbles, Tānerore moves rhythmically)*

In this whakataukī, the “wainene a Pīpīwharaua” speaks to the depth of indigenous biocultural knowledges and how they can be woven into curriculum. Our Māori ancestors and other Pacific Island peoples navigated Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa following the migratory flights of the likes of the pīpīwharaua and other such

migratory birds. They also read other ecological signposts such as sea swells, wave colours and patterns, migratory whales and other marine animals, and of course navigatory stars, winds, the moon and sun. But the birds provided a vital navigational signpost when it is understood that all birds breed on land, so the seasonally travelling pīpīwharaua and other migratory birds had to be nesting on lands or rocky crags in the direction they were heading—south. The pīpīwharaua is known by many Māori as the “bird of Hawaiki”, a beautiful iridescent green bird with a black-and-white striped belly and short tail feathers. It arrives in Aotearoa heralding spring, hence the whakataukī speaks of the mellifluous birdsong heard at the end of winter and the long-awaited heat rays of summer, represented by the quivering of hands in the haka of Tānerore. The new breeding season signals the time to plant. Arriving generally in a state of exhaustion after travelling thousands of miles, the pīpīwharaua has no energy to build its own nest and nor does it rear its own young. It leaves that job to the riroriro, after laying its egg either on a stump or leafy ground working silently, inconspicuously, and hastily carrying the egg, placing it into the nest of the riroriro. It does not put all its eggs in the one basket so to speak, but strategically spreads them around, one for each nest. The lives of the pīpīwharaua and the riroriro are inextricably entangled, and have been for aeons—both are extremely industrious and melodious. This is reflected in the naming of the pīpīwharaua, literally translated to mean the chirping chick that shelters for long periods. Sometimes the pīpīwharaua is still being nurtured by the riroriro long after its own chicks have fledged. Their intertwined, hardworking, longstanding, orchestral relationship is reflected in whakataukī where their names are used interchangeably—“I hea koe i te tangi o te pīpīwharaua?” “I hea koe i te tangi o te riroriro?” (Where were you when the shining cuckoo called? Where were you when the grey warbler called?) This whakataukī is used to challenge people to work hard like the pīpīwharaua and the riroriro in terms of being prepared for the future, helping with the tough stuff, walking the walk as well as talking the talk, and not just showing up at harvest time for the benefits accrued by the industriousness of others. It illustrates how Māori cosmologies, ontologies, and epistemologies can be woven into how whakapapa connects to all things, as is argued in *Te Whāriki*.

In whakapapa terms Tāma-nui-te-rā (the big sun) had two wives, Hine-takurua (the winter queen) and Hine-raumati (the summer queen). The child of Tāma-nui-te-rā and Hine-raumati is Tānerore. Tānerore, credited with the origin of dance, is the personification of shimmering air as he performs a haka for his mother Hine-raumati. The wiriwiri hand action resplendent in Māori performance is reminiscent of the shimmering air. So with the arrival and the tangi or beautiful sound of the Pīpīwharaua, we anxiously await the arrival of Hine-raumati, and Tānerore. We can all dance the haka of Tānerore in celebration and honour of his mother, and the promise of yet another long, warm, fruitful summer. These sorts of explorations and connections in terms of what happens when we locate our pedagogical intentions at the crossroads of colonial relations and indigenous biocultural knowledges in ECCE education; they can lead to transformative praxis. The intentional teachings can become new realities for children in centres, with endless possibilities in projects of social change. The following example of a critical kaupapa Māori pedagogical project was carried out by kaiako committed to teaching as much Māori language and culture as possible to young children (who were dominant English-language speakers).

### **Storytelling as pedagogy**

Using a kaupapa Māori research methodology (see Skerrett, 2017b) drawing on Māori language, Māori knowledge, Māori values, and Māori narratives weaving in the discourses around Rūaumoko/Rūaimoko, our earthmother’s unborn child, kaupapa Māori pedagogy was enacted. Robyn Kahukiwa’s book *Taniwha* (Kahukiwa, 1986) helped to shape a curriculum project around Papatūānuku and her unborn child, Rūaimoko. It was carried out under my guidance as part of the extended whānau, of which I was a part, with 14 young children around 6 years of age. Robyn Kahukiwa is a Māori storyteller (and artist) who draws on Māori worldviews from an insider perspective which is reflected both in her storytelling and in her art. When used pedagogically, the storytelling and children’s artistry becomes a re-storying, a re-presentation, and the creation of song and drama through critical literacy acts, then becomes experience of all those children who actively engage. They emerge with renewed insights and understandings. In this way her story becomes their story so to speak, in that

it becomes their shared experience. This story book *Taniwha* became an important part of a project around Papatūānuku, our earth mother, and her unborn child Rūaumoko (responsible for earthquakes) because earthquakes have become much more of a reality to young children in various parts of Aotearoa in recent years.

To briefly background the children involved in this project, they were not fluent speakers of te reo Māori. Many were just beginning the journey into te reo. There was a mix of Māori-language abilities with only a few children having some fluency. The book formed the basis of a video clip—and underpinned the project. The video clip and song became an absolute favourite within the learning and teaching environment as indeed it was in kōhanga reo. The lyrics speak of the creation of land through rupture, through the ebb and flow of land and water movements, through life and death. During this project the kaiako noticed a little girl digging out in the grounds. When the teacher asked what the little girl was doing she replied, “I am digging down to Rūaimoko—I can see Rūaimoko’s skin”. In further discussion with another whānau member, one of the mums recalled how her child was going to dig down to talk to Rūaimoko. She asked, “How are you going to talk to Rūaumoko?” He said, “You get a big big spade and dig all the way down”. Mum said, “That would take quite a long time wouldn’t it?” The child responded, “OK, I’ve got another idea—we’ll get a microphone and put that down there [to have a conversation with Rūaimoko]”.

This storytelling project highlights how discourses were transformed, and how distinct world views were promoted especially in terms of the physical environment of Papatūānuku and her unborn child, Rūaimoko. Through these types of critical literacy acts connected to, and transforming, children’s lives (through guiding their experiences and shaping their ways of thinking and ways of being) storytelling provoked a shift in awareness, increasing the intelligible link to children’s affective domains and responses—from the tremor (and terror) of earthquakes to the sanctity and renewed respect (and searching for) Rūaumoko/Rūaimoko and Papatūānuku. The critical pedagogies reflect

- storytelling facilitating critical discussion
- children and teacher and community in dialogue
- children’s exploration and problem solving

- children’s stories through their own creations and re-storying
- the feminisation and personification of phenomena
- the healing of trauma through active engagement
- transformation through activity and invention
- the translation of diverse ways of thinking and knowing into new understandings and ways of being
- the sanctity and beauty of children making sense of their world by generating and refining their own working theories
- the rangatiratanga that is referenced in *Te Whāriki* (p. 23) of children being rangatira as they weave in and around, and value, te ao Māori, and te reo Māori.

Therein lies my provocation: how do we maintain the sanctity of a radical pedagogy for social justice; for what ethically we know to be a right for all of our children: to be free thinkers; to be embracing of life at the horizon with the surety of their own agency?

### The development of critical literacy

Critical literacy frameworks provide the structures and practices for the ongoing co-construction of knowledge, through communication. One cannot understand messages without acting on them either internally (by thinking about them) or externally (doing something about them). The antithesis are descriptive acts which lack the sense-making agency, and are domesticating. Colonial pedagogies are behavioural in intent and developmental in nature. Critical kaupapa Māori pedagogies are mind liberating. It is what children think and do which shifts the teaching–learning nexus to a critical frame; where interpretative analysis represents the internalised action of text (the thinking about text). So a critical literacy act is internalised action (the thought) into external agency (the action) during the co-construction of knowledge in real meaningful contexts. As children engage with Māori language texts, through their discussions, questions, and answers, their understandings are deepened, their lives are altered. This is about children and adults (teachers and whānau) working together in a deepening understanding of the symbols that flood young children’s worlds and shape their minds. In the dominant hierarchical (teacher in control) approach to education of

both indigenous and non-indigenous children they have been coerced into taking on board the dominant viewpoint of not only who they are, but who they might be and become. For many Māori growing up in a system that does not reflect them, it has resulted in shame. They must become ashamed of their Māori ancestry, their Māori lives (Salmond, 2017). That process is dehumanising. In creative literacy acts when children actively voice their own experiences, views, thinking, desires, likes, and dislikes they are voicing their own realities and shaping their own identities. It is this process that can present as a challenge to the unequal power relations living alternative perspectives, ways of thinking, and ways of being. The Rūaimoko project was just that, a critical literacy act. It is this storytelling through our treasured Māori language that the tamariki/mokopuna can access the archive of Māori world views.

### New realities and possibilities: Some closing thoughts

“To let oneself be carried on passively is unthinkable.”

Virginia Woolf

This article has overviewed some of the “big” ideas around *Te Whāriki 2017* with a focus on language, culture, and identity. While there is a growing sense of awareness around the benefits of being bilingual, the importance of te reo Māori, the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, acknowledging that Aotearoa was founded on a document which guaranteed dual rights (including language rights) and dual citizenship (biculturalism) to the people of Aotearoa and their descendants. It has argued against the construct of linguistic hierarchies, and argued for the need to resist the perpetuation of colonialism’s harmful languages politics and policies. In keeping with the RSNZ (2013) paper about the fragmented nature of language/s policy and the need for a national, unified approach to policy development, and taking in the sentiments of Giroux’s (2017) assertion that real education must be about resistance to authoritarianism that upholds harmful structures, a commitment to social justice and critical pedagogy which is both political and pedagogical, it is suggested that our ECCE sector take on board the following considerations:

- 1 That the ECCE sector takes up the pedagogical and political challenges inherent in Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the

Treaty of Waitangi, to ensure that te reo Māori becomes entrenched in the education system beyond the ECCE sector, alongside English.

2 Honour the commitment of *Te Whāriki 2017* that all the nation's children have access to te reo Māori me ōna tikanga, to an advanced level, in order to meet the imperatives of *Te Whāriki 2017*, in a bicultural, bilingual endeavour as a sound platform into multilingualism.

Let's put the pedagogical principles of *Te Whāriki 2017* into linguistic play so as to make lasting connections between learning, thinking, and doing, and tautoko the weaving of minds. Let's be like the pīpīwharau who ventures regularly on fantastical journeys, returning to nest in the safety of Aotearoa. Let's trust each other in the nests of the early years, like those of the riroriro, where we carefully place our most treasured, valued taonga, our tamariki, to be nestled and nurtured by committed, diligent, trustworthy kaiako. As the riroriro simultaneously nurtures both the riroriro and the pīpīwharau to be riroriro and pīpīwharau, and contributes to an ecocultural community that is diverse and resplendent with mellifluous birdsong, so too must kaiako resist the refrain "one of you is not like the other" and take up the progressive challenge for social justice and societal transformation.

## Glossary

<b>Hawaiki</b>	Māori ancestral homeland
<b>whakataukī</b>	proverbial saying
<b>riroriro</b>	grey warbler
<b>te reo Māori</b>	Māori language
<b>tikanga Māori</b>	Māori cultural ways of being
<b>tikanga Pākehā</b>	Pākehā cultural ways of being
<b>Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa</b>	the great ocean of Kiwa
<b>pīpīwharau</b>	shining cuckoo
<b>tamariki/mokopuna</b>	children and grandchildren
<b>tautoko</b>	support
<b>whānau</b>	family
<b>wiriwiri</b>	rembling hand action

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**Dr Mere Skerrett** is from the Ngāi Tahu, Te Arawa, Mataatua, and Waikato Maniapoto tribes. In terms of her professional career, and interests, she is a senior lecturer at Victoria University, working in the initial teacher education field, early childhood. An enthusiastic supporter of the regeneration of te reo Māori as the indigenous language of Aotearoa, Mere continues to provide ideological clarification around Māori/English bilingualism, translanguaging, and te rangatiratanga o te reo. She has dedicated much of her career to establishing and working in kōhanga reo (Māori language nests) and kura kaupapa Māori (the schooling extension of kōhanga reo), culminating in completing her doctorate research into the mechanics of successfully revernacularising te reo Māori. She is also interested in equity issues as they relate to Māori as tāngata whenua, women's issues and children's rights.

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