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# COMMENT

This edition of *Early Childhood Folio* brings together a range of articles that are likely to provoke the reader by questioning some common practices and contributing examples of new pedagogical approaches and ways to encourage breadth, depth and complexity of learning. Each article is grounded in sociocultural theory.

Ritchie writes explicitly about sociocultural theory, suggesting it is timely to reflect on how this can be understood and applied in context and in ways that are transformative of social justice objectives. She draws on her recent research to illustrate some pathways for deepening the sociocultural nature of practice.

Two articles are concerned with curriculum domains. Each emphasises that these domains should not be thought of as a separate curriculum thread, but as holistic and integrated within the curriculum. Peters and Rameka explore the Te Kāhano framework of the Ministry of Education's *Te Aho Tūkutuku: Early Mathematics* resource. They examine how the framework can be used to strengthen mathematical learning within a range of strands and contexts. The discussion is brought to life with exemplars from early childhood settings. Kelly and Jurisich focus on arts-based education and ways to address their concern that much arts teaching seems to be influenced by developmentally appropriate practice rather than sociocultural theory. A revision of their own teacher education module from a sociocultural framework led the authors to incorporate aspects of culture, the environment and the wider community as contexts for students' learning, and to provide hands-on experiences and collaborative learning opportunities.

Whyte examines assessment practices, discussing her research on ways to engage parents, whānau and children at the point that learning is noticed rather than after the teacher has analysed learning. The practice has worked well in the author's centre to enhance active and meaningful participation and collaboration in assessment and planning.

What is the reality of children's freedom of choice in early childhood education (ECE) settings in New Zealand? Stephenson addresses this issue in one early childhood centre, analysing how issues of power and control were woven through children's apparent freedom of choice in using resources.

Widening the lens to parents and breastfeeding, the article by Carol Bartle and Judith Duncan examines responses from parents, ECE teachers and health professionals to the Web survey on supportive practices that they undertook as part of developing Ministry of Health guidelines for ECE services to support breastfeeding. A thoughtful analysis is provided about the difference that *people* can make, the way that *places* can be constructed and arranged and the *things* within the environment that support and encourage breastfeeding.

## *Retirement of Bev Webber*

This edition of *Early Childhood Folio* marks the recent retirement of Bev Webber from the position of Publishing Manager of NZCER Press. Bev oversaw the launch of *Early Childhood Folio* in its current format in 1997 and helped develop it from an irregular publication that drew largely on articles from *set: Research Information for Teachers* to the well-regarded early childhood research-based publication it is today. In the early days, Bev sometimes despaired that a particular issue was "short" when a promised article did not eventuate, but now sufficient people are submitting to the journal to produce it twice a year. Bev has worked sympathetically with new writers to encourage them through any resubmission process so that they could get their work published. We will miss her contribution, wisdom and experience very much.

*Linda Mitchell*  
Managing editor