



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

Why Story? Why Learning Stories? Building a conversation with a few of my favourite authors

Margaret Carr

ELP
Celebrating Learning Stories
Conference

2015

***Early Years Research
Centre
He Kōhanga Toi Tangata***



Wilf Malcolm Institute
of Educational Research
Te Pūtahi Rangahau Mātauranga o Wilf Malcolm

THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO

**Why Story?
Why Learning Stories?**



Gordon Commission Technical Report: learning dispositions for the 21st century

Jerome Bruner: narratives are a serious business making stories & possible minds in possible worlds

Liz Brooker: recognising valued cultural and capital at home & school

Carlina Rinaldi: documentation that is contextualised and informs teaching and learning

David Perkins: keeping the learning 'whole'

Ellen Langer: Mindfulness

The powerful roles of interpretation of context and uncertainty

Guy Claxton & Bill Lucas:

Content and process are woven together, also skills and attitudes with knowledge and understanding

Vivian Gussin Paley:

The value of story, and children authoring their own stories

Gillian McNamee:

Paley & Vygotsky – language and revisiting

Ken Robinson & Lou Aronica

Creative schools? Visit an early childhood centre

**Gordon Commission Technical Report (2013),
entitled *To Assess, To Teach, To Learn: A Vision for
the Future of Assessment***

Written by a group of assessment scholars in the USA and Canada, and named after chair Edmund Gordon, sets out key features of being an educated person in the mid 21st century:

In the interest of scientific validity, traditionally we have privileged 'objective' knowledge over 'subjective' information.... However, **assessment in education in the future will have to be more sensitive to subjective phenomena, i.e., to affect, attribution, existential state, emotion, identity, situation, etc., as will also the teaching and learning transactions in which learners are engaged.** (p. 38)

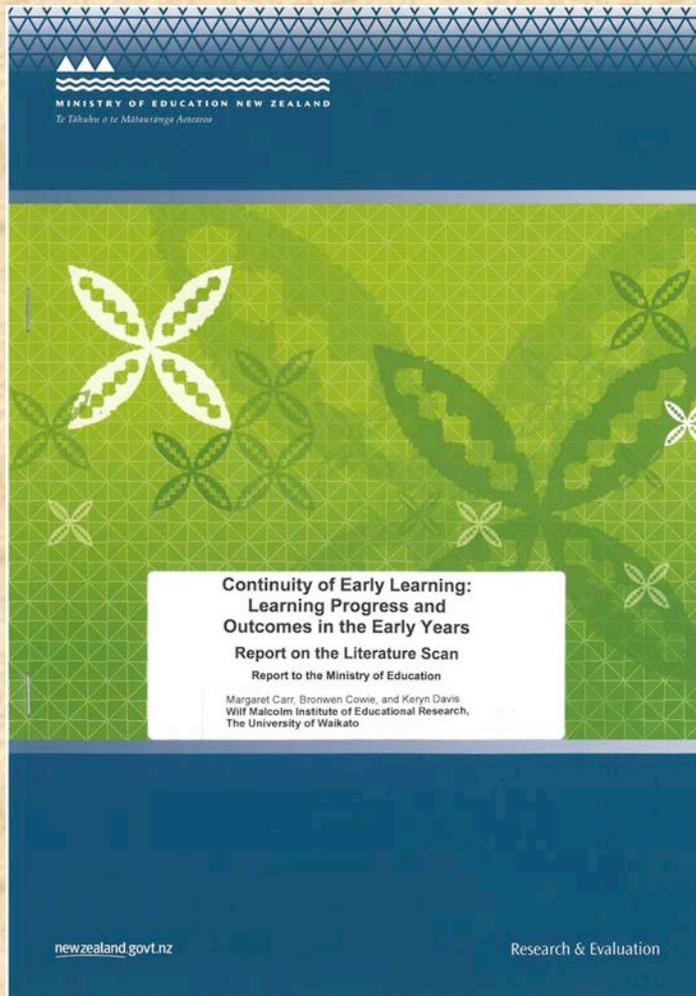
Features of being an educated person in the 21st century

- ❑ Knowledge creation as **participants** in a knowledge creating culture
- ❑ Moving flexibly and rationally between concrete reality and **abstractions** from it
- ❑ Living with **increasing complexity** and turning it to advantage whenever this is possible
- ❑ **Cognitive persistence**
- ❑ Collective cognitive **responsibility**: engaging in collaborative activities that are rich in cognitively challenging activities

To Assess, To Teach, To Learn: A Vision for the Future of Assessment, Gordon Commission Technical Report 2013

Increasingly the goals of education reflect the growing concern with encouraging and enabling students to learn how to learn and to learn to continue learning; to become enquiring persons who not only use knowledge but persons who produce and interpret knowledge ... (p.38)

Gordon Commission on the Future of Assessment in Education (2013) To assess, to teach, to learn: A vision for the future of assessment. Technical Report. Retrieved from www.gordoncommission.org



More details of the Gordon Commission Report and the connection to Te Whāriki and the key competencies in the NZ Curriculum can be found on pp. 5-6 in:
**Continuity of Early Learning:
Learning progress and outcomes in
the Early Years**

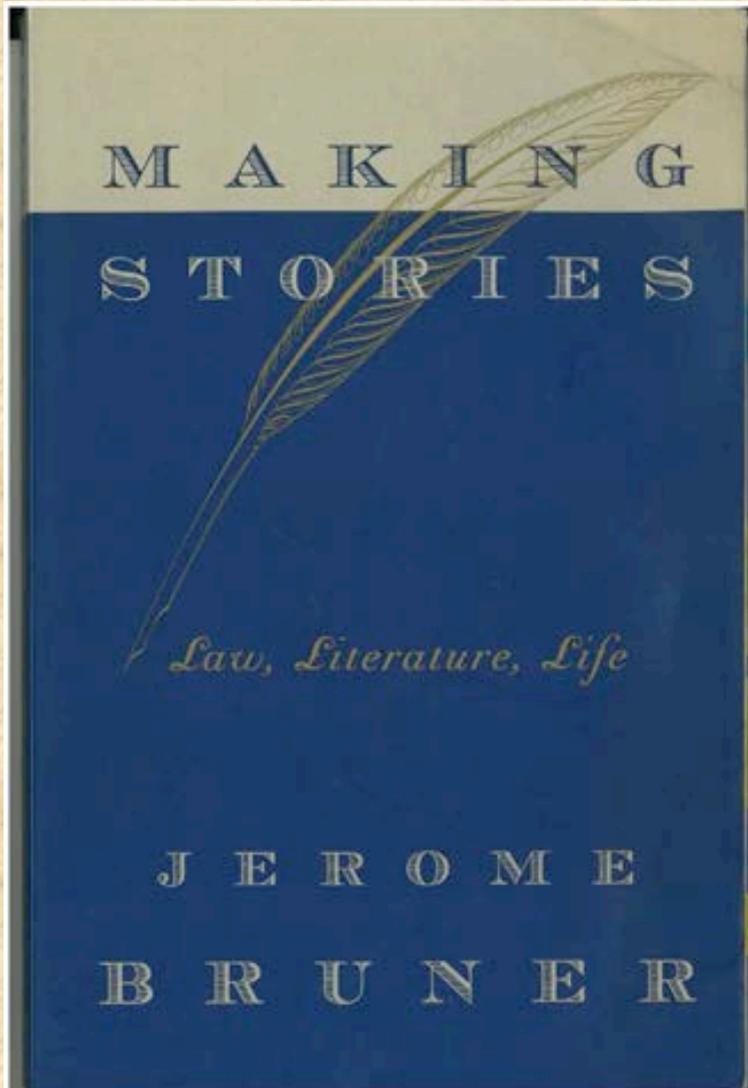
Report on the Literature Scan

Margaret Carr, Bronwen Cowie &
Keryn Davis

September 2014

Report commissioned by Ministry of
Education

See MoE website *Education Counts*



Chapter Four:

So Why Narrative?

Jerome Bruner (2002) *Making Stories: Law, Literature, Life*
Cambridge Mass. Harvard University Press

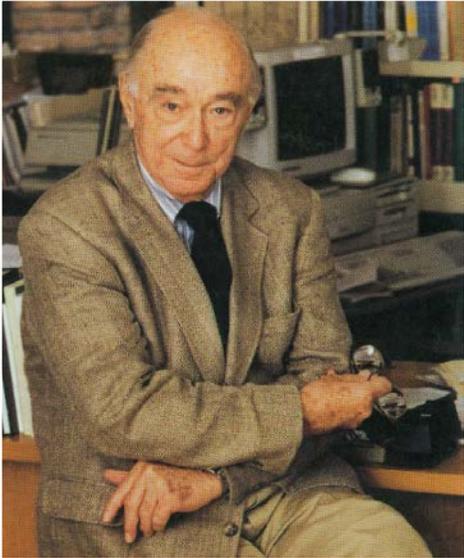
One truth is surely self-evident. For all that narrative is one of our evident delights, **it is serious business** (p.89)

Through narrative, **we construct, reconstruct, in some ways reinvent yesterday and tomorrow** (p.93)



Constructing, reconstructing, in some ways reinventing yesterday and tomorrow





**Actual
Minds,
Possible
Worlds**

**Jerome
Bruner**

Bruner: continuity of learner identities
over time and place

“How shall we deal with Self?....I think of Self as a text about how one is situated with respect to others and towards the world – a canonical text about **power and skills and dispositions that change as one’s situation changes from young to old, from one kind of setting to another**”.

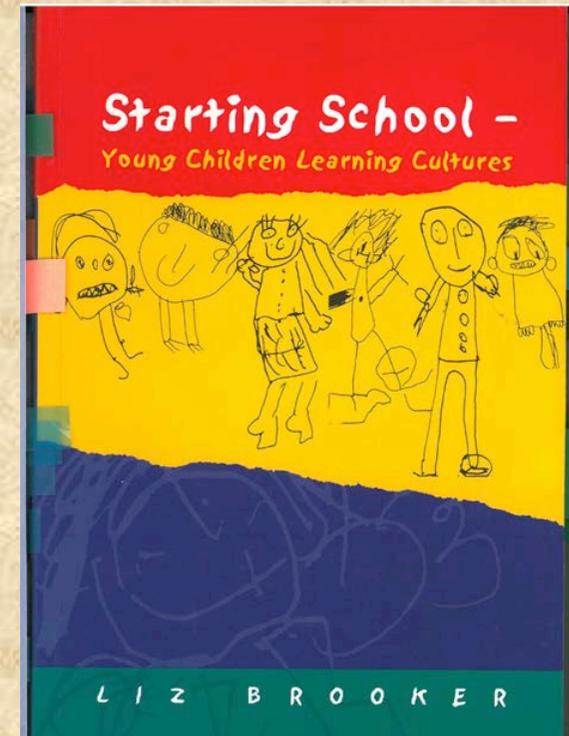
Jerome Bruner, J. (1986). *Actual minds, possible worlds*. Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press. p.130

Liz Brooker (2002) *Starting School – Young Children Learning Cultures.*

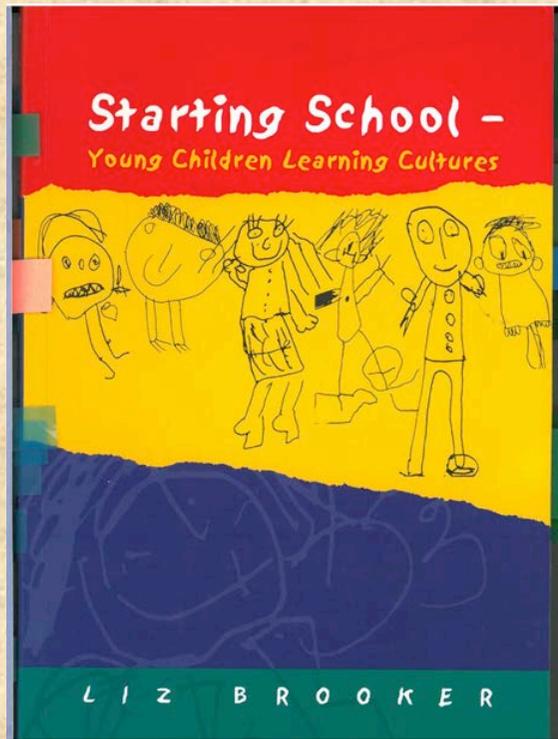
(Buckingham, Open University Press)

Pierre Bourdieu as a theoretical framework

“This is the story of 16 children, all 4 years old, who started school together in a single Reception class in a poor and rather run-down inner urban neighbourhood”.(p.1) 8 were ‘Anglo’ (their parents born and educated in the UK), and 8 were Bangladeshi. All were successful members of their own intricate social world [at home].



The task now ahead of them was to learn, as rapidly as possible, the culture of their first classroom, and the rules for being a member of it.

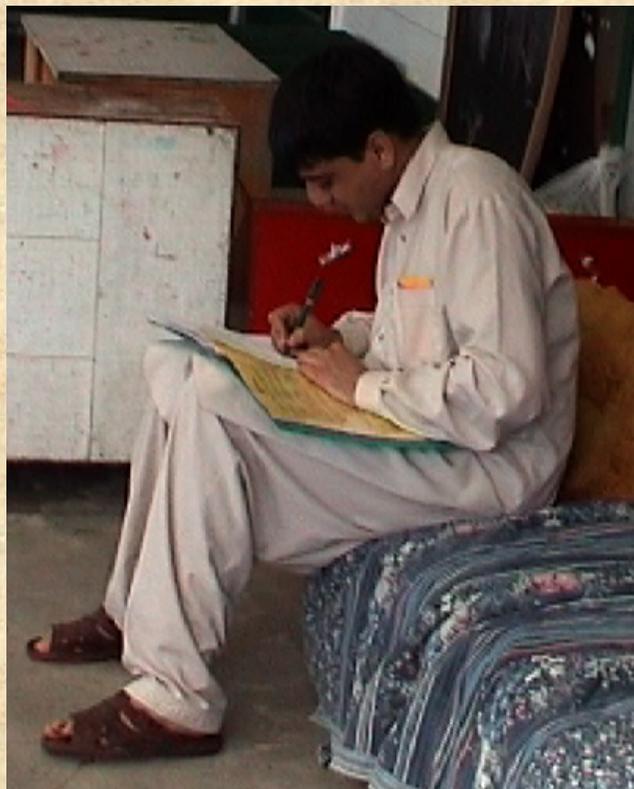


Liz Brooker (p.167, quotes Bruner, 1966 p. 118) : 'We get interested in what we get good at. In general, it is difficult to sustain interest in an activity unless one achieves some degree of competence'

The child who fails to 'get good at' something – reading, catching, block building – will soon lose any motivation she or he may have felt (Brooker, p.167)

Learning Stories notice and recognise the process of 'getting good at' something, highlighting the 'cultural capital' that is valued at the early childhood centre or school, and sharing this with the family.

Learning stories enable families to make connections between the early childhood centre and the cultural capital at home



Aljandoi Family
 Child's name: Hussain + Sajed
 Date: June 19th 202

Parents Voice

	Examples or cues	A LEARNING STORY
taking interest (with being most visible)	TAKING AN INTEREST Finding an interest here - a topic, an activity, a role. Recognising the familiar, enjoying the unfamiliar, coping with change.	اني ابيس بالمرحله روشت و بكلمة بالاعاقل اكتبه بمرصفت عن خبرته و اولاد انا حبه جدا و التعليم حبه جدا و المعامله حبه
with being more into	BEING INVOLVED Paying attention for a sustained period, feeling safe, trusting others. Being playful with others and/or materials.	و قدر تعلم اطفال كيفيه اللعب الصحيح و بعض الامامه لانهم حبه
persistence most visible	PERSISTING WITH DIFFICULTY Setting and choosing difficult tasks. Using a range of strategies to solve problems when 'stuck' (be specific).	من ساعه بذكر و اشرب حبه جدا نعلوا الرسم و اللعب في الامامه
communication most visible	EXPRESSING AN IDEA OR A FEELING In a range of ways (specific). For example oral language, gesture, music, art, writing, using numbers and patterns, telling stories.	و حبه كثيرا ان يذهب الي مدرسه و ان اشركهم بشان كبرياءه و ان
contribution most visible	TAKING RESPONSIBILITY Responding to others, to stories, and imagined events, ensuring that things are fair, self-evaluating, helping others, contributing to programs.	تعليمهم و اهتمامهم بالاطفال و تعليمهم و انكر الامامه لتدريسيه و تعليمهم ايضا فطرتهم هذا

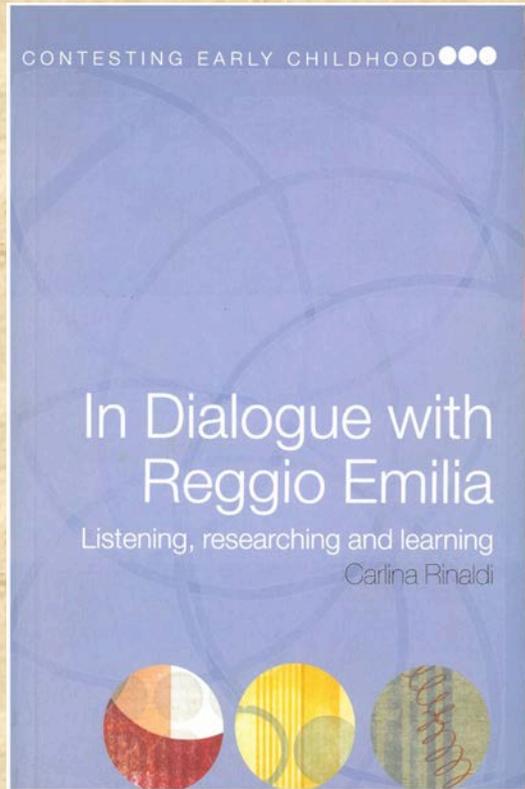
والد
 والدة م حسين وسجاد

Almusawiy Family
 Child's name: Haider
 Date: _____

Parents Voice

	Examples or cues	A LEARNING STORY
taking interest (with being most visible)	TAKING AN INTEREST Finding an interest here - a topic, an activity, a role. Recognising the familiar, enjoying the unfamiliar, coping with change.	تعلم حبه من ابرو حبه كيفه بقرا انشيد و حبه يتكلم ان انكثير
with being more into	BEING INVOLVED Paying attention for a sustained period, feeling safe, trusting others. Being playful with others and/or materials.	و طريقه التعلم حبه و كذا ان طريقه الاكل و طريقه اسلوبه المعامله ينسبه للاطفال حبه
persistence most visible	PERSISTING WITH DIFFICULTY Setting and choosing difficult tasks. Using a range of strategies to solve problems when 'stuck' (be specific).	حبه و كذا ان طريقه الكلام حبه و كذا ان الامامه حبه
communication most visible	EXPRESSING AN IDEA OR A FEELING In a range of ways (specific). For example oral language, gesture, music, art, writing, using numbers and patterns, telling stories.	تعلم كيف يلعب في الامامه
contribution most visible	TAKING RESPONSIBILITY Responding to others, to stories, and imagined events, ensuring that things are fair, self-evaluating, helping others, contributing to programs.	

والد
 والدة م حيدر



Carlina Rinaldi (2006) *Listening, researching and learning* (London: Routledge)

Significant elements from research at Reggio Emilia:

1. The value of documentation in process, i.e. during the process of learning-teaching enacted in the classroom. Documentation is therefore first and foremost an educational tool but also a great opportunity.
2. The value of documentation as a tool for assessment/evaluation and self-assessment/self-documentation.

“I feel that recognising documentation as a possible tool for assessment/evaluation gives us a very strong antibody to ... assessment tools that are anonymous, decontextualized and only apparently objective and democratic”. (p.62)

DAVID PERKINS

AUTHOR OF *THE EUREKA EFFECT*

**MAKING
LEARNING
WHOLE**

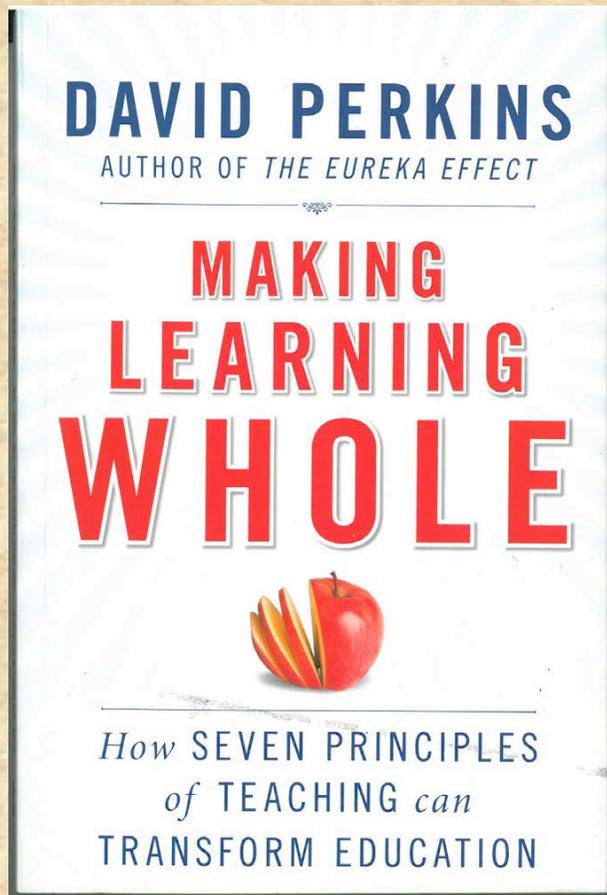


How SEVEN PRINCIPLES
of TEACHING *can*
TRANSFORM EDUCATION

Perkins, D.N., Jay, E. & Tishman, S. (1993) Beyond abilities, a dispositional theory of thinking. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly* 39,1 pp.1-21

Defined a learning disposition as a combination of **inclination, sensitivity to occasion ability**

We have translated this as being **ready willing & able**



David Perkins (2009) (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass) writes (p.5)

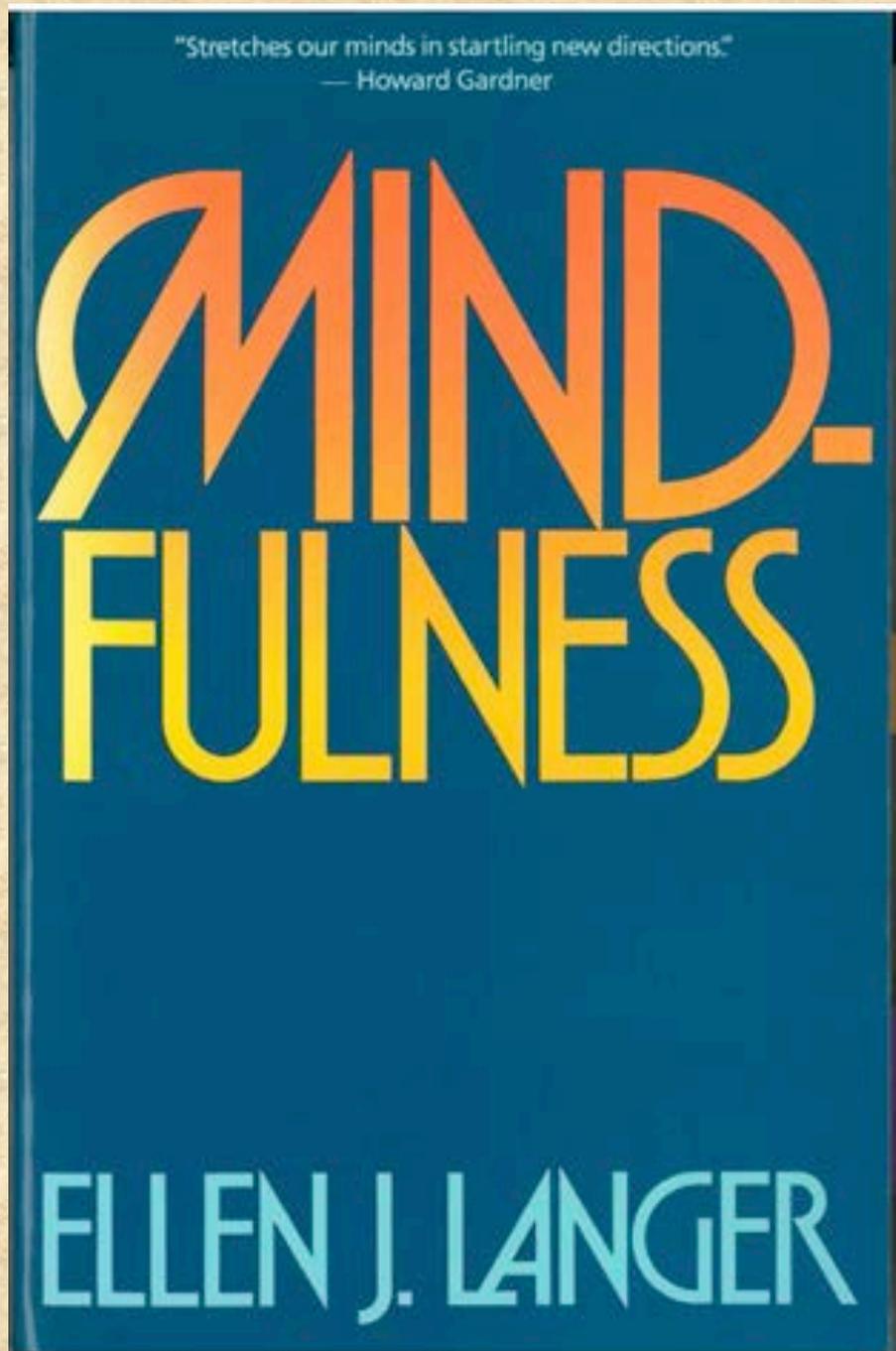
“In a 2007 Educational Researcher ... Wayne Wu reports how the influence of the U.S. No Child Left Behind policy has both narrowed and fractured the curriculum.

What’s not relevant to the test gets dumped and **what is relevant gets chopped up** into test-sized bites.

This doesn’t need to happen ... but it’s the trend”.

He adds:

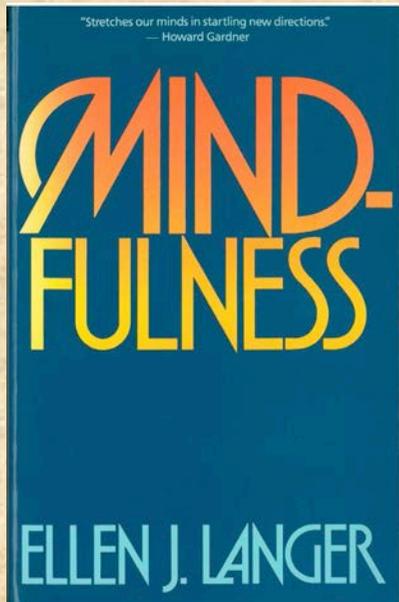
“Harvard psychologist Ellen Langer would characterize such education as *mindless*”.



Ellen Langer (1989)
(Reading, Massachusetts)

p.35 writes about
The Power of Context

The way we behave in any situation has a lot to do with context. We whisper in hospitals and become anxious in police stations, sad in cemeteries, docile in schools, and jovial at parties. Contexts control our behavior, and our mindsets determine how we interpret each context



Working Theories: being uncertain

Langer also writes (p.119-121) about Creativity and Conditional learning

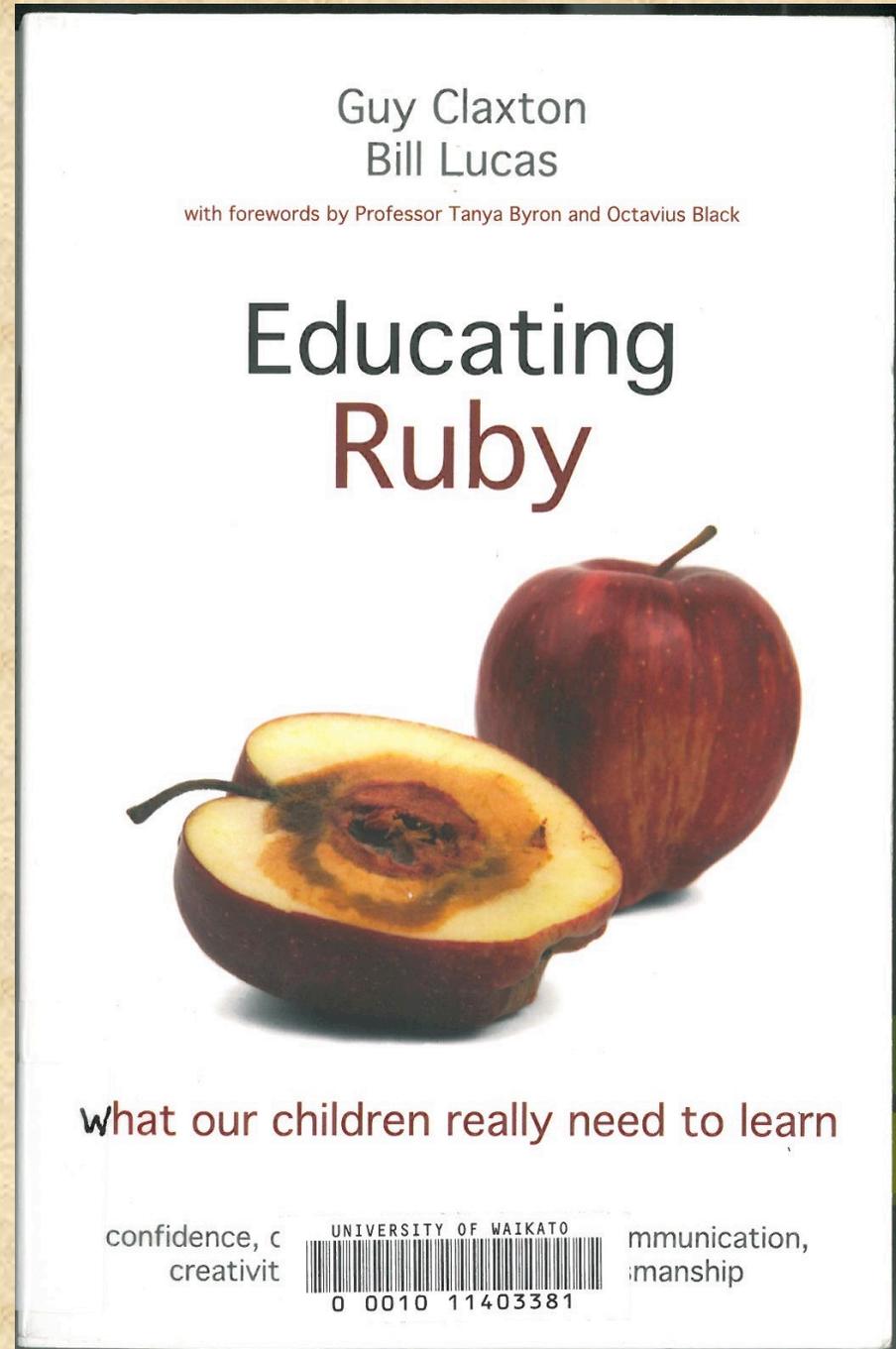
‘A good deal of my research has explored the brighter side of the picture: the encouragement of creativity by teaching facts in a conditional manner.

In most educational settings, the “facts” of the world are presented as unconditional truths, when they might better be seen as probability statements that are true in some contexts but not in others. What happens when this uncertainty is allowed in? Does the uncertain information become more available to us later, when the context has changed?’ What happens in people’s heads when they learn that “this could be” “I don’t know what it is, but it could be ...” ... ‘

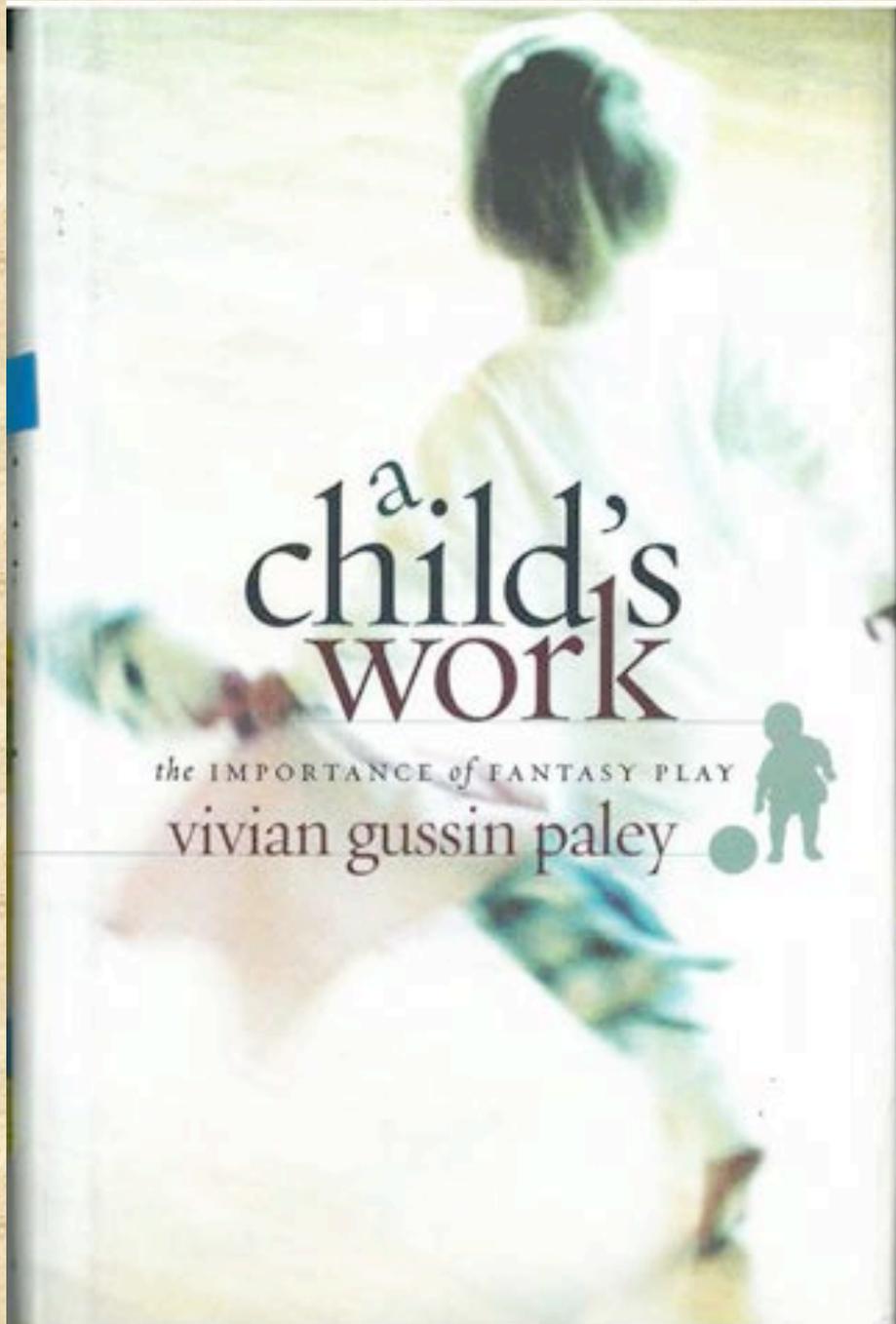
Guy Claxton & Bill Lucas
(2015) Educating Rita: what
our children really need to
learn:

**confidence, curiosity,
conviviality and
collaboration,
communication, creativity,
commitment,
craftsman ship.**

Crown: Carmarthen



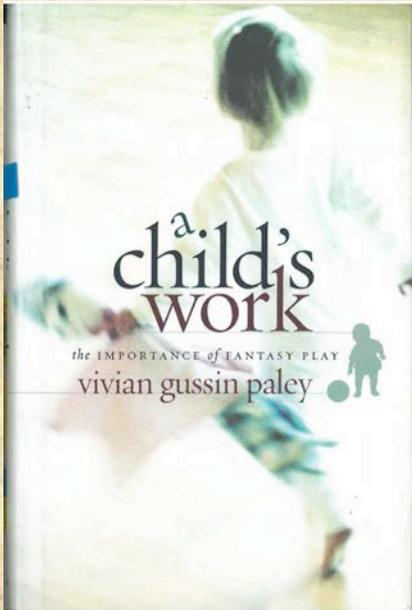
“The earlier Early Years Foundation Stage in England ... was not afraid to use the word ‘play’, because the writers do not oppose ‘play’ to ‘serious learning’. (This) is much closer to the globally respected and widely copied early years curriculum from New Zealand called Te Whāriki, which means a woven mat in Māori. The image suggests that content and process are woven together; skills and attitudes develop alongside knowledge and understanding as children work on interesting challenges and subject matter”. Claxton & Lucas, 2015 (p.91)



Vivian Gussin Paley (2004)

A Child's Work: the Importance of Fantasy Play. Chicago & London; The University of Chicago Press

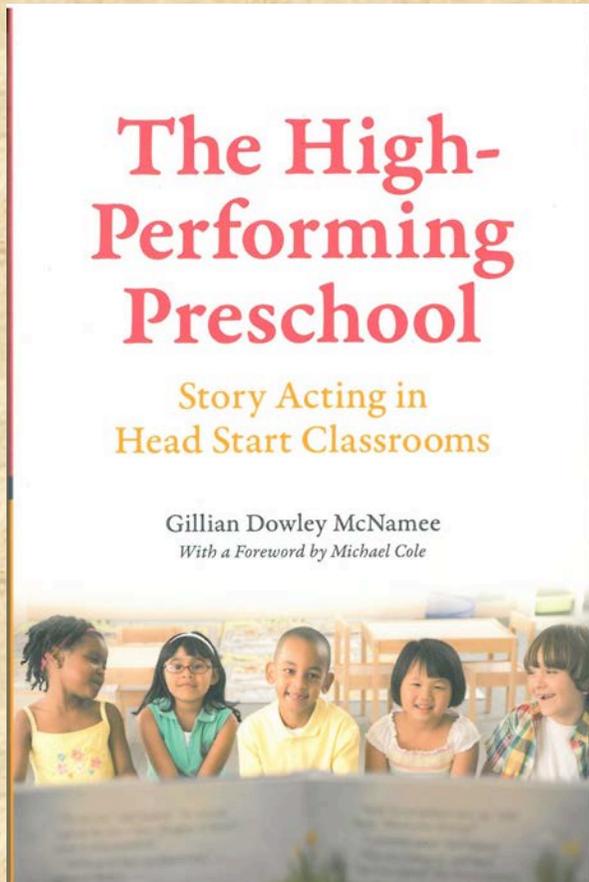
“If readiness for school has meaning, it is to be found first in the the children’s flow of ideas, their own and those of their peers, families, teachers, books, and television, from play into story and back into more play”. (p.11)



Storying, revisiting, thinking, having ideas, constructing learner identities

Paley pp.11-12

It was when I asked the children to dictate their stories and bring them to life again on a stage that the connection between play and analytical thinking became clear. The children and I were nourishing the ground and opening the seed packets, ready to plant our garden of ideas and identities.

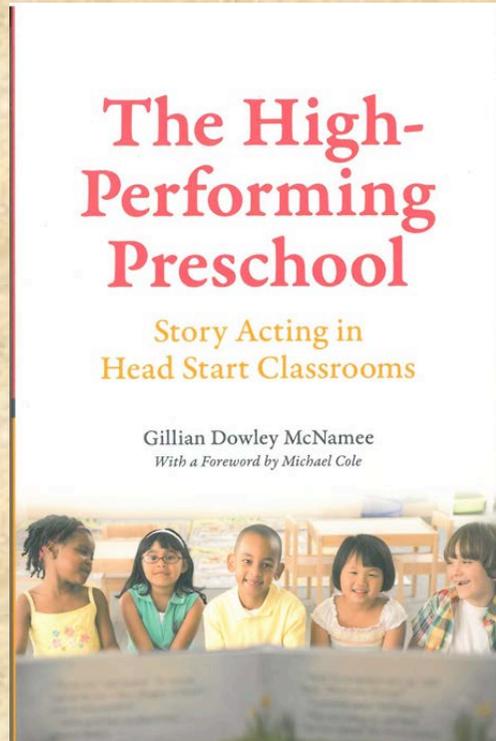


The High-Performing School: Story Acting in Head Start Classrooms

Gillian Dowley McNamee (2015)
Chicago & London: The Chicago
University Press

A book by a teacher who
acknowledges Paley and Vygotsky

p.34: One aspect of Vygotsky's theory that is particularly relevant to understanding school learning is the significance he places on learning to use words, and to do so as a tool to expand and transform what it means to understand something.



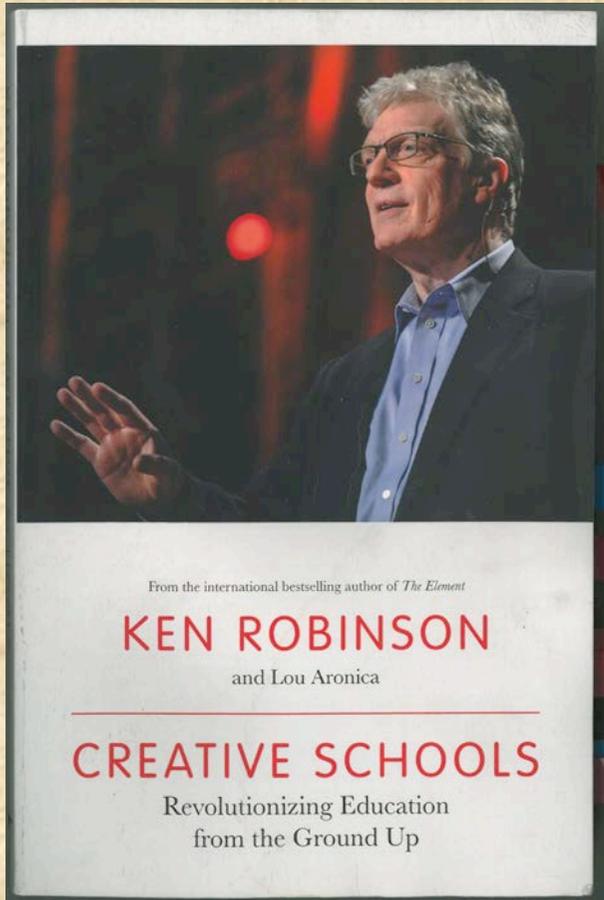
**Re-visiting conversations
illuminates and transforms our
perspectives**

McNamee (2015 p.34) continues:

“Words used [or listened to] in conversations illuminate and transform the way we view our experiences, and the ways we guide and direct our thinking”



Children sharing their experiences, and perhaps illuminating and transforming the way they view and value them



Ken Robinson and Lou Aronica (2015)
Creative Schools: Revolutionizing Education from the Ground Up (p.73)

“In Chapter 2, I described the transformation that Richard Gerver helped to bring about at Grange Primary School in the U.K. As successful as his idea was, Richard isn’t saying that all [school districts should do this]. Instead, he suggests they take the back-to-basics approach that led to [this success]:

“As a starting point, we should be getting all educators – whether at the university, school, or professional development level – to find the best early-years facilities they can in their region and spend time learning from what they do”.

Acknowledgements

To all the international authors of these books: for their wisdom and inspiring writing; they (and many others) keep reminding us of what is important in education and why.

To Wendy Lee: for her unwavering and indefatigable teaching of wise and empowering early childhood pedagogical and assessment practice throughout Aotearoa New Zealand and across the world.

To the Education Learning Project (ELP): for the annual Learning Story Conferences, and for their sensitive, sensible and successful professional development, making a difference to teachers' practice and therefore improving the lives of the youngest generation of learners, citizens, and story-tellers.