

Does a Learning Story qualify as a wise assessment?

Presented by Professor Margaret Carr



This presentation will explore the proposition that we would like teachers to become more wise about the ways in which they assess children's learning - and children to become more wise about their learning journeys. Many of the ideas for this topic arise from discussions with early childhood teachers during a research project, led by Margaret and Wendy, entitled 'Learning Wisdom'. We canvassed the notion of 'wise teaching', and the data we built on came from the teachers recording their conversations with the children as they revisited their Learning Stories. Conversations with those teachers, together with relevant literature and the examples from practice, enabled us to explore the ways in which an assessment practice that uses Learning Stories might be described as wise practice, and a Learning Story might be described as a wise assessment.

A little bit about Margaret

Margaret is a Professor of Education at the Wilf Malcolm Institute of Educational Research at the University of Waikato. She was Co-Director of the New Zealand Early Childhood Curriculum Development project that developed the national curriculum, Te Whāriki, published in 1996. After Te Whāriki was published, she researched in five different early childhood settings – a childcare centre, a kindergarten, a playcentre, a kōhanga reo and a home-based setting to develop, with the teachers, Learning Stories as a narrative assessment practice that was aligned with the sociocultural focus of Te Whāriki. Since then she has researched and published widely on issues of curriculum and assessment in the early years.

Formerly a kindergarten teacher, Margaret has taught student teachers in the undergraduate and graduate teacher education programme at the Faculty of Education, and she has a great enthusiasm for co-researching with teachers on action research projects, where the topics are dilemmas and puzzles about curriculum development and assessment that interest the teachers.