

Weaving Professional Education into our Practice

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A Learning Story: The team photo adventure.

I have the utmost admiration for professional photographers. This has not always been the case, I actually thought it would be pretty easy to get people to smile at the camera and maneuver a group onto the right space, get them to say cheese and wait for the cheque. I now know differently.

Thankfully it was not a professional who was employed to take an ELP group photo, it was helpful passers-by, husbands, son and yes one professional who was unsuspectingly hijacked whilst taking a wedding party's photos.

So the plan, meet at the gardens for some photos. Beautiful setting, beautiful day all the right elements. However, it was never going to be that easy, and I blame some of this on FISH! philosophy. The gardens had a festive feel, it was nearly Christmas and there was a wedding party also having photos. It was a recipe to be playful. The addition of Christmas hats (red sombreros) that could be manipulated into all manner of interesting shapes, meant that a serious photo was not going to be the outcome.



So we watched how the professional did it, he got the group to stand just so, smile, look up and click. Could we do the same? Of course not. We asked lots of people to take the photos and we did get many, many photos taken; but 6 people will each have criteria that say: "This is a good photo." Me, I had a thing about knees, Robyn had recently had surgery on her forehead, the wind blew hair, the hats were skewed, someone's fingers were above someone's head and so on.

At least the tourists and garden visitors did not seem to mind our antics. We even involved the wedding party! We gave them our hats, which did not thrill those that had spent a fortune on hairdos! The wedding party posed with our hats, then with us. We were an addition that they may wonder about in future years as they look back over the memorable day. "Who were those mad women in the red hats and why are they in our wedding album?" The professional photographer even took our photo - fair trade for the use of our hats.

And then there was the fountain. The wedding party playfully posed on the edge of the fountain - we playfully posed in the fountain. Some of us got a little wet as the lion accidentally squirted water. Some of us might have got a lot wetter if we hadn't made a quick exit.

How long does it take to get a group photo? Day 2. Father Christmas had made us all (including Kathryn who is a sewer) beautiful aprons. A team apron photo was called for. We tried several places, in front of the tree, sitting, standing, looking left, looking right, everyone looking the





same way at the same time - impossible. FISH! philosophy at work again. Playfulness kicked in and it is so hard to look good when you are crying with laughter - makes one look older I think. Aprons off and now time to include Annika and Marie for a complete team photo.

Time to test the mother of all couches. Can 8 people sit on a 4 seater couch? Would we fit? Yes we could fit, as long as we didn't mind that Lorraine had somehow half disappeared down the back of the cushion. We did mind.



So we tried the hallway, who will sit and who will stand. Everyone has to stop talking and smile at the same time. AND do not blink. It is very hard to concentrate on not-blinking - makes your eyes water. I blame the bad light for watery eyes.

Of course we had to try a photo on the stairs, it was always going to be a disaster, those at the bottom had close-ups and those at the top looked far far away, and knees became a problem, they stuck out everywhere and into everyone.

So did we get a team photo? Yes, several hundred. By the time they had passed rigorous scrutiny (we were very brutal about our friend's attributes) a few photos have passed the test. Everyone is looking forward and smiling, hands are not making gestures and most things visible are acceptable - the perfect team photo.



Could a professional have done this? I think not. It took love, laughter, sympathy, empathy, brutal honesty and a considerable amount of manhandling, pulling, pushing, shushing and shifting of environmental influences. (No plants in the gardens were harmed as a result of these photos.) There is a story behind every photo, as there should be. The photos are priceless, as is the story that goes with them.

Opportunities and Possibilities?

Team photos clearly offer an avenue for exploring possible selves, making people's day and letting playfulness abound. What about starting the New Year with a team photo adventure. There are gardens, playgrounds, parks, museums that offer endless possibilities. A time to make new friends and discover the photographer within.

Alison Brierley





Jo's top eleven for 2011

2011, it has a certain ring about it, and at the beginning of this year I wanted to reflect on the technologies 2010 brought us - so I have compiled Jo's top eleven list. I have to acknowledge being an Apple fanatic this list could well be top heavy with Mac products, but I will try not to be too biased! Some of the technologies may have been around for longer than 2010 but the increase in availability and use is why I have included them here.



1. **iPad** - what else could be number one? I am still waiting for the 2nd generation iPad before I buy. It is rumored to be released early 2011 and should have the front facing camera (great for video chat)
2. **iPod Nano** - I really, really, really want one of these to add to my iPod collection - it is so cool and would be very handy when I am out walking as it doubles as a pedometer. It also has the handy clip that my shuffle has which is excellent when you are on the go. It is such a great design and I put this one on my Christmas wish list when it was released. (It has an FM radio too - cool)
3. **Mobile applications** - with the rise of iPad, iPhone and android phone use the number of applications available for these devices has increased significantly (this could be a list in its own right - top ten mobile applications. Mine would include: Facebook, Twitter, 3 News, Angry Birds, Safari, Mail, iBook, Shazam, YouTube and the All Blacks application.)

4. **HD Video in still and Flip Cameras** - the increase and relative low cost (particularly in the Flip Camera) in HD video capability has enabled high quality video accessibility. I have a Flip camera on my Christmas wish list and will then be able to upload to YouTube with ease. It would have come in very handy at a couple of concerts I went to this year, my still camera sadly is not HD and has poor quality video.



5. **Mac Book Air** - This one is not in my possession yet either but I would love one. It is light and would be perfect as a travel laptop. I like the idea of flash storage (same as the iPad) which adds to its speed and reliability.



6. **3D Camera** - I am not sure about 3D television probably as I am so delighted with my HD television and can not imagine having to put glasses on to watch 3D content, I am excited though by the idea of 3D cameras. FUJI have a sweet little 3D compact camera - FUJI Finepix Real 3D 3W camera, which retails in New Zealand for around \$700.00. It is 10 megapixel which is not too shabby.
7. **Google Chrome** - Google's entry into the browser market sees a browser that is easy to use, safe and secure, has a minimalistic look about it but still has all the bells and whistles that you would expect from your internet browser. It is currently rated second after Firefox.

8. **Android phones** - the Google machine just keeps on rolling towards world domination with the release of their android operating system. While an android (smart) phone will never be a part of my wish list, it is a significant competitor for iPhone and because it can operate on any network it has already become a big player in the mobile phone market.



9. **Twitter** - the rise of twitter as a communication and social network programme. My work mates know well the importance of twitter in my life, particularly when it came to traveling and I wanted to know how the All Blacks were doing in the games they played while I was away. If my partner forgot to keep me updated with tweets, then the All Black official tweeter did a good job.





10. **iPhone 4** - why so far down the list you wonder? The iPhone 4 saw the release of the new operating system iOS 4 and it is this that I like most about the new iPhone. It was a free update for iPhone users so I am still a very happy owner of an iPhone 3gs. The iPhone 4 has HD video which is incredible and the face to face phone calls between iPhone 4 users is a bonus as long as you are not having a bad hair day!

11. **Digital displays in taxi's** - I am not sure how long these have been around for and maybe it is years and I am in taxi's so infrequently that I missed this innovation. While in Munich we got a cab that had the digital display in the rearview mirror! Very ingenious I thought, so I took a photo...



And so to 2011, I wait with anticipation for the release of the updated iPad and with Information and Communication Technology one thing is certain: there are always going to be new and highly coveted devices that we did not know we wanted but when they are released they are a must have. I can't wait!

Jo Colbert

Who is... Jo Colbert?

I cannot separate my early childhood life from my ELP life as they have been woven like the warps and wefts of a whāriki for so many years. In 2000, I was involved in ELP as a teacher and over the years I supported a number of teachers in their research journeys with ELP until, in 2006, I began to work full time for ELP. This work has been such a privilege for me as I have met so many wonderful teachers, shared learning with them and learnt from them in the work we have participated in together.

When I am in my 'Element' I am on my computer, or exploring new technologies, I get excited about the possibilities that they offer. I really like seeing what children can do with cameras, computers, etc. I find the work I do with teachers as far as ICT goes to be particularly empowering and is indeed reciprocal learning as there is never a time where I am not a learner alongside the teachers I am working with.

Aside from ICT my other passions include music and when the opportunity presents itself I like being able to listen to it live, highlights for 2010 included the Canadian Band 'The New Pornographers' and at the opposite end of the music spectrum, the New Zealand Operatic Society's performance of MacBeth!

I also love movies and there is nothing I like more than eating Renkon takeaways and watching a good movie.

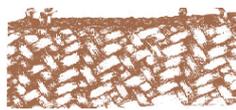
Rugby is also high on my list of passions and I am looking forward to the build up to the World Cup this year.

I can very easily become addicted to games and my current addictions include Fruit Ninja and Angry Birds - both of which I play on my iPhone.

With the beginning of a new year there are endless possibilities for work, for learning and for life and I look forward to the journey.

Jo Colbert





ELP Membership 2011

The first year of ELP's membership programme is coming to an end this month so now's the time to **renew your membership**. As in 2010, being an ELP member entitles you to our newsletter, priority enrolments at all ELP events, email and telephone support with an allocated ELP Project Facilitator and 10% (or more) discount for our in-centre work, our Lecture Series and Seminar Series.

Like last year, memberships are available for groups and individuals:
 One centre (1-4 licences) \$205 (incl. GST)/year for each licence
 One centre (5+ licences) \$185 (incl. GST)/year for each licence
 Individual teacher membership \$55 (incl. GST)/year

To renew your membership simply download the membership application form from our website (click [here](#)). If you fill out this form on your computer remember to save it before sending it back to us.

ELP programme 2011

A large part of our work in 2011 will be the 'Leadership' and 'Education and care of children under two years' programmes which are both funded by the Ministry of Education. Three **Inspiration Days** will be held for each programme and you can read more about the 'Leadership' Inspiration Days [here](#) and the 'Education and care of children under two years' Inspiration Days [here](#). We will share more of our wider MoE professional learning programme in the next newsletter

The 1st round of these **MoE funded programmes** will run until the end of 2011, enrolments for the **2nd round** will be open in spring 2011 - so keep an eye on our website for more information on these two programmes.

Of course we will return with our **Lecture Series** in Auckland and Hamilton. Lorraine Sands, Melissa Osmond and Rachel Pennell from Greerton Early Childhood Centre will open our Lecture Series in February to discuss and share insights into the role of the key teacher.

We are also planning to continue our Seminar Series, but are still in the process of finalising details.

You might also be interested in trying our [in-centre professional learning programme](#) which can be fully customised to suit your requirements or could be based on our [cluster/non-cluster programmes](#).

Wherever we will see you, at the lectures, at the Inspiration Days, or in your centre, we are looking forward to working with you again in 2011!

Upcoming Events

February - April 2011

08.02.2011

Lecture Series Auckland
 Lorraine Sands, Melissa Osmond,
 Rachel Pennell: The Role of the Key
 Teacher

15.02.2011

Lecture Series Hamilton
 Lorraine Sands, Melissa Osmond,
 Rachel Pennell: The Role of the Key
 Teacher

05.03.2011

Leadership Inspiration Day
 Palmerston North

8.3.2011

Lecture Series Auckland
 Wendy Lee: In the Spirit of
 Adventure

12.3.2011

Under Two's Inspiration Day
 Auckland

15.3.2011

Lecture Series Hamilton
 Wendy Lee: In the Spirit of
 Adventure

26.03.2011

Under Twos Inspiration Day Dunedin

02.04.2011

Leadership Inspiration Day Napier

09.04.2011

Leadership Inspiration Day Nelson

12.04.2011

Lecture Series Auckland
 Karen Ramsey: Bush Kindergarten
 in Urban Auckland

19.04.2011

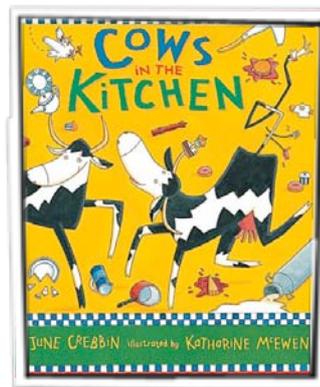
Lecture Series Hamilton
 Karen Ramsey: Bush Kindergarten
 in Urban Auckland



I have been reading...Cows in the Kitchen by June Crebbin illustrated by Katharine McEwen



Actually, I have been reading it quite a bit - truthfully, I know it off by heart. It is my grandchildren's favourite book at the moment. "Cows in the Kitchen" is a delightful children's book read or sung along to the tune "Skip to My Lou". When Tom Farmer is snoozing the farm animals come inside and create mischief and mayhem. The sheep are on the sofa, the ducks are on the dresser, and the pigs in the pantry etc. This children's book, for children of all ages, is beautifully illustrated with plenty of detail to attract the eye and engage the mind. It has lots of rhythm and animal noises to make, with lots of opportunities for jiggling and wriggling too.



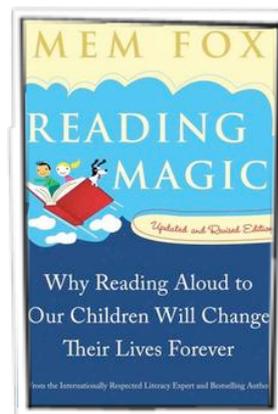
ISBN 0-7445-6947-8

And I have been reading...

Reading Magic: Why Reading Aloud to Our Children Will Change Their Lives Forever by Mem Fox, Judy Horacek

I have a passion for books and reading. I love to read to children and have had many opportunities for reading to my little grandchildren over the holiday season. I am surprised that they each like different kinds of books.

Reading aloud to children provides you with opportunities to sit, cuddle up, jiggle, wriggle, dance on a knee, and hang out together. It is obviously such a joy and pleasure to all involved. It is not a chore or compulsory. It is something we invite each other to do together. It is an interest we share. Zane who is 11 months old arrives at my house now and goes and chooses a book for us to read. At the moment he actually seeks out his favourite - "Cows in the Kitchen" - from a whole pile of books available to him. When he couldn't locate it last week, I was amazed as he stopped rummaging in the books and looked up and 'asked' me to find it. To his delight we found it.



ISBN 156035103



In her book "Reading Magic", children's author and literacy expert Mem Fox reminds us of the emotional and intellectual impact reading aloud to young children has. She says "Reading aloud and talking about what we're reading sharpens children's brains and helps develop their ability to concentrate at length, to solve problems logically, and to express themselves more easily and clearly." (p. 15) and "When we take the time to read aloud to the children in our lives, we bond closely with them in a secret society associated with the books we've shared. The fire of literacy is created by the emotional sparks that fly when a child, a book, and the person reading make contact. It isn't achieved by the book alone, nor by the child alone, nor by the adult who's reading aloud-its the relationship winding among all three, bringing them together in easy harmony." (p. 99)

Mem Fox reinforces something dear to our hearts in Early Childhood Education in Aotearoa, New Zealand. She reminds us

that reading aloud to babies and young children is a vehicle for building loving care relationships and supporting children's disposition to learn thus growing in them in a love of books, language and reading. Children have opportunities to become dispositional readers when we read aloud to them.

Mem Fox provides us with hints and tips for reading aloud to children and 10 Read Aloud Commandments.

It feels right to read aloud to children and I believe it is their right to be read aloud to.

I recommend this very useful book to parents and early childhood teachers.



Kathryn Delany

**Carol Dweck Mindset Rule #2**

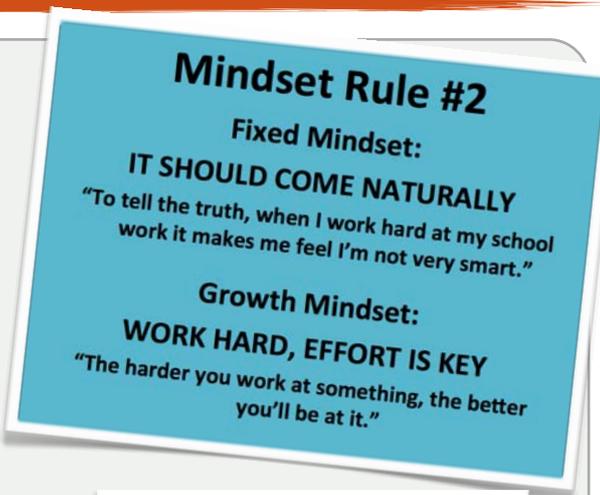
In our last newsletter I talked about the work Carol Dweck shared at the Carol Dweck National Conference in England in 2010. Part of her presentation was about what she called the three Mindset Rules and in this newsletter I will talk about Rule #2.

Mindset Rule #2 is the one that Carol sees as the most important rule of all. In a fixed mindset effort is seen as a negative thing. These children believe that if you have ability you shouldn't need to put in effort as things should just come naturally.

But those children with a growth mindset believe that effort makes all the difference and as Carol Dweck herself describes, "Effort is what ignites your ability, allows you to use it to the fullest and allows you to increase it over time, so they say the harder you work something, the better you'll be at it." Carol talked at length about the issues surrounding this rule and also other research that is confirming these ideas, particularly the work of other psychologists. More and more research is being done that has conclusions that are confirming that, "effort and learning is the gateway to great ability."

I will tell you about Mindset Rule #3 and Carol's conclusion in the next newsletter.

Wendy Lee



Carol Dweck

Growth Mindset in action: A Learning Story

It seems to me that building children's identity as learners is a critical aspect of our job. Learners who love to learn, who see struggle and effort and practice as a way to keep improving their skills, are learners who are well prepared to face the challenges of the twenty-first century. Feedback messages are powerful ways to support this kind of resilient identity. Most often this happens in our conversations as we use dispositional language to specifically talk about what we see. More formally, in our documentation, there is a very real opportunity to leave long acting messages that are revisited as children are later able to read their portfolios. Most importantly, this documentation has the opportunity to engage with families, as teachers provide thoughtfully written analyses of their child's learning and widen perspectives about what valued learning might look like. Below is a Learning Story about Mack's encounter with a difficult puzzle. It unpacks the characteristics of this resilient, resourceful learner and as you read further it may be helpful to have these reflective questions in mind.

- * How were Mack's own inquiries supported?
- * What does this tell us about her interests and strengths?
- * How was this interest/area of research sustained?
- * How has this enhanced Mack's learning... understanding (deepened and widened their learning theories)?
- * How has she been supported to 'love to learn'?
- * What does this tell us about wise practice?
- * How has it offered opportunities for wider consideration of a dispositional learning framework?
- * What surprised us about this work?

As we seek to encourage learners to choose edgy difficult work that puts them at the cusp of their skill level wanting more, we realise that feedback messages, whether verbal or documented are crucially influential in supporting children's identities as strong, resourceful learners.

Lorraine Sands



Mack, you have a lot to tell us about learning something hard!

MAY 2010

TEACHER: LORRAINE



I heard a confident voice and it was you Mack, asking me to come and help you do do the 'horse puzzle'.

I was more than happy to move to your spot at the table but not to 'help' you so much, as to watch how you tackled your own problem because I could immediately see you had many great strategies to get yourself over the difficult hump until you finished.

Mack, first of all you looked carefully at each piece and made a very good guess at where it might go. Next you tested this idea and if it didn't fit you had another thoughtful

attempt. So in fact, not many pieces went into spots where at least part of the shape wasn't a good fit. We did have a surprise though, because we found out the puzzle wasn't a horse at all. It had a horn, so it was a magical unicorn!

It was a challenge though but you thought this was great and immediately you had finished guess what, you tipped the puzzle out and had another go. This time you were much faster and remembered parts that had been quite hard the first time round with more ease. Now as soon as this one was finished again you tipped out the puzzle for another go. It was as if you were just challenging yourself to do it faster each time which

means that it was getting easier and easier. There was a short break to go off and investigate the

Mack, you know a lot about learning and you set your sights on the harder options, then you turn round and are willing to teach your friends

cockroach that everybody was squealing about and then back you came for another go. This time Ana who had been watching all your efforts with this puzzle, from the sideline, wanted to join in to have a closer look at what you were doing. Very graciously you were now the teacher and showed her your new improved skills.

Mack, what a committed learner you are. I was just so pleased to be asked to join you because it gave me a very clear insight into the way you set yourself a big challenge and how you persisted until you got there! What a fabulous attitude. The hard things are often the satisfying things to accomplish.