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A conference with Carol Dweck

What a fabulous way to start our overseas adventure together. The entire ELP team was invited by Pen Green to run a series of workshops around the Carol Dweck National Conference; Lorraine Sands and I were also invited to give a keynote at the Carol Dweck National Conference which was held at Pen Green in Corby, Northamptonshire. The focus of the 1-day national conference was **'Mastery Orientated Pedagogy by Professor Carol Dweck'**. Carol Dweck's work on developing children's mindsets so that they become confident risk takers with a learning orientation has become hugely influential on early years practitioners both in the United Kingdom and with our work in New Zealand. Dweck's work proves that children with a strong mastery orientation are able to make mistakes and still hold on to their own sense of self efficacy. Whereas, children with a narrow performance orientation struggle when the task becomes more challenging and are highly dependent on adult's praise.



Carol Dweck

The ELP team worked collaboratively with the Pen Green research team to run a series of workshops over the four days surrounding the Carol Dweck national conference. These workshops were designed to complement the National Conference. The first two days focused on how adults support babies and toddlers in becoming confident risk takers and the other two days focused on 'noticing, recognising and responding to children gaining mastery in the Early Years', and was for those practitioners working with children over three. All workshops took a focus of reflecting on and developing a socio-constructivist pedagogy through:

- The Te Whāriki curriculum from New Zealand
- The Pen Green curriculum from United Kingdom
- Pedagogical documentation

To frame both of these 2-day events, Kate Hayward from Pen Green and I each provided an overview keynote touching on both issues of curriculum and Carol Dweck's work.

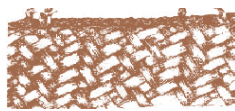
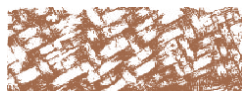
For those of you who do not know the work of Carol Dweck, she is the author

of: ['Self-Theories: Their Roles in Motivation, Personality and Development'](#). Carol Dweck is a professor of Psychology at Stanford University. She is a leading expert in the field of human motivation and intelligence and through the years she has developed an extensive body of theory and research. In 2006, she published a remarkable book called ['Mindset: The New Psychology of Success'](#). The book is extremely useful, not only because of the clarity but also, and foremost, because of its important and useful message. This message is that the way you view your own intelligence largely determines how it will develop. You can have a look on [YouTube](#) if you would like to have a little insight into her work.



Co-facilitated workshops lead by both ELP and Pen Green





Carol Dweck presenting at the Conference



Lorraine giving a keynote at the National Conference

At the National Conference, Lorraine and I presented a keynote on Perspectives on Pedagogy from New Zealand. In this keynote we presented work from NZ focusing our presentation on competent, confident risk-taking children. Carol Dweck's response to our keynote presentations at this conference, when asked about how she saw the NZ work in relationship to her research, was:

"It was really putting it into practice in profound and often subtle ways. To have the children take on challenges, originate their own learning, stick to their goal in the face of obstacles, rebound from the obstacles. It was just seamless in the way that you were encouraging it, but it was really bringing these principles to life, so it was very exciting."

In our next newsletter we will share some of the ideas that Carol Dweck explored at the National Conference. You can also access some extra material on Carol Dweck's Growth and Fixed Mindset through the ELP Member Area on our website.

Wendy Lee

Wendy and Carol participating in the panel that followed the keynotes at the end of the day.



Who Is... Marie Thom?

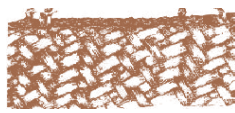
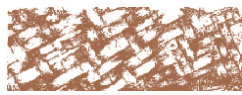
The second staff member profile in our series of "Meet the ELP team" is about Marie Thom.

Marie is your first point of contact for all Professional Development requests, general information about our programmes and complaints or concerns.

Tēnā koutou katoa, my name is Marie Thom. I have worked for ELP since the beginning of 2006 in an administrative role. This is the smallest company I have worked in and probably the most complex. Previously I worked at Hukanui kindergarten, Hamilton and before that in large government organisations in human resources, financial management and administrative roles. Working with ELP has been enjoyable and often exciting despite the very challenging political and commercial realities that ELP has faced. It is amazing to me to see the remarkable changes ELP has had to make to meet the requirements of the current environment and yet stay true to its philosophies.

In the words of Suzanne Paul, "and that is not all". I also have a busy life outside of work. Brian, my husband of many years, a golfer, is used to my outside interests, obsessions he might say. I have been studying part time, for personal interest, forever - management, writing and Te Reo Māori have been the main focuses. This year I have given study a rest to follow a new passion in martial arts. I have risen to the dizzy heights of blue belt, (to match the bruises on my arms), in my future is a black belt. I followed my eleven year old son, Lucas, into the sport and now my fourteen year old daughter, Emily, trains as well. With schools, homework, rugby, gymnastics, husband, dog, house and work it is a full life. I wouldn't have it any other way.





Organisational Culture - Byron Katie

A very important factor in organisational culture is the relationship between the staff. It can be a challenge to work closely in a team situation, and when teachers don't get on, or have unresolved conflicts, everybody suffers, including the children. We are at work for so many hours of the day, and it is so important to be able to enjoy supportive, respectful, and harmonious relationships.

There are many useful sites on the web to view if you just google "conflict resolution". Byron Katie's three sites, her [blog site](#), her [facebook site](#) and her [official site](#), are also great, and filled with movie clips that show her working with people. Byron Katie offers a simple method of inquiring into our stressful thoughts, and asks four questions

1. Is it true?
2. Do you absolutely know that it's true?
3. What do you experience as you believe this thought? and
4. How would you be without this thought?

She invites you to consider a turn around for your stressful thought - what is the opposite of this thought that could be true or truer? There is nothing religious or guru about her, and I find her questions are a refreshing way to keep inquiring and reflecting on how I live my life and conduct my relationships.

Julie Killick



"I discovered that when I believed my thoughts, I suffered, but that when I didn't believe them, I didn't suffer, and that this is true for every human being. Freedom is as simple as that. I found that suffering is optional. I found a joy within me that has never disappeared, not for a single moment. That joy is in everyone, always." — Byron Katie

Impressions of a 4 week journey with a centre in England

Summer is back again today, it has come and gone over the past few weeks, but today it is back. I am working with a centre who are very interested in narrative assessment and have been bravely forging ahead with trying to work from the children's interests and a less prescribed programme. There are lots of struggles. We have unpacked the word struggle as it is sometimes thought of as a negative word; as if striving to understand, finding things out and trying something completely new is going to be an easy path to take!

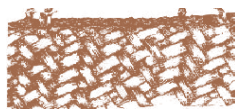
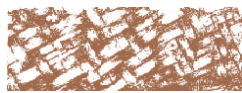
So there are struggles and questions. Lots of questions about 'how to' and 'do you' and 'what happens if?' It is my last day here today and I know that I will leave them with many questions and many more struggles. Yet I think the struggle is where the understanding grows, as teachers think deeply about what this may mean for them. There are struggles to reorganise the environment so that children may have more choices and longer to stay and probably longer also to struggle! There are struggles to feel brave enough to write from a personal perspective and trust one's intuition. Part of me wishes I could have all the answers and be here longer to help with the struggle, and yet I think the struggle will be a positive one and I look forward to hearing about what happens next.

The journey this centre is on started a few years ago as the Head Teacher had heard Wendy Lee speak and was inspired to try new ideas. Working with the Early Years Foundation Stage document can be daunting as almost every possible learning outcome is described and therefore needs to be proven. However, looking more broadly at the the EYFS we have discovered a language that I have recognised, such as 'enabling environments' and 'dispositions'. There are messages in this document about a 'unique child' and 'engaged teachers' and these are the aspects of this weighty (and tedious!) document that we can begin to make visible through Learning Stories.

Part of the new journey has been to discover [FISH! Philosophy](#) and I have a feeling there will be many interesting stories to be shared (and hopefully documented) in the staffroom.

So I am leaving this team after being immersed in their lives for a few weeks. I have met fabulous teachers who are bravely struggling with new ideas and already trying more new ideas and thinking about what will be next. It has been a privilege to be here and I know that this relationship will continue as I try to lure the teachers out to New Zealand so I can repay their hospitality and embark on more FISH! adventures.

Alison Brierley



Four Weeks in Durham County North East England

When people ask me about what I have been doing for the last three months I listen to myself tell the stories and think maybe I am talking about someone else! BUT NO, IT REALLY HAPPENED TO ME!

I have learnt a lot about myself and I have learnt so much about diversity and how Learning Stories can work in different contexts. I have been overwhelmed by the passion and excitement teachers in other countries have for Learning Stories. I have been humbled by the spirit of determination teachers, managers and professional providers have as they work out ways that successfully shift their services into using narrative assessment successfully alongside accountability in such a way that children and family's stories remain central to learning outcomes. On my return I reflect a lot on the beginning of my journey with Learning Stories and with Educational Leadership Project. I enjoy the memory of Margaret Carr and Wendy Lee in 2001 visiting Pakuranga College Early Childhood Centre celebrating and encouraging us in our exploration of using Learning Stories and am left with the thought, could I ever have known the 2010 outcome of this journey with Learning Stories?! I don't think so. To be one of the people that has been part of this 2010 overseas venture has been fantastic.

I was fortunate to be in the position to be able to take up the opportunity to work with four centres in Durham County for the month of May. I discovered, as I suspected, that children all over the world learn more effectively when left to explore their passions and interests and teachers willingly support their interests.

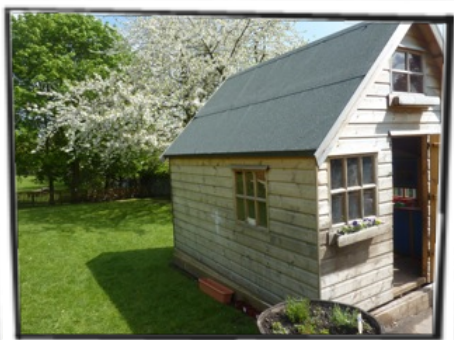


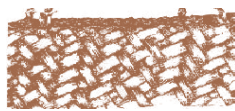
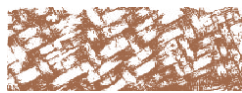
Learning Stories opened up for teachers the opportunity to write the most amazing stories about wonderful situations that touched the hearts of many. One small child with the support of her friends, teachers and parents had planted a dinosaur tooth beside the beans to see what would grow. She played with this idea with considerable delight and wonderment, at the same time developing another interest in growing carrots for her toy bunny. When her mum read the stories she almost cried as she realised for the first time how much the teachers valued her daughter's investigative and imaginative spirit.

During the final centre visit I was chatting and listening as one teacher explained to me how much her teaching practice had changed during the project. She had stopped rushing in to direct play and to set up activities and now listened more closely to children and became included in their discussions as they noticed her attention. I returned inside and suddenly she rushed in and called out "Guess what he said! Guess what he just said!" I looked expectantly "He said you have to write things down!!" In her excitement at what she had noticed she hadn't asked the child why. She shot back outside and when she returned she quietly said "I have to write it down 'because I have to know what we [the children] are thinking and who's ideas they are!'" Hard not to be overwhelmed in a situation like that! Wise and informative feedback from a child regarding the value of Learning Stories as an agent of change. The Professional Development was intense and firmly supported throughout by the local management and the teaching teams. Learning Stories when accepted as a teaching and learning philosophy, not just an assessment practice, results in rapid and considerable change.

As I reflect I return to the beginning of my journey in 2001 and I realise that in one decade that fact has not changed, the power of narrative remains. And in many countries communities are eager to adapt this philosophy.

Robyn Lawrence





An Apple a day keeps Jo very happy!

I have just returned from eight weeks overseas. While away I witnessed the release of the iPad in London, I saw the queue outside the Regent Street Apple Store – stretching for half a block – and was inside to hear the clapping as each person was allowed to go up the stairs to make their iPad purchase. I was able to explore the functionality of this new piece of hardware from Apple and I really liked it and *could* have paid my pounds and put one in my bag. Wherever I went I saw large posters displaying the iPad which was so tantalising and frustrating for a Kiwi who could not buy one in her own country! So the news this week that finally the iPad is here comes with slight ambivalence on my part, yes I *would* love an iPad. I watched a guy on the train using his when I travelled from Newbury to London and was very envious of its portability. The lovely screen makes watching movies a dream on a long train or plane trip! I am just left wondering why it has taken so long to be released here, however, it has given me time to decide not to rush out and by the first generation iPad but wait, and hope the next generation will have the front facing camera that is missing from the current version. <http://tinyurl.com/yf92po9>



Jo at the Regent Street Apple Store in London



iPad billboard in Berlin

Thankfully the iPhone 4 is going to be released in New Zealand in a more timely fashion and is available from Friday the 30 July. In Munich I was able to have a play with the new iPhone. I whipped my 3G-S out of it's case to compare my model with the latest offering from Apple. Now I would *love* one of these, but sadly will have to wait for another year until my current contract expires. If you are like me and have the 3G-S iPhone, I would recommend you download the latest update for iPhone iOS 4.0.1. it is free and will give you some of the features of the new iPhone. You can multitask, create folders for your apps, the mail app has changed so viewing all mail boxes at one time is possible. I really like being able to create a playlist on the iPhone's iPod app without having to use my lap top, oh, by the way the spell check is very handy too. Check out the update and other features at Apple online. <http://www.apple.com/nz/iphone/softwareupdate/>

Jo Colbert

Upcoming Events

07.08.2010

Inspiration Day Invercargill

10.08.2010

Lecture Series Auckland

Julie Killick: Cultivating Powerful Teacher Presence

11.08.2010

Seminar Series Napier

Wendy Lee: DON'T be careful, you'll hurt yourself!! Relishing Risky Play

17.08.2010

Lecture Series Hamilton

Julie Killick: Cultivating Powerful

Teacher Presence

21.08.2010

Inspiration Day Dunedin

31.08.2010

Seminar Series Whanganui

Wendy Lee: The Arts

14.09.2010

Lecture Series Auckland

Kathryn Delany: On the Mat - Wrestling with the BIG ONE!

21.09.2010

Lecture Series Hamilton

Kathryn Delany: On the Mat -

Wrestling with the BIG ONE!

12.10.2010

Lecture Series Auckland

Alison Brierley: Don't leave town 'til you've seen the country - Te Whāriki in the 21st century

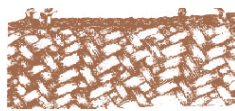
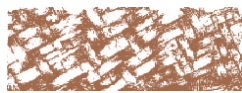
19.10.2010

Lecture Series Hamilton

Alison Brierley: Don't leave town 'til you've seen the country - Te Whāriki in the 21st century

30.10.2010

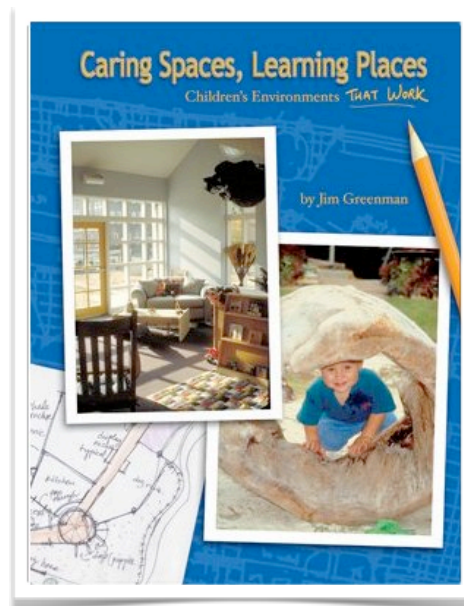
Inspiration Day Wellington



I have been reading...Caring Spaces, Learning Places: Children's Environments THAT WORK by Jim Greenman

Over the last two months I have had many wonder-filled opportunities to visit airports, railway stations, churches, abbeys, museums, art galleries and early childhood settings. So often these have been interesting, awe inspiring and jaw droppingly beautiful. All places and spaces evoked a response in me. Sometimes I felt over-joyed, amazed or overwhelmed. Sometimes I felt like staying a long time and other times I felt like screaming "get me out of here fast". At all times I had the power and resilience to go or stay.

All of these spaces gave cues to what is valued here and the purpose of the place. The purposes included: serving food, providing curation for precious items, displaying fantastic art, praise and worship, corralling and facilitating the movement of people, caring for and educating small children. All of these places are work spaces for people and colleagues. Some of these places are living, learning and loving spaces for our most precious and most vulnerable human beings. These travel and learning opportunities gave me cause to think about the places and spaces we provide for children in our early childhood care and education settings in New Zealand.



ISBN 0-942702-33-6

For ideas and reflective prompts I reached for Jim Greenman's book '[Caring Spaces, Learning Places](#)'. In the foreword to Jim's book, Lella Gandini says, "*We have all experienced how even a small improvement in a learning space can reverberate in positive ways, but we have also learned that one cannot stop there. It is the value that we attribute to the potentials of children and our respect for their learning as individuals and as groups that can truly create a shift in our teaching, transforming us from being "only" teachers to being true listeners and learners.*" (p. vii)

Experiences and time spent in our settings in New Zealand is as diverse as the children and families who use the service. Jim Greenman tells us that if fifteen-week-old Hannah continues in Childcare until elementary school, (NZ 6 year old) she will have spent around 12,000 hours at the centre, more time than she will spend in all of elementary and high school. Her brother Michael attends pre-school a few hours a day, he may spend up to 1,000 hours at the service. (p.54).



In this book Jim Greenman inspires by sharing the stories, insights and poetry of many people as he kindly challenges and supports us in reviewing and re-thinking the lives of children and teachers in our early childhood settings. He provides many good ideas and tools for changing and improving early childhood education environments in early childhood settings. The review, changes and improvements to our early childhood care and education settings can and will transform us teachers into "*true listeners and learners*".

I particularly liked the discussion on *institutionalized childhoods* (p.64) which concludes with a list of reflective questions that would be a very useful review tool to work through as a team of teachers. I recommend this book to those teachers who are "*... carrying out one of the most delicate missions in life, namely sustaining the growth and learning of children as individuals and in groups.*" (Lella Gandini p.vii)

Kathryn Delany