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Intentional Teaching in New Zealand Early Childhood Education: Aspirations, Decisions, and Actions

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A thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education, the University of Auckland, 2016.

Abstract

In recent years the term *intentional teaching* has entered the lexicon of early childhood education. A small but growing body of international literature investigating the notion of intentional teaching in early childhood education was located at the beginning of this study. Its relevance to the New Zealand context was not, however, clear and little research had been conducted in New Zealand. Moreover, the notion of intentional teaching as described internationally appeared to foreground teaching and teachers in a way that the New Zealand early childhood curriculum statement, *Te Whāriki*, does not. Nevertheless, prior to this study beginning there were indications that early childhood teachers and policy-makers in this country were starting to think about and discuss the notion of intentional teaching.

The focus of the study reported in this thesis was teachers' understanding of intentional teaching, and what aspects of their practice might be considered as intentional. The aim of this study was to develop a *ground-up* understanding of the nature of intentional teaching in New Zealand early childhood education centres that was based on empirical data. Consequently, this study was designed and conducted according to the principles of constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2000).

Thirteen qualified early childhood teachers from three early childhood centres participated. The methods used were: focus group interviews, individual interviews, observations, informal professional conversations, and a review of centre documentation. Data were analysed using the constant comparative technique that is central to constructivist grounded theory. In addition, the preliminary findings and theoretical model were presented to available participants for their comments, which were then incorporated into the final analysis.

The major finding of this study was that intentional teaching was an holistic and dynamic process that had its origins in teachers' aspirations for children. These aspirations were translated into intentional teaching practice through the teachers' curriculum decisions. In addition, the findings indicated that intentional teaching was demonstrated both in planned experiences and in teachers' spontaneous and intuitive responses to children's emerging inquiry. However, intentional teaching was typically unarticulated.

This thesis presents the original substantive grounded theory that was constructed from these findings. This theory explains intentional teaching as being the result of a complex and dynamic relationship between teachers' aspirations, decisions, and actions. The limitations of the study are acknowledged, and possible areas for future research are identified.

The engagement of the research and teaching communities with this theoretical model is invited. The thesis argues that this substantive theory has the potential to empower early childhood teachers to identify, articulate, and explain their intentional teaching. It also has implications for early childhood teacher-educators, and policy-makers, and these implications are considered.

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1. Introduction

The term *intentional teaching* is not one that has typically been associated with early childhood education in New Zealand. Nevertheless, in recent years intentional teaching has been increasingly discussed in international literature, and there is some evidence that it is beginning to be discussed by policy-makers, researchers, and teachers in this country in the context of early childhood education.

This thesis reports a qualitative interpretivist research study, designed and conducted according to the principles of constructivist grounded theory, which investigated the notion of intentional teaching in early childhood education in New Zealand. This chapter begins by introducing the notion of intentional teaching. It then outlines the rationale for the study, and the factors that indicated that this study was timely, before describing the specific aim of the study.

The design of the study and the researcher are also introduced in this chapter. It then contextualises the study by briefly describing the development of early childhood services in New Zealand, the nature of the New Zealand early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki: He Whāriki Mātauranga mō ngā Mokopuna o Aotearoa: Early Childhood Curriculum (Te Whāriki)* (Ministry of Education, [MoE], 1996), and the qualification structure for early childhood teachers. The chapter concludes with an overview of the content of this thesis.

Background to the Study

In the United States of America (USA), intentional teaching has been described as being at "the core of developmentally appropriate practice" (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2009, [NAEYC], p. 9). In Australia, intentional teaching was included as one of eight recommended practices for early childhood educators in the first Federal early childhood curriculum document *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* (EYLF) (Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations, [DEEWR], 2009). These references to intentional teaching suggest a high level of interest in intentional teaching at policy level in these two countries.

Both of these documents based their conceptualisation of intentional teaching on a definition proposed in 2007. In *The Intentional Teacher: Choosing the Best Strategies for Young Children's*

Learning, Epstein (2007) defined intentional teaching as being “planful, thoughtful, and purposeful” (p. 1), and she described an intentional teacher as one who “aims at clearly defined learning objectives for children, employs instructional strategies likely to help children achieve the objectives, and continually assesses progress and adjusts the strategies based on that assessment” (p. 4).

However, Epstein’s definition of intentional teaching was not based on research into intentional teaching. Rather, she acknowledged that she “suggested the term” (Epstein, 2007, p. 7). Nevertheless, as has been demonstrated, Epstein’s view of intentional teaching has been incorporated into significant early childhood education policy documents. Epstein’s definition has also been used as the basis for a growing number of research studies into intentional teaching in the context of American and Australian early childhood education, and for a small number of research studies in New Zealand, including my own study in 2011.

Rationale for the Study

My research interest in intentional teaching began with my Master of Education studies (Batchelar, 2011). Six early childhood teachers in one early childhood centre with a Christian philosophy participated in that study. I investigated how they interpreted and implemented one aspect of the aspiration statement in the national early childhood curriculum *Te Whāriki* that children should grow up “*healthy in* mind, body, and *spirit*” (MoE, 1996, p. 9, emphasis added). The focus of my study was to discover whether teachers were intentional about providing support for children’s spirituality. Informed by Epstein’s (2007) definition of intentional teaching, I interpreted the findings from that study as indicating that two of the six teachers were intentionally supporting children’s spirituality. The other teachers recognised children’s spirituality on reflection, rather than in advance, and therefore I did not consider their practice to be intentional.

In this present research study I wanted to investigate further the concept of intentional teaching, and to consider teaching practice across the whole curriculum. I did not want, however, to assess teachers’ practice against a pre-determined understanding of intentional teaching suggested either by the literature or by my previous research. Rather, I wanted to develop a *ground-up* understanding of intentional teaching that was based on data rather than on the literature.

I wanted to discover how early childhood teachers in New Zealand might interpret the notion of intentional teaching, and how intentional teaching might be demonstrated within the broad definition of curriculum found in *Te Whāriki*, and in the mix of pre-planned and spontaneous events that *Te Whāriki* indicates is appropriate for early childhood education. I also wanted to understand the factors that might influence intentional teaching. In summary, I was interested in understanding *how* New Zealand teachers' practice demonstrated intentional teaching, *what* they tried to teach intentionally, and *why* they engaged in intentional teaching.

My initial review of the literature located no similar prior study. The international studies that were located early in this study tended to focus on what early childhood teachers intentionally taught children, and thus had a focus on subject content (e.g., Edwards & Cutter-Mackenzie, 2011; Lonigan & Shanahan, 2010). These studies emphasised the importance of teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge. In addition, many of these studies also investigated how teachers engaged in intentional teaching, primarily by assessing their practice against Epstein's (2007) definition (e.g., Mogharreban, McIntyre, & Raisor, 2010). However, none were located that investigated how teachers understood the notion of intentional teaching, or how they thought it might be demonstrated in their practice.

One study was located (Burns, Kidd, Nasser, Aier, & Stechuk, 2012) that was based in observations of teachers' practice, with the intention of developing a research-based definition of intentional teaching to inform future research. Their findings, which are discussed in detail in the literature review, presented an understanding of intentional teaching that was relationship-based, focused on children's existing interests, and that incorporated both planned and spontaneous activities. This conceptualisation of intentional teaching seemed to have the potential of being compatible with *Te Whāriki.*

The studies that were located early on are critically reviewed in detail in Chapter 2. Together, they suggested that intentional teaching was a valuable and important construct for consideration in early childhood education. Their relevance to the New Zealand early childhood context, however, was unclear, and thus supplied the rationale for this study.

The Timeliness of the Study

As Chapter 2 will also show, only two studies conducted in New Zealand that specifically investigated intentional teaching were located when this study began. The first of these (Duncan, 2009a; Duncan et al., 2008) investigated the notion of intentionality in the context of home-based care for children. It concluded that intentional teaching was “key to both increased professional competency and to enhanced learning outcomes for children” (Duncan, 2009, p. 2). This conclusion supported the international view that intentional teaching was a potentially valuable and important approach to early childhood teaching that warranted further research investigation.

The second was my own study (Batchelar, 2011) that I described earlier. In that study I concluded that intentional teaching could be based on teachers’ personal beliefs and worldview. This finding appeared to challenge much of the international literature that presented intentional teaching as being based primarily on teachers’ professional knowledge. Both Duncan et al. (2008) and I referred to Epstein’s (2007) definition of intentional teaching.

Two other New Zealand-based studies were located that referred to intentional teaching, although that was not their primary focus. The first described intentional teaching as being “grounded in a particular context” (Carr et al., 2008, p. 48), suggesting that intentional teaching might be expressed differently in different situations. In addition, Carr et al. (2008) suggested that teachers consider how to align their intentions for children’s learning, with the children’s intentions. A later paper from this same study defined intentional teaching as occurring when teachers’ and children’s intentions are “in tune” (Robinson & Bartlett, 2011, p. 11).

The second New Zealand study that was located, which referred incidentally to intentional teaching, reinforced the importance of an alignment between teachers’ and children’s intentions, while also highlighting the difficulties associated with doing so. Cherrington’s (2011) study found that some teachers experienced a “mismatch between their teaching intentions and the children’s learning interests” (p. 3). This may in part have been because teachers struggled to “articulate their …teaching intentions” (p. 248). All of these studies are reviewed in detail in Chapter 2.

The New Zealand studies located indicated that intentional teaching was a concept that early childhood teachers in this country were beginning to think about and discuss. In addition, other evidence suggested that intentional teaching was beginning to be considered and discussed in New Zealand at a policy, and research, level. For example, in 2013, the New Zealand Teachers Council[1] (NZTC) issued a *Request for Proposals* to providers of Initial Teacher Education, requesting the design of Teacher Education Refresh (TER) Programmes intended to ensure that "every provisionally registered teacher has demonstrated that their professional knowledge and practice is current and has been recently assessed" (NZTC, 2013, p. 1). The request for proposals stated that any TER course designed for early childhood teachers should include reference to intentional teaching (NZTC, 2013).

This request was a strong indicator that intentional teaching in early childhood education was beginning to be considered in this country at a policy or regulatory level. However, it was also an indicator of the lack of a New Zealand research base into intentional teaching. It appeared that the inclusion of intentional teaching in the *Request for Proposals* document was inspired in part by Cherrington's (2011) finding, cited earlier, that New Zealand early childhood teachers may find it challenging to explain their teaching intentions, as well as by the growing international interest in the topic (D. Wansborough, personal communication, 8.11.2013). Otherwise, in tacit acknowledgement of the lack of a New Zealand research-base into intentional teaching, the NZTC were content to leave providers of the TER programme to determine for themselves how to define intentional teaching, and to provide their own theoretical base for their teaching about it (D. Wansborough, personal communication, 8.11.2013).

As further evidence of the growing interest in intentional teaching in New Zealand early childhood education circles, the 2014 51st annual conference of Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa New Zealand Childcare Association, a major conference for early childhood teachers, researchers, academics, and policy-makers had intentional teaching as one of its themes. Together, all of these signs of a developing interest in intentional teaching in New Zealand support the contention that this study is timely, and of potential significance to New Zealand early childhood teachers.

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[1] The New Zealand Teachers Council, Te Pouherenga Kaiako o Aotearoa, was the professional and regulatory body for registered teachers working in early childhood centres, schools and other education institutions in New Zealand. On July 1 2015 it was replaced with the Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (Education Council).

The Aim of the Study

The research study that is described in this thesis was designed to investigate the nature of intentional teaching in the context of early childhood education in New Zealand. The aim of this study was to develop a theoretical model to explain intentional teaching that was based on a ground-up analysis of teachers' understanding of the notion, and on an investigation of their current practice. It was expected that this would lead to the development of an understanding of intentional teaching that was appropriate and relevant to the particular context of New Zealand early childhood education. The research questions that guided this study are presented in Chapter 2.

The Design of the Study

Three factors influenced the design of this study. The first, as described earlier, was the specific aim of developing a theoretical model of intentional teaching based on empirical data. Closely aligned to that was my desire to embark on this research without assumptions about intentional teaching, and its antecedents or consequences. The third was the scarcity of empirical research into intentional teaching in early childhood education. This was subtly acknowledged by the NZTC, and was also identified in my initial review of the literature. These three factors led to my decision to design and conduct this study according to the principles of constructivist grounded theory (CGT). CGT is briefly introduced here, and is described in detail in Chapter 3.

CGT was a methodology particularly suited for this study, as the goal of a grounded theory study is to develop a new theory that is grounded in the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). CGT offers researchers a "set of clear guidelines from which to build explanatory frameworks that specify relationships among concepts" (Charmaz, 2000, p. 510). It is accepted as being a rigorous methodology (Charmaz, 2000), most appropriate in areas where there is little prior empirical research (Glaser, 1978). CGT is an interpretivist methodology that "assumes the relativism of multiple social realities, recognizes the mutual creation of knowledge by the viewer and the viewed, and aims toward interpretive understandings of subjects' meanings" (Charmaz, 2000, p. 510). In spite of its name, CGT should not be confused with the theoretical approach to learning and development known as constructivism (Charmaz, 2014).

One of the particular features of any grounded theory study is the way in which the researcher approaches the literature review. In classic grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), the researcher is not expected to consult the literature until they are engaged in the process of data analysis, in order to maintain an open mind to the data, and to avoid “the ‘rich’ derailment provided by the literature in the same field” (Glaser, 1978, p. 31). CGT researchers, however, acknowledge that it is wise to have some level of familiarity with the field before embarking on a research project, as “we should not confuse an open mind with an empty head” (Dey, 2007, p. 176). They may therefore adopt the approach known as “*informed* grounded theory” (Thornberg, 2011, p. 243, emphasis original), and the literature in this thesis has been managed according to that approach.

Consequently, consistent with informed grounded theory approach, I began this study with a preliminary review of the literature in order “to avoid running the risk of reinventing the wheel” (Thornberg, 2011, p. 245). In order to remain consistent to the methodology, and to avoid making assumptions about the topic, I then delayed any further engagement with the literature until during the process of data analysis, as "unlike in other research methods, the construction of emerging theory drives engagement with the literature in grounded theory: therefore, the relevant literature and theoretical frameworks will emerge and cannot be predetermined” (Walls, Parahoo, & Fleming, 2010, p. 15).

This understanding of the emergence of a theoretical framework in a CGT study is reinforced by Charmaz (2014), who argued that a theoretical framework is expected to “emerge from [the] analysis and argument”(p. 311). CGT is informed by social-constructivist theory (Charmaz, 2014), in particular by social-constructivist theory’s emphasis on “social contexts, interaction, sharing viewpoints, and interpretive understandings” (p. 14). In so far as CGT is consistent with aspects of social-constructivist theory, this study was therefore informed by social-constructivist theory. In addition, I refer to aspects of cultural-historical theory in my analysis and in particular the notion of motives (Hedegaard, 2002).

Positioning the researcher.

CGT acknowledges the influence of the researcher’s own knowledge, experience, and potential biases on the data collected, and the way it is analysed (Charmaz, 2000). In this section, therefore, I position myself, in order to make transparent aspects of my history that are likely to have influenced this study.

I began my professional career as an early childhood teacher in 1996. In that same year, the first New Zealand national curriculum for early childhood education, *Te Whāriki*, was published. I therefore witnessed the ways in which some early childhood teachers initially struggled to interpret *Te Whāriki*, and to implement it in their professional practice.

During my professional career I have worked as a teacher, and then as a head teacher, in a variety of different early childhood centres. I have also had experience working for the Ministry of Education as a specialist teacher of children with recognised special needs, and spent time working as a teacher-educator. My research interests to date have focused on teachers’ practice, and their interpretation and implementation of the curriculum.

My professional background facilitated my entry into the research settings, and enabled me to establish a level of rapport with the research participants quite quickly. However, it also equipped me with a range of possible biases, of which I needed to be particularly aware. These are described in detail in Chapter 3.

As one way of confronting my possible biases and assumptions, I engaged in writing reflexive memos (Dunne, 2010). I have included some examples of my reflexive memos at intervals throughout this thesis.

Contextualising the Study: Early Childhood Education in New Zealand

The provision of early childhood education in New Zealand is typified by a wide diversity of services. These include full-day services, sessional services, teacher-led services, and parent-led services. This diversity reflects, in part, the history of early childhood education in New Zealand, and the division that originally existed between kindergartens and child-care.

Formal provision of early childhood education in New Zealand began in the late nineteenth century, with the establishment of public kindergartens in order to rescue children from “delinquency, immorality, poverty and unemployable-ness” (May, 1997, p.35). Kindergartens were seen as places of moral education; however, they were for older pre-school children only. Infants and toddlers were still expected to be cared for in the home. The formal provision of out-of-home care for infants and toddlers did not begin until the early years of the twentieth century, when the first crèche was opened in Wellington by Mother Suzanne Aubert (May, 1997), to provide care for illegitimate children whose mothers needed to return to the workforce.

This separation between services that provided education and those that provided care continued throughout much of the twentieth century. Kindergartens came under the auspices of the Department of Education; they were sessional in nature (i.e. children attended for mornings or afternoons, but not both), staffed by qualified teachers, and their focus was on providing education for older pre-school children. Childcare services, in contrast, were more informal in nature. They came under the auspices of the Department of Social Welfare, and childcare workers were not expected to be qualified. It was not until 1989 that childcare services were brought alongside Kindergartens under the umbrella of the Ministry of Education (May, 1997). Today the majority of early childhood services, now known as early childhood education and care services, are teacher-led; that is, they are staffed by persons with some form of early childhood qualification. However, some services, such as Playcentres, are parent-led; that is, parents plan, implement, and supervise the curriculum that is offered.

All early childhood services in New Zealand are licensed, regulated, and monitored by the Ministry of Education. Early childhood education is not compulsory; compulsory education does not begin until a child starts school—typically on or around their fifth birthday, although legally children do not have to start school before they are six years old. In addition to not being compulsory, early childhood education is not free. Although early childhood education services are subsidised by the Government, they are not State-owned; rather they are owned and operated by many different bodies. These include: Kindergarten Associations, charitable or community trusts, religious organisations, private individuals, and corporate entities.

The centres that participated in this present study were chosen to represent some of this diversity of operating style. The first was a full-day centre, licensed for children from birth to five years old. It was privately owned. The second was a full-day centre for babies only; it was also privately owned. The third offered a combination of sessional or full-day care for children over the age of 2, and was owned by a Charitable Trust. The participating centres are described in detail in Chapter 4.

Te Whāriki.

In spite of the diversity in operation and ownership, all early childhood education services in New Zealand have been required to implement the national curriculum *Te Whāriki* since 2008 (Minister of Education, 2008). However, the deliberately non-prescriptive nature of *Te Whāriki* means that each centre is free to develop a curriculum that is unique, and that reflects the local environment, population and culture:

> …the early childhood curriculum has been envisaged as a whāriki, or [woven] mat….The whāriki concept recognises the diversity of early childhood education in New Zealand. Different programmes, philosophies, structures, and environments will contribute to the distinctive patterns of the whāriki (MoE, 1996, p.11).

Some services reflect particular educational philosophies such as Montessori or Steiner; some reflect particular religious faiths including Christianity, Judaism and Islam; and some are intended to preserve and promote language and culture such as Kōhanga Reo (Māori language immersion centres) and Pacific Island Language Nests. The majority of centres, however, base their philosophy primarily on *Te Whāriki* (Education Review Office, [ERO], 2013). For reasons that are clearly articulated in Chapter 4, all of the centres that participated in this study had *Te Whāriki* as their core philosophy.

Te Whāriki is a “learner-centered, holistic, integrated” (Ritchie & Buzzelli, 2012, p. 148) curriculum, that provides early childhood teachers with a “framework that will form the basis for consistent curriculum and programmes in…early childhood education services” (MoE, 1996, p. 10). *Te Whāriki* emphasises the importance of curriculum experiences being based in play as the most appropriate environment for young children's learning. Historically, early childhood education in New Zealand has been strongly influenced by the belief that children learn through play, with the work of educators such as Froebel and Piaget being profoundly influential (May, 2013). Piaget's theory of learning and development emphasised the importance of an adult providing a richly resourced and stimulating environment for children to explore. Thereafter, their role was typically expected to be that of "guide or facilitator" (Bredekamp, 1987, p. 52). In contrast, however, sociocultural theory, which includes such notions as the child's zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1967), and of scaffolding (D. Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976), foregrounds the role of the teacher in a child's learning.

Te Whāriki was originally influenced by the theories of Piaget, Erikson, Vygotsky, Bruner (Carr & May, 1996). It also refers directly to Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, and reflects the Māori philosophy of Ako (Pere, 1994). It is currently interpreted as being primarily a sociocultural curriculum (Anning, Cullen, & Fleer, 2009); there is, therefore, a potential theoretical tension inherent within *Te Whāriki* around the topic of teaching. The multi-theoretical underpinnings of *Te Whāriki* make it a complex document, requiring teachers' critical and reflective engagement (Fleer, 2013).

Te Whāriki does not refer to teachers; in keeping with the diversity of provision the document refers simply to *the adult*. In addition it only makes one reference to teaching, and that is in relation to primary schools. It does not give any guidance about the teaching of discrete subjects, and the learning outcomes that it values are not associated with specific areas of knowledge. This contrasts with the emphasis on content knowledge found in Epstein (2007), and in the revised statement of *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth Through Age 8* (NAEYC, 2009); an emphasis that is considered in detail in Chapter 2. Certainly *Te Whāriki* never refers to intentional teaching. Therefore there seem to be few immediately obvious areas of compatibility between *Te Whāriki* and the notion of intentional teaching.

Of the New Zealand research studies introduced earlier in this chapter, only two had had an explicit focus on intentional teaching (Batchelar, 2011; Duncan et al., 2008), and of those only one had been conducted in an early childhood centre (Batchelar, 2011). However, that centre had implemented a Christian philosophy in addition to *Te Whāriki*, and was therefore not typical of the majority of early childhood centres in this country. It therefore seemed timely and relevant to conduct an empirical research study into intentional teaching in mainstream early childhood education and care centres operating within the curriculum framework of *Te Whāriki*.

Early Childhood Teaching in New Zealand

Since the 1980s, successive governments in New Zealand have focused varying levels of attention on the early childhood education sector (Hedges, 2013). Amongst the matters they have focused on has been the question of early childhood education teachers' professional qualifications. From a patchwork of possible qualifications, three have emerged that are currently accepted by the NZTC: a three year undergraduate Diploma of Teaching, endorsed in early childhood education; a three year Bachelor of Education degree, endorsed in early childhood education; or a one year Graduate Diploma of Teaching, endorsed in early childhood education.

Following graduation with one of the above qualifications, an early childhood teacher may apply to the NZTC for provisional registration. Once they have been awarded this, they are expected to take part in a minimum of two years' mentoring with an experienced, registered teacher. At the conclusion of this, subject to recommendation by their mentor, they may apply to the NZTC for full registration status. This process is "vital for embedding and contextualising professional knowledge…and for encouraging ongoing learning and reflection" (Hedges, 2013, p. 278).

All of the participants in this study had a New Zealand qualification in early childhood education. In addition, they were all either provisionally registered, or fully registered, teachers. Therefore, throughout this thesis, I refer to the participants as early childhood teachers rather than using the more generic terms that are found in some publications such as educator, practitioner, or adult.

The Structure of the Thesis

This thesis describes a CGT study. There are certain complexities associated with writing an account of a CGT study, as it does not necessarily follow a traditional, linear process (Dunne, 2010). In this thesis, the complexities of a CGT study may be particularly evident in the approach taken to the literature review chapter, and the three findings/discussion chapters.

The preliminary literature review is reported in Chapter 2. This literature review is structured according to very strict parameters. First, it refers only to literature that was located at the beginning of the study, and before the decision was made to adopt CGT methodology. That decision was made in mid-2012, and had immediate implications for the conduct of this study, including the decision to stop any further searching of the literature at that time. Second, consistent with the principles of CGT, the preliminary literature review refers only to literature directly related to the topic of intentional teaching in early childhood education. It is not, therefore, an exhaustive review of all of the literature that has been read during this study. In keeping with the chosen methodology, the other literature that was consulted post-2012 is incorporated into the findings/discussion chapters.

The methodology, CGT, is discussed in detail in Chapter 3. CGT is a revision of classic grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) that was developed by Charmaz (2000). Consequently, this chapter draws heavily on Charmaz' work. This chapter has a particular emphasis on the data analysis process that is characteristic of CGT. The chapter closes with a consideration of how a constructed grounded theory might be assessed for validity and reliability.

Chapter 4 focuses on describing and explaining the research methods used in this study. It indicates how each of these research methods was expected to contribute towards answering the research questions. It then outlines the ethical principles that underpinned the entire research study. The chapter closes with a detailed description of the different research settings, and by introducing the research participants.

The following three chapters, Chapters 5, 6, and 7, present the three theoretical categories (Charmaz, 2014) that together, this study theorises, make up intentional teaching. All of these chapters are a combination of research findings and literature-based discussion in order to reflect CGT methodology, and the notion of sampling relevant literature to be incorporated into the process of data analysis. These chapters, therefore, include literature that was not reviewed earlier in this thesis, but that formed a critical component of the analysis and construction of the theory.

The first of the theoretical categories identified in this study is teachers' aspirations for children. These are identified and discussed in Chapter 5. This chapter argues that intentional teaching begins with these aspirations and that in order to understand intentional teaching, it is necessary to identify what they might be. The chapter identifies three particular aspirations that were found to be held by all of the participants. These aspirations are: wanting children to be happy; wanting children to have a positive view of learning; and wanting children to be ready for the future. This chapter then draws on the cultural historical notion of motives, and their development in response to participation in social institutions (Hedegaard, 2002), in order to consider why teachers might have developed these particular aspirations for children.

The second theoretical category is teachers' curriculum decisions. These are discussed in Chapter 6. Teachers were seen to make multiple curriculum-related decisions on a continual basis. This chapter suggests that teachers' decision-making be considered as three different modes of teaching, where each mode of teaching incorporates certain specific types of curriculum decision-making. Three modes of teaching are posited: resource-based teaching, proactive teaching, and responsive teaching. This chapter argues that teachers' aspirations are a major and overlooked influence on teachers' curriculum decisions. It also argues that teachers' curriculum decisions are the means by which their aspirations are translated into intentional teaching practice.

Chapter 7 builds on the foundation laid in the previous two chapters, and discusses the third theoretical category that was identified: teachers' intentional practice. This chapter presents multiple examples of teachers' underlying aspirations for children being enacted through the appropriate mode of teaching, as intentional teaching practice designed to promote children's happiness, foster children's learning, and prepare children for transitions. Together these three chapters present the three elements of the theoretical model of intentional teaching that has been constructed by this study.

The final chapter, Chapter 8, begins with an overview of the thesis, before demonstrating how this study answered the original research questions. It integrates the three theoretical categories identified into the final theoretical model of intentional teaching. The model proposes that intentional teaching be considered as a process that has its foundations in teachers' aspirations for children. These aspirations are then enacted through particular modes of teaching into intentional practice. It argues that the nature of intentional teaching is aspirational, holistic, and dynamic. It also argues that intentional teaching is at times spontaneous and intuitive, and that it underpins multiple areas of early childhood teachers' professional practice. However, the findings reveal that intentional teaching is frequently unrecognised and unarticulated.

Also included in this chapter are the findings from a "group validation interview" (Morse, 2007, p. 241) conducted with some of the participants, at which they were asked for their comments on the developing analysis and theory. These findings demonstrate the way in which this developed theoretical model meets Charmaz' (2014) criteria of resonance and usefulness.

Chapter 8 identifies the significance of this study, and its contribution to the scholarly literature about intentional teaching. In addition, it identifies some of the study's implications for policy, for teacher educators, and for practising teachers. The limitations of this study are acknowledged, and suggestions for possible future research are made. The chapter concludes by demonstrating that the theoretical model constructed by this study has the potential to assist teachers to articulate their intentional practice. In this way, the chapter argues that the model may be a useful and empowering tool for early childhood teachers.

2. Initial Literature Review

As indicated in the previous chapter, this study was designed and conducted according to the principles of constructivist grounded theory (CGT). There were three main reasons for that decision: the first was my aim to develop a ground-up understanding of intentional teaching that was based on empirical research with practising teachers; the second was my desire to avoid making assumptions about the nature of intentional teaching; and the third was my realisation that the body of literature relating to intentional teaching in early childhood education was not extensive. After searches of the databases ProQuest, Sage, Education Complete and Ebsco Host via the University of Auckland portal, related to key words associated with intentional teaching and early childhood education, I found that relatively little research had been conducted at that time into intentional teaching in the early childhood context. CGT is a methodology that is considered especially appropriate for studies in areas with either little existing empirical research, or where there may be a need for a deeper theoretical understanding (Grbich, 2007).

CGT warns researchers against becoming too immersed in the literature before beginning their study, in case they become too influenced by the thinking and theorising of others (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Walls et al., 2010). My choice of methodology therefore had significant consequences for the way in which I approached the literature. These are addressed in detail in Chapter 3. One of those consequences was that I stopped reading literature that was not immediately related to intentional teaching, as CGT cautions against making assumptions in advance about which literature might be relevant to the developing theory.

Therefore, in keeping with CGT methodology, this chapter presents the “primary review” (Stern & Porr, 2011, p. 49) of the research literature located at the beginning of this study. This review has been constructed according to two strict time and content parameters. First, it contains only the literature that I consulted prior to mid-2012, that being the point at which I decided to follow CGT methodology. This was intended to highlight the relatively small body of research into intentional teaching in early childhood education that was located at the start of this study, and thus to make clear one of the reasons for my choice of methodology. Second, this review contains only the literature directly related to intentional teaching in early childhood education that was located prior to that date. This reflected my desire to avoid making assumptions about intentional teaching.

This chapter is not, therefore, an exhaustive review of all the literature that was read at the beginning of this study. Further, it does not refer to the literature relating to intentional teaching that was published during the course of this study, nor does it include literature from other fields that was considered during the process of data analysis and theorising. That literature is incorporated into the later findings and discussion chapters.

Reflexive memo.

At the beginning of this study, once I had accessed the available literature about intentional teaching, I began to read literature related to associated topics, such as assessment for example. However, I became concerned that in doing so I was perhaps perpetuating certain assumptions about the nature of intentional teaching, rather than approaching my research topic with an open mind. This concern was part of my reasoning for selecting CGT as my methodology, and reinforced my decision to suspend my engagement with related literature until I began the process of data analysis.

The main sources of literature about intentional teaching at the time of this review were found to be the USA, where it seemed that intentional teaching had been widely discussed in the context of early childhood education since 2007, and Australia, where the notion of intentional teaching had been foregrounded since the publication of the national early childhood education curriculum in 2009. Some of this literature was in the form of research-informed texts for teachers rather than research-based empirical studies. All of the literature included in this review was particularly interrogated for evidence of the compatibility of the notion of intentional teaching to the New Zealand early childhood education context. A small body of New Zealand-based research into intentional teaching was located and is also reviewed in this chapter.

The chapter begins by considering the proposed definitions of intentional teaching that were located. These revealed an apparent lack of clarity about the meaning of intentional teaching, leading to a level of uncertainty and possibly even confusion amongst early childhood teachers.

The focus then turns to literature that described the goal-oriented, subject-focused nature of intentional teaching. Much of the literature included in this section was written to guide and inform teachers; little of it was based in empirical research. Intentional teachers were seen to be expected to set particular goals for children’s learning, and to develop plans to achieve those goals, based on their expert curriculum decisions. Whether such a model of intentional teaching is appropriate for the New Zealand context is considered.

The chapter then presents the literature relating to the practice of intentional teaching. Much of this literature considered intentional teaching in relation to specific subject areas. In addition, much was based around professional learning for teachers designed to assist them in implementing intentional teaching in their practice. A further feature of this literature is that it was focused on planned teaching experiences; in spite of the texts for teachers that described intentional teaching as being compatible with spontaneous events, no empirical research into spontaneous intentional teaching was located.

Following a brief summary of the literature reviewed, the chapter then presents the research questions that were developed to guide this study. It closes by considering some issues about methodology, and some of the similarities and differences between the design of this present study and those included in this review.

Defining, Describing, and Discussing Intentional Teaching

Current interest in the notion of intentional teaching in early childhood education seems to stem from the publication, in 2007, of *The Intentional Teacher: Choosing the Best Strategies for Young Children's Learning* (Epstein, 2007). In this text for teachers, Epstein defined intentional teaching as being "planful, thoughtful and purposeful" (p. 1). She explained that "intentional teaching means teachers act with specific outcomes or goals in mind for children's development and learning" (p.1), with the aim of ensuring that "young children acquire the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in school and in life" (p. 21).

The Intentional Teacher was apparently informed by the concept of developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) as articulated in a set of guidelines for pedagogical practice in early childhood education in the USA: *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8* (Bredekamp, 1987; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). These guidelines, the "so-called bible of ECE" (Grieshaber, 2008, p. 508), were published by the NAEYC, an influential professional organisation in the USA that advocates for high-quality early childhood education.

DAP was originally based firmly in Piagetian developmental theory. Developmental theory argues that children's development is characterised by progress through a sequence of clearly defined stages, and has been popularly interpreted as envisaging the child as a lone explorer in a stimulating environment created by adults, but in which interactions with those adults were not foregrounded (Siraj-Blatchford, 2009). The original DAP guidelines described teachers as "guides or facilitators" (Bredekamp, 1987, p. 52), thus underplaying the role of the teacher. The revised (1997) version acknowledged that teachers were critical to children's learning, but both editions have been described as being "part of the resistance to formal methods of instruction infringing on the early years" (Grieshaber, 2008, p. 509), and thus potentially limiting the involvement of the teacher in children's learning to "support[ing] the learning endeavors in which children engage" (p. 508).

The principles of DAP were based in, and informed by extensive research into children's learning and development. Similarly, Epstein's (2007) definition of intentional teaching was informed by research into children's learning and development; however it was not in itself research-based. Rather, Epstein claimed that she "suggested" (p. 7) the term *intentional teaching* to describe teaching practice that was balanced between "child initiated learning" (p. vii) in which the adult takes a passive role, and "adult directed instruction" (p. vii) in which lessons are scripted and inflexible. In spite of the apparent absence of a research base to support Epstein's contention about the nature of intentional teaching, this literature review will demonstrate that it has become an influential concept.

The apparent relationship between *The Intentional Teacher* and the DAP guidelines was made more visible in 2009, with the publication of the revised statement of DAP (*Revised Statement)* (NAEYC, 2009). This revision presented a very different view of teaching and teachers to that presented in the original version. In a clear reference to Epstein (2007), the *Revised Statement* explained that:

> A hallmark of developmentally appropriate teaching is intentionality. Good teachers are intentional in everything they do....Intentional teachers are purposeful and thoughtful about the actions they take, and they direct their teaching towards the goals the program is trying to help the children reach" (NAEYC, 2009, p. 10).

This description of intentional teaching foregrounded the role of the teacher in the early childhood context and thus contrasted with the view of teachers and teaching presented in the original statement of DAP. The *Revised Statement* also emphasised, again in an apparently direct reference to Epstein (2007), the importance of a balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities.

The inclusion of intentional teaching into the *Revised Statement* was expected to generate some controversy (Lonigan & Shanahan, 2010). Lonigan and Shanahan argued that the earlier versions of DAP “which were not based on meaningful evidence, declared such educational practices [as intentional teaching and a focus on content knowledge] ‘developmentally inappropriate’” (p. 344), and that these earlier versions of DAP had the potential to continue to influence teachers’ reactions to intentional teaching “for some time” (p. 344). It seemed that they did not expect early childhood teachers to embrace the notion of intentional teaching easily, and some of the literature reviewed later in this chapter will be seen to support that expectation.

Nevertheless, the notion of intentional teaching appeared to increase in influence as seen in its inclusion in the Australian Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) (DEEWR, 2009). This first Federal curriculum for early childhood education in Australia introduced the notion of intentional teaching as one of a “rich repertoire of pedagogical practices to promote children’s learning” (p. 14) that early childhood educators were expected to implement. The EYLF defined intentional teaching as being “deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful” (p. 14)—a definition that echoed that originally proposed by Epstein (2007). However, the EYLF also positioned intentional teaching as only one of many possible practices that could be adopted by early childhood teachers, as indicated in the statement that teachers “plan opportunities for intentional teaching” (p. 14). This contrasts with the *Revised Statement’s* view of intentional teaching cited earlier as being “everything [teachers] do” (NAEYC, 2009, p. 10).

The adoption of Epstein’s (2007) definition of intentional teaching in these two significant documents suggested a high level of interest in the notion of intentional teaching at a policy or regulatory level. It also represented a “departure from tradition because it focuses on teaching, learning and child development, rather than being oriented primarily to children’s developmental progress” (Grieshaber, 2010, p. 38). The reasons behind current interest in intentional teaching are not clear; however, it seems possible that it reflects the international debate about effectiveness and outcomes in early childhood education, the move towards “linking play with defined educational outcomes” (Wood, 2010b, p. 11), and the place of teaching in early childhood education (Grieshaber, 2010; Siraj-

Blatchford, 2009, 2010). Siraj-Blatchford (2010) argued that “effective pedagogy in the early years…involve[s] both the kind of interaction traditionally associated with the term ‘teaching’ and also the provision of instructive learning environments and routines” (p. 161). This contrasted with the historical view of early childhood teachers as being primarily facilitators of “’instructive’ environments for play and exploration” (Siraj-Blatchford, 2009, p. 148); however, Siraj-Blatchford argued that such facilitation should be reconceptualised as only one of the “pedagogical strategies that may be legitimately applied by the early years teacher alongside others, such as modelling and demonstration, questioning and direct instruction” (p. 148).

In making this argument, Siraj-Blatchford was drawing on the findings of two large-scale studies in the UK: the *Effective Provision of Preschool Education (EPPE)* study (Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford, & Taggart, 2004), and the *Researching Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years (REPEY)* study (Siraj-Blatchford, Sylva, Muttock, Gilden, & Bell, 2002). These studies formed part of the theoretical base for the EYLF (Edwards, Fleer, & Nuttall, 2008). Although they did not directly investigate the notion of intentional teaching, they nevertheless seem to support the intentional teaching literature (Grieshaber, 2010). For example, the findings from both of these studies suggested that children’s learning in early childhood education was enhanced when the role of the teacher was emphasised, and when teaching was “repositioned…as central” (Siraj-Blatchford, 2009, p. 157). These findings supported Epstein’s (2007) statement that “learning outcomes are maximised when adults have an active role in children’s learning” (p. 7).

The question of the adult’s active role in children’s learning seems to be at the crux of intentional teaching, and of teachers’ reactions to the notion. Grieshaber (2008) has argued that “the education of young children is better when it involves…teaching…than when it doesn’t” (p. 506). She has therefore challenged the “developmental theories, particularly Piagetian stage theories, [that] have become weapons of mass seduction in ECE across the globe, valorizing Piagetian developmental perspectives and, by default, mitigating against overt teaching and instruction” (p. 508). Rather, she has called for teachers to use a variety of theoretical approaches in their practice, thus giving themselves the freedom to observe children, or to engage with them in their learning, as appropriate, rather than adhering to the one approach only.

Multiple theoretical approaches to children's learning and development, as advocated by Grieshaber (2008), inform the EYLF (DEEWR, 2009). It therefore potentially supports early childhood teachers to use a variety of approaches. In particular, the inclusion of intentional teaching in the EYLF seems to create a potential pedagogical space for early childhood teachers to engage actively with children's learning in the context of a play-based curriculum (Grieshaber, 2008, 2010; Krieg, 2011). This is reinforced by the statement in the EYLF that intentional teaching is the opposite of "continuing with traditions simply because things have 'always been done that way'" (DEEWR, 2009, p. 15). This statement suggests a call for teachers to reconsider their existing or historical practice, and to engage more actively with children in their learning.

In addition, by apparently foregrounding the place of teaching in early childhood education centres, it has been suggested that the notion of intentional teaching may also have the potential to increase early childhood teachers' view of themselves as professional educators (Ortlipp, Arthur, & Woodrow, 2011). Ortlipp et al. re-analysed all of the 98 interviews that had been conducted with early childhood educators in Australia during the six-week trial of the EYLF, for evidence of an effect on teachers' sense of professional identity. They found that the notion of intentional teaching apparently gave the educators a greater sense of professionalism by making them more visible. It had encouraged the educators to "position themselves as intentional teachers who 'have purpose and intention' behind their practice; who do not simply 'make up' what they do, but are guided in their practice by a research-based learning framework" (p. 65). The findings from Ortlipp et al.'s study raise the possibility that the notion of intentional teaching, by making teachers and teaching more visible, might also contribute a greater sense of professional identity to early childhood teachers in New Zealand. These findings are supported by those from a New Zealand study (Duncan, 2009a) that concluded that "to be an 'intentional teacher' is a key to… increased professional competency" (p. 2). Duncan's study is discussed in further detail later in this chapter.

Not only does the literature suggest that intentional teaching creates a pedagogical space for teachers to engage actively with children's learning, and that it enhances teachers' sense of professional identity, it has also been suggested that intentional teaching may be conceptualised as underpinning many aspects of a teacher's practice. For example, in her recent text for early childhood teachers, Bredekamp (2011) described intentional teaching as being "a multifaceted, multidimensional concept that conveys many of the personal and professional qualities of an early childhood educator" (p. 15). In a similar vein, an Australian handbook for early childhood teachers included a reflective comment that suggested that intentional teaching might be much bigger that it first appears:

> When I think about my practice I believe that I do act with intent rather than just react. However when I reflected more about intentional teaching I realised how broad this concept is. To me it is not just about my interactions but my intentions across all decision-making areas including my relationships, curriculum, administrative responsibilities, professional action and advocacy. It is huge and slightly overwhelming! In order to make sense of this I have chosen to use the word bother. What I bother about really sums up my intentions (Hunter & Sonter, 2012, p. 58).

This view of intentional teaching represented a distinct departure from the other literature by emphasising that intentional teaching may be more than just a teaching strategy.

The definitions and descriptions of intentional teaching that have been considered thus far were research-informed, but not research-based. Only two definitions of intentional teaching that were based in empirical research were located, and they are discussed next.

The first research-based definition of intentional teaching that was located at the beginning of this study was developed in New Zealand. This definition was developed within a study conducted in a Kindergarten (Carr et al., 2008). The focus of this study was children’s continuing interests, not intentional teaching. However, during the analysis phase of this research study, two of the researchers recognised that they were beginning to use the phrase *intentional teacher* “when looking at the role of an effective teacher” (Robinson & Bartlett, 2011, p. 11). They defined intentional teachers as being those “who are in tune with learners’ intentions and co-construct curriculum with them” (p. 11). Further, they seemed to understand the notion of intentional teaching as relational, suggesting that “both the intentional teacher and the intentional learner inhabit the same space where teaching and learning roles are interchanged and the direction and the goals are co-constructed” (p. 11).

The definition proposed by Robinson and Bartlett (2011) was strikingly different to all the others proposed in the literature reviewed to this point, particularly the definitions arising in the USA. The primary difference was that it seemed to describe intentional teaching as a response to children's intentions for their learning, rather than as an approach driven by goals for children's learning that had been determined by the programme (NAEYC, 2009), by the teachers themselves, or by the need to prepare children for school (Epstein, 2007). It also contrasted with the definitions proposed by Hunter and Sonter (2012) and Bredekamp (2011) by implying that intentional teaching may only be achieved some of the time, and only by those teachers who manage to be in tune with children's intentions.

The other research-based definition of intentional teaching that was located resulted from a study in a community-based Head Start early childhood centre (Burns et al., 2012). Head Start is a federally-funded (USA) early childhood programme for children aged 3 to 5 years, from low socio-economic backgrounds. Head Start programmes are designed according to the principles of DAP. They are expected to "demonstrate children's progress across a wide range of developmental domains…. [including] children's knowledge and …progress in their home language as well as English" (Burns et al., 2012, p. 274).

Burns et al.'s study was motivated by a realisation that "high profile documents in early childhood education describe Intentional Teaching…yet little research has been undertaken to give specificity to the definition so that application is possible" (p. 272). It was therefore designed to "enrich and refine our understanding of [intentional teaching] so that the construct can be addressed precisely in research" (p. 275). The authors acknowledged that they were "struck by the various and broad definitions" (p. 273) that they found in the literature. In particular, it seemed that they were concerned that such variety of understanding could lead to confusion amongst early childhood teachers, and the temptation to identify any and all aspects of practice as being intentional: "a teacher who does not interact or have conversations with his or her young students might do this intentionally as she or he might believe that young children are best left alone to explore and learn on their own" (p. 275). It was clear that such behaviour would not be considered by Burns et al. as evidence of intentional teaching.

Burns and her colleagues began by developing a working definition of intentional teaching. They then refined this as a result of the observational data they gathered in early childhood settings, which was analysed by four “experts” (Burns et al., 2012, p. 275) in early childhood education who were familiar with the literature relating to intentional teaching.

During this study, 13 teachers were observed during large and small group activities in their early childhood classrooms. The experts then discussed their observations, and analysed them using grounded theory analysis methods of coding and categorising (Burns et al., 2012) and adapted their definition of intentional teaching accordingly. Following the first round of observations, the participating teachers were then offered several months of professional learning based on the new definition of intentional teaching that had been developed; they were then observed again and compared with a control group of teachers. Finally, the definition of intentional teaching that had been developed was further revised.

From their study Burns et al. concluded that intentional teaching included “(a) reciprocal, extended conversations between teachers and children; (b) integration and a balance between child initiation and teacher direction; (c) purposeful instruction; and (d) a positive socio-emotional climate” (Burns et al., 2012, p. 277). They presented an understanding of intentional teaching that incorporated all aspects of a curriculum, that was heavily based in the social relationships between teachers and children, that involved teachers in carefully planning experiences based on their understanding of children’s current thinking and designed to extend it, and that required teachers to be flexible and adaptable in their approach and responses to children. This understanding of intentional teaching has many similarities with the approach to early childhood education found in *Te Whāriki*. *Te Whāriki* is an integrated curriculum, it emphasises positive and reciprocal relationships between teachers and children, it encourages teachers to engage in planned and spontaneous activities, and it suggests that these activities be based in children’s interests. Intentional teaching as conceptualised by Burns et al. seems therefore to be potentially compatible with the New Zealand context.

Summary.

This section has demonstrated the range of ideas about the construct of intentional teaching that was a feature of the literature at the beginning of this study. It has shown that there was some variation between the different definitions and understandings of intentional teaching. It seemed that intentional teaching was frequently understood to be an approach to teaching that was based on plans, and a sense of purpose; it also seemed that it was considered to be one of a repertoire of teaching practices on which early childhood teachers might draw. However, other definitions suggested that intentional teaching may be more than a teaching strategy, and that it may apply to all areas of an early childhood teacher's professional responsibilities.

In addition, intentional teaching was interpreted by some scholars as challenging historically prevailing developmental views of children's learning, and thus of appropriate teaching practice. In this way, intentional teaching was seen to have generated some controversy, and possible confusion amongst early childhood teachers about how to implement intentional teaching in their practice. Some literature anticipated that teachers who had been accustomed to facilitating children's learning through the provision of resources, for example, may find the notion of intentional teaching problematic.

A further feature of some of the literature reviewed in this section was the connection assumed between intentional teaching and effective teaching in early childhood education. Effective teaching was, in turn, considered to lead to improved learning outcomes for children. This assumption suggested that intentional teaching might therefore be an important consideration for early childhood teachers.

Overall, therefore, this section has highlighted a lack of clarity amongst researchers about an appropriate definition for intentional teaching. Further, it has also highlighted a lack of understanding amongst teachers about the meaning of intentional teaching. Indeed, researchers in Australia concluded that the notion of intentional teaching was "generally ignored, misunderstood or misinterpreted" by early childhood educators (A. Ridgway, personal communication, 12.12.2011). Having considered the possible definitions of intentional teaching, the following section discusses the literature that relates to the goal-oriented nature of intentional teaching.

The Nature of Intentional Teaching

The literature indicated that intentional teaching was typically envisaged as being goal-oriented, and purpose-driven. For example, Epstein (2007) stated that intentional teachers need not only a "goal in mind" (p. 4), but also a "plan for accomplishing it" (p. 4). She then described the ways in which early childhood teachers could intentionally teach different subjects such as language, literacy, science, maths, movement and social skills. As indicated earlier, the purpose of such teaching was expected to be the preparation of children for school.

Similarly, the *Revised Statement* (2009) decreed that early childhood teachers “need to keep in mind the identified goals for children’s learning and development and be intentional in helping children achieve these goals” (NAEYC, 2009, p. 9). One of the goals of the *Revised Statement* was “reducing learning gaps and increasing the achievement of all children” (p. 2). Thus early childhood teachers were given guidance about the “knowledge and abilities that teachers must work especially hard to foster in young children” (p. 3). The document therefore contained an emphasis on preparation for school through the teaching of specific skills and knowledge, such as language (especially English), literacy, maths, science and social studies. The same focus on the instruction of young children in specific academic skills, such as oral language, literacy, and maths was expressed by Espinosa (2010). Further, Espinosa argued that teachers’ “explicit instructional goals for children [should] guide all aspects of their interactions and classroom planning” (p. 53).

The Australian EYLF also emphasised the goal-oriented nature of intentional teaching, with the principle goal being to promote children’s learning (DEEWR, 2009; Grieshaber, 2010; Krieg, 2011). In contrast to the USA literature, however, the learning outcomes suggested in the EYLF were not associated with domain-specific subjects. Rather, they were defined as “a skill, knowledge or disposition that educators can actively promote” (DEEWR, 2009, p. 8). Nevertheless, special mention was made of the importance of communication skills and literacy, and there was room within the EYLF for teachers to introduce children to conceptual as well as skill-based learning through “worthwhile and challenging experiences and interactions that foster high-level thinking skills” (p. 15).

The notion of goals for children’s learning, however, is one that some New Zealand early childhood teachers might find challenging. The learning goals specified in *Te Whāriki* are non-prescriptive, and focus on children’s development of dispositions for learning, and working theories about their world (MoE, 1996). These outcomes were innovative (Hedges, 2013); however, it is possible that teachers working within the framework of *Te Whāriki* may find them challenging to implement (e.g., Blaiklock, 2010, 2013). A recent comprehensive review of learning priorities in early childhood services in New Zealand, conducted by the Education Review Office (ERO) the government body responsible for the review of all educational settings, found that although the majority of services had identified their priorities for children’s learning, and designed their curriculum accordingly, a significant number had not (ERO, 2013b).

Once teachers had established their goals for children’s learning, the next step in the process of intentional teaching was recognised as decision-making. Epstein (2007) stressed the importance of teachers making deliberate decisions about the resources they provided, the activities they engaged in, and the “emotional climate” (p. 4) that they created within their classrooms.

The literature stated that the appropriate foundations for teachers’ expert decisions were their “skills, knowledge and judgement…and the opportunities to use them” (NAEYC, 2009, p. 5). It appeared that this foundation of knowledge, together with goal-setting for individual children, was considered to form the essence of intentional teaching, and thus of DAP: “the core of developmentally appropriate practice lies in this intentionality, in the knowledge that practitioners consider when they are making decisions, and in their always aiming for goals…for children” (p. 9).

As already indicated, teachers’ knowledge was expected to include knowledge of discrete academic subjects, such as mathematics and literacy (Epstein, 2007). As well as subject knowledge, teachers were also expected to have professional knowledge about child learning and development in general, and about the children they were teaching in particular, including their social and cultural contexts (DEEWR, 2009; Epstein, 2007; NAEYC, 2009). Writing about the EYLF, Kennedy and Barblett (2010) explained that “educators are expected to use their professional knowledge and decision-making skills in order to promote and extend every child’s learning through intentional teaching practices” (p. 8). However, in some curriculum areas, teachers’ knowledge may be lacking; in others, content knowledge may be challenging to acquire. For example, both the EYLF and *Te Whāriki* give early childhood teachers the professional responsibility to ensure that children’s spirituality is appropriately and intentionally nurtured (Batchelar, 2011; Grajczonek, 2012). However, spirituality is potentially a topic that “might cause educators some angst and trepidation, depending on their level of familiarity with children’s spirituality and their knowledge of how to consider it in their holistic approaches to teaching and learning” (Grajczonek, 2012, p. 158). I found that practice related to children’s spirituality was informed not by subject knowledge, but by the teachers’ “worldview” (Batchelar, 2011, p. 91). I defined worldview as a combination of beliefs and values that could be shaped by, for example, personal experiences, culture, or religious beliefs. These findings suggested that intentional teaching might be informed by influences other than the types of professional and content knowledge described in the *Revised Statement* or the EYLF.

In addition to a foundation of subject knowledge, child knowledge, and appropriate decisions, intentional teachers were also expected to demonstrate “a well-developed repertoire of teaching strategies” (NAEYC, 2009, p. 8). This repertoire was perhaps expected to enable teachers to demonstrate flexibility in their approach, and an ability to adapt their practice in response to children’s responses to learning experiences (Epstein, 2007; Grieshaber, 2008).

Both Epstein and the *Revised Statement* (2009) recognised that some of the decisions teachers make may be made in advance, but that others may have to be made moment by moment as “the acts of teaching and learning are too complex and individual to prescribe a teacher’s every move in advance” (NAEYC, 2009, p. 5). The EYLF also acknowledged the need for teachers to be adaptable. The framework defined curriculum as comprising “*all* the interactions, experiences, routines and events, *planned and unplanned*, that occur in an environment designed to foster children’s learning and development” (DEEWR, 2009, p. 9, emphasis added). However, within the EYLF it seemed that the notion of intentional teaching was particularly associated with the “the planned or intentional aspects of the curriculum” (p. 9), suggesting that the spontaneously arising “interactions, experiences, routines and events” (p.9) may not be considered as providing opportunities for intentional teaching. Nevertheless, Grieshaber (2010) argued that intentional teaching, as envisaged in the EYLF, involved teachers in “planning opportunities for learning but also capitalizing on spontaneous events or what is occurring ‘in the moment’” (p. 39). These opportunities for learning were to be embedded in children’s play, and to be a combination of child-initiated and adult led activities.

Recognition of the importance of including both planned and spontaneous child-initiated activities in an early childhood curriculum reflects Epstein’s (2007) use of the term intentional teaching to describe a balance between teacher-led and child-led learning activities or experiences. This is supported by Krieg (2011) who has argued for a view of early childhood education as an environment in which child-led and subject-led approaches are integrated, and in which early childhood educators are viewed as being mediators of subject content knowledge to children in the context of children’s interests and play-based learning, as opposed to either facilitators or instructors. She argued that viewing

> …the teacher as a ‘mediator’ reduces the oppositional positioning of ‘child-centred’ or ‘subject-driven’ pedagogies, for the role involves teachers using children’s knowledge in ways that connect them with the thinking that has been done before (in the disciplines) about their issue or focus of inquiry. This requires pedagogical skill of the highest order (Krieg, 2011, p. 52).

This balanced approach may resonate with New Zealand early childhood teachers, and *Te Whāriki*. For example, Cherrington (2011) believed that in order for New Zealand early childhood teachers to accept a “reconceptualization of the role of the teacher” (p. 244) it was important to ensure that they would not “interpret a foregrounded construct of their role as meaning an emphasis on didactic techniques or neglect their focus on the children in their attempts to re-position their own role” (p, 244).

Cherrington’s (2011) study focused on teachers’ decision-making, rather than on intentional teaching per se. However, she found that teachers’ decisions about curriculum content and teaching strategies foregrounded their relationship with children, and tended to focus on discovering, understanding, and responding to children's intentions for learning, rather than implementing their own intentions. She found that early childhood teachers accustomed to a child-centred, play-based approach to early childhood education struggled to “articulate their thinking and reflections about their own teaching intentions” (p. 248), and preferred to focus on the child or children and their learning, rather than on their own contribution to the learning process. This contrasted with Epstein’s (2007) statement that intentional teaching should be easily articulated: “the teacher who can explain just *why* she is doing what she is doing is acting intentionally—whether she is using a strategy tentatively for the first time or automatically from long practice” (p. 4, emphasis original). Cherrington’s study therefore challenged some aspects of the literature about intentional teaching but seemed to support others. This suggested the possibility that some features of intentional teaching as described in the literature reviewed here might be acceptable to New Zealand early childhood teachers, but that others may not.

Summary.

This section has considered the literature that described the nature of intentional teaching. The majority of literature reviewed in this section was in the form of texts for teachers; little was based on empirical research into intentional teaching.

Intentional teaching was described in the literature as being goal-oriented. The goals that intentional teaching focused on were related to preparing children for school (Epstein, 2007), or teaching them specific content knowledge (NAEYC, 2009).

Once teachers had determined their goals for children's learning, the literature then indicated that the next foundation for intentional teaching was the curriculum decisions that teachers made. These decisions were seen to be based on teachers' professional content knowledge, their professional knowledge of child development, and their personal knowledge of individual children. Intentional teaching was described as being compatible both with pre-planned and spontaneous teaching. It was also described as being easily articulated. However, some of the literature reviewed in this section challenged these assertions about the nature of intentional teaching.

The literature reviewed in this section raised certain questions about the compatibility of the notion of intentional teaching as envisaged by Epstein (2007) for example, and the practice of early childhood education in New Zealand. For example, the findings from Cherrington's (2011) research, together with some of the findings reviewed elsewhere in this chapter (e.g., Lonigan & Shanahan, 2010) suggest that intentional teaching may be a new and possibly difficult concept for New Zealand early childhood teachers accustomed to a child-centred approach to early childhood education. These findings supported the focus and aims of this present study.

Most of the descriptions of intentional teaching that have been discussed in this section were designed to inform teachers about the supposed nature of intentional teaching, rather than describing the nature of intentional teaching as observed in practice. The literature that was located that considered the implementation of intentional teaching in early childhood education settings is considered in the following section.

The Practice of Intentional Teaching

This section will consider the literature related to the practice of intentional teaching in early childhood centres, located prior to mid-2012. Much, but not all, of the literature in this section focuses on the teaching of specific subjects, such as literacy, to young children. Some, however, has a broader focus, and considers intentional teaching practice across a range of curriculum areas. Most of the literature that will be reviewed in this section emanated from the USA or Australia.

The first study from the USA that will be considered in this section evaluated research into children's literacy, and in particular the suggestion that children would benefit from "focused, teacher-directed, and intentional instruction" (Lonigan & Shanahan, 2010, p. 334) related to that topic. The conclusion of this study was ambivalent about the value of intentional teaching in this area. It recognised that "many children are likely to do well in a traditional early childhood classroom with relatively little teacher-directed instruction" (p. 344). However, it also suggested that high levels of intentional teaching were perhaps most appropriate for children needing extra support in literacy learning.

These findings contrasted with those of an earlier, similar study in the USA that evaluated research into children's phonological awareness (Phillips, Clancy-Menchetti, & Lonigan, 2008). The authors of this study argued that "a teacher whose goals include providing every child with the opportunity to make substantial advances in his or her phonological awareness capabilities is unlikely to find that incidental or implicit instruction alone will suffice" (p. 8), and that therefore teachers needed to intentionally plan and structure lesson time in order to enhance children's learning. However the authors also noted that such intentional teaching was rare. This may have been because teachers lack confident subject knowledge in literacy (Algozzine et al., 2011). Algozzine et al.'s study was predicated on the belief that "to be successful, children need coherent intentional pre-kindergarten instruction" (p. 247) in literacy. However, some early childhood teachers were found to need intensive and ongoing professional learning programmes in order to become effective providers of intentional teaching of literacy. Those who received such assistance were found to be "more able to be … intentional about their practice" (p. 258).

Researchers investigating children's oral language learning in the USA also considered the role of intentional teaching. An intervention study introduced early childhood teachers to the concept of Instructional Conversations (IC) and invited them to implement IC in their interactions with children (Goh, Yamauchi, & Ratcliffe, 2012). IC are a specialised form of intensive interactions between teachers and children, typically associated with children of school age, designed to promote children's language-learning. Goh et al. (2012) found that, provided the notion of IC was adapted for the early childhood context by acknowledging young children's non-verbal communication, early childhood teachers who intentionally implemented IC into their practice reported that this strategy enhanced their ability to "assist children towards higher learning goals" (p. 313).

Research findings that the explicit teaching of particular academic skills was of value to young children were supported by a study of teachers' practice with young children with identified special needs in blended early childhood settings (i.e., settings in which children with special educational needs were educated alongside those without) (Grisham-Brown, Pretti-Frontczak, Hawkins, & Winchell, 2009). This study found that the children with special needs benefited from "*intensive, individualized, and intentional* instruction" (p. 132, emphasis original) in specific skills. A further study that also focused on intentional teaching and children with special needs found that children's learning may be enhanced "when intentional teaching focuses on skills that can transfer between contexts and, importantly, over time" (Bagnato, McLean, Macy, & Neisworth, 2011, p. 248). This study also found that teachers' decisions about which skills to teach children needed to be based on close assessment of individual children, in order to ensure that intentional teaching was "uniquely tailored to each child's needs" (p. 249). A similar connection between planning for individual children's specific learning needs and intentional teaching was made by other researchers (e.g., Flynn, 2011; Grisham-Brown & Pretti-Frontczak, 2003). As an additional finding, Grisham-Brown et al. (2003) highlighted the importance of ensuring that early childhood teachers had sufficient time to plan carefully for their intentional teaching.

A further USA-based intervention study focused on instructional teacher-child interactions in early childhood education (Hamre et al., 2012). These researchers were inspired by the new emphasis on teachers and teaching that was found in the *Revised Statement* (2009). They argued that many early childhood teachers were inclined to take a passive role in children's learning, and to downplay the importance of adult-led interactions, and that such teachers were "unlikely to engage in intentional teacher-child interactions, particularly instruction" (p. 98). However, Hamre et al. found that teachers who participated in a 14 week professional learning course they had designed demonstrated both enhanced interactions with children and increased "intentional teaching beliefs" (p. 110).

Intentional teaching beliefs were described by Hamre et al. (2012) as beliefs that "children's learning is contingent upon teachers being actively involved with children and providing some opportunities for explicit teaching" (p. 102). Nevertheless, it seemed that many early childhood teachers were reluctant "to embrace teaching as a legitimate practice in early childhood settings" (Thomas, Warren, & DeVries, 2011, p. 70). For example, in their study of mathematics education for 3 ½-4 ½ year old children in an Australian early childhood centre, Thomas et al. (2011) found that the teachers who participated tended to “privilege and conform to the dominant discourse of play-based pedagogy that locates children as active agents in control of their learning” (p. 72). However, analysis of the teachers’ conversation after they had participated in some professional learning about intentional teaching and early childhood mathematics, revealed a tension between their expressed belief in child-led learning, and their recognition that “child-initiated play, on its own, [was] not enough to facilitate the necessary level of learning” (p. 73). This suggested that teachers were aware of the possible limitations of their existing practice, and the ways in which things had “always been done” (DEEWR, 2009, p.15), while simultaneously being uncertain about the notion of intentional teaching.

A further Australian study investigated children’s learning of scientific concepts (Edwards & Cutter-Mackenzie, 2011). The participating early childhood teachers were asked to engage with children in three particular types of play that had been specifically designed as vehicles for introducing conceptual learning to children. The play types were: “open-ended play” (p. 54), in which the teacher’s primary role was the provision of materials, after which children were left to use the materials as they wished in order to create their own learning; “modelled play” (p. 54) in which teachers showed children how to use the materials before allowing them to use them; and “purposefully framed play” (p. 54) in which the teacher explained the concepts that were under investigation to children and connected them to the children’s prior knowledge or experience. The teacher then stayed alongside the children while they used the materials, providing advice and guidance, and investigating with them. The researchers found that using all three play types in sequence when wanting to introduce scientific concepts to children promoted the teacher’s thoughtful planning, and seemed to enhance children’s learning. The three play types suggested in this research therefore seemed to be an appropriate vehicle for intentional teaching. However, Edwards and Cutter-Mackenzie acknowledged a need for further research focused on “how early childhood teachers construct themselves as both advocates for play-based pedagogy and practitioners of intentional…teaching” (p. 75).

An emphasis on play as a vehicle for intentional teaching was supported by Bodrova (2008). She stated that “intentional instruction in preschool and kindergarten can and should foster the prerequisites for the academic skills, but it should do it by promoting foundational competencies

…through play” (p. 358). The type of play advocated for by Bodrova was “mature” (p. 357) make-believe play; she believed that through such play children would learn to master the necessary prerequisites for academic skills. Bodrova therefore not only rejected the notion of intentional teaching expressed through formal instruction, it seemed she also rejected the notion of play that was “purposefully framed” (Edwards et al., 2011, p. 54) to support children’s conceptual learning.

The studies reviewed thus far in this section have focused on introducing children to particular subject content, and have suggested that, for some early childhood teachers, this may be both controversial and problematic. In contrast, however, it seems that early childhood teachers may be more likely to accept the notion of intentional teaching when it is associated with ensuring children’s socio-emotional wellbeing. For example, in the USA, Mogharreban, McIntyre and Raisor (2010) observed and interviewed four pre-service early childhood teachers during their placements in an early childhood centre and a primary school classroom, with a particular focus on understanding how they implemented intentional teaching. The underlying expectation of intentional teaching appeared to be that it would be planned, and that the planning would be based on teachers’ “formal and informal assessment information” (p. 234) about children’s learning.

The findings from this study revealed that the student teachers placed a higher importance on the emotional wellbeing of the children than on curriculum content. In particular, the teachers emphasised the importance of knowing individual children well in order to be able to adapt their teaching and pedagogy to the individual’s needs (Mogharreban et al., 2010). This was consistent with Epstein (2007) and the *Revised Statement* (2009) both of which acknowledged the relationship between intentional teaching and knowledge of the individual. It may also resonate with New Zealand early childhood teachers, and the centrality of relationships between teachers and children that is a feature of *Te Whāriki*.

Mogharreban et al.’s (2010) findings also support those from Australia, discussed earlier, that found teachers were reluctant to engage in practice that resembled teaching, and preferred to support children’s learning through play instead (Thomas et al., 2011). The findings from Mogharreban et al.’s study suggested that the student teachers struggled with the notions of “curriculum planning, instruction and assessment decisions” (Mogharreban et al., 2010, p. 244). Further, they were considered to “underplay” (p. 238) children’s content learning in favour of “setting up the environment so that [the children] …can figure it out on their own" (p. 238). The result was a curriculum based on "isolated, fun activities, where no stated goals or outcomes seemed to be guiding curriculum choices" (p. 239), and the researchers concluded therefore that the student teachers did not exhibit intentional teaching. This suggested a clear pre-determination by the researchers about the meaning of intentional teaching; and an association made by them between intentional teaching and subject-based teaching.

An alternative interpretation of these findings, which was not offered by the authors, could be that the student teacher participants demonstrated intentional teaching through their affective engagement with children, based on their belief in the importance of a child's emotional wellbeing. This possible interpretation is supported by the findings from other studies that suggested that children's socio-emotional wellbeing was not only a central concern for teachers, it was also recognised as an area of practice worthy of intentional teaching. For example, researchers in the USA who investigated intentional teaching in relation to large group experiences (Gronlund & Stewart, 2011) found that teachers who engaged in collaborative reflection with each other, and who then followed that with deliberate planning of strategies to increase children's engagement, were successful in their endeavours. They concluded that "excellent teachers in early childhood programs are intentional in all that they do with and for children" (p. 28), a statement that not only suggests that intentional teaching can be considered in relation to more than academic subjects, but that also directly associates intentional teaching with excellent teaching.

Other studies were also located that investigated the relationship between intentional teaching and the social environment in early childhood centres (Blay & Ireson, 2009; Miller & Pedro, 2006; Quan-McGimpsey, Kuczynski, & Brophy, 2011). Blay and Ireson's (2009) study conducted in the UK found that "the adults believed the emotional tone of the environment impacts on how well children learn, and how they feel about learning" (p. 1114). They concluded, therefore, that the adults were intentional about creating an environment with a positive affect for children. In a similar way, teachers were found to play a central role in "creating a positive classroom climate" (Miller & Pedro, 2006, p. 294), and to use intentional strategies to develop relationships with children (Quan-McGimpsey et al., 2011).

My own research study into intentional teaching, described earlier (see p. 28), argued that early childhood teachers in New Zealand have the professional responsibility to provide intentional support for children to "grow up healthy in…spirit" (MoE, 1996, p. 9). One further New Zealand-based study into intentional teaching was located (Duncan, 2009a, 2009b; Duncan et al., 2008). In this, early childhood teachers responsible for visiting home-based carers of young children were introduced to Epstein's (2007) notion of intentional teaching, and were encouraged to incorporate intentional teaching into their practice. Intentional teachers were described as being those who "directly address both the 'how' to teach young children and the 'what' to teach them" (Duncan, 2009a, p. 1). Further, intentional teachers were expected to recognise and respond to any and every opportunity to extend children's learning "whether that learning be child-initiated, teacher-initiated, routine, planned or unexpected" (p. 1). As has already been discussed, this study concluded that being an intentional teacher led to greater professional competency. It also concluded that "to be an 'intentional teacher' is a key to …enhanced learning outcomes for children" (Duncan, 2009a, p. 2). This was the only New Zealand study located that unequivocally associated intentional teaching with enhanced outcomes for children.

Summary.

This section has reviewed the literature, including the relatively small body of empirical research that considered the practice of intentional teaching, located at the beginning of this study. These studies had many points in common. The first was that many of them seemed designed to assess the effectiveness of either initial teacher education or in-service professional learning programmes, rather than to understand how teachers' practice might reflect intentional teaching without such prior instruction. Those few studies that were not designed to assess such programmes nevertheless seemed focused on assessing teachers' intentional practice against a prescribed definition.

The second point that many of these studies had in common was their focus on direct instruction, and subject-based teaching. This focus seemed likely to be problematic in the New Zealand early childhood context, in which subject-content knowledge has not typically been a focus, and in which it is still considered to be controversial (Hedges, 2000, 2014; Hedges & Cullen, 2005).

In addition, all of the studies reviewed in this section emphasised the deliberate pre-planning of teaching and learning experiences by teachers. This contrasts with literature reviewed earlier in this chapter that suggested that intentional teaching could be expressed in spontaneous events (see p.29). *Te Whāriki* expects that early childhood teachers will provide children with a mix of pre-planned and spontaneous or emerging experiences; a particular focus of the present study was therefore on the compatibility between intentional teaching and emerging curriculum.

However, there were some indications in this section that intentional teaching might be an approach applicable across a wider range of curriculum areas. This was of particular significance to the New Zealand context, and the holistic nature of *Te Whāriki*. Similarly, Duncan's (2009) finding that intentional teaching in an New Zealand context led to enhanced outcomes for children was of particular relevance to this study as it supported the argument that it was likely to be relevant.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has reviewed the literature that was located at the beginning of this study that considered intentional teaching in the context of early childhood education. Consistent with my understanding of CGT, the review included only the literature that was located prior to mid-2012. Literature located later has been incorporated into the findings/discussion chapters.

This preliminary literature review revealed that current interest in intentional teaching in early childhood education seemed to have started with Epstein's (2007) book. This book was written as a guide for "teacher-educators and reflective practitioners who…grappl[e] with the issue of how and what to teach young children" (p. vii). It was seen to be research-informed, rather than research-based. It described intentional teaching as being based on teachers' planning and decision-making. Their plans and decisions were in turn expected to be based on their knowledge of child-development, of the children in their care, and of specific subjects. Since 2007, the notion of intentional teaching was seen to have gained in influence (DEEWR, 2009; NAEYC, 2009). Intentional teaching has been the subject of scholarly debate and discussion (e.g., Bredekamp, 2011; Grieshaber, 2008, 2010; Krieg, 2011), and various definitions and descriptions of intentional teaching have been proposed (e.g., Burns et al., 2012; Epstein, 2007; Robinson & Bartlett, 2011). There was therefore evidence in the literature of a lack of clarity about the notion of intentional teaching.

The small body of empirical research that was located and reviewed tended to associate intentional teaching with specific, teacher-determined, learning outcomes (e.g., Lonigan & Shanahan, 2010;

Phillips et al., 2008). However, some research associated intentional teaching with promoting children's socio-emotional wellbeing (Blay & Ireson, 2009; Miller & Pedro, 2006; Quan-McGimpsey et al., 2011). The literature suggested that children's learning was enhanced by teachers engaging in intentional teaching; however it also suggested that many early childhood teachers may be, to varying degrees, unfamiliar and/or uncomfortable with the notion of intentional teaching (Cherrington, 2011; Grajczonek, 2012; Mogharreban et al., 2010; Thomas et al., 2011). This was attributed in part to the continuing influence of the philosophy of DAP, and the way in which it has been interpreted as under-emphasising the teacher's active role in children's learning.

Perhaps as a result, a number of the studies reviewed were designed around professional learning programmes or interventions designed to increase or enhance teachers' intentional practice (Duncan et al., 2008; Edwards & Cutter-Mackenzie, 2011; Goh et al., 2012; Hamre et al., 2012; Thomas et al., 2011). One implication of these studies, therefore, is that intentional teaching is something that practising teachers may need to learn about. A further implication of these studies is that intentional teaching is something that requires careful and thoughtful planning. Although some of the discussion in the literature indicated that intentional teaching should be visible in teachers' spontaneous practice (e.g., Bredekamp, 2011; Grieshaber, 2008), there was no evidence in the empirical research of a focus on intentional teaching in spontaneous responses.

The literature suggested that when teachers were given the opportunity to discuss intentional teaching with researchers, and to experiment with different teaching strategies that were considered to be consistent with intentional teaching, they acknowledged that intentional teaching could be a valuable and appropriate way of enhancing children's learning (e.g., Duncan et al., 2008; Edwards & Cutter-Mackenzie, 2011; Thomas et al., 2011). Further, there were suggestions in the literature that the notion of intentional teaching might give teachers a greater sense of professional identity (Duncan, 2009a; Ortlipp et al., 2011). However, much of the literature seemed to have been based on an assessment of teachers' practice by researchers, rather than on discussion about intentional teaching with teachers.

Taken together, the literature suggested that intentional teaching was a concept that would potentially benefit teachers as well as children. However, in contrast to the studies reviewed that were intervention-based, this present study was designed to inquire into how teachers might already be demonstrating intentional teaching in their practice, in order to develop a theoretical model of intentional teaching. This present study therefore had teachers' practice as a starting point for enquiry rather than a definition based on the literature.

The majority of studies that were located had been conducted in either the USA or Australia; their relevance to New Zealand was not clear. The small body of New Zealand research that was located highlighted the absence of a research-based understanding of intentional teaching that was New Zealand-based and transferable across the diverse range of early childhood services typical of early childhood education in this country. It seemed therefore that this present study was timely, and likely to be of value to the early childhood education profession.

This preliminary review located no prior study that had focused on developing a ground-up understanding of intentional teaching that incorporated teachers' perspectives and that analysed teachers' practice across all aspects of the curriculum for evidence of intentional teaching. This review therefore led to the development of the following research questions.

The Research Questions

The principle question that guided this research was:

- What might be the nature of intentional teaching in New Zealand early childhood settings?

In addition, some further questions were designed to assist the direction of the study. These were:

- In what ways might early childhood teachers in New Zealand understand the notion of intentional teaching?
- In what ways might early childhood teachers in New Zealand demonstrate intentional teaching in their practice?
- What factors might influence intentional teaching in New Zealand early childhood settings?

Designing the Study

This preliminary review of the literature not only suggested the research questions, it also led to the decision to use CGT as a research methodology. CGT is considered to be particularly suitable for studies where the researcher does not want to be "constrained by pre-determined constructs" (Blay &

Ireson, 2009, p. 1115) and where the aim is to “generate new descriptions” (p. 1115). Further, CGT is also particularly suitable for studies in areas with little prior empirical research.

Two grounded theory studies were included in this review. The first (see p. 24) was designed to develop a research-based definition of intentional teaching (Burns et al., 2012). Burns and her colleagues used grounded theory as an analytical tool for their study; they did not claim to have designed their entire study according to grounded theory methodology.

Their study differed from this present study in several respects. First, they began with a working definition of intentional teaching that they had developed prior to beginning their empirical research. The basis for their definition was not clarified. No such working definition was developed for this present study. Second, as a result of their working definition, it seemed clear that these researchers had a particular understanding of intentional teaching against which they assessed teachers’ practice. My aim was to investigate teachers’ practice for evidence of intentional teaching without engaging in such assessment. Third, Burns et al.’s understanding of intentional teaching seems to have been based in DAP; their research was therefore informed by a particular theoretical framework. This present study was not designed according to a theoretical framework; my understanding of the methodology was that a theoretical framework would emerge during the data analysis phase. However, it was informed by social-constructivist theory (see p. 7). Last, it seemed that Burns et al. relied on observational data to develop their definition. Although grounded theory does not constrain researchers to using particular research methods, grounded theory studies typically incorporate interview data (Charmaz, 2014). There was no evidence recorded that Burns et al. invited their research participants either to contribute to, or comment on, their developing definition. It was thus impossible to determine whether their participants found their definition useful or relevant to their practice. In contrast, this present study employed a wide range of research methods, including focus group and individual interviews, and the participants were asked for their comments on the developing analysis.

The second study reviewed earlier that utilised grounded theory as a framework for data analysis (see p. 36) investigated the possible relationship between teachers’ “pedagogical beliefs and intentions, activity choice and structure, and the nature of adult-child participation in the nursery” (Blay & Ireson, 2009, p. 1105). Blay and Ireson’s study was based on observations of “naturally occurring activities”

(p. 1107) in two early childhood settings. The activity observed in both settings was the same—cooking—suggesting that it was a planned and scheduled activity rather than one that was spontaneously arising. The observations were video-recorded, and the recordings transcribed and analysed. The participating teachers were interviewed both before and after the observations; these interviews were recorded and transcribed. The interviews were analysed for evidence of the teachers' "underlying pedagogical beliefs and intentions for the activity" (p. 1109).

There were therefore many similarities between the design of Blay and Ireson's (2009) study, and the study reported in this thesis. As will be seen in Chapter 4, this present study focused on the naturally occurring activities in the settings that participated; it involved the use of observations, video recording, and interviews, and it was particularly focused on understanding teachers' underlying intentions.

The other research studies included in this preliminary review were primarily designed around observations, and this present study also incorporated significant periods of observation in different early childhood settings. However, in contrast to many of the studies in this review, this present study did not include any form of professional learning, or of intervention.

CGT methodology is explained in detail in Chapter 3, following. This explanation further highlights the reasons for using this methodology. Chapter 3 also explains clearly the approach to data analysis that is a particular feature of CGT. The specific design of this present study, including the research methods used, is described and explained in Chapter 4.

3. Research Methodology

Grounded theory was developed by the sociologists Glaser and Strauss, and introduced to the research community in their seminal book *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research (The Discovery),* published in 1967. Constructivist grounded theory (CGT) is an adaptation of classic grounded theory. It developed in reaction to the perceived positivist world view of classic grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014). CGT aims to present an "*interpretive* portrayal of the studied world, not an exact picture of it" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 10, emphasis original).

The aim of the present study was to develop a theoretical model to explain the nature of intentional teaching in New Zealand early childhood centres that was based in empirical data. The literature review, reported in the Chapter 2, located no such prior study. Rather, it revealed a bias toward research that assessed teachers' intentional practice against pre-determined definitions of intentional teaching, or that involved early childhood teachers being requested to implement intentional teaching strategies that had been devised by others. It also revealed a lack of research into intentional teaching in the context of New Zealand early childhood education.

As the overarching intention of any grounded theory study is to develop a new theory generated from, or grounded in, the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), it is considered to be especially appropriate in areas with little prior research, or where the researcher hopes to approach the topic from a fresh perspective (Dey, 2007). Grounded theory therefore seemed to be an appropriate methodology for this present study. However, I chose not to follow the tenets of classic grounded theory. Rather, because of CGT's particular focus on understanding the lived experience of participants, and on interpretive understanding, this study was designed and conducted as a CGT study. This decision meant that I chose not to be "guided by an existing conceptual framework" in which concepts were "viewed as predetermined" (McGhee, Marland, & Atkinson, 2007, p. 337). Instead, I hoped that the important concepts would instead "emerge from observation and discussion with the research participants" (p. 337).

This chapter describes and explains the principles of CGT, and how they were applied in this present study. It begins with a brief overview of grounded theory. It then describes the principle characteristics of CGT before introducing two of the continuing debates that are taking place between grounded theory scholars. The first relates to the appropriate timing of the literature review. The second debate relates to the question of whether a theory emerges from the data, or is constructed by the researcher.

The process of data analysis is then described in detail, with particular reference to how these processes were enacted in this study. The chapter closes with a discussion about the criteria that are considered appropriate for assessing the authenticity and trustworthiness of a CGT study, and how this study is considered to have fulfilled them.

CGT was originally proposed by Charmaz (2000). This chapter is therefore informed primarily by her work.

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory has been described as “the most widely used and popular…[qualitative research] method across a wide range of disciplines” (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007a, p. 1). It is a “systematic, inductive, and comparative approach for conducting inquiry for the purpose of constructing theory” (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007a, p. 1) that offers researchers “a set of general principles, guidelines, strategies, and heuristic devices” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 3) by which to conduct their research. It also offers a process in which “data collection and analysis proceed simultaneously and [in which] each informs and streamlines the other” (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007a, p. 1).

Grounded theory is a rigorous and widely accepted methodology, and grounded theory studies are considered to have advanced theoretical understandings in numerous academic and professional disciplines (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007a). The preliminary literature review included two studies into intentional teaching in early childhood education that claimed to have been conducted according to grounded theory methodology (Blay & Ireson, 2009; Burns et al., 2012). However, these researchers only used grounded theory analysis methodology; they did not design their entire studies using grounded theory. In contrast, I have endeavoured to follow the principles of CGT throughout the design and conduct of the study.

CGT differs fundamentally from classic grounded theory by “actively repositioning the researcher as the author of a reconstruction of experience and meaning” (Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2006, p. 2). The influence of the perspective, knowledge and experience of the researcher on the processes of data collection, analysis and interpretation is therefore acknowledged and recognised.

CGT “aligns well with social constructivists …who…stress social contexts, interactions, sharing viewpoints, and interpretive understandings. These constructivists view knowing and learning as embedded in social life” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 14). As discussed in Chapter 1 (p. 6), CGT should not be confused with constructivism—a theoretical perspective on development and learning that is individualistic in outlook. Rather, CGT reflects the influence of, and is consistent with, social constructivist theory (Charmaz, 2014).

Constructivist Grounded Theory

All grounded theory studies share certain features in common. These include: the simultaneous gathering and analysis of data; an approach to data gathering known as theoretical sampling; the approach to analysis known as constant comparative analysis; the development of new conceptual categories grounded in the data; the use of inductive and abductive reasoning; an emphasis on explanation rather than description; and an emphasis on the construction of a theory rather than the testing of an existing theory (Charmaz 2014). In particular, the “Troublesome Trinity” (Hood, 2007, p. 163) of theoretical sampling, constant comparison, and a focus on theory development through “theoretical saturation of categories rather than substantive verifiable findings” (p. 163) are considered to form the bedrock on which all types of grounded theory studies rest. Researchers working within any of the different grounded theory approaches may use the same basic research methods (Charmaz, 2009).

As already indicated, one major contemporary revision of grounded theory is CGT (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007b; Charmaz, 2000, 2003, 2006, 2009, 2014). CGT “adopts the inductive, comparative, emergent and open-ended approach” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 12) of classic grounded theory. However, there are also several points of difference between classic grounded theory and the CGT approach. These include: the acknowledgement of the researcher’s potential influence on the study; the consideration of the possible effect of other external influences; the timing of the literature review, and the question of the “emergence” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 37), or discovery, of theory. These issues are considered in the following sections.

The influence of the researcher and the role of reflexivity.

Classic grounded theory called for a researcher to adopt a neutral position in relation to the field of study, and to identify and abandon any preconceptions that they might be carrying into the research field, in order to be as open as possible to the new ideas that would emerge from their data (Holton, 2007). These preconceptions could include those derived from personal professional experience, from the literature, and from a pre-determined theoretical framework. Holton acknowledged that setting these aside may be "among the most challenging issues confronting those new to grounded theory" (p. 269).

In contrast, CGT recognises that "conducting and writing research are not neutral acts" (Charmaz, 2009, p. 130) but are inevitably influenced by the researcher's "perspectives, privileges, positions, interactions, and geographical locations" (p. 130), as well as by "social structures and discourses of which [the participants] may be unaware" (p. 131). Consequently:

> …the constructivist approach shreds notions of a neutral observer and value-free expert. Not only does that mean that researchers must examine rather than erase how their privileges and preconceptions may shape the analysis, but it also means that their values shape the very facts they can identify (Charmaz, 2014, p. 13).

CGT researchers therefore recognise that any theory that the researcher constructs from the data is likely to have been influenced by the beliefs, knowledge, experiences and worldview of participants and researcher alike. Further, they recognise that researchers are likely to be drawn to topics because of their prior knowledge or interest in that area (Mruck & Mey, 2007). Therefore, rather than being asked to set aside their prior knowledge or preconceptions, CGT researchers are expected to expose and understand them (Robson, 2002, p. 173).

As I have already briefly discussed (see p. 2), my interest in the topic of this research study grew out of my earlier research into the support provided in early childhood centres for children's spirituality (Batchelar, 2011). My awareness of this research topic developed from my professional background as an early childhood teacher. This professional experience aided me both in gaining access to the research contexts (as a former teacher I was able to communicate easily with the participants) and in understanding the nature of the participants' work. This was a valuable "resource for research" (Reed

& Proctor, 1995, p. 4), helping me to make research decisions such as where to position myself in a centre, and what types of activities to expect or watch for. It also helped me to develop a relaxed and collegial relationship with the participants.

However, I was aware that my professional background also potentially equipped me with a ready-made set of assumptions about how things ‘should’ be done in an early childhood centre and why. There is a fine line to walk between acknowledging that the researcher’s "prior experience and knowledge can be an advantage in assisting [them] to recognise the nuances and subtlety of what is being said by participants in the field and in the analysis of the data" (Walls et al., 2010, p. 11) and seeing the researcher’s prior knowledge as a potential risk factor. There were times during my data gathering that I was challenged by the practice I observed, and I had to guard against the temptation to comment or intervene.

I was therefore aware of the possibility that my assumptions about early childhood education might influence or bias what I looked for, and how I interpreted it. I was also aware that I began this study with an underlying belief that intentional teaching was potentially a valuable concept for early childhood teachers in New Zealand, although I accepted that not all teachers would necessarily share that view. I anticipated that some, perhaps many, teachers might be unfamiliar with the concept of intentional teaching, but I assumed that their agreement to participate in the study indicated their willingness to engage with the topic.

To counter my ready-made assumptions, I endeavoured to stay alert to my own biases, to areas where I felt a lack of neutrality (Robson, 2002), and to any prejudice (whether positive or negative) I felt towards any of the participants. When I felt challenged by my own reactions I reflected on them, and sought to understand and challenge my underlying feelings. Reflexivity is considered to be particularly important in the context of CGT as the impact of the researcher on the data is one of the factors that need to be considered during the constant comparative analysis (McGhee et al., 2007).

Reflexivity is expected to help researchers be aware of the “impact of their previous life experience, including previous reading, and 'turn back' on these to appraise their effect” (McGhee et al., 2007, p. 335). Charmaz (2014) argued that being reflexive offers researchers the opportunity to ensure that they are not forcing their theoretical preconceptions onto their analysis. Reflexivity should also help researchers avoid “reproduc[ing] current ideologies, conventions, discourses, and power relationships" (p. 241) by looking beneath not only their own assumptions but also those of the participants. Reflexivity is therefore applied not only to the researcher's actions, but also to their data. Thus in the context of this study, it was important not only that I confronted my own preconceptions and potential bias, but also that I fostered collegial and trusting relationships with the participants, in order to understand better "their beliefs, their purposes, the actions they take, *and* reasons for their actions and inactions from their perspective" (Charmaz, 2009, p. 131 emphasis original).

One useful mechanism for promoting reflexivity is the process of reflexive memo-writing (Dunne, 2010). Dunne suggested that the researcher start reflexive memo-writing during the initial literature review in order to raise their awareness of the influence of the literature on their thinking, and that they should continue with reflexive memos throughout the research study. In my experience, writing reflexive memos helped me to identify and confront some of my feelings as I spent time in three very different early childhood centres. In particular, I reflected on my relationship with the research participants, recognising that a good relationship with them was likely to enhance the quality of the data I was able to gather (Hall & Callery, 2001). For example, I quickly realised that even the way I dressed seemed to influence my relationship with the participants, and I consciously adjusted my wardrobe to reflect the way in which the teachers dressed in order to blend in rather than stand out.

Through my reflexive memos, I endeavoured to confront my own feelings and beliefs. As part of making the reflexive process transparent I have included some brief examples of my reflexive memos at intervals throughout this thesis. These are intended to give insight into some of my decisions and actions. It is my expectation that "by incorporating reflexivity [I] will enhance the rigor" (Hall & Callery, 2001, p. 263), of my study.

Additional influences.

In addition to reflecting upon their own impact on the research context, CGT researchers are also expected to try and understand the external influences which may impact on the situation being researched, even when these influences are not articulated by the research participants. For example, research participants are as likely as researchers to be influenced in their behaviour and their thinking by beliefs or assumptions of their own and it is important for the researcher to "make them explicit in our analyses" (Charmaz, 2009, p. 131). In addition, wider social and relationship issues may influence participants. I expected that those influences might include such diverse issues as: centre philosophy, accountability, management requirements, government funding, and even inter-staff relationships so I was alert to any suggestion of these influencing factors, and incorporated any relevant data into my analysis. In the event, my findings revealed the ways in which teachers' personal beliefs, experiences, and participation in the practices and culture of early childhood education influenced their intentional teaching. This matter is discussed in detail in Chapters 5 and 6.

The timing of the literature review.

Some of the issues associated with reviewing literature in a grounded theory study were briefly discussed in the previous chapters. When they originally introduced grounded theory, Glaser and Strauss (1967) stressed the importance of a grounded theory researcher not engaging with the extant literature in the field of study, either empirical or theoretical, until after completing their data analysis. In this way, the researcher was expected to be liberated from the constraints of former thinking, and free to "theorise from [the] data" (p. 14).

Following their original publication, however, Glaser and Strauss began to differ in some of the ways their interpreted their new methodology. One of their differences related to the timing and the importance of the literature review (Dunne, 2010). Glaser adhered to his original position of advising researchers to delay the literature review (e.g., Glaser, 1978), stressing the importance of entering a research setting "with as few predetermined ideas as possible" (p. 3), as "it is hard enough to generate one's own ideas without the 'rich derailment' provided by the literature in the same field" (p. 31). On the other hand Strauss, in conjunction with Corbin (e.g., Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1997), began to advocate for an earlier review of literature.

However, both Strauss and Glaser have since expressed elements of compromise about their stance on the literature review. Strauss, with Corbin, identified a possible danger for grounded theory researchers, namely that they become "so steeped in the literature that he or she is constrained and even stifled by it" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 36). Glaser, on the other hand, conceded that an awareness of relevant literature both in the field of study and in related fields is necessary before beginning, in order to assist the researcher to develop "theoretical sensitivity" (Glaser, 1978, p. 3). Theoretical sensitivity is a term used to describe the researcher's sensitivity to the data, and their ability to discover within it the codes and concepts that lead to the development of theory. It is described in a later section of this chapter.

Reflexive memo.

In my experience in this present study, the cautions issued both by Glaser (1978) and Corbin and Strauss (2008) were relevant. I deliberately chose to curtail my engagement with the literature at the beginning of the study, to avoid being “stifled” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 36) by the many possible fields of literature that were suggested by my initial literature review. I did not want my research study to be directed into pre-determined channels by the literature. Later, when I began again to engage with the literature, I found that the risk of “derailment” (Glaser, 1978, p. 31) was ever-present. Determining which areas of literature were relevant to my developing analysis, and which were interesting but not immediately germane, was a major and continuing challenge. I had read Glaser’s warning before I began, but I had not fully appreciated the difficulty that the literature could create until I found I needed to be continually alert to the possibility of forcing my data to fit the literature, rather than fitting the literature to the data (Glaser, 1978).

Informed grounded theory.

A researcher’s familiarity with the research context and with the literature can provide them with certain starting points for their inquiry, and with a useful framework for beginning their data collection and analysis (Charmaz, 2014). However, an over-familiarity with the field, or with the literature, can direct their thought to one particular analytic perspective, and thus prevent or hinder them from being aware of other possible interpretations or perspectives (Charmaz, 2014). CGT researchers therefore argue that it is necessary to find a balance between an appropriate level of prior knowledge or experience and an avoidance of being excessively influenced by the theoretical findings of others (Kelle, 2007; Reichertz, 2007). To that end they have advocated an approach described as “*informed* grounded theory” (Thornberg, 2011, p. 243, emphasis original).

Informed grounded theory acknowledges that not only is it probably unrealistic to expect a researcher to enter the field of research with no prior knowledge at all; attempting to do so may actually hinder the researcher’s ability to understand the situation, and analyse their data. It may also lead them to replicate work that has already been done, rather than making an original contribution to their field of study (Clarke, 2005). After all, it is recognised that Glaser and Strauss themselves were well informed about their field of study before they developed grounded theory research methodology

(Walls et al., 2010). Further, Thornberg (2011) argued that “the ability to draw good abductive inferences is dependent on the researcher’s previous knowledge” (p. 248) as well as on their open-minded attitude to the data they are analysing.

In this present study, I approached the literature review from an informed grounded theory perspective. By doing so I was able to determine that my study was likely to be original. I was also able to meet the institutional requirements of my university, and in particular of the Human Participants Ethics Committee, that I demonstrate an awareness of the relevant research literature (Dunne, 2010; McGhee et al., 2007).

In accordance with informed grounded theory, therefore, as already discussed, I began this study with a preliminary review of the extant literature relating to the intentional teaching in early childhood education. I then decided which other literature to incorporate into my data analysis by engaging in theoretical sampling. In this approach, the literature I referred to was selected according to the “codes, concepts, questions and ideas” (Thornberg, 2011, p. 252) that were developing during data analysis. My theoretical sampling of the literature developed in conjunction with my developing analysis and theory; it included literature that I had not anticipated, at the beginning of this study, would become relevant and important (Walls et al., 2010). This carefully selected literature has been incorporated into Chapters 5, 6, and 7.

Selecting literature according to theoretical sampling in this way is expected to prevent the researcher from becoming overwhelmed by the possible areas of literature to be reviewed, and enable them to remain focused on the development of their theory (Morse, 2007; Thornberg, 2011). However, as I have already indicated, deciding which literature to review, and avoiding becoming overwhelmed by the literature, was a significant and ongoing challenge that I confronted throughout this study.

The timing of the literature review within grounded theory is still contested. Nevertheless, even though the process of incorporating the literature into the study may differ from other qualitative studies, the importance of incorporating the scholarship of others into a grounded theory is still acknowledged. In this thesis, I have presented my initial literature review in the previous chapter. The literature I reviewed as part of the data analysis process is woven into the three Findings/Discussion chapters (Chapters 5, 6, and 7), as indicated earlier.

Generating Theory

The generation of a new theory, either substantive or formal, is the aim of a CGT study. The theory that I have constructed from this present study is a substantive theory; it is based in empirical data that relates particularly to the centres in which the study was conducted. Substantive theory is generated from a specific area of enquiry, whereas formal theory relates more to conceptual areas of enquiry (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Substantive theory is considered to be “a springboard or stepping stone” (p. 79) toward the development of formal theory, and is “identified by its practical import and adaptability to specific contexts” (Dey, 2007, p. 187). Glaser and Strauss (1967) suggested that most researchers “tend to avoid the formulation of …formal theory; they stay principally at the substantive level” (p. 92).

Substantive theory can lead to formal theory if the analysis becomes sufficiently abstract and conceptual in nature, so that it may apply to a variety of contexts or groups of participants (Lempert, 2007). Formal theory is therefore more likely to be transferable to other contexts. However, no theory that is generated from a grounded theory study should be considered to be a finished product; rather, theory itself is perceived as a process that is “ever-developing” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 32).

Generating theory in classic grounded theory.

In classic grounded theory “the discovery of theory from data” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 1) as the result of a rigorous process of data collection and “purposeful systematic” (p. 28) data analysis is the primary goal of any study. The particular process of data analysis associated with grounded theory is known as “constant comparative analysis” (p. 101). It is described in detail in a later section of this chapter.

Constant comparative analysis involves analysing the data for ideas, and then for patterns of ideas or concepts. The interpretation applied to these patterns or concepts must be grounded in the data—it is not appropriate to look for what is expected or *supposed* to be there (Glaser, 1978). By focusing on what is actually in the data, the researcher ensures that the resulting theory emerges from the data, not from the literature (Glaser, 1978). However, Glaser and Strauss (1967) cautioned that constant comparative analysis and theoretical sampling—also described later in this chapter—were not appropriate techniques for testing theory. Further, Dey (2007) cautioned that any testing of a theory generated by such a study is left to future studies, as data collected in a grounded theory study "usually provide a poor basis for testing it" (p. 174).

This recognition of the importance of the theory's "emergence" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 37) from the data highlights the importance for the researcher of avoiding "forcing the data to match and conform to pre-existing theory" (Stern & Porr, 2011, p. 43). Glaser and Strauss argued that theory begins to emerge as the analysis progresses and the most frequently recurring concepts are identified. Further, they argued the researcher should not expect to know in advance what these concepts may be. However, the question of emergence is one that is contested within the field of grounded theory research. An alternative view, that suggests that a researcher constructs a theory rather than discovers it, is one of the characteristics of CGT.

Generating theory in constructivist grounded theory.

The development of theory is also the ultimate goal of a CGT study. CGT researchers, however, dispute the notion that theory emerges from the data, as though it were only waiting for the researcher to discover it. In contrast, researchers working with CGT argue that "neither data nor theories are discovered either as given in the data or the analysis. Rather, we are part of the world we study, the data we collect and the analyses we produce. We *construc*t our grounded theories…" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 17, emphasis original). Furthermore, it is not only the researchers who are involved in the process of construction. CGT researchers recognise that they construct their theories "out of stories that are constructed by research participants…Out of these *multiple constructions* analysts construct something that they call knowledge" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 10, emphasis added).

CGT researchers acknowledge that the analyses they develop are an "*interpretive* portrayal of the studied world, not an exact picture of it" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 17, emphasis original). The findings from this study, therefore, represent my interpretation of the ways in which the participants interpreted the notion of intentional teaching. The theoretical model presented in this thesis is one way in which intentional teaching may be conceptualised in the New Zealand early childhood education context. Other researchers or analysts may have interpreted the findings differently, or constructed a different theoretical model. However, it is hoped that the process of analysis and construction reported in this thesis will be sufficiently transparent to enable readers to understand how I reached my conclusions.

In a CGT study, the process of theory development relies upon the process of inductive reasoning, and on the researcher's "abductive inferences" (Richardson & Kramer, 2006, p. 498). Induction and abduction are explained briefly in the following section.

Induction and abduction.

The purpose of induction "is to give…deductive hypotheses sufficient empirical basis…or…to reject the hypotheses" (Åsvoll, 2014, p. 4). Induction begins with specific cases, and uses multiple observations to develop theories about the given situation (Richardson & Kramer, 2006). Grounded theory is therefore considered to be inductive in nature (Charmaz, 2014; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) because it starts with the behaviour or situation of interest, and progresses through a systematic process of analysis, thus leading to the generation of a theory that is grounded in empirical data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Such a theory is therefore expected to be useful to the field of study.

The process of theory generation also involves abduction (Charmaz, 2014; Reichertz, 2007; Richardson & Kramer, 2006). Charmaz (2014) defined abductive reasoning as "a mode of imaginative reasoning researchers invoke when they cannot account for a surprising or puzzling finding" (p. 200).

Abduction is "a distinct type of reasoning…not to be confused with…induction and deduction" (Fann, 1970, p. 5). It is a creative process, which requires the researcher to develop a new hypothesis or theory to explain a phenomenon about which they have no prior experience or information (Åsvoll, 2014). It includes "imaginative interpretations and deductions that follow inductive discoveries" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 201). These interpretations then lead the researcher to re-examine their existing data, or to collect more, in order to ensure that their abductive inferences stand up to "rigorous empirical scrutiny" (p. 201). Abduction also imbues theorists with a "critical, sceptical stance" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 201) towards extant theories that may seem to explain the data, ensuring that only those theories considered to be truly relevant and helpful are included in the analysis.

Abduction is thus the process of inferring "useful explanations" (Richardson & Kramer, 2006, p. 499) from the data. It has been described as the "appropriate method for making sense of new (or unknown) situations" (p. 500). Abductive reasoning starts at the early stages of research, as data begins to be collected (Richardson & Kramer, 2006). Abduction has also been described as:

> …the first stage of any scientific investigation, and of all interpretative processes…The very basis for abduction is our examination of a certain number of facts. We attempt to sort out the facts in order to attain an idea of what we find before us, but we fail to immediately achieve a satisfactory understanding and explanation of the phenomenon. When something new is required, it can be a relevant strategy to start from surprising facts or from little details, and try with them to find a tentative hypothesis (Åsvoll, 2014, p. 3).

The “mental leap” (Reichertz, 2007, p. 220) that constitutes abductive reasoning is expected to result in the development of new theoretical insight. However, the resulting theory is not considered to be a “reflection of reality” (p. 222). Rather, it consists of “*mental constructs* with which one can live comfortably or less comfortably” (p. 222, emphasis original).

Reflexive memo.

The literature suggests that there are two main conditions that are likely to facilitate “abductive discovery” (Reichertz, 2007, p. 221). The first involves pressure, doubt or fear, which can be considered appropriate conditions for encouraging “abductive lightning to strike” (p. 222). The second is the opposite, namely the creation of conditions similar to daydreaming, when the mind is free to wander without pressure (Åsvoll, 2014; Reichertz, 2007). My own experience in this present study was that the latter conditions were more conducive to abductive reasoning than the former. Time away from the data and the pressure to produce analysis was most likely to be the time that led me to new ways of seeing and of interpreting that data.

Data Analysis

As with other aspects of grounded theory, the process of data analysis is one that is debated by researchers (Holton, 2007). While certain aspects of the analysis seem to be universal across the different approaches to grounded theory, others are disputed. As this study has been designed and constructed according to the principles of CGT, the approaches to data analysis presented here will be those adopted by that approach.

The fundamental elements of data analysis in a CGT study are: constant comparative analysis, coding, categorising, theoretical sampling, and memo-writing. As constant comparative analysis is a continuing process that occurs throughout the analysis, and underpins all of the other analytic tools, it is described first.

Constant comparative analysis.

Holton (2007) described constant comparative analysis and theoretical sampling as the “twin foundations” (p. 277) of all grounded theory studies. Constant comparative analysis is described in this section; theoretical sampling is described later in this chapter (see p.60).

Constant comparative analysis begins with the first data, and continues until the end of the analysis process. It involves comparing each piece/type of data with all other data, across type (interview with interview), participants (the responses of one participant with another) and time (a participant’s actions/responses on different days and at different times, or similar events on different days).

In this study I began my data collection in each setting with a focus group interview with all of the teachers. I therefore began the process of constant comparative analysis as soon as I started the process of coding that data. Following the focus group, I then spent up to ten weeks in each setting observing teachers engaged in “naturally occurring activities” (Blay & Ireson, 2009, p. 1107). I expected that data gathered during the focus group interview would be either supported or challenged by data gathered during the periods of observation that followed.

At the end of my time in each setting, I conducted individual interviews with each participant. During these, participants were asked to reflect on, and explain, video footage and written observations of their practice. I compared statements made by individual participants at different times—such as during their interview and during informal professional conversations— to see whether their views were consistent, or whether they varied according to context. I compared their statements with the field notes of my observations, to investigate any possible connections or disconnects between their espoused views and their practice. I also compared data from interviews with different participants (Charmaz, 2006) in the same settings, and across the different centres.

Finally, the “group validation interview” (Morse, 2007, p. 241) that I conducted towards the end of the study provided further data for comparison, by specifically asking participants for comment or feedback on my developing analysis that helped me to further develop that analysis.

A further source of data for constant comparative analysis was the literature (Thornberg, 2011). I compared my data with the literature that was critically reviewed in Chapter 2, as well as with other literature that was suggested by the developing analysis. Ultimately, this process of constant comparison was intended to “generate successively more abstract concepts and theories” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 187).

Initial and focused coding.

Constant comparative analysis underpins all of the process of data analysis in CGT. The analysis process in CGT begins with coding; “the pivotal link between collecting data and developing an emergent theory to explain these data” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 113). Coding involves studying the data to identify the actions and processes that are revealed within it. Coding helps the researcher to “*define* what is happening in the data and begin to grapple with what it means” (p. 113, emphasis original).

Generating an initial coding framework involves reading the data closely multiple times. In the case of this study, this was a lengthy process, and the list developed was extensive. I repeated this process frequently, and my list of initial codes increased each time as new data were gathered. By the end of the initial coding phase, I had identified approximately 300 initial codes.

Once I believed I had identified all of my initial codes, I then moved on to the process of “focused coding” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 57). Within the paradigm of CGT, focused coding is the second step in the coding process. At this point the coding becomes more conceptual than the line-by-line process of initial coding. Focused coding is the process of revisiting the most frequently repeated initial codes to determine which of them “make the most analytic sense to categorize [the] data incisively and completely” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 137). As I collected more data, it became easier to understand which codes could be considered more relevant to my analysis.

Throughout the coding process it is important to remember that all codes are a construct created by the researcher (Charmaz, 2014). As such, they reveal the researcher’s perspective of the situation being studied rather than “empirical reality” (p. 115). However, the frequent iterations of analysis that are a feature of CGT enable the development of codes that more accurately reflect the important issues.

From the lengthy list of initial codes, I developed a tentative list of focused codes. Developing focused codes meant that some of the initial codes had to be set aside as my analysis became more conceptual in nature. I went through multiple iterations of focused coding. I have included a sample of my data with initial codes and then with focused codes identified in Appendix I.

Theoretical coding

After focused coding, some CGT researchers engage in theoretical coding (Glaser, 1978). The notion of theoretical coding has been the subject of some debate amongst grounded theory scholars (Charmaz, 2014; Dey, 2007; Kelle, 2007). Charmaz (2014) has argued that CGT researchers should only utilise Glaser's theoretical codes where they seem helpful to their analysis, and if they "earn their way" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 153) into the developing grounded theory. Otherwise she indicated that it is quite appropriate for CGT researchers to choose not to engage with the notion of theoretical coding. In this study I decided not to engage in theoretical coding.

Memo-writing.

Charmaz (2014) suggested that the next step in the analysis process is memo-writing. Analytic memos are the notes a researcher makes during the data collection and the analysis. They may be informed by the theoretical field notes taken during the observation process for example, as described in the following chapter, but they extend these into a form of "analytical conversation" between the researcher and the data (Lempert, 2007, p. 247) which creates the "fundamental link between data and emergent theory" (p. 249).

Memo-writing is considered to be a core method in constructivist grounded theory, and should begin early in the analysis process (Charmaz, 2014; Lempert, 2007). In this present study, I began the process of memo writing as soon as I began collecting data; however I discovered that writing analytic memos is a learned skill that develops over time. As my skill in writing analytic memos increased, I found that they helped me to develop and extend my conceptual ideas. They also helped me track the development of my thinking, and to identify the insights and ideas that I had when away from my data.

Memos are expected to help in the process of constant comparative analysis, which may lead to the next round of questions and data collection. Memos may help the researcher "carry his (*sic*) thinking to its most logical (grounded in the data, not speculative) conclusions" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 107). Ultimately analytic memos helped me to become able to identify and name the theoretical categories that I was constructing from the data.

Theoretical categories.

Charmaz (2014) argued that the process of memo-writing enables the researcher to develop theoretical categories from their list of focused codes. Categories were described by Glaser and Strauss (1967) as the "conceptual elements of a theory" (p. 36). They are more abstract in nature than codes; nevertheless they are still expected to be grounded in the data (Dey, 2007). Constructing categories may be the process that is most likely to require the researcher to draw on moments of creative inspiration, or to make abductive inferences. These inferences can assist the researcher to see connections and categories within their data of which they may have been previously unaware (Åsvoll, 2014; Reichertz, 2007; Richardson & Kramer, 2006).

In this present study I constructed three theoretical categories. These were: having aspirations for children, making curriculum decisions, and implementing intentional practice. These three theoretical categories are also considered to be the "basic social processes" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 34) of intentional teaching. Basic social processes are expected to explain "most of the observed behaviour that is relevant…for those involved" (Wiener, 2007, p. 306). These categories, or processes, form the basis of the theory that has been constructed, and are discussed in detail in Chapters 5, 6, and 7.

Constructing theoretical categories involves making judicious decisions about which categories are most deserving of being raised to theoretical level. Charmaz (2014) states:

> …we choose to raise certain categories to concepts because of their theoretical reach, theoretical centrality, incisiveness, generic power, and relation to other categories….Theoretical concepts subsume lesser categories with ease and by comparison hold more significance, account for more data, and often make crucial processes more evident (p. 247).

The answer to which categories to choose to raise is, according to Charmaz (2014), relatively simple: "raise the categories that render the data most effectively" (p. 247).

Theoretical categories move the analysis into a more abstract space, going beyond an explanation of what is happening in one particular setting, and moving "toward defining generic processes" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 189). However, it is important to ensure that the theoretical categories retain "specific connections to the data" (p. 214). By raising the analysis to a more abstract level, the resulting theoretical model is more likely to be considered relevant and applicable to more than just the context within which the research was conducted. An indication of which analytic categories were subsumed into the three theoretical categories I developed is found in Appendix II.

Theoretical sampling.

Theoretical sampling differs significantly from other approaches to sampling that are typically used in a qualitative research study, such as convenience sampling or purposeful sampling (Morse, 2007) because it is directed by the emerging theory and the questions it raises, rather than by the need to answer the initial research question (Charmaz, 2014; Morse, 2007). It entails "seeking and collecting pertinent data to elaborate and refine categories in [the] emerging theory" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 192). During theoretical sampling the researcher may be likely to apply abductive reasoning, as they may suddenly become aware of areas where more data is needed in order to fully saturate a particular conceptual category (Charmaz, 2014). In contrast to initial sampling, which "gets you started" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 197), theoretical sampling "guides you where to go" (p. 197).

The process of theoretical sampling enables the researcher to focus specifically on one aspect of data collection. It involves the researcher in gathering data prompted by the need to answer specific questions that the comparative analysis has raised, in order to reach theoretical saturation—described in the following section of this chapter. In theoretical sampling, therefore, "the basic idea is to sample new settings which might illuminate through further comparison the properties and relationships of emerging categories" (Dey, 2007, p. 186). However, in addition to theoretical sampling during field work, Thornberg (2011) also advises applying the principle of theoretical sampling to the literature. This was described in detail in an earlier section of this chapter (see p.51).

Theoretical sampling may take place in the original research setting (Charmaz, 2014; Glaser, 1978), and on occasions I revisited centres in order to collect further data relating to a part of my analysis. Alternatively, the researcher might choose to approach some new participants, selected deliberately because they seem likely to have had a specific experience or because a specific developing category seems likely to apply to them (Morse, 2007). The additional data that is collected might be in the form of targeted observations; it might also be in the form of further interviews. In this study I shaped the later phases of my field work according to the notion of theoretical sampling. Therefore, while I made the initial decisions about what data to collect based on the research question, the decisions about what data to collect as the study progressed were based on the emerging codes and categories (Charmaz, 2014), as well as on the areas I identified as lacking the data I needed to answer my research questions. For example, my study began in a mixed-age setting, catering for children from birth to five years of age. However, at the time I was there they had no babies enrolled at the centre, so the next setting I invited to participate in the study specialised in the care and education of infants. Then I deliberately approached the third setting because of their particular focus on four year old children, and because of the pre-school programme they offered. This contrasted strongly with either of the previous settings I had observed, and I believed that data from such a programme would enrich my study. I believed that data from multiple settings would ensure that this was a robust and thorough study

Saturation.

When new data lead to no new codes or categories, the study is said to have reached "saturation" (Glaser, 1978, p. 24). At this point data collection can be considered to be complete. However, saturation does not simply mean that the data shows repetition of previously observed or heard actions or statements (Charmaz, 2014). Rather, saturation refers to repeated investigation of the data until "no new properties…emerge" (Glaser, 2001, p. 191).

Theoretical saturation is often considered alongside theoretical sampling. The potential connection between theoretical sampling and saturation is easy to see; sampling may contribute to saturation (Charmaz, 2014). Furthermore, "sampling ceases when saturation is achieved" (Morse, 2007, p. 231).

However, saturation may be a problematic concept, as it is easy to claim, but may be harder to prove (Charmaz, 2014). Dey (1999) argued that the process of theoretical sampling may produce data that offer up no new insights simply because the data being collected are increasingly focused on a particular line of enquiry, rather than because the analysis has reached saturation. Dey therefore proposed the notion of "theoretical sufficiency" (1999, p. 257) as an alternative. I adopted the notion of theoretical sufficiency rather than saturation to guide this study, as the small scale of this study made a claim of saturation seem rather ambitious.

By the end of the field work component of this study I believed my list of initial codes to be exhaustive. Therefore, I believe that I had achieved theoretical sufficiency in my data as defined by Dey (1999). Nevertheless, I acknowledge the possibility that another analyst might detect other codes within the data as it may be that I had become focused on one particular perspective that hindered me from seeing other possible interpretations.

Reflexive memo.

The process of data analysis in a CGT study can appear to be a straightforward process, particularly when described in written form. Charmaz (2014) suggests that coding in CGT “need not be complex” (p. 115), a suggestion that I now consider rather optimistic, and perhaps even a little misleading. I tend to agree with Stern and Porr, that analysing and coding CGT data is not a tidy linear process, but a “chaotic iterative pattern” (Stern & Porr, 2011, p. 45). I also found it to be a lengthy process that could not be hurried. I learned that abductive inferences and mental leaps do not necessarily occur when the researcher wants them.

Establishing the Study’s Authenticity and Trustworthiness

The research design in this study was intended to ensure that the data gathered were reflective of some of the variety of operating structure that is typical of the early childhood education sector in New Zealand. Although any grounded theory study is expected to be explanatory rather than descriptive (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), gathering rich and varied data was expected to increase the likelihood that the resulting theory would reflect some of the diversity found within early childhood education in New Zealand.

The criteria that have been suggested for CGT researchers to apply to their studies, to assess them for authenticity and trustworthiness, are: credibility, originality, resonance, and usefulness (Charmaz, 2014). In addition to Charmaz’ proposed criteria, others which can be usefully applied are: dependability and transferability (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In the following sections I explain these various criteria. I close this section by discussing the issues of triangulation which is another consideration when attempting to ensure the authenticity of a grounded theory study.

Credibility.

For a theory to be credible, it is important that it is based in "intimate familiarity" with the topic or the setting (Charmaz, 2014, p. 337). Qualitative researchers aim to present as detailed a description of the research context, participants, methods and process as possible, and the greater the level of detail, the more likely the analysis is to be trustworthy (Warren & Karner, 2010). For this study I spent significant periods of time in a range of early childhood centres that reflected some of the diversity found within early childhood education in New Zealand. Furthermore, by using multiple research methods, I gained extensive, rich data.

The trustworthiness of data can be established by presenting the developing analysis to the participants for checking (Morse, 2007). Glaser (2001) disagreed with this approach, arguing that participants "may not understand or even like the theory" (p. 11), as it is a "generated abstraction from their doings and its meaning" (p. 11), and may be based in part on data of which they are not aware. However, CGT scholars acknowledge that construction of a theory is an interactive process between participant and researcher (Charmaz, 2009), and for this reason I chose to give the participants the opportunity to comment on my analysis and my developing theory.

First, I gave participants copies of their interview transcripts to check before I included them into my analysis. I then invited them to take part in a group interview towards the end of the study, in order to hear and comment on my analysis, and the developing theory. My original plan was to invite the participants to a "theoretical group interview" (Morse, 2007, p. 241). A theoretical group interview is expected to contribute to the developing analysis as it offers the researcher an opportunity to ask further questions, or clarify particular points. In the event, I was given an open invitation to revisit all three participating centres any time, and this gave me plenty of opportunity to ask additional questions as I needed during my analysis. Consequently I decided to conduct a "group validation interview" (p. 241) only. A group validation interview is one at which the participants are asked to comment on the developing analysis and theory, and to indicate whether they broadly agree with the conclusions. This interview was an important part of ensuring the trustworthiness of my analysis.

Furthermore, I also expect that the detailed account I have provided earlier in this chapter of the way in which I analysed my data will support the credibility of the grounded theory constructed in this study. I believe that by engaging in “theoretical candor” (Lofland, Snow, Anderson, & Lofland, 2006, p. 170) about my analysis methods I will have enabled those reading the thesis to follow the logic of the argument presented, and agree with the claims made (Charmaz, 2014).

Originality.

This criterion speaks for itself—are the analysis and the insights offered original in the field? This study took an original approach to researching intentional teaching in early childhood education by having as its aim the construction of a theoretical model that was grounded in empirical research data. This study focused on making explicit teachers’ understanding of intentional teaching, and the ways in which they were practising intentional teaching. This was in contrast to the majority of the literature located at the beginning of this study that was either not research-based, or that had assessed teachers’ practice against a predetermined understanding of intentional teaching. The aim of this present study was therefore original.

No substantive research into intentional teaching in the New Zealand context was located prior to this study commencing. Furthermore, the preponderance of international research into this topic located to date had not considered the perspective of teachers. This further supports the claim that this study was original in its context, scope and aim.

The theoretical model constructed in this study highlights teachers’ aspirations for children, and argues that intentional teaching consists of the interaction between teachers’ aspirations for children, their curriculum decisions, and their practice. It presents a view of intentional teaching as being aspirational, holistic, dynamic, spontaneous, and intuitive. It suggests that intentional teaching is more than a teaching strategy that can be learned and adopted, or not, as a teacher chooses; rather this study argues that intentional teaching underpins multiple aspects of teachers’ professional practice.

The theoretical model of intentional teaching that is proposed in this thesis is therefore different to other explanations or descriptions of intentional teaching that have previously been suggested. This study therefore represents an original contribution to the contemporary scholarship around intentional teaching in early childhood education.

Resonance and usefulness.

A constructivist grounded theory is only considered useful if it offers ideas and interpretations which people can actually use (Charmaz, 2014). Further, the theory developed should resonate with, or make sense to, the participants or “people who share their circumstances” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 338).

In an earlier section I described the group validation interview to which I invited the research participants. In the event, only the teachers from one participating centre, Setting 3, were able to attend. I presented to them my developing analysis and theoretical model, and asked them for their comment and feedback. I was particularly interested to know whether it made sense to them (Morse, 2007), and whether they felt it would be useful to them. In this way, I hoped to further establish the credibility and trustworthiness of my analysis. Their comments, which are incorporated into Chapter 8, indicated that they felt I had appropriately identified and made explicit their underlying, and unarticulated aspirations for children. Furthermore, they explained that they found the notion of three different approaches to decision-making particularly helpful in explaining their actions, and why they might respond differently to children and circumstances at different times. They stated they believed that this theoretical model had the potential to assist them both to reflect on their practice, and to explain it to others.

In addition to considering a theory’s usefulness to the participants, it is also important to consider the potential usefulness of the developed grounded theory in terms of its contribution to the wider field (in this case, early childhood education in New Zealand and internationally), and to the literature (Charmaz, 2014). The contribution of this study to the literature in terms of originality has already been considered. The usefulness of that contribution will be determined by others.

As for the usefulness of this study to the early childhood education profession in New Zealand or overseas, I can only refer to the responses of the participants, who seemed to believe that the theoretical model I have developed had great potential to be useful to them and, by extension, to all early childhood teachers working in a similar curriculum framework. These comments also suggested that it might be considered transferable. Transferability will be considered further in the following section.

Transferability.

In a small-scale qualitative study such as this one, the transferability— that is, the applicability of the findings to another, similar situation—may be a subjective assessment on the part of the reader (Haigh & Dixon, 2007). In a CGT study a substantive theory is considered to be potentially less transferable than a formal theory (Charmaz, 2014, Glaser & Strauss, 1967), but claims for transferability may still be made.

Misco (2007) questioned the extent to which a grounded theory developed from one study can claim to be transferable to other contexts, particularly when context is a crucial component of the situation being studied. He suggested that the findings from such a study might only contribute “grounded understandings” (p. 7), and cautioned that it may only be possible to claim that a theory has been generated once a grounded theory study is “considered in association with similar ones in some sort of qualitative meta-analysis” (p. 6).

This thesis presents a theoretical model to explain the phenomenon of intentional teaching, in the context of New Zealand early childhood education. It may be considered a substantive theory, applicable to the contexts in which the research was conducted, and perhaps applicable to other early childhood education contexts in New Zealand. The response from the participants suggests that the theoretical model developed from this present study has the potential to be relevant and useful to early childhood teachers across multiple different early childhood education centres. Nevertheless, it will be for the “research community [to] provide(s) the medium through which [this] theory can be tested, whether through replication, application or evaluation” (Dey, 2007, p. 174).

Dependability and triangulation.

Within the paradigm of quantitative research, dependability is determined by whether the findings from a research study are able to be replicated by other researchers (Punch, 2005). Within qualitative research, however, the replication of a study’s findings is not expected. Instead, dependability can be established by using multiple sources of data, and considering them in relation to each other. In grounded theory this process is called constant comparative analysis (Glaser, 1978). I have described this process in an earlier section. Furthermore, in the later chapters that combine findings with discussion, the connection between my analysis, the data on which it is grounded, and the associated literature, is made clear, in order to enhance the dependability of my research findings (Eisenhardt, 2002).

The term triangulation can refer to the use of multiple data collection methods (Eisenhardt, 2002). Both constant comparative analysis and triangulation depend on the use of multiple participants, research methods, and data sources, and a process of analysis in which data is checked against that gained from other sources, in order to ensure that the analysis ‘fits’ (Warren & Karner, 2010). In this study, I used several different data collection methods, all of which are described in detail in the following chapter. By comparing the data gathered during each process across the whole study, as explained in the earlier section about constant comparative analysis, and by gathering rich and detailed data through a number of different methods, I believe I built the notion of triangulation into my research design.

Summary

In the previous two chapters I introduced the aim and focus of this research study and reviewed the literature. I explained that I did not wish my research to involve assessing teachers’ practice against a predetermined understanding of intentional teaching, but that I wanted to understand how teachers interpreted the notion of intentional teaching, and how they might demonstrate intentional teaching in their regular professional practice. I then reviewed the literature, and found that no prior study similar to the one I envisaged could be located. Taking my research aim together with the findings of my literature review, I decided to design and conduct this study according to CGT.

In this chapter, therefore, I have explained in detail the core characteristics of CGT, with particular attention to the methods of data analysis that CGT entails. I have clearly indicated how I implemented CGT in my research study, and how I conducted my data analysis. In doing so, I have made explicit the processes I followed, and some of the challenges I confronted.

I concluded this chapter by describing the ways in which I have attempted to establish the trustworthiness of this study. One way was by engaging in the type of transparency about processes and challenges that I have just alluded to. In addition, I have clearly explained how this study meets Charmaz' (2014) criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of CGT studies.

Having established that CGT was the most appropriate methodology for this research study, and described the principle characteristics of CGT, I now turn to describing the research methods that I employed. These, and the ethical principles that underpinned this entire study, are described in the following chapter. The following chapter will also introduce the research participants.

4. Research Methods

"Our grounded theory adventure starts as we enter the field where we gather data….Attending to how you gather data will ease your journey and bring you to your destination with a stronger product" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 22).

Having established the methodology that would underpin this study, this chapter explains the processes by which I gathered the data I would need to meet the research aims. The design of a CGT study is expected to be flexible, "start[ing] with [the researcher's interests] but also pursu[ing] other topics that … respondents [identify] as crucial" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 17). A grounded theory study has therefore been described as a "matrix operation where everything goes on at once" and which "is at odds with linearity" (Stern & Porr, 2011, p. 44). However, it is also important to establish some kind of clear structure so that participants have a clear understanding of the possible implications for their time should they agree to participate. This chapter describes the design of this study, including the different research methods used. These methods were focus groups, observations, individual interviews and a review of documentation. The chapter explains the connection between these methods and the specific research questions that guided this study.

The chapter then explains the ethical principles which underpinned the conduct of this research study throughout, with a particular focus on the issues of informed consent, voluntary participation, and the question of confidentiality. The chapter concludes by introducing the research participants. The participants included three Professional Learning Facilitators (PLFs) who agreed to participate in a focus group interview only, and 13 qualified early childhood teachers working in three different early childhood centres.

The Research Methods

In order to construct a grounded theory that will meet the criteria of credibility, trustworthiness and usefulness, it is vital to gather "rich data" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 22). In order to gather rich data, it is necessary to choose a variety of research methods that will be suitable for the context of the study because "certain research problems indicate using several combined or sequential approaches" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 15). CGT does not restrict the researcher to a particular set of research methods.

It does, however, expect that the research methods used should reflect the research questions, a view that “brings methodological eclecticism into grounded theory” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 27). In this study, I conducted focus group interviews and individual interviews, I spent multiple hours in the early childhood centres observing teachers and occasionally filming them, and I reviewed relevant centre documentation.

Focus groups.

Focus groups are interviews in group rather than individual formats, and can be especially useful at the early stage of a study when “researchers are not entirely sure what…perspectives are relevant” (Macnaghten & Myers, 2007, p. 65). In this study, I anticipated that the focus groups might provide me with data that would be relevant to each of my research questions.

A focus group was the first research method that I used in each research setting. In spite of some challenges and constraints that are associated with focus groups, such as the lack of confidentiality, I found them to be a successful method for eliciting information from a group of people with a common concern. I also found them a useful way of uncovering the existence of group-based understandings or perspectives (Flick, 2009). For example, as will be seen in Chapter 5, some of the teachers’ responses revealed common perspectives on the notion of programme planning. In order to ensure that participants would answer questions freely, however, I assured them that I would respect their opinions (Krueger & Casey, 2009), and that there was no ‘correct’ answer to any of the questions that I asked them.

I prepared an indicative list of questions for the focus groups (Appendix III) that reflected my general “guiding interests” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 31) as well as some of the queries that the literature had suggested to me. I began each focus group by asking the participants to express their initial reactions to the idea of intentional teaching. I then asked them to describe areas of their practice that they thought of as being intentional.

At the end of each focus group I summarised the discussion to ensure that everyone agreed that I had captured the meaning behind what they were saying. However, for reasons that will be clarified in the later section on ethical principles, the participants were not offered a copy of the transcript to check.

Observations.

After the focus group, I began my period of observations within each research setting. The literature I had reviewed, together with the responses from the focus group in each centre, helped me develop sensitivity to the types of practice I might expect to observe while in the centres. I adopted the role of "observer as participant" (Bailey, 2007, p. 80). This allowed me to interact with the teachers and the children, without actively participating in the activities or programmes in the setting. Observations, including a record of professional conversations with teachers and informal chats with children, were recorded in the form of field notes and video recordings.

At the beginning of the study I wanted to observe the full gamut of daily life within each centre. As the study progressed, my observations became more focused (Flick, 2009), and shaped by my developing analysis. In particular I began to focus on teachers' curriculum decisions, including their decisions about how to prepare the environment, what activities and experiences they planned, and how they responded spontaneously to children or events.

This meant that I needed to be at the centre at different times throughout the working day. However, it was important to carefully negotiate the balance between gaining valuable data and intruding on participants' privacy. It was also important to strike a balance between gathering sufficient data and becoming a source of irritation to the teachers. In order to achieve this balance I visited each centre three times a week for not more than three hours at a time, for up to eight weeks. These times and days varied from week to week.

The observational data were expected to answer my research question relating to the ways in which intentional teaching is manifested in practice, as well as the overall question about the nature of intentional teaching in New Zealand early childhood education. Through the process of constant comparative analysis, the data were also used to confirm or challenge some of the statements made by teachers during the focus group. Finally, observation data provided a springboard for my discussions with teachers during their individual interviews.

Field notes.

In this study, I recorded my observational data in two ways: as written field notes, and as video recordings. Charmaz (2006) suggested that the focus of field notes should be more on the process or question being studied than on a description of the setting. CGT research may often take place across multiple settings, and the notes taken should convey a "*conceptual* rendering of these" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 38). Observational notes may therefore start broad, but should become more focused on emerging analytic insights as the data analysis progresses (Charmaz, 2014).

The purpose of field notes is to provide sufficient in-depth data to help in the construction of a grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014). In this study I collected extensive notes of my observations within the various centres. I noted interactions between the participants, informal professional conversations I held with them, and the actions and behaviours of the teachers together with the children's responses. In each centre I began with making notes about the environment, the routines, and any other structural aspects of life within the centre that could contribute to my understanding of the processes there. However, as the study and my analysis progressed, and in keeping with theoretical sampling, I became more focused in the types of interactions or events that I recorded. I ceased trying to record everything that happened during the day, and began to select specific types of events for particularly close observation.

I developed my observational field notes, together with my analysis of video footage and photographs taken in the research settings, into a series of vignettes. These vignettes form the basis of the three findings/discussion chapters in this thesis.

Videos.

The second form of observational data that I collected during this study was in the form of video. The use of video as a data gathering tool in education research is becoming increasingly widespread (e.g. Cherrington & Loveridge, 2014; Fletcher, Price, & Branen, 2010; Flewitt, 2006). Video footage is considered to give "insights into aspects of … behaviour previously unaccounted for in early years education research" (Flewitt, 2006, p. 25) and the literature indicates that the use of Video Stimulated Recall interviews (VSR) can be an effective way of gaining rich and detailed insight into teachers' thinking and decision-making (Fletcher et al., 2010; Lyle, 2003). However, it can be difficult to distinguish between "participants' recall of, and reflection on, an event" (Cherrington & Loveridge, 2014, p. 45).

There are aspects to the use of video footage in research, which are potentially problematic, and which I carefully considered both before and during the research process. These included: issues around consent and confidentiality, the question of intrusion into the centre, and the potential impact of filming on the behaviour of the participants (Flewitt, 2006). The questions around research ethics, consent and confidentiality will be discussed in detail later in this chapter. The discussion here focuses on the practical issues associated with the use of video camera, once consent for the process had been obtained.

Introducing a video camera into a centre seemed, in theory, as though it would be a straightforward process. In the event, however, it presented various challenges (Fletcher et al., 2010). I tried to minimise the impact that using a video camera could have on the day-to-day running of a centre by giving all participants time to become familiar with my being in the centre, before bringing the camera. When I thought my presence was no longer really noticed by the teachers, I started to take my very small camera with me. However the teachers were not entirely comfortable with being filmed. This raised the ethical question of whether it was appropriate to continue filming if a participant was clearly uncomfortable (Flewitt, 2006), and in those situations I chose to stop filming and tell the teacher that I had stopped.

Although I did my best to use the camera discreetly, inevitably it seemed that the teachers quickly became aware that they were being filmed, and if they did not, then the children soon let them know. However, in spite of the challenges both ethical and practical, I did manage to video some (but not all) of the teachers in each setting, and the footage generally proved a powerful stimulus for conversation with the teachers during their interview, as it triggered their memories. The exception to this was when I showed teachers film of something they had done a long time before their interview. In those cases they were able perhaps to remember the event, but not their thinking at the time, which was the main focus of my enquiry (Cherrington & Loveridge, 2014). Because of this experience, I began to restrict my filming to the days immediately before scheduled individual interviews with teachers.

Reflexive memo.

I had prior experience of using video cameras in an early childhood centre as part of a research project. However, at that time I had been one of a team, and thus able to focus my entire attention on the process of filming. During this study, however, I was the sole researcher. I therefore found myself trying to juggle using the camera with being aware of what was happening around me at the same time, in order to stop filming if necessary. I found this very challenging. By the time I was in Setting 3, I had become increasingly uncomfortable with the role of camera operator.

I found that viewing life through the screen of a camera made me feel divorced from what was happening around me. I felt unable to absorb enough information about what else was going on around me, and thus to understand the context of the events I was filming. I therefore decided to decrease (but not totally abandon) my use of video, and to increase my use of still photographs instead. The teachers also seemed much more relaxed when I was taking still photographs; this was an activity they were accustomed to, and it seemed to present much less of a challenge to them. The photographs, taken together with detailed observational field notes, still provided me with rich data, and seemed to be just as useful as videos (but without the embarrassment factor) in stimulating discussion with the teachers during their individual interviews.

Individual interviews.

Interviews are essentially a “special form of social interaction” (Warren & Karner, 2010, p. 152) designed to elicit information, and have become a mainstay of qualitative research (Silverman, 2000). Within CGT, Charmaz (2014) describes interviews as a key method of data gathering. In this study, the individual interviews with teachers were scheduled towards the end of my time in each centre.

Video footage, and photographs, of the teacher’s practice were used during the individual interviews to stimulate their recall of events, and subsequent discussion. However, they only formed a part of each interview. The interviews also included times of question and discussion. I had prepared some indicative, open-ended questions for each interview in advance (Appendix IV). I also prepared some questions that were specifically tailored to the teacher I was interviewing. These questions were based on my observations and notes of conversations I had had with them, and data from the focus group. In keeping with constant comparative analysis, these questions provided me with an opportunity to confirm or challenge the other data I had collected. Individual interviews were also an opportunity to ask questions and raise topics that were suggested by my developing theoretical framework (Charmaz, 2014).

Once an interview began, I also tried to follow the leads that the participants gave in their responses, and to engage in in-depth exploration of the issues that were raised. My goal was to gain an understanding of that participant's experiences, perspectives, understandings and reflections. I expected that the individual interviews would provide me with data that would be pertinent to all of my research questions.

Documentation.

The final aspect of my data collection involved the review of some of each centre's documentation. A review of relevant documentation is frequently part of qualitative research (Warren & Karner, 2010) and of grounded theory research (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Seeking to understand the purposes and meaning of documentation can add depth to analysis, and perhaps provoke further data collection, however Charmaz (2006) cautioned that written "texts [are not] objective facts although they often represent what their authors assumed were objective facts" (p. 35). It was therefore important for me to remember that while the documentation I read became part of the data for this study, it was not prepared for that purpose (Flick, 2009).

I expected that reviewing the teachers' pedagogical documentation might give me further insights into their teaching practice. I was specifically interested in documentation relating to teaching and learning, and to that end I read the centres' policies relating to assessment and planning, and I read some of the children's individual portfolios of learning stories (Carr, 2001a). Learning stories are a form of narrative assessment in which the focus is on making children's learning visible. I expected that the learning stories might reveal whether intentional teaching as described in the focus group and the individual interviews was visible in their documentation. Argyris & Schön (1974) highlighted the inconsistencies that are often found between an individual's intended and actual actions, and any such inconsistencies were one focus of my observations and subsequent discussions at interviews.

In addition, in Settings 2 and 3 I asked teachers to select some samples of learning stories that they had written to bring to their individual interviews to refer to in our discussion. By asking teachers to select for themselves which learning stories they felt were most significant or interesting I hoped to gain an insight into their priorities for children's learning. I had not done this in Setting 1; there I had asked teachers to remember a time when they believed that they had helped a child's learning and tell me about it. This proved to be such a difficult question for teachers to answer unprepared, that in the later settings I decided to ask the teachers to bring documentation to refer to that would answer the same question.

The connections between the research methods and the research questions are summarised below (Fig. 1).

Question	Method 1	Method 2	Method 3	Method 4
What might be the nature of intentional teaching in New Zealand early childhood education centres?	Focus group with PLFs. Focus group with all teachers in each centre.	Observations of individual teachers' practice, recorded in written field notes. Video-recorded observations of participating teachers.	Individual interviews with participating teachers in centres, using video-stimulated recall.	Review of pedagogical documentation relating to planning of teaching experiences, or assessment of children's learning.
How might New Zealand early childhood teachers interpret the notion of intentional teaching?	Focus group with PLFs Focus group with all teachers in each centre.	Written field notes of professional conversations with teachers.	Individual interviews with participating teachers.	Review of New Zealand-based research literature.
In what ways might New Zealand early childhood teachers demonstrate intentional teaching in practice?	Focus group with PLFs. Focus group with all teachers in each centre.	Observations of individual teachers' practice, recorded in written field notes. Video-recorded observations of participating teachers.	Individual interviews with participating teachers, using video-stimulated recall.	Review of pedagogical documentation relating to planning of teaching experiences, or assessment of children's learning.
What factors might influence their intentional practice?	Focus groups with all teachers in each centre. Focus groups with PLFs.	Written field notes of professional conversations with teachers.	Individual interviews with teachers.	Review of international research literature. Review of pedagogical documentation relating to planning.

Figure 1: Research methods.

Ethical principles.

The design and conduct of this study was underpinned by the ethical principles typically expected during qualitative research (e.g., Cullen, Hedges, & Bone, 2009; Dockett, Perry, & Kearney, 2012).

The study was approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, reference no. 2012/8272.

The major ethical issues that I addressed when designing this study were: informed consent; voluntary participation and confidentiality. Underlying these issues was the principle of minimising any possibility of harm to either the participants or me. These issues are explained in the following sections.

Informed consent.

Before I approached any individual participant, I first contacted the centre managers or owners, and the manager of the Professional Learning Facilitators' organisation, in order to obtain their consent to approach their employees. I contacted each of these persons by email, and sent them the appropriate Participant Information Sheet (PIS) to read, and Consent Form (CF) to sign. Once I had obtained their consent, the process of recruiting participants began. A copy of the PIS and CF for organisation and centre managers is included in Appendix V.

I prepared a separate and specific PIS and CF for each group of participants – teachers and facilitators. Each PIS explained in detail the focus of the research, what involvement would mean for the potential participants, how much time it was likely to take, the participants' right to choose not to participate, their right to withdraw from the study at any time, and the measures I would take to conceal their identity. In addition, the PIS for the teachers presented them with several choices about which stages of the research they chose to participate in (Fig. 2). Each CF addressed these issues individually to give participants maximum choice about what they were consenting to. A copy of the PIS and CF for the facilitators and the teachers is included in Appendix V.

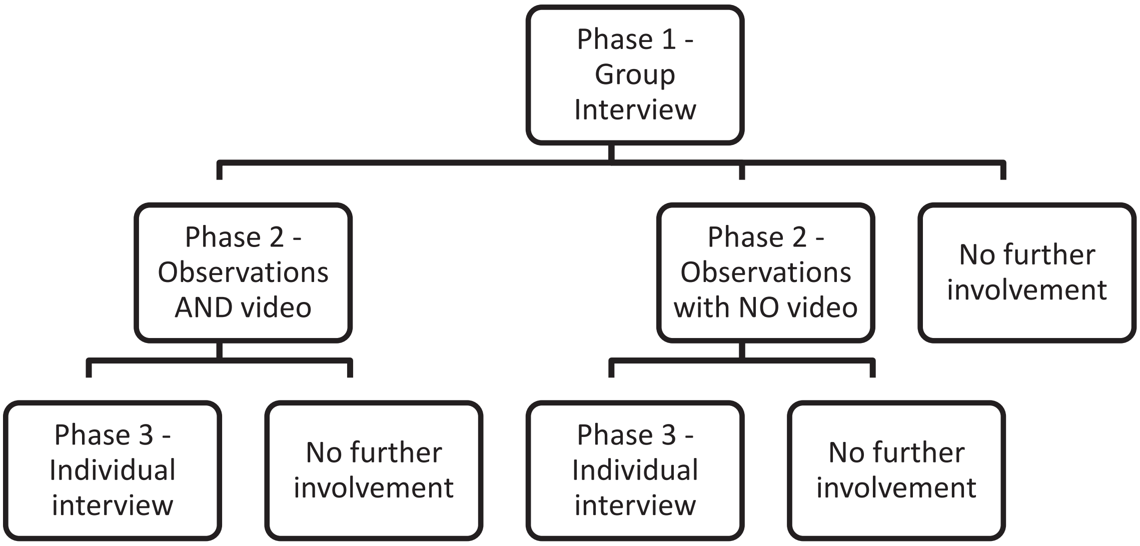
Phase 1 - Group Interview
Phase 2 - Observations AND video
Phase 2 - Observations with NO video
No further involvement
Phase 3 - Individual interview
No further involvement
Phase 3 - Individual interview
No further involvement

Figure 2: The research process for teachers.

Parents and children were not invited to participate in this study. However, in order to ensure that parents were fully informed about my presence in the centre, and the nature of my research, I prepared a PIS and CF for all parents. A copy of the PIS and CF for parents is also included in Appendix V. In particular, I asked them to consent to my reading their children's portfolios, and including any salient comments from their children in my research data. I further explained to parents that I would be taking photographs or videos of the teachers, and that their children might feature in these. However, I assured them that these were for use in private interviews with the teachers, and would not be viewed in public. In addition, I also assured parents that I would not observe, film or document children during personal care routines, or when they were sleeping or distressed. In the event, two parents refused consent for their children to be photographed, and I was careful to ensure that I complied with their wishes.

The PIS for parents also clearly indicated the behavioural boundaries that I would observe while in the centre. For example, I made it clear that I would not be involved in giving their child/ren any intimate physical care, I would not be responsible for supervising their children, and I would suspend all research activities if there was a concern for children's safety. In addition, I originally prepared a letter of introduction for teachers to read to the children in the different centres, and an assent form for older children, to ensure they were happy with me reading their portfolios, for example. However, in the event, I did not use either of these. In Setting 1, the teachers preferred not to introduce me to the children in a formal way; my presence in the centre was not remarked on, and the children did not seem particularly curious as to why I was there. In Setting 2 the infants very quickly accepted me as part of the setting. A formal introduction would have seemed quite inappropriate in that context. In Setting 3, I was introduced to the children at mat time on my first day there by one of the teachers. She did not want to use the letter I had prepared. The matter of the assent form for the older children was never raised. The children were all more than willing to show me their portfolios and tell me about them. As these forms of documentation were not used, I have not included them in the appendices.

Voluntary participation.

One of the key pieces of information contained in each PIS was that participation was entirely voluntary. In order to emphasise this point, I first asked all managers/employers/owners to give a written assurance that no-one's decision whether or not to participate would affect their employment status or, in the case of parents, the care and education their children received.

I also took measures to ensure that no-one felt pressured or coerced into participating. This was achieved by avoiding making direct contact with potential participants. Rather, I relied on head teachers/centre managers to explain the research, and distribute the relevant documentation for me. In the case of the PLF team, the manager discussed the research with her colleagues, and gave me an assurance that they were all happy to participate. I then delivered the PIS and CFs to her to distribute, returned to collect them when they were signed, and made an appointment for the focus group interview. No explanatory meeting was requested or needed.

In the case of the early childhood centres, however, once the PIS and CFs had been given to the teachers by their manager/centre owner, I arranged to come to a staff meeting to meet all of them, explain the research further, and answer any questions they might have had before agreeing to participate. These meetings proved valuable. Although I had thought that the PIS gave a detailed explanation of the research, the teachers still had questions they wanted to ask. I believe it was also important for them to meet me in person, and decide whether I seemed amenable and trustworthy, before committing themselves to participate.

Once the teachers had agreed to participate, I asked them to distribute the relevant PIS and CF to parents within the centre, and to tell them that I was available to answer questions in person if needed. Across the three settings only two parents withheld their consent; both of these were in the infants' centre. At no time did any parent approach me personally to discuss the research, although some parents did engage me in informal conversation at different times. I was careful to wear a name badge identifying myself when in the research settings.

As I have already discussed, the teachers in Setting 3 introduced me to the children; the teachers in the other settings did not. Some children engaged with me happily, as though I were a regular member of their setting; others ignored me. Similarly, some children appeared interested in what I was doing and asked questions; many did not. I endeavoured to be alert to indications from the children that they were not comfortable with me being around them. When I was in doubt, I took the advice of the teachers who knew the children well.

In addition to participation being voluntary, participants also had the right to withdraw themselves and any data attributable to them, including data from individual interviews, within an agreed time frame. However, it was clearly explained that they could not withdraw any data they had provided during a focus group interview as the nature of a focus group is such that the responses of any one individual cannot be withdrawn without potentially rendering all of the data meaningless. All of this was clearly explained in the PIS, as was the participants' right to ask for recordings to be halted, or to choose not to answer any particular question. All the participants were assured that they did not have to provide any reason for either choosing not to participate, or for choosing to begin but later withdraw.

Allowing participants the right to withdraw from the study at any time acknowledges that consent should always be considered to be "'provisional' upon the research being conducted within a negotiated framework and continuing to develop within participant expectations" (Flewitt, 2006, p. 31). Flewitt suggested that participants' on-going commitment to participation depends to some degree on the quality of relationship they have developed with the researcher, and whether that relationship is built on "sensitivity, reciprocal trust and collaboration" (p. 31).

In this present study none of the participants exercised their right to withdraw. However, two teachers did change their mind about the level of their involvement as the research progressed, and the relationship between us developed. The first, Isabelle, initially declined to participate in the research.

After two weeks of my being in her centre, however, and engaging in informal conversation with her during non-contact time, our relationship had developed to the point that she then offered to participate in the observation and individual interview phases of the research, although she declined to be filmed. The second teacher, Gillian, initially agreed to participate in the focus group only; however after that interview she chose to extend her participation to include observations and an individual interview. This demonstrated the importance of the relationship between researcher and participant. It also demonstrated the value of the way I had designed the PIS, which had given the teachers several choices about how much they wanted to participate. Although most of the teachers ultimately participated in all aspects of the research study, Hannah agreed only to take part in the focus group interview.

Part of the process of developing a trusting relationship with the participants was the commitment I made to concealing their identity, and protecting their confidentiality as much as possible. This issue is discussed further in the following section.

Confidentiality.

Observing people in their work place, and interviewing them about their professional practice, their knowledge and their beliefs is an intrusive process. Participants need to trust that the researcher will handle the information they obtain respectfully, and that they will not reveal anything that could be compromising or embarrassing (Renold, 2002). However, the researcher also needs the freedom to publish their research findings, and this limits the amount of confidentiality they can realistically offer.

In this study I began by informing managers/centre owners that I would not identify their business or early childhood centre by name, and that I would not disclose to them anything that was said in the course of interviews with their staff. They were given the option of choosing a pseudonym for their centre or business, or allowing me to choose one on their behalf. In the event, I chose the pseudonyms, and settled on describing them only as Settings One, Two and Three.

I then gave the same assurance to participants—that I would not disclose the contents of their individual interviews with anyone else at their centre, and that when I used excerpts from their interviews in my research I would not identify them by name. They too were given the option of choosing their own pseudonym, or allowing me to choose one for them. They all asked me to choose their pseudonyms.

Although it is possible to maintain confidentiality around individual interviews, focus group interviews are a different matter. Participants in a focus group were therefore asked to respect each other's confidentiality by agreeing not to disclose the content, or the names of the other participants to anyone else. Focus groups were audio recorded, and transcribed. Participants did not have the option to ask for recording to be suspended, but they were advised that they were not obliged to answer any particular question. Transcripts of the focus group were not returned to participants for checking, as I could not offer them the option of removing anything from the transcript as that would potentially render all of the subsequent discussion meaningless. This was clearly explained in the PIS.

Participants were also warned in advance that their individual interviews would be audio recorded (subject to their consent), and the recordings transcribed by a third party who had signed a confidentiality agreement. Following the interviews I gave the transcripts to the participants, for them to read and approve. While the recall of two people (in this case, interviewer and interviewee) about one event may not be identical in every detail, there should be a high level of agreement (Flick, 2009). In the event, some of the participants expressed a degree of embarrassment at seeing their words, complete with hesitations, repetitions and incomplete statements transcribed. However, none of them disagreed with the content or asked for anything to be deleted.

Taking video footage of teachers also needed careful management to ensure confidentiality. I reassured the teachers that video footage taken of their practice in the centre would be used only as part of their individual interview with me, and that it would not form part of any future presentation that may arise from the study.

I made it clear to all participants that in spite of my best efforts, I could not absolutely guarantee that no-one would be able to work out from the final published report, who had taken part in the study. Early childhood centres are public spaces, and many people, including (but not limited to) parents, community librarians, Education Support Workers (ESW), administrators and non-participating teachers within the centre, were aware of my presence in the centre and the reason behind it.

Furthermore, I clearly explained that my findings would be published, and could be used to inform public presentations.

Minimising harm.

The underlying principle behind all other aspects of research ethics is that of minimising the possibility of harm to participants. My personal professional history as an early childhood teacher with many years' professional experience meant that I was familiar with the Regulations that govern early childhood education (MoE, 2008), with the Code of Ethics for teachers (NZTC, 2004), and with early childhood centre policies and practice. I assured participants that I would abide by centre policies and routines during the research and that I would suspend research activities should any safety issues become apparent. I also explained to centre managers and to parents that I could not be included in the teaching team ratios in any centre, nor would I be providing children with supervision, or personal care.

This was not an intervention study, and there was therefore no interruption to the centres' normal teaching and learning programmes. Teachers were not asked to carry out any special activities for me to observe, and parents were assured that, should they choose not to participate, their child would not miss out on any possible learning experience.

Selecting the Participants

Two groups of early childhood professionals agreed to participate in this study. The first was a team of Professional Learning Facilitators (PLFs); the second group comprised the early childhood teachers who worked in different early childhood centres. In this section I begin by introducing the PLFs, and the reason for inviting them to participate in the study. I then describe the criteria I developed to guide my selection of early childhood centres, before describing the centres that agreed to participate, and introducing the teachers.

Professional Learning Facilitators.

When planning the design of this study I had considered the possibility of interviewing a team of PLFs, and the ethical consent I obtained included permission to approach them with an invitation to participate. My original plan was perhaps to interview them towards the end of my study, if my analysis suggested that doing so could be valuable. However, as I was preparing to embark on the field-work component of this study, I heard that they were beginning to prepare some teaching material for early childhood teachers, focused on intentional teaching. I interpreted this as a further indication of the developing interest in intentional teaching in this country, that supported the timeliness and relevance of this study, and I was keen to interview them before they started delivering this new teaching programme. I therefore invited them to take part in a focus group interview before I started my field work in early childhood centres. The indicative questions I prepared are included with the indicative questions for the teachers' focus groups in Appendix III.

The PLFs provided in-service education for early childhood teachers. The three members of the PLF team were all experienced early childhood teachers. They all held a degree-level early childhood teaching qualification, and were registered teachers (see p.12). In addition, all three of the PLFs were engaged in post-graduate study

I treated the focus group with the PLFs as preparation for my work in the early childhood centres. The interview provided me with some valuable insights into the likely level of understanding of intentional teaching that I might encounter in the participating centres. Some of the matters raised during this focus group acted as "sensitizing concepts" (Blumer, 1969, cited in Charmaz, 2014, p. 30). Sensitizing concepts "give researchers initial but tentative ideas to pursue and questions to raise about their topics" (p. 30).

Perhaps the most significant insight, or sensitizing concept that I derived from my interview with the PLFs was that early childhood teachers were likely to have intentions for children that were unspoken and unexamined: "You know, they may have unconscious intentions, unspoken intentions for children that come from their beliefs or values either professional or personal but those are never or seldom laid on the table for examination or critique" (Anna/PLF/FG/p. 7). This comment alerted me to the question of teachers' underlying intentions for children, a notion that became an integral part of my analysis, as will be seen in later chapters.

Having interviewed the PLFs, I then began to approach different centre managers and owners, whose centres fitted with the criteria described below, with an invitation to participate in the research.

Criteria for Participation

In order to ensure that the early childhood centres I approached were representative of some of the diversity of operating style and structure that is typical of early childhood education in New Zealand, I engaged in “purposeful sampling” (Morse, 2007, p. 237). Morse (2007) described purposeful sampling as the deliberate selecting of participants “according to the needs of the study” (p. 238). Purposeful sampling may also involve selecting research participants “within a wide range of situations in order to maximize variation” (Gobo, 2007, p. 418). Purposeful sampling is sometimes interpreted as introducing an element of bias into the research study, but within CGT that level of bias is considered acceptable so long as it is clearly stated (Morse, 2007).

Purposeful sampling began with the development of some criteria to determine which early childhood centres I would invite to participate. The first criterion was that only centres where at least 80% of the teaching staff held an early childhood teaching qualification recognised by the NZTC would be approached. I anticipated that this would ensure that the participants were likely to have the type of professional knowledge, experience, understanding or insight that would be useful and relevant to the study. In the event, all of the teachers who participated (13 in total) held a recognised New Zealand early childhood qualification at either Diploma, Degree or Graduate Diploma level, and they were all either provisionally or fully Registered by the NZTC. The different types of qualification available in New Zealand, and the process of teacher registration, were explained in Chapter 1 (p. 12). Teacher Registration indicates that a qualified teacher has completed a minimum of two years’ post-qualification supervised practice, and has been judged professionally competent. Provisional registration indicates that a teacher is in the supervision phase of the process. Part of the requirements of provisional registration is that the teacher should demonstrate their willingness and ability to reflect on their professional practice, and to share these reflections with their mentor teacher; it seemed likely that a teacher with that experience might be comfortable in discussing their practice with a researcher (Morse, 2007).

The second criterion for selection was that participating centres should offer a positive teaching and learning environment. Working with, and in, organisations that can be described as “success cases” (Brinkerhoff, 2005, p. 90) has been found to be a valuable strategy. Such organisations can be identified through reviewing “records and reports, by accessing performance data, or simply by asking people" (p. 90). In this case, potential centres were identified through a two-part process. First, the names of potential centres were located from publicly available information on the Ministry of Education website (www.minedu.govt.nz); second, these names were then cross-checked with the publicly available information on the Education Review Office (ERO) website (www.ero.govt.nz). The ERO is the government department responsible for reviewing all licensed early childhood education centres, and their most recent reports on potential centres were reviewed to ensure that they were positive. All of the centres that participated in this study had been reviewed by ERO in the previous 12 months, and all of the reviews were positive and complimentary.

The third criterion was that the centres should differ from each other in terms of operating structure, and the ages of children attending, but that they should all use *Te Whāriki* as their primary philosophical base (ERO, 2013a). I deliberately did not approach centres with a clearly defined philosophy such as Montessori or Reggio Emilia, because I anticipated that such distinct philosophies might have particular perspectives on the notion of intentional teaching. Further, I deliberately did not approach any centre with a clear cultural identity such as Kōhanga Reo (Māori language immersion centres) or A'oga Amata (Pacific Island language nest). This decision was made for both cultural and practical reasons. The cultural reason was that as a Pākehā (European heritage New Zealander) I would have faced significant challenges in analysing data collected in such centres in a culturally sensitive and appropriate way. The practical reason was to do with language—as the medium of teaching in such centres is not English I would have been unable to understand what was being said.

The final criterion was that at least 50% of the teachers in any one centre should agree to participate in this study. This criterion reflected my research interest in how the dynamics of a team might influence the expression of intentional teaching. It also reflected my practical awareness of the sometimes small size of teaching teams in early childhood centres.

The methodological principles of theoretical sampling, and theoretical saturation or sufficiency both imply an almost open-ended approach to the number of research settings that can potentially be involved in a study. However, in practice, in order to obtain ethical approval for this study it was necessary for me to specify how many early childhood centres I intended to invite to participate. I originally obtained ethical approval to approach up to five centres. I expected that if, after that, I still required more data, I would apply for an amendment to my ethical consent in order to approach some more.

In the event, I collected data in three different early childhood centres, after which I believed I had achieved theoretical sufficiency (Dey, 1999). I began, as planned, in a mixed age centre that provided a full-day or sessional programme (Setting 1). The next two research settings were selected according to the principle of theoretical sampling (see p. 60), as I determined which areas of my data required support. Consequently, the second setting was a full-day centre that specialised in the care and education of infants, and the third was a sessional centre licensed for children aged between 2 and 5 years. The research settings are described in detail next. The descriptions that are provided are all drawn from my observations, recorded as field notes (FN).

Setting 1.

Setting 1 was a privately owned early childhood centre, employing six qualified teachers. Five of these teachers worked full-time at the centre, the sixth provided extra cover at lunch times, so that teachers were free to go off-site during their lunch break. One of the teachers was also the centre owner.

Setting 1 was licensed for 20 children, including up to 10 aged under 2 years. At the time of this study only one child under the age of 2 was attending; he was around twenty months old. The centre was located in a quiet suburban street, in an old house that had been converted for use as an early childhood centre. It offered full-day (8.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.) care, but parents had the option to enrol their child/ren for mornings or afternoons only. A few parents chose to take this option. The majority of children however arrived at some point before 9.00 a.m., stayed for most of the day, and were collected by their parent or caregiver at around 3.00p.m. Those children who only attended for the morning were collected before 12.30 p.m., and those who only came for the afternoon tended to arrive at around 1.30p.m. Documentation suggested that the arrival and departure times had once been specified; however, during the time of this study they seemed to be very flexible.

Upstairs in the centre there was a large main room. In this room a variety of spaces had been created by using strategically placed shelving or other furniture, with different resources within each space. There was an uncarpeted area set aside for art and play dough, a space for construction toys, tables for puzzles and games, and a large sofa next to a bookcase where children were able to sit and read. The walls were decorated with notices, and some artwork created by the children.

There was a separate room that was used exclusively as a dining room. Here the children sat at large tables for their morning and afternoon tea, and for lunch. Older children were asked to help set the tables with cutlery, water jugs, and cups. All of the meals were prepared in the kitchen by the teaching staff, who took turns to be responsible for food preparation. The kitchen opened on to the main play room, and the children were able to see the teachers in the kitchen, and talk to them while they were cooking. Children were not, however, permitted to enter the kitchen area.

A small office for staff use was also located upstairs. Although it was separate from the rest of the centre, there was a window from the office into the children's main play room. There was also a bathroom for staff use, and a bathroom for children. Downstairs there was another large room that was used for children's sleeping space, and another bathroom.

There were two separate, small, outdoor play areas, one leading off the upstairs space, and the other from the sleep room. The upstairs garden contained a sand pit, a small planted area, and a paved area under an awning where there was some fixed outdoor seating. The downstairs garden also had a covered area in which the teachers tended to place tables on which they put drawing or collage materials. There was also an open grassy space, and a small fixed jungle gym with ladders and a slide.

The centre followed a very consistent routine. Each morning began at 8.00 a.m. with a period of free play time. Then, at around 9.15 a.m. there was a mat time which could last up to 40 minutes. After the mat time children went into the dining room for their morning tea. This was followed by another mat time, lasting for up to 20 minutes, after which children were free to choose their own play activity. A third, shorter, mat time preceded lunch, which was typically served at around 12.30 p.m. Some children were collected by their parents before lunch, during the third mat time.

After lunch the children were expected to have a rest in the sleep-room. During this time other children arrived at the centre for the afternoon. Children who remained awake or who woke quickly were offered a structured activity time led by one of the teachers, until all the children were awake, after which they were again free to play wherever they chose. Afternoon tea was provided around 3.00p.m., and most children left around that time, although the centre was open until 5.00 p.m.

Little formal structure for curriculum planning was visible in Setting 1. The teachers described how they would often make decisions about the curriculum in an informal way during conversations that took place during the day. Formal planning meetings in Setting 1 were apparently rare, and written planning documentation seemed scarce. Teachers were assigned responsibility for a particular area of the centre each day according to a roster that was on display in the office, and it seemed that they were expected to make sure that some activities were provided in that area. However, there did not seem to be any particular expectation about what the activities they provided should be. Some activities varied; the art table might have cardboard boxes and scissors on it one day, and playdough the next (FN). However, much of the centre remained unchanged from day to day; the same blocks, books, cars and dress-up clothes were available, in the same place, each day.

Setting 2.

Setting 2 catered for infants from three months to roughly eighteen months of age. It occupied one room in a large, modern, purpose-built centre in a light-industrial area. The centre had multiple rooms, each one designed to cater for children of a different age. It was privately owned.

The overall centre was licensed for up to 48 infants and toddlers in total. Infants were considered to have become toddlers when they were walking independently, and toddlers transitioned to being described as young children at around three years of age. At the time of the study the maximum number of infants present on any one day was nine, although the total number of infants enrolled was 15. Three qualified teachers worked full-time in the infants' room, and an unqualified teacher aide joined them at lunch time to provide help while the others took their lunch breaks. The teacher aide was not a participant in this study.

The infants' room opened off the toddlers' room, and was separated from it by a low partition. The older infants were able to stand at the partition and watch the children in the toddlers' room; similarly toddlers were able to stand there and see the babies and their previous teachers. The room was large and spacious. Half of the floor was carpeted and the other half was covered with vinyl. It contained two full-sized rocking chairs for teachers to use when feeding babies, a book case, and a low table in one corner. Otherwise, the room was empty of furniture. However, it was well-supplied with different resources, which changed each day according to the teachers' planning. These resources included large soft blocks of different shapes which could be used to make ramps or climbing surfaces for the children, baskets of toys, toy vehicles, musical instruments and balls.

The room had glass doors onto a small deck which provided the children with some outdoor play space. The deck overlooked the main playground, and on occasions the teachers took the infants into the toddlers' section of the playground when it was unused.

Three small rooms opened off the main space: a room furnished with cots, a kitchen/preparation room, and a bathroom. The kitchen was used by the teachers to prepare infants' bottles. Food for meals and snacks was prepared in the centre's main kitchen, and delivered from there at set times each day. The children ate in their room, sitting at the low table, on the floor, or on a teacher's knee while she sat on the floor. Children were free to choose when to eat their meals. If they were asleep when meals were delivered, or if they indicated that they were not hungry at those times, their food was stored in the kitchen until such time as they wanted it.

Apart from the times at which the food was delivered, the only routine in the centre that applied to the whole group was mat time, the first at around 9.00 a.m. and the second at around 2.00p.m. This lasted between one and twenty minutes, and consisted of songs and perhaps a story. Otherwise the teachers followed the individual routines of the babies, allowing each infant to follow their own pattern of eating, sleeping and playing.

In contrast to Setting 1, a more formal system of curriculum planning and documentation was observed in Setting 2. The teachers in this setting attended a lengthy planning meeting once a month, after hours. At this meeting, they studied their written observations which documented children's developing physical and social skills, and their apparently preferred activities, for evidence of learning and interest. Children's interests were sometimes interpreted as being resource-related—as in exploring musical instruments for example—and at other times they were interpreted as being skill related, such as learning to crawl. The teachers used a learning story (Carr, 2001a) format for their assessment of children, and as part of the learning story they also recorded how they intended to extend children's learning further. In this way they developed their planning for the following month, and selected a focus theme which was expected to form the basis of the activities that they would offer. The focus theme was displayed on the wall for parents' information. At the time of this study, based on their observations of the children, the teachers had decided to focus on sensory play.

I was told that the centre management required the teachers to provide and document at least one activity or experience per day relating to the planning theme. The experiences offered were selected by a different teacher each day, and they had freedom to decide what it was they wanted to offer to the children.

Setting 3.

The third research setting was licensed to offer sessional care and education for up to 30 children between the ages of 2 and 5 years. At the time of this study the roll was full, and over half of the children attending were 4 years and over. The centre employed four qualified teachers, all of whom worked four days a week, so that three teachers only were on duty on any given day. The centre was owned by a registered Charitable Trust.

This was a purpose-built centre, approximately 20 years old, located near a main road in a suburban area. It consisted of one large indoor space, divided into activity areas with furniture. Some of the floor was uncarpeted, and art, play dough and messy play were restricted to that area. Elsewhere there were areas for construction, puzzles, reading, craft, music and dramatic play.

The outdoor area was large. It contained a large sandpit with a water pump positioned nearby; a grassy area with moveable play equipment, a play house; swings and a slide, and an area of concrete for riding bikes and scooters. Between the indoor and outdoor space was a large covered area.

Centre 3 offered morning sessions, starting at 8.45 a.m. each day and closing at 1.00p.m. on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and at 12.30 p.m. on Tuesday and Thursday. On Monday, Wednesdays and Fridays the session ended with the children having lunch at the centre. On the other days, the children left earlier to allow the teachers enough time to prepare for the afternoon sessions. Staff meetings took place on Wednesday afternoons.

Afternoon sessions for children aged four years only were offered on Tuesday and Thursdays, from 1.15 p.m. until 2.45 p.m. These sessions were restricted to 10 children, and were designed as preparation for school.

The morning sessions consisted of long periods during which children's activity was not interrupted. There were two mat times. The first one typically lasted around half an hour, and started somewhere between 9.30 and 10.00a.m; it was followed by morning tea. Children brought their own morning tea, and ate together while sitting on large picnic mats on the centre floor. The teachers sat together at a nearby table during this time and had their morning tea as well. The second mat time was much shorter, and was held at the end of the morning, immediately before the children went home (on Tuesday and Thursday) or before lunch (on the other three days). Children brought their own lunches and they sat together around three large tables that were set for the occasion with table cloths, water jugs, and cups. One teacher sat at each table and had lunch with the children.

A third approach to curriculum planning was observed in Setting 3, where the teachers gathered together each week for a staff meeting at which they discussed, amongst other topics, their observations and assessments of children's learning, their ideas for whole-centre planning, and Individual Plans (IPs) for each child. The IPs were developed by the whole teaching team drawing on their combined knowledge of the child. Each teacher was then given a random group of IPs to monitor, with the specific responsibility for ensuring that the plans for all the children were implemented and reviewed regularly.

The centre teachers.

When designing the study, I decided to invite only the teachers who were permanent members of staff or long-term relievers at the participating centres to take part. This decision was expected to increase the likelihood of the participants being at the centre throughout the duration of the study. As I have already indicated, a total of 13 qualified teachers across all three settings agreed to participate. All of the participants were female.

As discussed earlier, the teachers all held New Zealand early childhood teaching qualifications and all of them were registered, either fully or provisionally, by the NZTC. There was a wide range of professional experience across the participants. The participant with the most experience had been an early childhood teacher for more than 30 years; in contrast, four of the teachers had only had one year of professional experience. Two of the teachers had received their original teaching qualification prior to the publication of *Te Whāriki* and the development of the current qualification system; however, these teachers had upgraded their qualifications to keep in step with changes to the qualification structure (May, 2009). One of the teachers was participating in post-graduate study in early childhood education during the course of this study. A table summarising information about the participating teachers is contained in Appendix VI.

Summary

In the previous chapter I described CGT methodology, and explained the decisions that led to designing this study according to the principles of CGT. This chapter has described and explained the practical conduct of the research study. In particular, it has discussed the multiple approaches used to collect data, and it has explained how these research methods were expected to provide appropriate data to answer the research questions. It has also demonstrated the ways in which some of the features of CGT, such as theoretical sampling and theoretical sufficiency, influenced the conduct of this study. This chapter has also discussed some of the challenges that I confronted in the process of conducting this research, and the strategies I used to resolve them.

This chapter addressed the most significant ethical issues that were considered, and demonstrated that my concern to conduct this study in an ethical manner underpinned my decisions and behaviour throughout the study. It then introduced the research participants, and described the three settings in which they were located.

The thesis thus far has described the foundations on which this study rested. The following three chapters present the research findings. Consistent with my understanding of CGT, these chapters are each a combination of findings and discussion. As CGT expects that relevant literature will be incorporated into the process of data analysis, these chapters include both literature that was reviewed in Chapter 2, and literature that was deliberately selected as part of the developing analysis.

5. Constructing the Theory: Teachers' Aspirations for Children

In order to fully understand intentional teaching as it is practised in New Zealand early childhood centres, this thesis argues that it is important to identify and acknowledge teachers' aspirations for children. The theory constructed in this study demonstrates that teachers' aspirations are the foundation for intentional teaching; they are translated into intentional practice through the process of making curriculum decisions. Aspirations are defined in the Merriam-Webster dictionary as "something that one hopes or intends to accomplish".

Teachers' aspirations for children are the first of the three theoretical categories, or "basic social processes" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 34) identified in this study. Findings that identify and describe three major aspirations that teachers had for children are reported in this chapter. These aspirations were: wanting children to be happy, wanting children to have a positive view of learning, and wanting children to be ready for the future. The chapter then draws on research into the connection between teachers' beliefs and practice, and on the cultural-historical view of motives, in order to explain how and why the teachers in this study might have developed these particular aspirations for children. It demonstrates that the aspirations identified in this study were developed in response to specific influencing factors, in particular *Te Whāriki*. This chapter does not describe how the teachers put their aspirations into practice.

The other two basic social processes identified in this study, and discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, are making curriculum decisions, and implementing intentional practice. The theoretical model of intentional teaching that has been developed by this study proposes that intentional teaching is composed of all three processes. This chapter therefore represents the first stage of the theoretical model of intentional teaching that was developed in this study. The following chapters will add to this model, and a diagram of the complete model is found in Chapter 8.

In addition to reporting research findings, this chapter also includes discussion informed by research literature. Consistent with constructivist grounded theory (CGT) methodology, it refers both to literature that was included in the initial Literature Review, and also to literature that was located later and incorporated into the analysis process.

A Note about Annotation

In order to clearly identify the source of the findings that will be referred to throughout the remainder of this thesis, they will be annotated as follows:

1. Quotations from focus groups interviews will be identified as: (Teacher's name/Setting #/FG/p. #);
2. Quotations from individual teacher interviews will be identified as: (Teacher's name/Setting #/TI/p. #);
3. Quotations from the group validation interview will be identified as: (Teacher's name/Setting #/GVI/p. #);
4. Excerpts from field notes, which may refer to observations or informal professional conversations will be identified as: (FN);
5. References to centre documentation will be identified as: (Doc).

In addition, and in accordance with the ethical principle of confidentiality discussed in Chapter 4 (p. 81), all of the names used for teachers and children are pseudonyms.

Identifying Teachers' Aspirations

The findings indicated that the teachers who participated in this study had long-term, future-focused aspirations for the children in their centre. They were interested in "what [we] want our children to become when they leave the centre" (Gillian/S1/TI/p. 11), because "as an early childhood teacher, I should not be looking just at what is ongoing…but [at] what do I want them [the children] to be… [because] I think I can be part of it" (Gillian/S1/TI/p. 12).

Reflexive memo.

When I began this study I had not anticipated that I would find myself focusing on teachers' aspirations for children. This analytic focus developed from a comment made during the PLF focus group, that teachers might have "unconscious [or]…unspoken intentions for children" (Anna/PLF/FG/p. 7), which was reinforced by Gillian's comment, cited earlier, suggesting that early childhood teachers were concerned about children's future. Teachers readily acknowledged that their primary focus was to ensure that children were happy. Identifying their other aspirations however was somewhat more complex, and was the result of engaging in the iterative process of constant comparative inductive and abductive analysis.

There was no evidence that any of the participants had discussed their aspirations with each other prior to taking part in this study. Further, they were not easily able to articulate them. Sarah explained that it was difficult for her to identify the underlying reasons for her practice because they were “so ingrained in me [that they were] just part of how I operate” (Sarah/S3/TI/pp. 6-7). This supports findings from earlier research that teachers may struggle to articulate their intentions for children (Cherrington, 2011).

In spite of the teachers’ difficulty in articulating their aspirations for children, however, analysis identified three particular aspirations for children that the teachers who participated in this study were considered to have in common. These were: ‘wanting children to be happy, ‘wanting children to have a positive view of learning’, and ‘wanting children to be ready for the future’ (Fig 3).

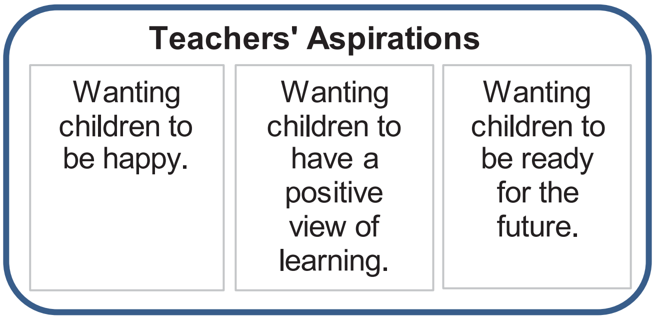
Teachers' Aspirations
Wanting children to be happy.
Wanting children to have a positive view of learning.
Wanting children to be ready for the future.

Figure 3: Intentional teaching: The first process.

The findings reported in this chapter suggest that although many of the teachers had all of these aspirations for children, each individual teacher prioritised them differently. For example, as the findings will demonstrate, it appeared that Tracy prioritised wanting children to be happy, whereas Isabelle seemed to prioritise wanting children to be ready for the future. Lompscher (2000) has argued that each individual has an internal hierarchy of motives that is fluid and changes in response to different situational demands. The connection between motives and aspirations is discussed in detail in a later section of this chapter. Lompscher’s (2000) statement is supported by the findings from the present study that indicated teachers apparently focused on different aspirations depending on the child/ren they were with, or the context (e.g., p. 121 and following, Making Paper). The following sections provide a detailed description of the aspirations that were identified.

Wanting children to be happy.

The first aspiration identified was: wanting children to be happy. This aspiration seemed powerful for all teachers, and was the one that they were most able to articulate. For example, the teachers in Setting 1 claimed that their main aspiration for children was “their happiness” (Debbie/S1/FG/p. 29). Gillian believed that it was most important that “at the end of the day [the children] go home and they are happy” (Gillian/S1/FG/p. 29).

A similar view was expressed by teachers in the other centres. The teachers in Setting 2 agreed that it was important for children to feel happy while at the centre. Jacky confirmed that “when [the infants] are actually happy to come in and happy to come to us we know that we are doing our job well” (Jackie/S2/TI/p. 1). Similarly, in Setting 3, the teachers talked about the importance of children being happy while at the centre. Tracy believed that if children “are not happy, not feeling safe, then they are not going to open up and learn” (Tracy/S3/TI/p. 17).

Happiness is an aspiration for children that is frequently expressed by both teachers and parents:

> …in the minds of teachers and parents happiness is a driving force which often emerges during conversations as the desired basis for the lived experiences of infants and toddlers; [it] is felt by parents that it provides evidence of a child settled in an early childhood setting (Rockel & Craw, 2011, p. 122).

Happiness has been associated with children’s social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing (Eaude, 2009; Holder & Coleman, 2009; Holder, Coleman, & Wallace, 2010; Holder & Klassen, 2010; Ikegami & Agbenyega, 2014), and has been described as an important foundation for early childhood education (Ikegami & Agbenyega, 2014). Children who are described as being “more social, less shy, less emotional, and less anxious” (Holder & Klassen, 2010, p. 432) are considered more likely to be happy.

Holder and Klassen’s (2010) study investigated happiness in children aged between 9 and 12 rather than in children of pre-school age. However, in the present study, the teachers also appeared to believe that children who were “more social [and] less shy” (p. 432) were more likely to be happy. Certainly, the findings suggest that they particularly associated children’s happiness with their relationships within the centre. For example, in Setting 1 Gillian explained that the key to children’s happiness was their experience of “warm and loving relationships” within the centre (Gillian/S1/FG/p. 29). Their first focus seemed to be on establishing positive relationships between themselves and children. This echoes recent research in Australia which found that “both teachers and parents value[d] highly the many social, emotional and pedagogical functions that can be realised through the teacher-child relationship” (Degotardi, Sweller, & Pearson, 2013, p. 15). The particular strategies the teachers in the present study used to develop and sustain these relationships are described in detail in Chapters 6 and 7.

In addition to focusing on relationships between teachers and children, many of the teachers actively tried to foster friendships amongst children as a way of trying to promote the children’s happiness. Debbie explained that it was important to develop children’s social skills because:

> …if they are unhappy they are not going to do well, so as soon as they’ve got that sense of belonging, as soon as they are socially able, I suppose you could say, to mix with different people, different groups, then they are happier, [and] they do better (Debbie/S1/TI/p. 17).

The ability to make friends is considered to be established while children are very young, and may be a skill or process that adults can effectively model and promote (Lawhon & Lawhon, 2000). Tracy firmly believed that it was essential for young children to learn how to make friends, and that it was the responsibility of early childhood teachers to help children develop the necessary skills to do so

> …because [when] you think about life, in life it doesn’t matter how intelligent you are or how bright you are, [if] you can’t get on with people and have relationships and talk – it’s horrible you know. So I just think if we can foster that in a young age, it will set them up for life (Tracy/S3/TI/p. 18).

With regard to the relative importance of the different relationships children develop within early childhood centres, Degotardi et al.’s (2013) study found that teacher-child relationships may be less significant to children’s happiness than children’s friendships with their peers. This finding is supported by research that found that children overwhelmingly associated being happy with “playing with their friends and having good relations with their peers" (Einarsdottir, 2011, p. 393). Conversely, incidents remembered as being unhappy were associated with conflict, relationship problems such as teasing, and with loneliness or "when they didn't have friends to play with" (p. 396). Further, children's friendships are considered in the literature to be crucial to their future wellbeing; a lack of friendships amongst children is considered by some to be a predictor of loneliness, and negative "physical, social, and psychological consequences" (Lawhon & Lawhon, 2000, p. 105).

The teachers' focus on relationships reflected the priority that *Te Whāriki* places on children learning through "reciprocal and responsive relationships [with] people, places, and things" (MoE, 1996, p. 9). In each of the research settings, it seemed that "as much emphasis was placed on the emotional tone of the environment as on the physical layout" (Blay & Ireson, 2009, p. 1114). Teachers were observed engaging in deliberate planning to promote positive teacher-child, and child-child, relationships with their centres. This also indicated the teachers' awareness, either conscious or subconscious, of the tenets of sociocultural theory, in which learning and development is seen to occur in the context of positive relationships with others (e.g., Shawer, Gilmore, & Banks-Joseph, 2008; Vygotsky, 1978).

An alternative view of happiness was also evident, namely that happiness was to be found in having fun. One of Viv's stated goals was to ensure that the experiences she prepared for children were fun (Viv/S3/TI), and Sarah suspected that having fun was a child's primary intention when they came to the early childhood centre (Sarah/S3/FG). Similarly, Maria in Setting 2 talked about the importance of "let[ting] them have fun" (Maria/S2/TI), as did Erica and Fleur in Setting 1. These teachers apparently agreed that "learning should be enjoyable" (Blay & Ireson, 2009, p. 1109).

Vintimilla (2014) described the way in which early childhood teachers may provide materials or resources for children to play with, and how children "will stay…with the materials, until they are bored or they have decided that activity is not fun anymore" (p. 81). She suggested that ensuring children have fun, rather than trying to engage them in focused learning-oriented activities, may have become the over-riding intention for teachers. Such an approach appeared to be supported by Wood (2010a), who argued that viewing play as "educational practice—a means of learning, progress and achievement" (p. 13) placed too much emphasis on adult control and adult-imposed learning outcomes. She advocated instead for early childhood teachers to ensure that children had opportunities to play “with little direct intervention from adults, and no pressure for products or outcomes” (p. 20), thus “provid[ing] the conditions that help children to become flexible and creative learners” (p. 17). In other words, it seemed that she was advocating for children to have fun. However, Wood (2010b) has cautioned that “not all play is fun” (p. 15). Rather, she points out that play can be used to “subver[t] social rules and norms” (p. 15), and it can be a vehicle for bullying, and aggressive behaviour. The notion of children’s happiness, and its relationship with having fun, and with play, is therefore complex and potentially problematic for early childhood teachers (Rockel & Craw, 2011).

The deceptively straightforward nature of happiness creates the risk that it may become simplified to mean more or less the absence of visible unhappiness; this simplification could lead in turn to practices intended to suppress children’s expression of negative emotions (Rockel & Craw, 2011). For example, it has been found that “many [early childhood] teachers and practicum students describe ‘cleaning up’ emotions, and removing children from situations that might make them unhappy” (Vintimilla, 2014, p. 82). This desire to protect children from potential unhappiness may lead to a situation in which teachers “move…away from allowing ambivalence in children’s emotional lives or supporting ways of being that are more complex than being happy” (p. 82). Vintimilla thus suggested that teachers who focus on a simplistic view of happiness may hinder children from developing emotional resilience and the ability to manage a range of emotions. She also implied that teachers tend to use fun, or entertainment, as a way of promoting children’s happiness. In the context of the present study, the teachers were seen to become concerned when they felt that a child was unhappy. Their first attempts to resolve children’s unhappiness were often focused on relationships.

The intangible and emotional notion of happiness does not mean that this intention was separate from teachers’ aspirations related to children’s learning or development. Rather, the teachers had a holistic perspective on children’s learning, understanding the close connection between children’s well-being and learning. Some of the teachers in this study perceived happiness as an essential foundation for children’s future learning: “when…friends are made and established…then [the children] are happy and then they start learning” (Tracy/S3/TI/ p. 18).

Wanting children to have a positive view of learning.

As well as wanting children to be socially and emotionally happy, the teachers also talked about the importance of children having a “desire for learning” (Pat/S3/TI/p. 10), and a positive view of themselves as learners: “not frightened to explore [and] learn…and not scared to make mistakes” (Viv/S3/FG/p. 15). Lisa wanted to “encourage children to have their own independent thinking” (Lisa/S2/FG/p. 2), and Gillian stated that “our goal is about building children who are confident….and…good communicators” (Gillian/S1/TI/p. 15). These findings contributed to the identification of the aspiration: wanting children to have a positive view of learning.

Although the findings suggest that all of the teachers in this study shared an aspiration for children to view learning positively, they also suggest that the teachers had differing ideas of how best to achieve that aspiration. I interpreted these ideas as reflecting different perspectives on how children might learn.

For example, many of the teachers appeared to view learning as an independent activity that was undertaken by the child or children, with minimal intervention from adults. These teachers seemed to believe that the most important contributing factors to a child’s learning were the resources and the environment (Lisa/S2/TI). They explained that it was their responsibility to:

> …see something that [the children] do that is interesting, and you [think], ‘oh, that’s a good idea. Next time I’ll...put something more on that to relate it to what they are doing’ and that’s still…the children’s interest…you’re there to support what they have already started (Gillian/S1/FG/p. 5).

Teachers who took this view of learning were likely to describe themselves as a “guide” (Sarah/S3/TI/p. 3) or a “human resource” (p. 7), who provided support for children as they took the lead in their own learning. This was apparently because they understood that “it’s not the teacher who is leading the…learning, it is the children” (Hannah/S1/FG/p. 4). It appeared that these teachers agreed that “the adult’s role is to promote children’s independent learning” (Blay & Ireson, 2009, p. 1109). For example, Pat, in Setting 3, stated that it was important to spend time

> …just sitting with the children…just sit at their level…just to watch them, just to be there and see what’s going on, what they are thinking about, what they are doing…how they get

> involved in things. So there's more stepping back and actually just watching them (Pat/S3/TI/pp. 12-13).

In contrast, however, other teachers appeared to view learning as a collaborative approach between teachers and children. Such teachers seemed to believe that children learned through their interactions with others. For example, the teachers in Setting 2 were confident that their interactions with the infants, particularly around their care routines, provided times for the infants to learn about "relationships…relationships with others" (Jackie/S2/TI/p. 2) as well as about communication, and how to communicate non-verbally with others. In Setting 1, Fleur and Isabelle both thought that in a mixed-age centre like theirs where younger children were free to mix with older children "they are actually learning from each other, the skills and things" (Isabelle/S1/TI/p. 16). Viv described the way in which she tried to "work together" (Viv/S3/TI/p. 22) with children in order to support and extend their ideas, by "investigating, and pos[ing] questions, and get[ting] books and resources, and look[ing] into it" (p. 7). Similarly, Sarah felt that "you get encouraging growth in children when they see you as a partner" (Sarah/S3/TI/pp.5-6).

A third perspective on learning that was identified was that, at times, children might require direction from adults in order to learn. The teachers in this study were most likely to describe their actions as 'teaching' when referring to the times they gave children direct instruction. They were observed instructing children about fine motor skills such as using scissors (see p. 128), writing their names (see p. 172), or culturally acceptable behaviour during mat times (see p. 177). These three perspectives on learning are considered further in Chapter 6.

In spite of some apparent differences in the ways in which teachers viewed the process of children's learning, it nevertheless seemed that the teachers agreed that children's learning occurred in the context of play. For example, Debbie recalled that when she began her initial teacher education, after her own children had started at school, she already had an understanding of how young children might learn: "I kind of knew what it was like, that it wasn't sit down and learn like a primary school setting, I knew it was through play" (Debbie/S1/TI/p. 1). Teachers then claimed that they observed children's play for indications of their interests, so that the curriculum within their centres could then be designed to reflect, and perhaps to extend, these.

This approach is consistent with *Te Whāriki,* which indicates that the curriculum within a centre should build on children's "needs, strengths and interests" (MoE, 1996, p. 20), and calls for teachers to base their planning on their observations of "children's interests, strengths, needs, and behaviours" (p. 28). However, the teachers' emphasis on children's interests may at times have acted as a constraint on their practice, as some teachers seemed unsure of whether it was appropriate for them to "bring things…from the outside, library books or whatever else to try to then further their knowledge or their understanding" (Viv/S3/FG/p. 6). The matter of children's interests is considered in more detail in a later chapter (see p. 158).

In addition to supporting children's interests, some of the teachers talked about the importance of "promoting dispositional learning" (Debbie/S1/FG/p. 19) as a way of instilling in children a positive view of learning, and of themselves as learners. In particular, these teachers focused on encouraging children to be "curious and … [to] open their minds and ask questions beyond their current knowledge" (Pat/S3/FG/p. 12). Other dispositions named by teachers included "perseverance, communication…independence and investigation" (Erica/S1/TI/p. 11). The issue of how teachers sought to promote children's dispositions for learning is considered in the following chapters which focus on the implementation of teachers' aspirations.

As well as to wanting to encourage children to be confident communicators and independent thinkers, the teachers also wanted to ensure that they had the physical, social, and cognitive skills that they might be expected to need in the future. In particular, they focused on ensuring that they were ready for the world of school and beyond; as will be seen in the following section.

Wanting children to be ready for the future.

Ensuring that children were well prepared for the next stage in their education, whether that was to be in another room of an early childhood centre, or at school, was another important aspiration identified. Some of the teachers expressed this aspiration directly. For example, in the infants' room, Jacky explained that a lot of the teachers' work was focused on determining when the infants were "socially ready and physically ready [to] move [to the toddlers' room] (Jacky/S2/FG/p. 14), whereas in Setting 1 Isabelle suggested that getting children ready for school was perhaps one of the most important things an early childhood teacher could do (Isabelle/S1/TI).

Isabelle's comments may have resonated with the teachers in Setting 3, who appeared to feel that ensuring children were ready for school was a major part of their role: "they need to be able to do certain skills to cope at school… and so you are trying to, not really teach them, but guide them so they can gain those skills" (Pat/S3/TI/p. 8). Further, Sarah explained that most of the content of their curriculum, including relationships, physical challenges, a focus on encouraging children's communication and exploration, and the materials that supported the development of children's literacy and numeracy, was "the forerunner… [for] later on when they get to school" (Sarah/S3/TI/p. 7). This suggests that the aspiration for children to be ready for the future was a powerful motivator for curriculum decisions and teaching practice. This was further supported when the teachers at Setting 3 listed the skills they thought children needed before starting at school:

> Sarah: self-help [skills], social skills, confidence in themselves, self-belief…
>
> Pat (interrupting): That is all part of school readiness, they all have to have those to go to school
>
> Sarah (continuing): …gross motor skills, fine motor skills
>
> Tracy: Being able to recognise letters, communicate things
>
> Pat: [Being able to] ask for help if they need it
>
> Viv: Belief in themselves (S3/FG/pp. 40-41)

This excerpt demonstrates the large number of learning areas that the teachers associated with school-readiness, and the following chapters illustrate the ways in which teachers worked to ensure that children were deemed ready for school. Occasionally they had a child in their centre whom they assessed as being not ready for school; they gave as an example one of the four year old boys in the centre who was still inclined to ask the teachers for help with basic self-help skills that they felt he should have mastered. In such an instance, Sarah described their intention as being to "fill in the gaps" (Sarah/S3/FG/p. 42) to make sure that by the time he went to school he could manage his own clothing and lunch box.

As a further way of preparing children for school, the teachers described ways in which they focused on teaching, or enforcing, pro-social, or socially responsible, behaviour. For example, teachers in

Setting 1 discussed the importance of ensuring that children acquired culturally acceptable table manners (S1/FG). In Setting 3, the focus was less on table manners, and more on encouraging children to show respect for people, and for their environment—both within the centre, and the wider environment (S3/FG).

At times, the teachers' aspiration for children to be prepared for their future involved them in actions that seemed contrary to many of their stated beliefs about child-directed learning. The following chapters will demonstrate how this aspiration was often expressed in action as direct verbal instruction of children, or in a focus on skills-based learning.

The aspiration to prepare children for the future reflects one of the aspirations that underpinned the writing and development of *Te Whāriki*. The early childhood curriculum was designed to merge seamlessly with the school curriculum in order to create a foundation for lifelong learning (ERO, 2013b; May, 2009), and the current New Zealand (school) Curriculum (MoE, 2007) contains explicit links to the strands of *Te Whāriki*. However, the teachers in this present study did not refer to *Te Whāriki* or the school curriculum when explaining their intention to prepare children for the future. Rather, they tended to refer to their own experiences of schooling. For example, Isabelle explained her focus on helping children acquire skills associated with school-readiness by referring to the difficulties she had experienced at school as a result of her undiagnosed learning disability (Isabelle/S1/TI).

As the theory constructed from this study proposes that teachers' aspirations for children form the foundation of intentional teaching, it is important to consider what factors may have influenced the development of their aspirations. This matter is the focus of the following section.

The Origins of Teachers' Aspirations

In order to explain the possible origins of teachers' aspirations for children, this study referred to research into the influence of teachers' beliefs on their professional practice, and to the cultural-historical notion of motives.

The influence of teachers' beliefs.

Existing research into teachers' beliefs has tended to focus on the connection, or lack of connection, between beliefs and professional practice (Ahn, 2005; Blay & Ireson, 2009; Brownlee, Berthelsen, Irving, Boulton-Lewis, & McCrindle, 2000; Calderhead, 1996; Pajares, 1992; Raths, 2001). Pajares (1992) suggested that in order to understand the beliefs that inform teachers' practice it was important to study "what individuals say, intend, and do" (Pajares, 1992, p. 327), thus indicating a possible connection between beliefs and intentional actions. However, no literature was located that considered a link between teachers' beliefs and their aspirations.

The findings indicated that the teachers in this present study had certain beliefs in common. These included: beliefs about how children learn, beliefs about the role of an early childhood teacher, and beliefs about the appropriate emotional environment for an early childhood centre. However, the association between their beliefs and the development of their aspirations for children was not strong. The most significant example, Isabelle's experiences of school, and in particular her memory of struggling with an undiagnosed learning disability and a lack of appropriate support, has already been mentioned. It seemed clear from her comments that this experience had significantly influenced her belief that a teacher's role was to prepare children for school, and thus her aspiration for children to be prepared for the future.

Otherwise, it did not seem that teachers' beliefs about learning, the role of the teacher, and the emotional environment of the centre had influenced their aspirations; rather they were considered to influence the teachers' curriculum decisions. The connection between teachers' beliefs and their curriculum decisions will be considered in the following chapter. However, the findings did suggest a connection between teachers' personal experiences and their aspirations.

The cultural-historical notion of motives provided a more useful framework for understanding how teachers' aspirations for children may develop (e.g., Fleer, 2012; Hedegaard, 2002, 2012, 2014; Kravtsova & Kravtsov, 2012; Stenild & Iversen, 2012). A discussion of this aspect of cultural-historical theory, and its relevance to this present study, forms the focus of the following sections.

A cultural-historical perspective.

Cultural-historical theory argues that human behaviour is driven or shaped by particular motives that may be explicit, unconscious, or unarticulated (Kravtsova & Kravtsov, 2012). This thesis does not claim that motives as defined in cultural-historical theory, and aspirations as identified here, are synonymous. However, it argues that teachers' aspirations for children inspire and shape their intentional practice, much as motives in cultural-historical theory are considered to inspire and shape intentional actions.

In order to understand what an individual's motives might be, it is necessary to analyse their intentional behaviour (Hedegaard, 2012). Hedegaard argued that this analysis should take place "in the same activity setting over time" (p. 23). Activity settings were described as being either "recurrent structures of traditions for activities that take place in an institutional practice" (p. 18), or "recurrent social situations in which [the individual] takes part together with other persons" (p. 18). Early childhood education centres seem to fulfil these criteria. Therefore, Hedegaard's statements supported the notion that a study of intentional teaching practices within the activity setting of an early childhood education centre might be expected to provide insights into the motives of the participants.

In the tradition of psychoanalysis, motives were considered to be innate to an individual (Kravtsova & Kravtsov, 2012); from a cultural-historical perspective, however, "human motives are [considered to be] culturally and socially created [as well as being] linked to the individual" (Stenild & Iversen, 2012, p. 138). Given the cultural and social nature of motives, it is therefore necessary to consider an individual's experiences, and "the activities he (*sic*) participates in at the various social institutions of which he is a member" (Hedegaard, 2002, p. 57) in order to understand how and why they might have developed particular motives. The social institutions considered to be particularly influential are family, school, and workplace (Hedegaard, 2002).

Cultural-historical theory therefore provided a framework for explaining how teachers' aspirations for children might have developed. In particular, the notion that they might have developed in response to participating in the institutions of family, school and workplace was one that seemed particularly relevant. In the present study, only the potential influence of family and workplace are considered.

The influence of family.

Of the 13 teachers who participated in this study, 10 were parents. They were therefore actively participating in the institution of family at the time of this study. Many of them, particularly the teachers in Setting 2 where the children were all young infants, used maternal language to describe their work. For example, Jacky viewed herself as being a “second mum” (Jacky/S2/TI/p. 1) to the infants in Setting 2.

Cultural-historical theory suggests that participation in family may shape an individual’s motives. Further, literature suggests that maternal experiences are a powerful influence on the practice of teachers of young children (Ailwood, 2008; James, 2012). In the present study, however, with regard to the development of teachers’ aspirations, the influence of family was less obvious; only one clear example was found. Tracy’s aspiration for children to be happy was apparently, at least in part, the result of her experience of:

> …having a child that was quite scared about being left, insecure and that. The important thing was for me to know that I was handing him to someone who really cared about him and was really interested in him—that’s what… I don’t know, you feel happy and it makes you as a parent—you want that. You want to know that your child isn’t one of a number running around and we don’t care about them (Tracy/S1/TI/ p. 17).

This finding suggested that teachers’ ongoing participation in family may have inspired their aspiration for children to be happy. In contrast, it seemed that their participation in the work of early childhood education had the potential to influence all three of the identified aspirations.

The influence of the workplace.

The findings from this study indicated that participation in the ethos of New Zealand early childhood education, together with the curriculum *Te Whāriki*, were significant influences in the development of the teachers’ aspirations.

Te Whāriki was based on an aspiration for all New Zealand children to grow up “as competent and confident communicators, healthy in mind, body, and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society” (MoE, 1996, p. 9). Thus the very nature of the New Zealand early childhood curriculum can be considered to be future-focused and aspirational.

Te Whāriki comprises four foundational principles and five strands. The four principles are: empowerment—"the early childhood curriculum empowers the child to learn and grow" (MoE, 1996, p. 14); holistic development—"the early childhood curriculum reflects the holistic way children learn and grow" (p. 14); family and community—"the wider world of family and community is an integral part of the early childhood curriculum" (p. 14); and relationships —"children learn through responsive and reciprocal relationships with people, places, and things" (p. 14). The five strands are: well-being—"the health and well-being of the child are protected and nurtured" (p. 15); belonging—"children and their families feel a sense of belonging" (p. 15); contribution—"opportunities for learning are equitable, and each child's contribution is valued" (p. 16); communication—"the languages and symbols of their own and other cultures are promoted and protected" (p. 16); and exploration—"the child learns through active exploration of the environment" (p. 16).

Although the teachers rarely mentioned *Te Whāriki* directly, the influence of the aspiration statement, and the four principles and five strands, on the development of their aspirations for children was clearly visible. Teachers' aspiration for children to be happy, either through relationships or through having fun, reflected the principles of relationships and holistic development. In addition, it reflected the strands of belonging and wellbeing. Their aspiration for children to have a positive view of learning reflected the principles of holistic development and empowerment, and the strands of communication, contribution, and exploration. Finally, their aspiration for children to be ready for the future reflected the strands of holistic development, relationships and empowerment. It also reflected all five strands.

Although it is impossible to state definitively which came first, teachers' awareness of *Te Whāriki* or the development of their aspirations, there nevertheless appeared to be a clear relationship between the two. It seems likely that the teachers' enculturation into the aspirations, principles and strands of *Te Whāriki* had a significant influence on the development of their aspirations. The finding that the teachers rarely referred directly to *Te Whāriki* suggests that its nature and content had become so embedded in their thinking and their practice that they were no longer consciously aware of its influence (e.g., Oberg, 2005).

Cultural-historical theory emphasises the importance of considering context when studying the development of motives. It is therefore likely that teachers working in other early childhood centres within New Zealand, such as language and culture based Kōhanga Reo, or faith-based early childhood centres, might have additional, or different, aspirations to those identified here. Similarly, early childhood teachers working in other countries, and within different curriculum frameworks, may also have additional, or different, aspirations. By referring to the cultural-historical notion of motives and their development, it is possible to see that such differences are to be expected.

Underlying philosophies of early childhood education, such as a commitment to children's access to free play, were also seen to influence the teachers in this study. However, they were considered to influence their decision-making rather than the development of their aspirations for children, and so are discussed in the following chapter.

Summary

This chapter introduced the theoretical model of intentional teaching constructed from this study. It focused on the foundations of intentional teaching: teachers' aspirations for children. Three main aspirations were identified, and considered in relation to relevant literature. They were: wanting children to be happy, wanting children to have a positive view of learning, and wanting children to be ready for the future. Children's happiness was seen to be considered by the teachers as being of primary importance. Teachers who aspired for children to be happy were shown to express that in one of two ways —either by fostering children's relationships with teachers or with their peers, or by ensuring that children were having fun.

Teachers who aspired for children to have a positive view of learning were seen to have a variety of views about how best to achieve that. Some teachers appeared to believe that children learned independently through access to thoughtfully selected resources; others appeared to believe that children learned collaboratively, through interacting with people; at other times teachers engaged in direct instruction to ensure children's learning. All of the teachers agreed that learning took place in the context of play.

The third aspiration that was identified was: wanting children to be ready for the future. Teachers with this aspiration were seen to focus on ensuring that children were equipped with the appropriate physical, cognitive and social skills that they were expected to need when they moved to a different area of the early childhood centre, or when they started school.

This chapter has considered how teachers' aspirations might have developed (Fig 4). The possible connection between teachers' beliefs and their aspirations was considered, and some evidence was found to suggest such a connection. However, teachers' beliefs were considered to be more likely to have influenced their decision-making than their aspirations. A stronger association was seen between teachers' personal experiences and the development of their aspirations.

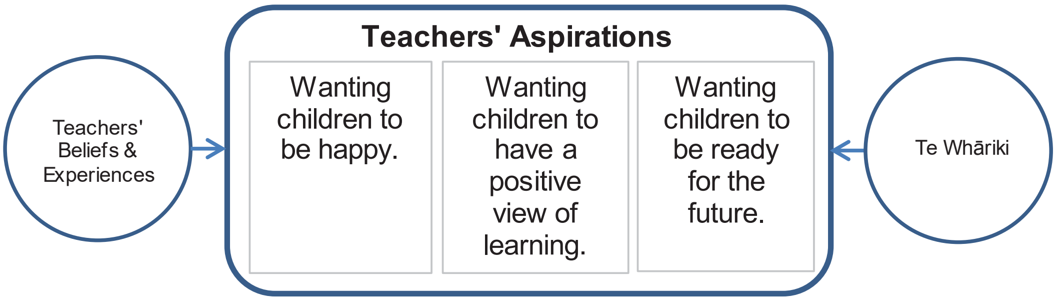
Teachers' Beliefs & Experiences
Teachers' Aspirations
Wanting children to be happy.
Wanting children to have a positive view of learning.
Wanting children to be ready for the future.
Te Whāriki

Figure 4: Influences on teachers' aspirations.

Cultural-historical theory, and in particular the notion of motives, provided a useful framework for explaining the possible origins of teachers' aspirations. Aspirations, as defined in this chapter, were considered to be similar to motives, as understood in cultural-historical theory. Cultural-historical theory suggests that motives may develop in response to an individual's participation in family, school or workplace. The findings reported here indicated that teachers' aspirations may have developed in response to their participation in the institutions of family and workplace. Some evidence was found to suggest that teachers' participation in and experiences of family had helped to develop their aspiration for children to be happy. However, the findings overwhelmingly supported the argument that participation in the workplace of New Zealand early childhood education, and knowledge of the curriculum document *Te Whāriki,* had exerted a significant influence on the development of all of the teachers' aspirations identified.

Cultural-historical theory recognises the centrality of context in the development of an individual's motives. Similarly, this chapter acknowledged the important role that context might play in the development of a teacher's aspirations for children. It concluded therefore that teachers' aspirations for children were likely to reflect the influence of their local or cultural context.

Teachers' aspirations for children are the first of three basic social processes that were identified by analysis. Together with teachers' curriculum decisions, and teachers' intentional practice, they form the theoretical model of intentional teaching that has been constructed to answer the research question "What is the nature of intentional teaching in New Zealand early childhood education settings?" This chapter has provided the first part of the answer to that question by identifying that intentional teaching is aspirational in nature. Intentional teachers are not only concerned with children's daily experiences and activities, but also with their long-term future. This chapter has demonstrated that teachers' aspirations for children are foundational to their intentional practice.

Not only has this chapter identified the aspirational nature of intentional teaching, it has also demonstrated that intentional teaching is holistic in nature. The teachers' aspirations were focused on children's socio-emotional well-being, as well as on their learning and their preparedness for the future. Further, the findings reported here indicate that the teachers were aware that children's well-being and their learning were closely linked (see p. 97).

As well as providing a partial answer about the nature of intentional teaching, this chapter has also begun to address the research question "what factors might influence intentional practice in New Zealand early childhood settings?" It has demonstrated that a significant influence on intentional teaching practice is teachers' aspirations for children. These aspirations were seen to be influenced themselves by teachers' beliefs and personal experiences, as well as by *Te Whāriki*.

In the following chapter, the second basic process of the grounded theory is discussed: teachers' curriculum decisions. Three different analytic categories of curriculum decisions will be identified, and discussed. The chapter will demonstrate how these approaches to curriculum decision-making are related to the teachers' aspirations, and how they translate teachers' aspirations into intentional teaching practice.

6. Constructing the Theory: Teachers' Curriculum Decisions

Early childhood teachers are involved in a continual process of making curriculum decisions. Some of these decisions are made in advance of an event; others are made in-the-moment, as teachers respond to emerging situations. Teachers' curriculum decisions are the second basic social process (Charmaz, 2014) of the model of intentional teaching that has been constructed in this study. This grounded model theorises intentional teaching as being comprised of the connection between teachers' aspirations, their curriculum decisions—the focus of this chapter, and their actions.

The chapter reports and discusses the findings related to teachers' curriculum decisions. It begins by considering some of the different ways in which the literature defines the notion of curriculum, and how these definitions influence the types of curriculum decisions that early childhood teachers might be expected to make. The chapter then proposes that teachers' curriculum decisions be considered in three analytic categories, which I have termed modes of teaching. The modes of teaching I identified are: resource-based teaching, proactive teaching, and responsive teaching. These three different modes of teaching are described in detail, with reference to the findings. The connections between the teachers' aspirations, and their modes of teaching, are also highlighted (Fig 5, below).

The theoretical model developed in this study emphasises the influence of teachers' aspirations on their decision-making. However, the findings indicated that there were other factors that also influenced teachers' curriculum decisions. The findings that related to some of those other possible influencing factors are reported and discussed at the end of the chapter.

This chapter draws on data from observations, interviews, informal professional conversations, and centre documentation. Many of the findings are presented in the form of vignettes—"small illustrative stories" (Grbich, 2007, p. 214) from my field notes, that are analysed to support the developing argument. These vignettes are in effect excerpts from my field notes, and include observational data, data from informal professional conversations, and data from centre documentation. The sources of data are clearly indicated. The vignettes represent my perspective and interpretation of an event or interaction; they are therefore a paraphrase rather than an exact representation (Flick, 2009).

All of the findings reported in this chapter are discussed in relation to relevant literature, including literature that was reviewed at the beginning of the study, and literature that was sampled as part of the developing analysis (p. 51).

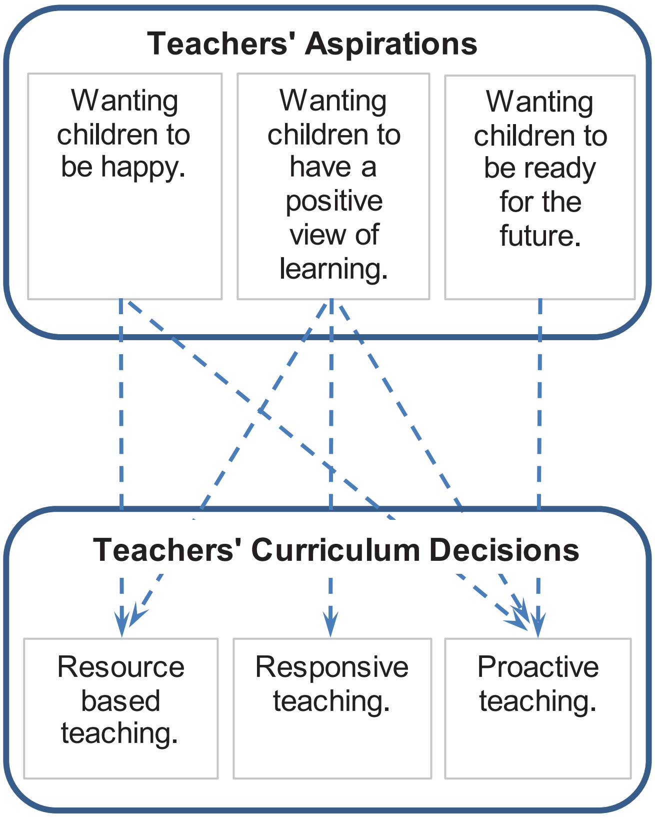
Teachers' Aspirations
Wanting children to be happy.
Wanting children to have a positive view of learning.
Wanting children to be ready for the future.
Teachers' Curriculum Decisions
Resource based teaching.
Responsive teaching.
Proactive teaching.

Figure 5: Intentional teaching: The second process.

Defining Curriculum

In *Te Whāriki*, curriculum is defined as “the sum total of the experiences, activities, and events, whether direct or indirect, which occur within an environment designed to foster children’s learning and development” (MoE, 1996, p. 10). A similar definition of curriculum is found in the Australian *Early Years Learning Framework* (EYLF): “curriculum encompasses all the experiences, routines and events, planned and unplanned, that occur in an environment designed to foster children’s learning and development” (DEEWR, 2009, p. 9). Curriculum as envisaged in *Te Whāriki* and the EYLF, therefore, encompasses all aspects of a child’s experience at an early childhood centre.

The definitions of curriculum that emanate from the USA contrast starkly with the broad definitions found in *Te Whāriki* and the EYLF. For example, Epstein (2007) defined curriculum as “the knowledge and skills teachers are expected to teach and children are expected to learn, and the plans for experiences through which learning will take place" (p. 5). Similarly, curriculum is defined in the *Revised Position Statement of Developmentally Appropriate Practice (Revised Statement)* (NAEYC, 2009), as consisting of "the knowledge, skills, abilities, and understandings children are to acquire and the plans for the learning experiences through which those gains will occur" (p. 20). Further, Bredekamp (2011) defined curriculum as:

> …a written plan that describes the goals for children's learning and development, and the learning experiences, materials and teaching strategies that are used to help children achieve those goals. The goals include the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that we want children to achieve (p. 299).

These three definitions of curriculum perhaps explain why much of the literature that was critically reviewed earlier in this thesis associated intentional teaching with curriculum decisions made in advance of an event or experience; it envisaged such pre-planning as being foundational for intentional teaching. For example, Epstein (2007) claimed that "intentional teaching does not happen by chance; it is plan[ned]" (p. 1).

The teachers in the present study intuitively associated the notion of intentional teaching with a pre-planned programme of activities, based on teachers' decisions, and inflexible in nature. It was clear from their comments that they regarded such an approach with disapproval:

> Debbie: When I think of the words *intentional teaching* I think [that] rather than child-led, it's a teacher-led concept…
>
> Gillian: It's like [you have] an objective in mind… your intention of what to do with the children
>
> Fleur (interrupting): So you come with a plan
>
> Hannah: Yeah, a plan. You shouldn't do that.
>
> Debbie: Which we don't do….
>
> Susan: What would you see as …negative [about that]?
>
> Hannah: Everything (S1/FG/pp. 1-3).

Further, it seemed that some of the teachers were concerned that intentional teaching might lead teachers to compel children to participate in planned activities or experiences:

> So that's the sad part of intentional [teaching], if you will force the children to like what you have planned, [by saying] 'Okay. I planned this. I didn't sleep all night thinking about this. We're going to do it'. That's no good (Gillian/S1/FG/p. 8).

However, they acknowledged that there were aspects of the curriculum in their centre that were dictated by the teachers, and about which children were given no choice. These were mat times, rest times, and meal times (Debbie/S1/FG). They were the aspects of the curriculum that the teachers initially described as being examples of intentional teaching.

The teachers in Setting 2 also associated the notion of intentional teaching with a pre-planned, teacher-directed approach to curriculum. However, they agreed that there were times when a pre-planned approach was appropriate. Jackie argued that "You can't just run a room without a curriculum" (Jackie/S2/TI/p. 11). Nevertheless, she stipulated that a planned curriculum should be purposeful in nature—"you, as a teacher, you are doing something for a purpose" (Jackie/S2/FG/p. 6)—and that the purpose should be related to the teachers' assessment of children's learning: "you are not just [setting] up the tower because it looks pretty…but [because] you know that the first child comes in, loves to build" (Jackie/S2/FG/p. 6). A curriculum based on children's interests in this way, was consistent with intentional teaching as envisioned in the literature (e.g., Mogharreban et al., 2010).

Although the teachers in Setting 2 acknowledged that a planned curriculum could be appropriate, they stated that it should still allow teachers the opportunity to be flexible, and respond spontaneously to children's emerging interests or needs; it should not be "so strict that there's not [the] flexibility to just bring out something that you just like" (Jackie/S2/FG, p. 11). There was some suggestion within the literature that intentional teaching and teachers' spontaneous responses to children might be compatible. For example, Bredekamp (2011) stated that intentional teachers need to demonstrate "flexible decision-making" (p. 269) in order to respond to situations when "what they have planned doesn't work out" (p. 74), although she did not specifically address how teachers might demonstrate intentionality in their unanticipated and unplanned interactions with children. Furthermore, as noted earlier, Grieshaber (2010) argued that intentional teaching should be considered as related not only to planned activities or experiences, but also to “spontaneous events or what is occurring ‘in the moment’” (p. 39). However, much of the empirical research into intentional teaching reviewed in Chapter 2 focused on planned teaching events.

The only teacher in the present study who appeared to think that it might be possible for such a spontaneous approach to curriculum to be compatible with intentional teaching was Sarah in Setting 3. She argued that “intentional [teaching] doesn’t have to be planned out a long time ago; you can have an intention when you do something in the moment” (Sarah/S3/TI/p. 2).

Examples of Curriculum Decisions

Te Whāriki acknowledges that curriculum in an early childhood centre can consist of experiences, activities and events that may be either “specifically planned” (MoE, 1996, p. 11) or that may “arise spontaneously” (p. 11). Although many of the teachers in the present study objected to the notion of a pre-planned curriculum, the findings indicated that there were times when all of them made their curriculum decisions in advance. However, the findings also indicated that many of the teachers’ curriculum decisions were made in response to children’s emerging interest or inquiry. Not only were these curriculum decisions spontaneous, they were also frequently unarticulated, and undocumented.

Reflexive memo.

Understanding the thinking behind teachers’ spontaneous responses to children was complex, because of their typically unarticulated and undocumented nature. At these times, the use of video in an interview situation was particularly helpful, as were informal professional conversations with the teachers as soon after an event as possible.

From my discussions both formal and informal, with the teachers who participated in this study, and from my field notes, I have distilled the following list of some of the decisions that they identified they had to make on a regular, usually daily, basis. They included decisions about: whether to pre-plan events, follow an emerging curriculum, or try to combine both approaches. Following that decision, teachers had to decide what experiences or activities to organise, what resources to make available, and to what degree they should become involved with the children in these activities. They also had to decide how to respond to a child’s unexpected inquiry, interest, or request for assistance.

If the teachers decided to plan activities or experiences, they had to decide what to base their planning on. If it was based on children's interests, they had to decide whose and which interests to follow. They also had to decide what, if anything, they hoped or intended that children might learn from the activities or experiences they planned, or whether they should leave the child to determine what they might want to learn.

In addition, teachers had to decide how to encourage desirable behaviour, discourage less desirable behaviour, and eliminate undesirable behaviour. They also had to decide what constituted desirable behaviour. Further, they had to decide how and when to schedule centre routines, and what if anything they hoped those routines might contribute to children's learning.

Many of these decisions, such as whether to follow a planned or emerging curriculum, had been made some time prior to this study. Many others, such as how to respond to a child's spontaneous inquiry, were made in an instant, with no time for reflection or deliberation. Many of the decisions teachers made appeared to be based in ingrained behaviour that reflected their professional knowledge, experience and judgement (Oberg, 2005). Others seemed to be intuitive in nature (Claxton, 2000). Some decisions were documented; others were tacit (FN). Teachers' curriculum decision-making has been described as a process of "continuous interpretation and professional discrimination" (Nuttall & Edwards, 2004, p. 17), suggesting that teachers are constantly engaged in re-making or adapting decisions. The findings reported in this chapter support this view of decision-making.

In order to differentiate clearly between the different types of curriculum decisions that the teachers were observed to make, I developed three analytic categories, referred to throughout the remainder of this thesis as modes of teaching. The modes of teaching I developed are: resource-based teaching, proactive teaching, and responsive teaching. Each mode of teaching describes the different ways in which teachers made decisions about the environment, about activities or experiences, about learning goals, and about the ways in which they interacted with children. A description of these modes of teaching forms the focus of the following sections.

Modes of Teaching

The modes of teaching discussed in this chapter are analytic categories I constructed during the process of data analysis. They reflect the three perspectives on learning that I introduced in Chapter 5 (p. 101). Thus, the category of resource-based teaching incorporates curriculum decisions that suggest a teacher views learning as a child's independent activity; proactive teaching incorporates decisions that reflect a view of learning as a directed activity; and responsive teaching incorporates decisions that reflect a view of learning as a collaborative activity.

In the first mode, that I have called resource-based teaching, teachers focused their advance planning almost exclusively on the environment. Resource-based teachers were particularly concerned with providing an environment that was interesting for children, and well-resourced. At times their decisions about what resources to place in the environment demonstrated little awareness of the children, or little imagination. For example, in all of the settings there were areas where the same resources were made available every day (FN). At other times, resources were provided to reflect seasons of the year, major public events, or, as in the example of Making Paper in this chapter, in order to recycle some rubbish.

Once the environment was prepared, teachers taking this approach then tended to confine their responses to children to providing help or equipment when asked. They were not seen to be focused on achieving any particular learning outcome; rather, they had apparently decided that it was not their role to determine what children might learn from a particular activity (Blay & Ireson, 2009). The findings indicate that at times, teachers' whose aspirations were for children to be happy and for children to have a positive view of learning used this approach.

In the second mode, 'proactive teaching', planning the environment was also seen as important. However, in contrast to resource-based teaching, the planning of the environment in this approach was informed by assessment of children's learning. Further, teachers who decided to engage in proactive teaching were frequently observed to have a particular focus on either providing children with opportunities to continue exploring a particular area of interest, or on providing children with opportunities to develop, or hone, a particular skill. Similarly, their responses to children tended to focus on a particular learning outcome. Teachers using this mode of teaching were noticed to work alongside children and explore activities with them; they were also seen at times to engage in didactic instruction. Proactive teaching was an approach used by teachers with any of the three identified aspirations; in addition, it was the only approach used by teachers whose aspiration was for children to be prepared for the future.

The final mode of teaching I identified was ‘responsive teaching’. This was observed to be the least commonly used approach. Responsive teaching tended to develop either from a planned activity, or in response to a child’s emerging inquiry. Teachers using this approach were seen to be willing and able to depart from a clearly defined plan, and to follow children’s lead into unanticipated areas of exploration and inquiry. Their exploration with children was open-ended, and not necessarily directed towards a particular learning outcome. Teachers using this approach were considered to be ready to take risks, and become co-learners with the children. Very few teachers were observed to engage in responsive teaching, and it was only demonstrated by teachers who aspired for children to have a positive view of learning.

These three modes of teaching therefore incorporate multiple curriculum decisions. No one mode is considered to be better than another. To separate one mode of teaching from another for the purpose of analysis was challenging. Although this chapter will describe the three different modes of teaching as though they are separate and discrete entities, that is a simplification of a highly complex process; they were seen to be inextricably intertwined. For example, responsive teaching frequently, even typically, developed from resource-based or proactive teaching, as teachers responded to a child’s interest and enquiry. In addition, it was noticeable that the teachers moved frequently and fluidly between the three modes. This movement was often intuitive. The contention of this thesis is that a significant factor in a teacher’s choice of teaching mode was their aspirations for children.

Resource-based Teaching

As indicated earlier, teachers adopting this mode of teaching focused above all on ensuring that they provided a well-resourced environment for children to explore. Preparing the environment was seen to be a core responsibility for all early childhood teachers (FN), and was a feature of all three modes of teaching. However, resource-based teaching is characterised by the way in which the provision of resources was emphasised by teachers as being their primary responsibility. Once they had prepared the environment, resource-based teachers appeared to feel that their role was to support, rather than initiate, children's learning. They explained that they would "sit with the children…put [out an activity] and see what happens. You observe what the children are going to do with it…and then you have to support [their reaction to the activity]" (Hannah/S1/FG/p. 4).

Careful preparation of the learning environment is considered in the literature to be one aspect of intentional teaching (e.g., Epstein, 2007). However, when I asked the teachers in Setting 1 how they decided what activities to provide in their areas, Debbie replied "it's just whatever the person feels like doing….It's just random" (Debbie/S1/FG/p. 25), a response that did not seem consistent with the notion of being either careful or intentional. Debbie explained that:

> I don't plan. I don't like planning. I'll plan to make lunch. I'll plan to do …those sorts of physical things, routine things or care things, but I don't particularly like planning in the centre. I actually struggle with planning (Debbie/S1/TI/p.7).

Therefore she claimed that she prepared for each new day at the centre by just "throw[ing] some things out [onto a table] and then the children will decide what they want to do" (Debbie/S1/TI/p. 7). The other teachers in Setting 1 seemed uncomfortable with the notion that their preparations were random, but they agreed that their preparations were basic; in order to avoid imposing adult expectations on what the children would decide to do (FN). They explained that each evening they would "set up the tables [by] just put[ting out] the basic things that [the children] will be needing….And then the following day when [the children] come, they can do whatever they feel like doing" (Gillian/S1/FG/p. 26). It was noticeable that the environment, both indoors and out, looked very similar each day (FN). Nevertheless there were times in each setting when resource-based teaching introduced children to new and innovative resources, as will be seen in the following example.

Making paper: Setting 3: Part 1.

The teachers in Setting 3 had been reorganising their office, and had shredded a lot of old documents. For three days the shredded paper had been in a container in the garden, with toy animals amongst it, as something for children to explore. The children had been playing with the paper, and the animals, making dens and nests. However, on the previous afternoon one child had tipped water into this paper (FN).

This brief vignette, which is the beginning of a lengthy example of teaching practice that will be followed throughout this chapter, is an example of resource-based teaching. The teachers had been confronted with a pile of shredded paper, and rather than simply throwing it out, they had decided to put it in the garden to see what the children would do with it. The inclusion of the toy animals with the paper indicates that one of the teachers had tried to prompt children's play, and the children had responded.

A further feature of this vignette, and of resource-based teaching, is that teachers might not articulate any specific learning outcomes for children, because of their understanding, cited earlier, that "it's not the teacher who is leading the…learning, it is the children" (Hannah/S1/FG/p. 4). It was clear from talking to the teachers at Setting 3 about this example that the shredded paper was, in their minds, an open-ended resource, and that they had no particular plans for how the children might use it, or what they might be expected to learn from it (FN). Resource-based teaching may therefore at times resemble the random curriculum described by Mogharreban et al. (2010) as "a series of isolated, fun activities, where no stated goals or outcomes seemed to be guiding curriculum choices" (p. 239). The following vignette is a further example of resource-based teaching in which the teacher decided to restrict their role to setting up the environment, and observing the children's play.

Water in the Sandpit: Setting 1.

Two boys, aged between 3 and 4 years, were playing together in the sandpit. The tap from the water-tank was running, and a large puddle had developed. Eventually Debbie turned the tap off, and the boys continued playing that they were at the beach. They were jumping in and out of the puddle. It was a sunny day. Gradually the puddle became smaller, and eventually it disappeared. At this point the boys became engaged in a heated discussion about where the water had gone, and whose fault it was. Debbie was standing nearby, observing them. She did not intervene (FN).

Debbie talked to me about this incident during her individual interview. She explained that she had deliberately chosen not to get involved in the debate about what had happened to the disappearing water because she had not wanted to interrupt the experience: "I could have interrupted the play and we could have talked about scientific terms in the example of the splashing…but [I did not] because they were experiencing it; you do have the opportunity to talk about it afterwards" (Debbie, S1/TI, pp13-14). No such follow-up conversation was observed (FN).

These two vignettes therefore are examples of intentional teaching practice resulting from teachers' aspiration for children to be happy, enacted through their curriculum decisions. These curriculum decisions related to their selection of resources, and their choice not to interfere or impose an adult agenda onto the children's play. It is possible to interpret resource-based teaching as an example of teachers engaging in "the common pedagogical practice of…pre-arranging children's activities and simply observing children at play, [thus] limit[ing] their pedagogical role to one of passive onlooker with no effective engagement in the potential learning" (Ridgway & Quinones, 2012, p. 46). Burns et al. (2012) stated that a teacher who deliberately decided not to engage with children in their exploration of resources could not be considered to be demonstrating intentional teaching. In contrast, this thesis argues that teachers' decision to stand back and not engage with children can be considered as intentional practice, when interpreted in the light of their aspirations for children and their consequent curriculum decisions.

New Zealand has a long history of supporting free play in the context of early childhood education. This approach was underpinned by a Piagetian view of learning and development, and by the assumption that if children were "afforded flexibility and freedom to experiment with properties and concepts at their own pace" (White et. al., 2007, p. 99) they would learn. The expectation was that children would determine for themselves what they would learn, while the adult's role was confined to establishing and maintaining a suitably supportive environment (Fleer, 2012; Hedges, 2014), a view that Hedges (2014) argued arose from "non-empirical traditions and ideologies" (p. 192).

In the present study, Pat commented that "I think this whole free play [means that] children are meant to be free to explore, whereas if you *teach* it's got the connotation of you limiting them" (Pat/S3/TI/p. 16). Similarly, Sarah explained that she saw early childhood teachers as being "a guide... seeing the children as taking the lead in their day to day activities here. So [that's how] they're learning" (Sarah/S3TI/p. 3). In addition, Fleur described her role with children as helping and extending their learning, rather than teaching them: "I don't think I teach them. I only think I actually encourage and extend their interest, their own learning. I don't *do* anything, I just help them" (Fleur/S1/TI/p. 23). Likewise, in Setting 2, Maria depicted the teaching of infants as "following their lead, and sometimes stepping back and just observing instead of being in and trying to engage with them … just watching and following their cues" (Maria/S2/pp. 4-5).

When teachers envisage their role in this way they may be reluctant to describe themselves as teachers (Thomas et al., 2011). The view that early childhood teachers should "teach without teaching" (McArdle & McWilliam, 2005, p. 328), that seemed to have been expressed by the teachers in the present study, is "characteristic of developmentally inspired and child-centered approaches in which teachers are reluctant to engage in 'instruction', [and] are guarded when providing children with requested information for fear of intervening inappropriately" (Grieshaber, 2008, p. 507). It is a view that is frequently challenged by research that supports the notion that young children learn through play, but that emphasises the importance of the adult taking an active role alongside children in their play, in order to enhance the learning opportunities that play may provide (e.g., Grieshaber, 2008; Hedges, 2014; Siraj-Blatchford, 2009; Wood, 2009, 2010a, 2010b, 2013, 2014).

In resource-based teaching the teachers created an "affording environment" (Claxton & Carr, 2004, p. 91). An affording environment provides children with "opportunities for the development of a range of learning attributes" (p. 91). However, teachers are considered unlikely to engage in "deliberate strategies to draw students' attention to those opportunities" because "value is not placed upon them" (p. 91). Although there was no evidence to suggest that the teachers in this present study did not value learning opportunities, it appeared that at times they were confident that children could and would direct their own learning.

Resource-based teaching was not the dominant mode of teaching observed in this study, although some of the teachers were seen to use it more frequently than others. Other teachers, however, seemed more willing to work alongside children in the learning process. These groups of teachers adopted either the proactive or responsive modes of teaching, as described in the following sections.

Proactive Teaching

The defining characteristic of this mode of teaching was that the teacher had a particular pre-determined learning outcome in mind for the child or group of children. This learning outcome may not have been formally documented, but it was apparent in the decisions the teachers made. In this way proactive teaching closely resembled the view of intentional teaching as presented in much of the literature (e.g., DEEWR, 2009; Epstein, 2007; NAEYC, 2009). For example Epstein (2007) stated that “to be 'intentional' is to act purposefully, with a goal in mind and a plan for accomplishing it” (p. 4).

Proactive teaching also most closely resembled the ways in which the teachers in the present study initially conceptualised intentional teaching. As reported earlier in this chapter, many of the teachers in this study intuitively associated the notion of intentional teaching with a plan-based, or purposeful approach to curriculum decisions: “We used to do [intentional teaching] a lot, years ago…. where everything you did was for a reason, everything you set up, everything you did” (Tracy/S1/FG/p. 1).

Proactive teaching was informed by the teachers’ assessment of children. Assessment has been described as “all those activities…which provide information to be used [by the teachers] as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged” (Carr, 2014, p. 265). The connection between assessment and curriculum planning is considered to be a key aspect of intentional teaching (Mogharreban et al., 2010), provided the form of assessment used is appropriate for the early childhood context (Bagnato et al., 2011; Broadhead, 2006). *Te Whāriki* expects that parents and families will be involved in the assessment process.

In this study, the teachers’ assessment of children’s learning was seen to be based both on their informal undocumented observations of children, and on their formal written observations that were recorded as learning stories (Carr, 2001a). These included their perceptions of children’s learning, strengths and interests (FN). In addition, the teachers also described the ways in which they referred to their personal knowledge of children obtained through interactions and relationships with the children or their parents (FN); and their professional knowledge of child development (FG/S2).

Jackie referred to parents as being her primary source of information about the infants in her centre, and explained how this information was incorporated into practice in Setting 2:

> We need the initial relationship with parents because…they’re our source, they’re our number one source of what’s been going on with their child, [and]…of course they know them best, so …we definitely have quite open relationships and lots of communication (Jackie, S2.FG.p. 8)

This information enabled the teachers to “run by everyone’s individual routines” (Jackie/S2/FG/p. 11). The development of “two-way, reciprocal relationships with families to get to know the children as individuals and to understand their cultural context” (Bredekamp, 2011, p. 86), together with a foundation of professional knowledge about child development, are also considered to be features of intentional teaching (DEEWR, 2009; Epstein, 2007; NAEYC, 2009).

This foundation of information enabled teachers to prepare an environment and plan a curriculum that was expected either to reinforce or extend children's existing interests or knowledge. Planning that was informed in this way was therefore able to be tailored to individual children. For example, in Setting 3, the teachers prepared, and referred to, individual learning plans (IPs) for each of the children at the centre, in which they documented specific learning goals for each child (Doc). This was in contrast to the more general and unfocused preparation that appeared to be typical of resource-based teaching.

The teachers' assessment-based knowledge of the children also helped them respond to children's interests or inquiry if a focused way. This is apparent in the following example, which is a continuation of the Making Paper vignette.

Making paper, Part 2.

The day after noticing that a child had added water to the shredded paper, Viv brought a paper-making kit that she owned to the centre. She added more water to the shredded paper and prepared a bowl of paper pulp. She set up a table outside with a hand beater, and a paper-making frame. She then asked some children to help her cut some leaves from the Rosemary bush in the garden.

A group of children came to see what Viv was doing. She started by taking the soaked paper, tearing it into smaller pieces, and putting it back into the tub. Then she mixed it up with the hand beater. She was talking to the children all the time she was doing this, explaining what she was doing. The children helped, tearing the paper and mixing it up, and adding some of the Rosemary leaves and commenting on their smell.

Then Viv showed the children how to spread the pulp onto the purpose-built frame. This consisted of a wooden frame, roughly the size of an A5 piece of paper, which enclosed a sheet of fine metal mesh. The idea was to cover the mesh with pulp, and use a rubber spatula (or hands) to press the water out of the pulp through the mesh. The resulting flat piece of pulp was then left in the frame to dry into paper.

The children joined in with this process quite enthusiastically; one girl and one boy (both aged 4) were especially keen. When they had piled a thick layer of pulp onto the frame, Viv showed them how to press it to squeeze the water out. The children took over this task. When they said they were finished, Viv asked them to look and see if there were any gaps in the pulp. If they could see any, they were to apply more pulp to fill the gaps, and then repeat the pressing process. The she asked the children what might help the paper to dry. They replied “the sun”, so she asked the boy to go and look for a nice sunny spot in the garden, out of everyone’s way, where the paper could dry. He chose a sunny spot; Viv and the children put the paper there to dry, and those two children left (FN)

Viv had noticed that one of the children had added water to the shredded paper, and she had prepared a plan for the paper pulp in response to their initiative. Her plan had a particular goal—to introduce children to the process of how recycled paper is made. This was therefore an example of proactive teaching. This example demonstrates how proactive teaching can develop from resource-based teaching, when teachers decide to act on their observations of children, and to introduce an element of teacher-selected focus and purpose into an activity. In this example of paper-making, Viv seemed to be focused on supporting children’s dispositions to learning, and in particular their curiosity and perseverance. Children’s dispositions to learning are considered further in the following chapter (see p. 163).

In contrast, much of the proactive teaching that was observed during this study appeared to have been designed to support children’s development of skills: self-help skills, social skills, physical skills and basic academic skills such as counting and writing their names (FN). For example, the teachers at Setting 1 agreed that they focused on helping children to learn about “toileting…put[ting] their clothes on…[putting on]their shoes” (Erica/S1/TI/p. 22). In Setting 2, the teachers focused on preparing children for transition to the toddlers’ room by encouraging them to feed themselves at mealtimes (FN).

One of the potential risks of an excessive focus on children’s skills, and thus of proactive teaching, is that it may lead to a “*canned* curriculum” (Mogharreban et al., 2010, p. 239, emphasis original), driven by a narrow and prescriptive view of learning. In this, the teachers may become so focused on particular learning goals that they miss or ignore serendipitous opportunities to extend or challenge children's thinking in creative or innovative ways. An example of proactive teaching focused on children's skill-development is found in the following vignette.

Learning to use scissors: Setting 3.

Chris, a 4 year old boy, arrived at the centre wanting to make a kite. He approached Sarah, who was sitting with some children at a table where there were pencils, rulers and scissors, and some small sheets of paper, and told her of his plan. She asked him what he thought he might need to make one. He replied that he didn't know, so Sarah sent him to look through the resource shelves for some things that he thought might be useful. He came back with a sheet of A3 paper, and asked Sarah to make it into a triangle for him. Sarah asked him to try and see if he could do it, so he picked up a pair of scissors ready to cut the paper. Sarah stopped him and advised him to use the pencils and ruler to draw the shape first, and then cut it.

Chris was happy to try this, and using the ruler to help him draw straight lines, he managed to draw a triangle that he was pleased with. However, he was less confident using the scissors so Sarah helped him decide which hand he wanted to hold them with, and then she told him how to hold them. Once he had his fingers in the right place, she then started telling him how to use them, suggesting that he try and make them open and shut like a crocodile's mouth. Eventually he managed to cut all round the triangle, although well within the outline so the result was a lot smaller than he intended.

Sarah asked one of the other teachers to fetch a camera and take a photograph of Chris using the scissors to celebrate and record the event. Sarah then wrote about this incident in Chris' portfolio.

Meanwhile, Chris finished his kite by sticking a paper tail to it, and some string to hold it by. He then took his newly-made kite outside and proceeded to show it to the teachers there and to all of the other children. He climbed to the top of the slide and, holding onto the string, threw the kite into the air for it to fly. He seemed undeterred by the lack of wind. However, he eventually became disappointed when the kite did not fly as expected (FN).

Sarah's plan for the indoor environment on this day had included a craft table. This was not available every day (FN). She explained later that she had not set up the craft table with the specific purpose of teaching Chris to use scissors. However, when Chris arrived wanting to make a kite, Sarah responded by focusing on the skills he needed to achieve this goal. She did not ask him why he was interested in kite-making.

In Sarah's opinion, there were two particularly significant aspects to this incident. The first was that Chris had persevered with a complex task, even when the kite he made was not exactly like the one he had originally planned. She regarded this as something of a breakthrough for Chris, as he was perceived by the teachers as a perfectionist who often preferred not to start a project unless he was sure he would be able to do it well (Sarah/S3/TI). The second was his success in manipulating scissors, as this was a new achievement for him (Sarah/S3/TI).

However, Chris' reaction suggested that for him, the significant aspect of this incident was that he managed to achieve his goal of making a kite. He did not demonstrate any particular satisfaction with his new-found skill with scissors.

This vignette illustrates Sarah's awareness of Chris' current ability, as well as his personality. This awareness informed the ways in which she helped him make the necessary decisions about resources he would need, and encouraged him to persevere with the task. It also informed her decision to give him instructions in how to hold and manipulate scissors. This vignette may be interpreted as an example of how a teacher's aspirations for Chris to have a positive view of learning and of himself as a learner, and for him to have the skills he needed to be ready for the future, were translated into intentional teaching practice through her proactive curriculum decisions. However, Sarah's focus on helping Chris increase his technical and fine motor skills meant that she chose not to investigate, and possibly extend, his new-found interest in kites. Chris, on the other hand, maintained his focus on kites even though he received no particular support for it; he seemed to regard the skills as no more than means to an end.

Fleer (2015) recognised the challenge that may face teachers when "the level of intersubjectivity between teachers and children is not closely aligned" (p. 8). She argued that the most common cause of such misalignment was "due to educative agenda that was being overlaid on particular…situations by the teacher" (p. 8). In this example, it appeared that Sarah's intentions were not closely aligned with Chris'. Although both seemed satisfied with the outcome of their encounter, a greater level of intersubjectivity may have been attained if Sarah had been more aware of Chris' learning intention for this situation. Such attunement was considered by Robinson and Bartlett (2011) to be a hallmark of intentional teaching. However, this thesis contends that even without a high level of attunement between teacher and child, this vignette is still an example of intentional teaching.

As the following chapter will demonstrate, proactive decision-making was most frequently associated with teachers' practice related to preparing children for the future. There were times when this aspiration led teachers to implement a curriculum that included multiple teacher-led routine events. This was perhaps particularly noticeable in the tightly scheduled programme in Setting 1 (see p. 88). At these times, the curriculum shared some features with Claxton and Carr's (2004) notion of a "prohibiting environment" (p. 91), in which "children move from one routine to the next in rapid succession, [thus making] it impossible for children to persist and to be engaged over any length of time" (p. 91).

Aspects of this type of environment were visible in all three centres, when the demands of the centre rosters and routines were given precedence over children's desire or need to engage in uninterrupted play and learning (Nuttall & Edwards, 2004). This may have made it challenging for teachers to develop children's sense of perseverance, a disposition that they claimed to value in children. However, it appeared that some of the teachers regarded the centre routines such as mat, meal, and sleep times, as valuable opportunities for them to teach children about appropriate pro-social behaviour (FN), and thus to enact their aspiration for children to be prepared for the future. Teaching children such social and behavioural skills seemed almost invariably to involve proactive teaching.

In contrast, responsive teaching was most likely to create the third type of environment proposed by Claxton and Carr (2004), an "inviting environment" (p. 91). In an inviting environment, "asking questions or working with others is made attractive and appealing to students" (p. 91). Responsive teaching is considered next.

Responsive Teaching

The third mode of teaching that was identified was responsive teaching. As with proactive teaching, teachers' planning, and their responses in this approach were informed by their assessment of children's learning.

Examples of responsive teaching often began with some proactive decision-making and activities that were based on children's existing interests or learning. However, features of responsive teaching became evident in the ways teachers then responded to children's reactions to the planned activity. Responsive teachers were seen to try and understand what a child's underlying interest or inquiry might be, and then to try and challenge or extend children's existing thinking. In this way, responsive teaching was similar to the definition of intentional teaching developed in New Zealand, that described intentional teachers as those who are "in tune with learners' intentions and co-construct curriculum with them" (Robinson & Bartlett, 2011, p. 11). The following continuation of the Making Paper vignette illustrates how proactive teaching may develop into responsive teaching.

Making paper, Part 3.

Some days later, Viv decided to repeat the paper-making activity. This time however she used the flat plastic sand sieves as frames, so many more children were able to take part—I counted eight children participating at the busiest time. The children made their own round paper sheets, and Viv put them in a sunny spot to dry.

Some children didn't want to squeeze all the water out of theirs; they wanted to put the wet pulp out onto a tray and see what happened. Viv talked to them about this decision, asking them questions in order to understand why they wanted to do it this way. The children were adamant that their method would work. Viv warned them that it might take a very long time for their samples of pulp to dry—maybe even as much as a week—but the children insisted that that was what they wanted to do. So she helped them shape their piles of pulp, and decide how much to use. She then helped them find the sunniest spot in the garden to use as a drying area. That spot was on the shed roof, which Viv was able to reach (FN).

This iteration of the paper-making activity began with proactive teaching. Viv's goal was the same as before, to introduce children to a new concept about the making of paper, and to give them the opportunity to try it for themselves. She had evidently reflected on this activity after the first day, and realised the frustration inherent in an interesting activity that had limited equipment. It is possible that in the first instance she had only provided the single wire frame because she was unsure of how the children would respond to the activity. However, the enthusiastic response that the activity had generated led her to devise an innovative way of using sand sieves, in order to make the paper-making accessible to many more children.

Part way through this incident, it became obvious that Viv was able to reflect in-the-moment on her practice (Schön, 1983), and to adapt her teaching approach in response to the children's responses to the activity. She therefore chose to support the children who decided to experiment with the process and not to follow the instructions as expected, rather than to cajole them into complying with the approved method. She thus gave them the opportunity to challenge or reinforce their understanding of some of the scientific concepts that were inherent in this activity. In this way, Viv demonstrated an insightful level of response to children's spontaneous learning. She also tacitly acknowledged and supported the different intentions that children had for their own learning (e.g., Leggett & Ford, 2013). This was therefore an example of responsive curriculum decisions being used to translate her aspiration for children to have a positive view of learning into intentional teaching practice.

Viv's apparent willingness to experiment with children, and not to focus only on working towards a pre-decided learning outcome seemed to be based in her intuitive awareness that what a teacher thinks a child will learn, and what they actually learn, may be quite different:

> You might have an idea in your head of where you might think [an activity] could head but in fact [the children] may go way over there and I've got to step back and … be open to letting them go over there (Viv/S3/TI/p. 6)..

Further, she explained that as a child she had found it intensely frustrating to be given answers or solutions to something she was trying to work out for herself.

Proactive teachers were seen to have a particular goal in mind for children's learning that had been decided on by the teacher. In contrast, as has been demonstrated, responsive teachers did not appear to have any particular expectation of what children might learn from these experiences. For example, Viv described her approach to teaching children as "a delicate path…a dance" (Viv/S3/TI/p. 8) in which she tried to find a way of working with the child or children in order to achieve an outcome that was satisfying to them both.

Being a responsive teacher was, however, potentially fraught with complexity. Teachers who tried to base their teaching on children's interests were reliant on successfully understanding what those interests might be. In Setting 1, Gillian remembered the ways in which she and her colleagues had tried in the past to support a child's apparent interest in insects:

> I just remember … all the activities that we came up with were about insects…we made like a story, we made baking, we made playdough insects, and then [we] …asked, do you think the child's interests is really insects or something else. Because we …were thinking more of the topic itself, than [whether]…he is curious about something bigger…. But we focused on making, when we are doing the play dough making the insects. And then we did drawings of insects, like a mural, like a collage …it was so funny (Gillian/S1/TI/p. 19).

She acknowledged that they may have over-emphasised the child's activity-based interest (Hedges, 2010), rather than understanding that perhaps his activity was an indicator of a deeper, unarticulated interest. The need to identify children's interests accurately may be a particular challenge for responsive teachers.

A further challenge that may confront teachers who want to extend and challenge children's thinking may be the need for teachers to have a foundation of subject knowledge, because without that it is less likely that they will be able to introduce children to conceptual learning with confidence (Hedges & Cullen, 2005). In addition, teachers must be willing to share their content knowledge if the children are to acquire conceptual knowledge from play-based experiences (e.g., Fleer, 2009). However, doing so in an appropriate way can present teachers with a distinct pedagogical challenge, and sometimes the most knowledgeable teachers are the most reluctant to share their knowledge with the children because of uncertainty about how best to do so (Edwards, Moore, & Cutter-Mackenzie, 2012). In this present study, Viv was reluctant to provide children with information too quickly:

> I almost think in some ways it's better not to have …subject knowledge …because if you do maybe … [you] could just blurt it out. And [instead] I want to break things down …. I think that is just such a fine line between taking over the kids experience and them guiding it rather than me. I want to see where they go, but I do have a tendency to…come along with a … comment …and [then] I've directed it (Viv/S3/TI/p. 6).

Viv's desire to strike a balance between the children's leadership and her own suggests a similarity between responsive teaching and intentional teaching as envisaged by Epstein (2007) who claimed that she had suggested the term 'intentional teaching' to describe an approach to teaching that was balanced between adult-initiated and child-initiated. Responsive teaching also appears to have similarities with some of the approaches to intentional teaching described in research conducted in Australia into the intentional teaching of scientific concepts to children (Edwards & Cutter-Mackenzie, 2011; 2013; Edwards, Cutter-Mackenzie, & Hunt, 2010).

Edwards et al. (2010) argued that scientific concepts could be sensitively and intentionally introduced to children through play-based activities. As discussed earlier (see p. 34) they posited three different approaches to play: open ended play, modelled play, and purposefully framed play; certain similarities between these types of play and the modes of teaching described in this chapter can be seen. For example, open ended play seems consistent with resource-based teaching, modelled play seems to be consistent with proactive teaching, and purposefully framed play seems consistent with responsive teaching.

The similarities between the modes of teaching identified in this study, and the types of play described by Edwards et al. (2010), suggest that all three modes of teaching might be considered compatible with the notion of intentional teaching, where intentional teaching is understood as being focused on deliberately introducing conceptual learning to children. However, the findings from this present study have clearly demonstrated that teachers frequently engaged in resource-based teaching or responsive teaching, with no particular predetermined learning outcome in mind; nevertheless, as will be made clear in the following chapter, all of these modes of teaching are considered to be aspects of intentional teaching. Therefore, the model proposed in this study calls for a reconceptualization of intentional teaching, in a way that acknowledges intentional teaching might be open-ended rather than always goal focused.

In responsive teaching, the teachers often began by creating an "inviting environment" (Claxton & Carr, 2004, p. 91), but were able, through their responses to children, to develop a "potentiating environment" (p. 91). A potentiating environment is one which "involves frequent participation in shared activity in which children or students take responsibility for directing those activities, as well as adults" (pp. 91-92). Creating this type of environment requires teachers to be closely attuned to children’s interests and responses, to be adaptable in their approach, and to be able to make curriculum decisions rapidly.

This discussion has demonstrated that responsive teaching is potentially a high-risk strategy for teachers. It requires them to respond to their interpretation of children’s interests by planning and implementing learning experiences or activities that may be novel, that have no clearly defined outcome, and that may draw on their own scientific or other knowledge. When children respond positively to these experiences, the teachers may find themselves having to respond to emerging inquiry or interest that they are unsure how to handle as in the example of Hunting for Dinosaurs (p. 158). Engaging in responsive teaching therefore involves a high level of professional skill including pedagogical knowledge, and the ability to enact a “competent blending” (Hedges, 2014, p. 200) of “teacher-initiated and child-initiated strategies” (p. 200).

This discussion has also highlighted the spontaneous nature of responsive teaching. This suggests a level of compatibility between intentional teaching and teachers’ spontaneous responses to children.

Additional Influences

This thesis contends that teachers’ aspirations are a major and largely unacknowledged influence on their curriculum decisions, and it is these that are the primary focus of the model that has been developed. However, the thesis does not claim that they are the only influence. This chapter has demonstrated that other significant influence on teachers’ decision-making are their assessment of children’s learning based on their observations, their relationship with children, and the information provided by parents. Further, their decisions were at times modified or revisited as a result of children’s responses to the curriculum.

In addition, the findings from this study identified certain other factors that may also have influenced the decisions that teachers made. These factors included: teachers’ beliefs, the requirements of *Te Whāriki*, the expectations of stakeholders including centre managers, parents, and colleagues, and the requirements of ERO. These possible influences are considered next.

The influence of teachers' beliefs.

The first additional influence on teachers' decision-making and mode of teaching that was evident in the findings was their beliefs about appropriate practice. Teachers' beliefs about teaching practice are often considered to have been shaped by their own experiences of education (Pajares, 1992; Raths, 2001). This was evident in comments made by both Viv and Fleur. For example, Viv's belief that it was not appropriate to intervene too quickly in a child's learning, which has already been alluded to (p. 133), appeared to have a powerful influence on her curriculum decisions, and the way she interacted with children. In particular, it seemed at times to make her feel uncertain about how best to respond to children (FN). She explained that this belief had developed in response to her own frustration as a child when adults provided her with answers too quickly:

> I was completely turned off if answers were given to me, you know?...And when I was a child I think there was a lot of that, and I used to get very frustrated because I would think 'I just want to find out for myself' (Viv/S3/TI/p. 8).

The decisions that Viv made, especially in relation to her interactions with children, reflected this reluctance to answer children's questions too quickly. She was one of the two teachers—the other being Gillian—who were seen to engage frequently and deliberately in the approach that I have identified as responsive teaching. Viv was observed choosing to engage in unstructured explorations with children, that had no pre-determined outcome, but that challenged and extended children's thinking. This may have been because of her reluctance to simply provide children with information.

In a further example of the influence of teachers' beliefs on their curriculum decisions, Fleur recalled her experience of being a child in a very formal and didactic early childhood education centre in her home country:

> …in [my home country] teaching is quite different, even in kindergarten. Everybody sits in front of … a study desk or a table and they put their hands behind [them] and I remember when I was there I learned how to draw things, like step by step, like the teacher is going to show you on the … board and everybody needs to follow exactly what they have done (Fleur/S1/TI/p. 24).

This experience, together with the teacher education she had encountered in New Zealand, had shaped her understanding of the role of the early childhood teachers as being:

> …more like extend[ing], comfort[ing] …and basically just help[ing] them. You can't force them to do something when they don't have any interest in that. You just like encourage them to join in first, like [trying new] food, if [you] don't like it, that doesn't matter…but actually try it and then we give you another one. So I think teaching always happens but probably not in [a] recognisable way, yeah. I normally don't think I teach them, I just help them (Fleur/S1/TI/p. 24).

The influence of these beliefs was visible in much of Fleur's practice. She was observed to engage frequently in resource-based teaching. For example, she would prepare complex art activities for children, and having done so she would stay alongside children while they experimented with the resources she had provided; however, she typically did not give the children any guidance as to how to use them (FN).

In the previous chapter, teachers' beliefs were found to have a moderate influence on the development of teachers' aspirations. In contrast, however, the findings reported here suggest that they had a powerful influence on teachers' curriculum decisions and consequent mode of teaching. Some beliefs had developed as a result of personal experience, as with Fleur and Viv. Others, however, seemed to have stemmed from teachers' professional experience, and their enculturation into the ethos of New Zealand early childhood education. Such beliefs related to the importance of children learning through play, the importance of recognising and supporting children's interests, and the importance of supporting children's dispositions to learning.

The influence of *Te Whāriki*.

In addition to teachers' beliefs and knowledge, the findings indicate that certain external factors also influenced teachers' curriculum decisions. The first of these was *Te Whāriki*. For example, in Setting 3 the teachers described an excursion out of the centre that they had organised to the local Maunga (mountain). This is described in the following vignette.

Visiting the local Maunga: Setting 3.

The teachers in Setting 3 described a recent excursion outside of the centre, to the local volcanic peak, which had at one time been a major Māori pā (fortified site). The teachers described their reason for planning this particular excursion as being "for the children to get to know their local area and their local history because it not only incorporates the physical area but the Māori history" (Sara/S3/FG/p. 7).

This excursion had required a lot of planning and preparation. The teachers had asked one of the parents, who was a local historian, to come and tell the children about the history of the maunga, and several parents had come along to provide extra supervision.

On the day of the excursion the children had walked up the mountain and explored the archaeological sites, including the sites of kumara storage pits, and the evidence of early fortifications. Nevertheless, the teachers had realised from their discussions with the children before the excursion that the aspect of the trip they were most excited about was the possibility that they might see the herd of cattle that grazed in the park. Therefore, Sarah had contacted the farmer, and he had supplied her with some hay so that at the end of the day they could spend some time feeding the cows (Sarah/S3/FG).

This excursion had clearly involved the teachers, and some of the centre parents, in a significant amount of careful planning and preparation. However, it had not apparently arisen from children's observed interest in local Māori history. Nor did it seem that the teachers had expected the excursion to stimulate such an interest in the children. Rather, the teachers described this excursion as being a way of "ticking the boxes" (Pat/S3/FG/p. 9) and fulfilling the requirements articulated in *Te Whāriki* to educate children about their local area, and about Māori culture. In particular, they referred to the expectation that children would "develop a knowledge of features of the land which are of local significance, such as the local river or mountain" (MoE, 1996, p. 90).

In their efforts to comply with the requirements of *Te Whāriki*, the teachers had engaged in proactive teaching. Similarly, teachers whose practice was in response to the expectations or requirements of stakeholders such as centre managers and parents were also seen to engage in proactive teaching.

The influence of Stakeholders.

The findings indicated that there were times when teachers' curriculum decision-making was made in response to the expectations of other stakeholders in early childhood education. Stakeholders included centre managers, children's parents, and professional colleagues.

For example, in Setting 2 the teachers were engaged in a continual process of assessing when children were ready to make the transition from the infants' room to the toddlers' room. One of the specific criteria for transition was that the child should be walking (FN). However, as the following vignette demonstrates, children were occasionally selected for transition before they had started walking independently. This happened as a result of pressure brought to bear on the teachers by the centre manager.

Becoming a toddler: Setting 2.

The centre manager had contacted Jackie and informed her that a new infant had been enrolled at the centre, and was due to start attending within the next two weeks. She therefore instructed Jackie to choose one of the current infants in her room to transition to the toddlers.

At that point none of the infants was walking independently, which was the standard expectation before children moved to the toddlers' room. However, Jackie did not have the option of maintaining her current roll; rather she had to create a vacancy. She discussed the issue with her colleagues, and together they decided to prepare David for transition. They chose him because he was one of the oldest infants in their room, and he was beginning to show signs of trying to walk. The teachers began to focus on encouraging David in his efforts to walk unaided. They started to insist that he walk with their assistance everywhere he wanted to go, rather than crawling. They also borrowed a trolley from the toddlers' room for him to push around. This was not usually found in the infants' room as the teachers did not agree with trying to accelerate children's physical development. However, on this occasion their intention to ensure that David was prepared for the coming transition overrode their objection to trying to promote his walking ability (FN).

As discussed above, this vignette is another example of proactive teaching resulting from external pressure being placed on teachers. In this case the source of pressure was management. In the case of the ready-for-school (RFS) programmes in Settings 1 and 3, however, the main source of pressure was parents.

In Setting 1, Debbie was of the opinion that school preparation programmes had become a widespread feature of early childhood centres in response to parental pressure, and she claimed that she was not in favour of a formal arrangement in which teachers would “sit down and do half an hour of reading and writing” (Debbie/S1/TI/p. 7) with children. Nevertheless, it seemed that the teachers in Setting 1 had succumbed to parental expectations, and an occasional “focused programme” (Fleur/S1/TI/p. 15) was organised for some of the older children

The focused programme consisted of a planned, didactic course of instruction in writing letters and numbers—an example of proactive teaching. Debbie, who had a leadership role in the centre, had delegated the responsibility of running this programme to Fleur (Fleur/S1/TI). However, the children did not respond to the programme with interest, and therefore Fleur did not run it often (Fleur/S1/TI/p. 16).

The inclusion of an RFS programme in Setting 1 was an example of parents’ influence on teachers’ curriculum decisions. However, it is also an example of an individual teacher’s practice being influenced by more senior teachers or, as in this case, teachers with leadership positions. Fleur’s participation in Setting 1’s RFS programme seemed to be at odds with her reluctance to consider herself as a teacher that was discussed earlier. When I asked her about this apparent contradiction, it was clear that she did not feel that she had been given any choice in the matter, and that she felt obliged to comply with the wishes of the lead teacher (Fleur/S1/TI).

This suggests that teachers’ colleagues, including senior teachers, or those who are in positions of authority, may also have a powerful influence on teachers’ curriculum decisions, and thus on their intentional practice. The RFS programme in Setting 3 is discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

The influence of the Education Review Office

A further influence on teachers’ curriculum decision-making was the expectations of external regulatory bodies such as the Education Review Office (ERO). Accountability and “performativity” (Kilderry, 2015, p. 1) are considered to place increasing pressure on early childhood teachers and their decision-making (Bullough Jr, Hall-Kenyon, MacKay, & Marshall, 2014; Kilderry, 2012, 2015).

Kilderry (2015) argued that early childhood teachers are increasingly subject to pressure concerning "standards, performance,…outcomes, outputs, [and] effectiveness" (p. 3), and that this may lead to a lack of confidence, and increased anxiety amongst teachers. In the present study, the teachers in Setting 3 had been advised that the ERO would be conducting a review in their centre within the next three months. The ERO typically conducts thorough reviews of all aspects of each early childhood centre on a three-yearly cycle.

It became apparent that the teachers were anxious about how to provide evidence of their performance, and outcomes that would satisfy ERO reviewers. For example, at their staff meetings they were beginning to review their learning documentation with a view to determining whether it would provide evidence of their practice (FN). The learning stories they recorded for children focused on making children's learning, rather than teachers or teaching, visible (Doc). As a consequence some of the teachers had started to consider which particular activities they could document, and how to document them in a way that would provide convincing evidence of their practice to reviewers. For example, Viv, who was particularly anxious about the ERO review as she had not experienced one before, described an activity related to water displacement that she had recently organised, and that she thought could be documented in a way that might make her teaching visible (Viv/S3/GVI). This activity, planned and directed by Viv, was another example of proactive teaching, thus further suggesting that proactive teaching was regarded by the teachers as the approach that was most evidential of their practice.

Summary

This chapter has described and discussed the second basic social process that was identified as part of the theoretical model of intentional teaching: teachers' curriculum decisions. The curriculum decisions that teachers were observed to make were analysed as belonging to one of three different categories, or modes of teaching. The modes of teaching were described as being distinct, yet closely related. Some teachers were seen to use all three approaches; other teachers' practice was considered mostly representative of one or other of them. Some teachers were observed to move freely and fluidly between them as demonstrated in the example Making Paper.

Resource-based teaching was described as encompassing the times when teachers' focus was on providing a well-resourced and stimulating environment, with minimal input or intervention from the adults. Activities and experiences were provided, and children chose whether or not to participate. Children who chose to participate did so alone or with their peers, and the teachers restricted their involvement to providing extra resources or assistance on request.

In contrast to resource-based teaching, proactive teaching referred to times when teachers had carefully pre-planned an activity or experience for children, or when they responded to children's emerging inquiry, with a focus on a particular purpose. That purpose could be related to a specific learning goal for children. These goals were often related to the development of a particular skill, such as fine motor skills. However, proactive teaching could also be related to the provision of an activity or experience that was expected to support the identified interest of a specific child or group of children. Proactive teaching may be the approach in which teachers are at greatest risk of treating their plans as a "script" (Mutton, Hagger, & Burn, 2011, p. 408) to be followed, thus possibly limiting their ability to respond in-the-moment to the unexpected or unpredictable. However, proactive teaching also seems to have been the approach that teachers adopted when they felt under pressure to comply with the demands or expectations of others. The reasons for this were unclear, and the teachers were unable to explain why this might have been so.

Responsive teaching was the third approach that was identified. At times, responsive teaching began with deliberate and proactive decisions. However, teachers taking a responsive approach were seen to use their plan as a starting point only; they appeared to be both willing and able to view their planning as "the anticipation of what *might* happen rather than their determination of what *would* happen" (Mutton et al., 2011, p. 408, emphasis original). Teachers using this approach to curriculum planning were considered most likely to engage closely with children in their learning, working alongside them to co-construct new learning (Jordan, 2009).

This chapter considered particularly the connection between teachers' aspirations and their mode of teaching. However, it also interrogated the data for evidence of other influences on teachers' decision-making and these were described and discussed. The influences that were identified were teachers' beliefs, the curriculum *Te Whāriki*, requirements and expectations of centre managers and parents, and the requirements of the ERO. In considering all of these factors, this chapter has added further to the answer to the research question “what factors might influence intentional practice in New Zealand early childhood settings?” by demonstrating the influence of teachers’ curriculum decisions, as expressed through their modes of teaching, on their practice. In addition, it has demonstrated some of the factors that might influence those decisions (Fig.6).

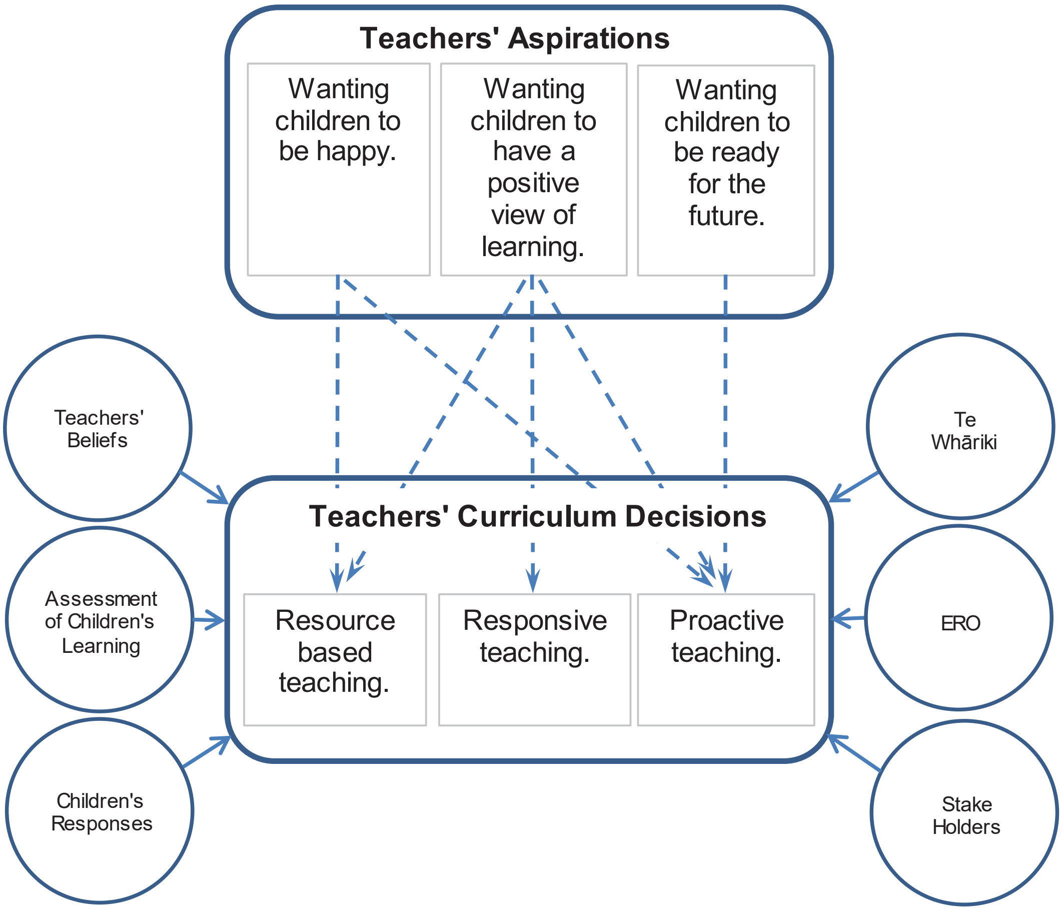
Teachers' Aspirations
Wanting children to be happy.
Wanting children to have a positive view of learning.
Wanting children to be ready for the future.
Teachers' Beliefs
Assessment of Children's Learning
Children's Responses
Te Whāriki
ERO
Stake Holders
Teachers' Curriculum Decisions
Resource based teaching.
Responsive teaching.
Proactive teaching.

Figure 6: Influences on teachers’ curriculum decisions.

This chapter has provided a partial answer to the research question: “in what ways might early childhood teachers in New Zealand understand the notion of intentional teaching?” by describing their some of the ways in which they responded to the idea. The teachers’ initial understanding was seen to be limited by a lack of knowledge about the topic. However, their intuitive response was that intentional teaching was equivalent to a formal programme of instruction that was likely to be teacher-led and inflexible. They tended to associate intentional teaching with school-age children. Perhaps unsurprisingly therefore, they did not consider intentional teaching to be an appropriate approach for early childhood. However, the teachers acknowledged that there was a time and place for a planned curriculum within early childhood education, provided it was based on children’s interests and it retained flexibility and responsiveness to children.

The chapter has also contributed towards answering the research question “How might early childhood teachers in New Zealand demonstrate intentional teaching in their practice?” through the use of vignettes. These were drawn from observations of teachers’ practice, and demonstrated clearly the interplay between their aspirations and their curriculum decisions, and how these affected teachers’ intentional practice.

In the following chapter the interactions between teachers’ aspirations and curriculum decisions are demonstrated further, with the use of multiple vignettes. The chapter will clearly demonstrate how these two processes together form the foundation of intentional teaching practice.

7. Constructing the Theory: Teachers' Intentional Practice

Thus far, this thesis has outlined the first two basic social processes (Charmaz, 2014) of the grounded theory that has been constructed by this study. These were: teachers' aspirations for children, and teachers' curriculum decisions as expressed in their modes of teaching. Three aspirations were identified: wanting children to be happy, wanting children to have a positive view of learning, and wanting children to be ready for the future. Similarly, three approaches to curriculum decision-making were identified: resource-based teaching, proactive teaching, and responsive teaching. The relationship between all of these factors was illustrated in Figure 6 (p. 143).

This chapter reports the findings related to the third, and final, social process that was identified: teachers' intentional practice. It demonstrates, with multiple examples from practice, how teachers' aspirations, mediated through their curriculum decisions and mode of teaching, led to intentional teaching practice.

In order to illustrate the dynamic nature of intentional practice, and the move from aspiration to action, I have changed some of the terminology used. Thus, the term 'promoting children's happiness' is used to refer to the intentional practice associated with enacting teachers' aspiration 'wanting children to be happy'. Similarly, the term 'fostering children's learning' refers to intentional practice related to the aspiration 'wanting children to have a positive view of learning', and the term 'preparing children for transitions' refers to intentional practice related to the aspiration 'wanting children to be ready for the future'.

These three areas of intentional practice are treated in this chapter as discrete entities. Nevertheless, as with teachers' aspirations and modes of teaching, there is significant crossover between them. This chapter contains multiple vignettes drawn from the findings. Vignettes were introduced in Chapter 6 (p. 113). They are illustrative examples of teachers' practice.

I have analysed the vignettes included in this chapter for evidence of teachers' aspirations. I have also analysed them for evidence of types of curriculum decisions. This chapter will demonstrate that when teachers were focused on promoting children's happiness, they tended to make either resource-based or proactive decisions. In contrast, when they were focused on preparing children for transitions, the only type of decision-making that they were observed to implement was proactive.

Teachers who were focused on fostering children's learning were observed making resource-based, proactive, and responsive decisions. Many of the vignettes included in this chapter therefore illustrate aspects of more than one approach to curriculum decisions. In this way, the complex nature of intentional teaching is made clear (Fig. 7).

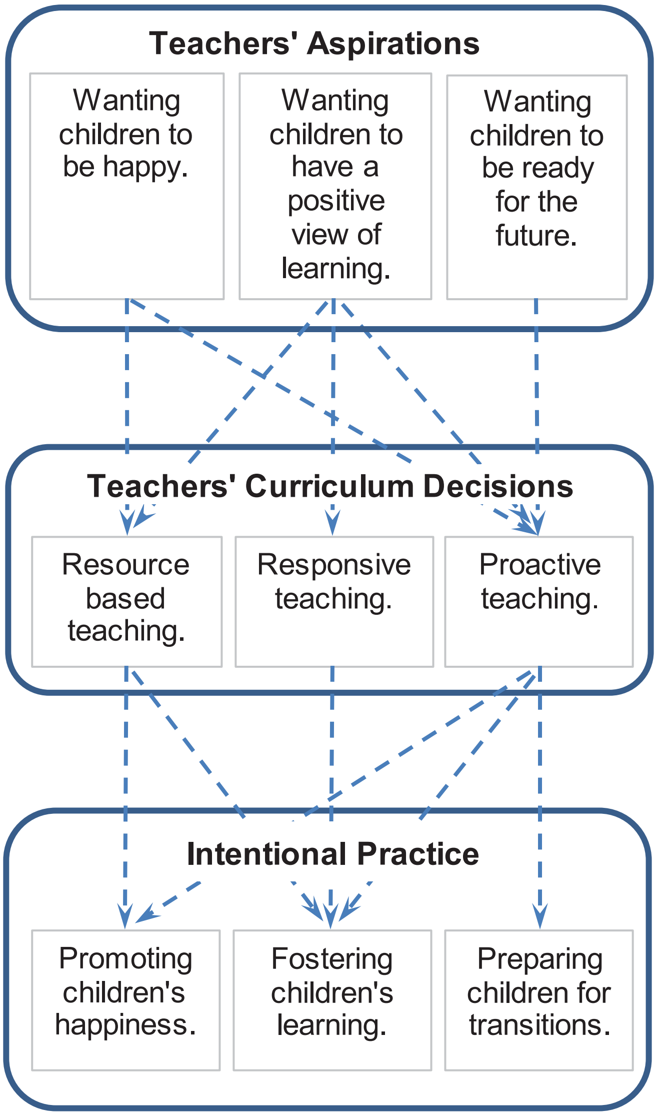
Teachers' Aspirations
Wanting children to be happy.
Wanting children to have a positive view of learning.
Wanting children to be ready for the future.
Teachers' Curriculum Decisions
Resource based teaching.
Responsive teaching.
Proactive teaching.
Intentional Practice
Promoting children's happiness.
Fostering children's learning.
Preparing children for transitions.

Figure 7: Intentional teaching: The third process.

The three areas of intentional practice identified in this chapter were not necessarily articulated by the teachers. However, when they were presented with this theoretical model at the group validation interview (GVI) (see p. 63) they recognised and acknowledged that these intentions were motivators for their practice. They also recognised that the intentions "cross over…. [for example] nurturing…crosses over with learning" (Sarah/S3/GVI/p. 3).

This chapter draws on multiple types of data. As in the previous findings chapters, and consistent with CGT, it discusses the findings in relation to literature that was critically reviewed in Chapter 2, as well as literature that was specifically sampled as part of the process of analysis (see p. 51).

Promoting Children's Happiness

As indicated earlier, promoting children's happiness is the term used in this chapter to describe the active expression of teachers' aspiration for children to be happy. Teachers interpreted the notion of children's happiness in two ways. In the first, children's happiness was associated with their having fun. In the second, children's happiness was associated with their socio-emotional wellbeing, and in particular with their having close and trusting relationships with teachers, and friendships with their peers.

The findings reveal that teachers who were focusing on ensuring that children were having fun frequently, but not always, did so through resource-based teaching. They provided interesting and appealing resources, together with plenty of opportunity to use those resources with minimal adult involvement. Most often, ensuring children were having fun was one aspect of a more complex scenario, in which teachers were also seeking to promote children's learning, as in the vignette Making Paper (p. 121). Occasionally, as in the following vignette, it seemed that providing children with fun was a teacher's primary intention.

Teddy-bears' picnic: Setting 3.

A major charitable organisation had launched a fund-raising appeal, as part of which early childhood centres were encouraged to host teddy-bears' picnics for children, and to encourage parents to make a donation on behalf of every child that attended. Pat, in her leadership capacity in the centre, organised a teddy-bears' picnic one morning, for the children who regularly attended on that day. Parents were asked to drop off their child and teddy, and their donation to the charity.

The teachers had prepared extensively for this occasion, baking treats for morning tea, decorating the centre with balloons, and providing face paints for the children that Viv and Sarah applied. They had organised party games, and the children spent the whole morning enjoying a party (FN).

This picnic was organised ostensibly to raise funds for a recognised and popular charity. However, the reason for it was not apparently discussed with the children (FN). As far as they were concerned, this event was a fun break from routine, and a party-like occasion. It had involved all of the teachers in a considerable amount of planning and preparation, and they had been under no obligation to support the charity in this way. However, it seemed they had decided to take the opportunity to spend a whole morning focused on having fun. They seemed satisfied that having fun was a “meaningful, or…sufficient way for children to spend their time” (Vintimilla, 2014, pp. 81-82).

In general however, teachers’ aspiration for children to be happy was expressed through the ways they sought to promote children’s happiness through relationships, either teacher-child, or child-child. The promotion of children’s happiness through relationships is recognised as being one aspect of effective, and intentional teaching in early childhood education (Bredekamp, 2011; Quan-McGimpsey et al., 2011), as is the development of positive emotional environments to support children’s learning (Blay & Ireson, 2009). Bredekamp (2011) claimed that effective, and therefore intentional, teachers “develop positive relationships with each child, provide engaging learning environments, [and] *intentionally teach social skills*” (p. 246, emphasis added).

In the context of caring for very young children, the literature emphasises the importance of secure relationships between adults and children (Bowlby, 2005; Degotardi & Pearson, 2009; Sakellariou & Rentzou, 2011). The onus for developing these relationships lies on the teacher, and teachers have been found to have specific intentional strategies for developing these relationships (Quan-McGimpsey et al., 2011). These frequently involve a primary caregiving model, in which a particular teacher is assigned responsibility for an individual child (Colmer, Murphy, & Rutherford, 2011; Degotardi & Pearson, 2009). In the present study however, the teachers who worked most closely with very young children—those in Settings 1 and 2—chose not to do this. Rather, they sought to ensure that all of the children became familiar with all of the teachers, while still acknowledging children’s right to have a preference for one particular teacher (FN). The argument for taking this approach was based on practicalities; the realities of staffing rosters meant that an individual teacher’s availability could not always be guaranteed (FN).

In Setting 2, therefore, the teachers endeavoured to be alert to signals about which teacher each infant was most comfortable with, and they then tried to ensure that teacher was available to that infant as much as practicable (FN). They all expressed their intention to be “nurturing [to the infants] …getting them settled, making them feel ok to be away from their parents…it’s almost just like being a mother to heaps of babies” (Jackie/S2/TI/p. 2). In order to achieve that goal they ensured that they had close communication with parents in order to gain insight into the infant’s individual routine, which was then followed in the centre (FN).

In Setting 1, the enrolment information provided to parents stated that “we spend a lot of time fostering …relationships” (Doc). As part of helping children to settle at their centre, the teachers in Setting 1 made deliberate attempts to ensure that all children were comfortable with all of the teachers, as seen in the following vignette.

Planning for relationships: Setting 1.

During the focus group, the teachers had been discussing the issue of curriculum planning, and they began to talk about the areas of their practice that were most likely to be planned. It seemed that these were to do with ensuring that children felt happy at the centre: “if you see somebody sitting over there and not really happy, then you want to bring them in or…make them feel confident and like they do belong; you work purposefully with them” (Debbie/S1/FG/p. 31). Debbie then gave a specific example. She referred back to a child who had started at the centre during the previous year. This child had developed a close relationship with one of the teachers, but had appeared very shy around Debbie, and refused to have anything to do with her. Debbie’s response had been to get together with the other teachers and “[sit] down and [come] up with a plan to get her more comfortable with me, and we worked really hard on it…really steering the child into a relationship…and that was very purposeful” (Debbie/S1/FG/p. 32).

When considering activities or experiences for children, Debbie considered herself to be a non-planner, as seen earlier (p. 121). She seemed to pride herself on her relaxed and spontaneous approach to curriculum matters, acknowledging that she struggled with formal planning (Debbie/S1/TI). However, in this instance, it seemed that the value she placed on having a good relationship with each child at the centre outweighed her reluctance to develop a formal plan of action. She therefore developed a strategy to overcome the child’s antipathy towards her. Because this strategy was goal-oriented it can be considered an example of proactive teaching.

Debbie's stated reluctance to plan was therefore contradicted by her actions. This can perhaps be understood when considered in the light of the notion of teachers' personal hierarchy of aspirations (Lompscher, 2000). It seems possible that her primary aspiration for children was relationship-based, and that when confronted with a situation such as that described in this vignette, she was willing to override her objection to pre-planning activities or experiences, and to engage in careful planning in order to establish relationship and ensure the child's happiness. The findings from the present study suggest therefore that a teacher may be most likely to engage in careful and thoughtful planning, or to engage in proactive or responsive teaching, when enacting their prioritised aspiration for children.

This is further supported by the findings that describe Tracy's practice. Tracy believed that children needed warm and secure relationships with the teachers before they could begin to make friends with other children, and many of the statements she made throughout this study indicate that her primary aspiration for children was for them to find happiness through relationships:

> I like [the children] to feel safe and comfortable and valued, so I have always made an effort…to greet them every morning so that they…know they are valued with me and that they are comfortable to come to me…And then once they are safe and they are happy then friendships flow from that (Tracy/S3/FG/p. 12).

Tracy also believed that children's emotional wellbeing was the foundation for future learning: "I just think….when the friends are made and established and then they [the children] are happy and then they start learning" (Tracy/S3/TI/p. 18). Further, she expected that the confidence and happiness that children developed when they formed friendships would provide a solid foundation for a child's learning, and for their future success in all aspects of life. As a consequence, much of Tracy's practice was focused on supporting children to make friends.

For example, the following vignette describes the first time that Helen, a shy three year old girl, detached herself from Tracy and chose to go and play with another child. Tracy interpreted this event as being highly significant for Helen, and as being a signal that Helen was now ready to form friendships and start learning.

Jumping squares: Setting 3.

Helen, a girl of nearly 3 years of age, was considered by her parents and the teachers to be poorly co-ordinated and lacking in confidence physically (Tracy/S3/TI/p. 24). On this occasion she approached Tracy in the garden to show her that she had learned to jump with both feet off the ground. Tracy admired this new skill, and then got some chalk and drew two squares near each other on the concrete and asked Helen if she could stand in one square and jump into the other. Initially Helen was unsure, but Tracy encouraged her and held her hand for her first attempt. When Tracy realised that making a gap between the squares had made it too difficult for Helen, she redrew them, making them touching. Then she added some more squares in a line along the concrete.

One of the older girls came to see what Tracy was doing, and she stood nearby watching. Tracy invited her to come and join in. The older girl initially wanted to count the squares, and Tracy listened while she did so, and supplied her with support when she hesitated. Then Tracy suggested that she try jumping along the squares. Tracy then suggested that the older girl take turns with Helen at jumping, and she encouraged Helen to participate in this game.

After several turns, the older girl turned to Helen, and suggested that they go and play somewhere else in the garden. The two girls then ran off together to play (FN).

In discussion with Tracy later, it became apparent that her primary intention at this time had been to help Helen develop social confidence, and friendships. Tracy explained that when Helen had first joined the centre her older brother had been attending, so she had spent all her time shadowing him, and not engaging with other children. Once her brother had gone to school Helen had transferred her attachment to Tracy and “she sort of became my little person that I worked with” (Tracy/S3/TI/p. 24). This had worried Tracy, and she had spent time trying to help Helen develop friendships with other children. The incident reported in this vignette was the first time that Helen had voluntarily left Tracy’s side to go and play with another child and Tracy was delighted to see this happening.

However, this vignette illustrates an event that was complex and multi-layered. It seemed that more was happening than just the beginning of a new friendship. The incident began with Tracy recognising, and responding thoughtfully, to Helen’s new-found physical skill. She provided her with a new activity designed to provide her with the opportunity to demonstrate and practise this skill while having fun. When it seemed that the activity was too hard for Helen, Tracy adapted it accordingly. At this point, this vignette could be interpreted as an example of proactive teaching focused on ensuring that Helen was having fun while at the same time practising and perfecting her skill at jumping.

However, when the older girl approached and wanted to join in, it seemed that Tracy's focus changed, and incorporated: wanting Helen to have fun, wanting Helen to practice her new skill, and promoting a possible friendship. Tracy engaged the older child's attention by deliberately making the activity more complex and thus interesting for her, and then decided to adapt the activity again to promote social interaction. This was therefore an example of more than one intention in action at one time. However, Tracy's later interpretation of the event indicated that her primary intention had been to promote Helen's happiness (FN).

This vignette illustrates Tracy responding in a proactive way to a spontaneous event. Her response supported her aspiration for Helen to be happy both through having fun, and through promoting a new friendship. This vignette also demonstrates Tracy's thoughtful and reflective practice, as she adapted the activity when it seemed too difficult for Helen, and then again when it seemed too easy for the older child.

After this event, Tracy explained that she thought that now Helen was starting to feel more secure socially with other children she would be happy and thus ready to start learning. This suggests that alongside Tracy's primary aspiration for Helen to be happy was another aspiration: to foster Helen's learning. However, she focused on her happiness first.

The findings from this present study support the literature that suggests that early childhood teachers place value on the emotional tone that is set in their centres (e.g., Blay & Ireson, 2009). They also support the literature that recognises teachers' efforts to promote relationships between and with children as an expression of intentional teaching (e.g., Bredekamp, 2011; Epstein, 2007).

Wanting children to be happy seemed to be of supreme importance to the teachers in this study. The vignettes presented here demonstrate the ways in which teachers' intentional practice focused on ensuring that children were happy. However, these events were not documented. Teachers did not appear to consider documenting times when children were unhappy, or the efforts they had made to promote their happiness. It seemed that they preferred to communicate information about children's emotional state to parents verbally (FN).

One of the reasons that Tracy gave for promoting children's happiness was her belief that children's learning was contingent upon their happiness. The findings relating to teachers' intentional practice regarding children's cognitive learning are the focus of the following section.

Fostering Children's Learning

In both Epstein (2007) and the *Revised Statement* (2009), much of the focus is on how early childhood teachers might, in a developmentally appropriate way, teach children a variety of topics such as language, literacy, maths, science and social studies. In addition, much of the research literature into intentional teaching that was critically reviewed in Chapter 2, investigated the ways in which teachers may introduce specific content to young children, such as scientific concepts (Edwards & Cutter-Mackenzie, 2011; 2013; Edwards et al., 2012; Fleer & Hoban, 2012), literacy (Algozzine et al., 2011; Lonigan & Shanahan, 2010), and numeracy (Varol, Farran, Bilbrey, Vorhaus, & Hofer, 2012). These research studies positioned the teachers as knowledgeable about the subject matter, and purposeful about finding the appropriate way in which to communicate this matter to very young children.

The findings from the present study, however, suggest that the teachers did not have such a subject or discipline focus in their teaching, thus perhaps reflecting the literature that acknowledges that the question of how and when to engage in teaching children specific content knowledge is still contentious within early childhood education in New Zealand (Hedges, 2014; Hedges & Cullen, 2005). Philosophically, the notion of early childhood teachers engaging children with specific subject or discipline knowledge may appear challenging to teachers whose allegiance is to developmental notions of children's development, and to the view of teachers as facilitators of learning (McArdle & McWilliam, 2005; Siraj-Blatchford, 2009). In the present study, many of the teachers appeared reluctant to describe their activity as teaching, preferring to describe their role as supporting or encouraging children's learning. For example, when I talked to Fleur about the ready-for-school (RFS) programme she was responsible for organising (p. 140), she was quick to explain that "I don't *do* anything…I didn't mean to *teach* them" (Fleur, S1/TI/p. 23). However, the findings suggest that the teachers' reluctance to introduce children overtly to discipline knowledge may have been based in the lack of guidance given by *Te Whāriki* to teachers about what subject knowledge children are expected to acquire from their experience in early childhood education (Blaiklock, 2011; Hedges, 2014).

Te Whāriki contains the following suggestions of areas of knowledge that children might be expected to acquire through participating in early childhood education: "knowledge about the world" (MoE, 1996, p. 44), about "how to keep themselves healthy" (p. 48), and that "personal worth does not depend on today's behaviour or ability" (p. 50); knowledge about "how to keep themselves safe from harm" (p. 52), "about the wider community and environment" (p. 55), and "about the role of the wider world of work" (p. 56); "knowledge and skill…in at least one language" (p. 76) and "knowledge that print conveys a message" (p. 79); "knowledge that trying things out, exploration, and curiosity are important" (p. 84), and "knowledge that playing with ideas and materials, with no objective in mind, can be an enjoyable…approach to learning" (p. 84). However, it is left to the teachers at each individual early childhood centre to interpret these notions of knowledge, and to determine how best to ensure that children have the opportunity to gain such knowledge.

Perhaps as a consequence of the influence of *Te Whāriki*, or the way in which the teachers interpreted it, the teachers in this study not only seemed reluctant to describe themselves as teachers, many of them seemed equally reluctant to engage with the notion of introducing children to conceptual or factual knowledge, except in an almost covert manner, as in the vignette Ramps and Cars, next.

Ramps and cars: Setting 3.

Daniel (3 years 9 months) came outside with a number of small vehicles in his hand. He went to the top of the slide and looked as though he was preparing to send the cars down the slide. Tracy spotted him about to do this and quickly intervened, reminding Daniel that sending toys down the slide was not allowed, as someone had been hurt recently by an object rushing down the slide and knocking into them. As an alternative, Tracy suggested that they make a ramp somewhere. She encouraged Daniel to move away from the top of the slide, and come to the top of a sloping part of the garden instead. Then she got a large tray out of the shed, which she turned upside down and placed on the slope to make a ramp.

Once the ramp was in place, Daniel started whizzing his cars down it, but as the ramp had no sides the cars fell off easily, and he quickly became frustrated. Tracy then found a length of plastic spouting than she placed next to the ramp, and suggested he drive the cars down that instead. This worked really well as the high sides of the spouting prevented the cars from falling off, and Tracy sat with Daniel for a while talking about the cars and how fast they were going.

After a while one of the vehicles—a plane—became stuck; it was wedged across the spouting. Tracy suggested that Daniel try and use some of the other vehicles to dislodge it. He pushed a car down the ramp towards the plane, but failed to make the plane move. He tried again, pushing this car a little harder, but again with no success. He tried a third time, to no avail; the plane remained wedged across the spouting. Tracy wondered aloud what would happen if he used a bigger car. So Daniel found a truck that would fit in the spouting ramp, and gave it a mighty push. Success! All of the trapped vehicles were released and made their way to the bottom (FN).

Tracy's initial response to Daniel appeared to have been informed by a desire to uphold the centre's rules about what should and should not go down the slide. During her interview later she viewed the video footage of this incident that I had captured, and was able to describe her thinking at the time.

She explained that there had been some recent incidents in which toys had been pushed down the slide and children standing at the bottom had been hurt. Since then a blanket ban on pushing toys of any size down the slide had been in place (Tracy/S3/TI).   However, once she had managed that aspect of the situation, she then decided to stay with Daniel, and provide him with the help he needed to explore his chosen activity further. She had recognised his interest, and decided to respond to it with appropriate resources.

As a result of her decision to stay with Daniel, it seemed that Tracy was able to engage him in problem-solving, and perhaps to introduce him to some scientific concepts, such as velocity and mass, in a "roundabout way" (Fleer, 2009, p. 1082), although she did not articulate these specifically. I interpreted this as an example of responsive teaching.

After a while some other children noticed what Daniel and Tracy were doing and came to investigate, and the vignette continues:

A group of other children, boys and girls had come to see what was happening with the ramp and the pipe. Tracy produced another piece of spouting that she placed next to the original, and the children started to have races to see which ramp was fastest. One of the other boys began to try moving the ramp, lifting it, and changing the angle, to see what effect that had on the speed of the cars (FN).

When the other children arrived, Tracy provided some additional equipment in order to include them. She explained later that as well as seeing this as a great learning opportunity for children, she had also seen it as a potential way of helping Daniel, whom she perceived as being a solitary child, to make friends with some of the other children (FN). In addition to being an example of fostering children's learning therefore, this vignette could also be interpreted as an example of Tracy promoting children's happiness.

Then Tracy decided to put the second piece of pipe below the first, with a gap, and told the children she wanted to see if the cars could jump from one to the other. There was some discussion about what the children needed to do to make the cars jump, and Tracy suggested that they should try and see if sending them down the pipe faster made a difference.

The first attempts were successful, and the cars managed to jump the gap between one pipe and the other. The children then started to experiment with making the gap different widths, to see what worked the best. Eventually Tracy was called away, and during her absence the children rearranged the equipment again, and started to pour water down the pipes to see if they could make a water slide for cars (FN).

By offering the children suggestions about how they might use the materials she had provided, Tracy appeared to be continuing to introduce scientific concepts into the children's play, but in a covert way. Fleer (2009) argued that it is important for teachers to make explicit the concepts that they are intending children to learn, as otherwise there is a likelihood that children will not learn what the teacher expected. In this incident with the ramps and cars, however, it seemed that Tracy was willing to make suggestions that might provoke children's thinking, but that otherwise she was content to rely on the resources to stimulate children's learning. It was not clear if she had any particular intention for what she wanted the children to learn from participating in this activity.

I interpreted this incident as an example of Tracy introducing scientific concepts to children, and simultaneously facilitating group friendships, using resource-based and responsive teaching. However, when I discussed this incident with her later, using video-footage to stimulate her memory, Tracy explained that her response to Daniel had been influenced by a recent Professional Development course she had attended on children's schema. In particular she referred to a schema that she had heard about: "I can't remember what it's called now, [I think] they call it …'dabbing' where they just want that 'boom' at the end…they want the reaction at the end" (Tracy/S3/TI/p. 11). She had interpreted Daniel's interest in pushing cars down a ramp as an expression of this particular schema:

> So when I saw [Daniel] putting the aeroplanes down the slide… I thought okay I had better stop this [for safety reasons] but I don't want to put an end to it because he is wanting to see that ["dabbing"] at the end. So that's when I thought what can I do? What can I do? So I just put the pipes down the side and sort of [waited to] see where it would go from and as you see the interest just sort of grew (Tracy/S3/TI/p. 10).

Tracy's reflections reveal that it is possible for one incident to be interpreted in different ways. They also reveal some of the complexity that is inherent in intentional teaching practice in early childhood education, and some of the multiple decisions a teacher must make. However, when she documented this incident later in Daniel's portfolio, she did not make any mention of her actions, responses, or decisions (Doc).

Reflexive memo.

This incident was one that I had managed to capture on film, and I played the footage to Tracy during her individual interview. As she watched it, she was able to recall her thinking at the time, and explain it clearly to me. In spite of some of the challenges that the use of video presented, this was an occasion on which it was particularly valuable.

Te Whāriki does suggest the "acquisition of domain-specific knowledge" (MoE, 1996, p. 21) as an example of an area of child development that early childhood teachers should be aware of. However, instead of focusing on specifically required content knowledge, the learning outcomes suggested in *Te Whāriki* are "indicative rather than definitive" (p. 44) and include the development of children's working theories, and their "dispositions that encourage learning" (p. 44). In addition, *Te Whāriki* states that the curriculum within an early childhood centre should "build on a child's current needs, strengths, and interests by allowing children choices, and by encouraging them to take responsibility for their learning" (p. 20). The findings from this study demonstrate that the participating teachers' intentional practice related to children's learning was based on identifying and supporting children's interests, encouraging and nurturing their dispositions, and to a lesser degree identifying and developing their working theories.

For example, the emphasis within *Te Whāriki* on the importance of framing a curriculum around children's interests was clearly reflected in how the teachers described the ways in which they fostered children's learning. When I asked the teachers how they thought that they contributed to children's learning, many of them referred to the ways in which they sought to support, or perhaps extend, children's interests. For example, Gillian considered that it was important to give children time and opportunity to "construct…their own learning" (Gillian/S1/TI/p. 4); and Hannah rejected the notion of planning curriculum in advance, stating that they were "just there to support [the children's] interest" (Hannah/S1/FG/p. 3). Lisa considered that a curriculum should be planned; however, she stipulated that the basis for planning should be the children's interests (Lisa/S2/FG). The following vignette describes a lengthy period of learning about dinosaurs that began as a planned response to children's recognised interests, and that was designed to foster their further learning.

Hunting for dinosaurs: Setting 3.

It was Viv's turn to lead the morning mat time. She arrived disguised in a wig and wearing a white lab coat, and introduced herself as Professor Fossil. She explained that she was there to tell them about her job, but that she could not remember what her job was. However, she had a bag of tools with her, which she tipped out onto the mat, and explained what they were for. One was for digging, one for brushing dirt off fossils, and so on. Eventually, with the children's help and suggestions, she "remembered" that she was a palaeontologist. She spent the rest of the mat time describing to the children what a palaeontologist did.

Following the mat time the children had their morning tea. During this period, Viv quietly went outside and buried several large bones in the sandpit, including a bovine femur, and half of a sheep's ribcage, that she had acquired from a butcher some weeks prior, and had cleaned and bleached ready to bring to the centre. In addition to burying the bones, she also placed some pictures of dinosaur skeletons around the garden and went inside.

After morning tea the children went back into the garden. It was not long before the first bone was discovered in the sand. This led to a frenzy of excitement amongst the children, as everyone rushed to see if they could find one too. By the end of the morning all of the bones had been excavated, and some children were starting to compare them with the pictures they had found in the garden. Most of them, however, were still digging, and asking the teachers to come and join them in the sandpit and help them to look for more bones. Not long after that it was time for the children to go home, and reports from the parents indicated that the children's excitement was communicated to the families (FN).

Viv was aware that many of the boys at the centre were interested in dinosaurs. The centre was already decorated with some posters about dinosaurs, and related books were available to the children (FN). This activity was clearly designed to support that interest; however, by introducing the character of a palaeontologist, and some novel and intriguing resources, Viv had taken a proactive stance towards challenging and extending the children's interest.

A week later the excitement had not abated. Viv had re-buried the bones several times in different parts of the garden, and reported that she was starting to prepare some other items from home to bring in and bury because she thought it "was all about the searching" (Viv/FN).

It was apparent that Viv's plan to capture children's imagination and stimulate their interest in dinosaur skeletons and palaeontology was successful. A lot of the children told me about the bones they had found, and many of the children's portfolios featured photos of their digging (Doc), although Viv's preparations and plans for this activity were not mentioned.

It was clear from Viv's comments reported above that she was continually reflecting on the activity, and making decisions about how best to develop it. She had apparently concluded that the children's main interest had ceased to be in dinosaurs, and was more focused on searching for, and discovering, buried treasures. At this point, Viv had ceased her direct involvement with the children. She also acknowledged that she had abandoned her original focus of stimulating children's learning about dinosaurs, and was focusing instead on providing children with a very different, resource-based experience. The vignette continues:

For one child at least, it was all about the dinosaurs. Adam (4 years 6 months) decided he wanted to write to Professor Fossil and let her know about the exciting discoveries in the garden. With Viv's help he was crafting a letter, using pictures and symbols to express himself. He seemed confident that Professor Fossil would be able to understand his letter. However, he asked Viv to write on the envelope.

I asked Viv later, when Adam was unable to hear, what she was going to do in response to the letter, and she replied that she didn't "really know where this is going, it's just evolving" (Viv, FN).

When Adam decided to write to Professor Fossil, he approached Viv for help. He seemed entirely unaware that Viv was Professor Fossil. Viv helped Adam in a way that was deliberately non-directive, in keeping with her belief that it was more appropriate to understand and build on children's existing knowledge than to correct it (Viv/S3/TI). Consequently, Adam's letter was written using a variety of pictures, letters and symbols that he chose to represent the words he was saying. However, he seemed to realise that people in the Post Office might not be able to understand his writing, so he asked Viv to write on the envelope. Adam's decision to write this letter took Viv by surprise. She had not anticipated that this would happen, and she was unsure of how she would proceed. She agreed to help him post the letter, but she told me that she had not expected that anyone would actually write to Professor Fossil, and that she was going to have to think very carefully about how she should reply to the letter, and what she should do next (FN). This demonstrates one of the particular characteristics of responsive teaching: its open-ended nature, and the consequent challenge to teachers who may find they have to manage a situation that they had not anticipated.

A willingness to engage with uncertainty is a characteristic of responsive teaching. Responsive teachers may be often faced with uncertainty. They must confront the possibility that their efforts to engage with children in their learning may not always work as they intended (Fleer, 2010, 2015; Hunter, 2012; Leggett & Ford, 2013). Sometimes, as in the previous example, the unexpected developments are positive and demonstrate a high level of engagement between teacher and child.

At other times it seems that interpreting children's interests can be complex and frustrating, and cause teachers to feel disappointed with their responses to children as seen in the following vignette.

Drawing snails: Setting 1.

Gillian was sitting at a low table in the garden. It was early afternoon, and children were starting to come outside after their rest. Some children came to join Gillian at the table where she had some paper, pencils and crayons, and scissors. They were talking quietly to each other, and one of the boys was trying to draw a circle with encouragement from Gillian. Then Georgia, a four-year-old girl came to the table and sat down. She watched what the other children were doing, and then started talking about birthday cards. It seemed that her birthday was looming (at least in her thinking) and the subject of cards was important to her. She asked Gillian to fold a piece of paper to make a card, and reminded her that she had done this before. She was very clear about the type of card she wanted – and gave Gillian instructions about folding the paper in four to make it look right. Gillian obliged, and then passed the paper to Georgia.

Then Georgia asked Gillian to draw a snail. Rather than oblige, Gillian began talking to Georgia about snails, what they looked like and how she might try and draw one herself. Georgia persisted in asking Gillian to draw the snail for her, and Gillian persisted in trying to encourage Georgia to do it for herself. Then Gillian suggested that they go for a walk together around the garden to see if they could find a snail to look at. Georgia took Gillian's hand and they started to go and explore, but then Georgia let go and walked away (FN).

Understanding what drives a child's interest or exploration is a complex process. Reflecting on this incident during her individual interview, Gillian explained that she had learned from experience that doing something for Georgia once would lead to repeated requests for the same thing again. Therefore she had decided not to draw the snail for Georgia, but to try and encourage her to think about the process for herself. Unfortunately, Georgia had not responded positively to Gillian's suggestion. Gillian was unsure why this was, but wondered whether she had misinterpreted Georgia's thinking. She speculated that perhaps Georgia's interest was "not really about snails, but it [was] about the drawing" (Gillian/S1/TI/p. 19) and she wondered whether, had she responded differently, she might have been successful in discovering and extending Georgia's actual interest.

Overall it seemed that Gillian was dissatisfied with her response to Georgia, and disappointed that she had been unable to interpret and challenge the child’s thinking at that time: “I think it wasn’t meaningful responding because nothing happened” (Gillian/S1/TI/p. 17).

Hedges (2010) argued that children’s interests exist on a continuum from “activity-based play interests” (p. 30) to “continuing interests” (p. 30) to interests that relate to children’s “fundamental inquiry questions” (p. 30). She suggested that many early childhood teachers are only aware of children’s activity-based interests; they observe children’s play, notice the children’s interest in a particular activity, and respond to this perceived interest by providing further resources, as in resource-based teaching. However, it is likely that children’s activities in an early childhood centre will have been influenced or limited by the nature of the resources provided (Ailwood, 2003); they may not, therefore, be an accurate indicator of the child’s interest. In the above vignette, Gillian was apparently trying to look beyond the child’s activity, and respond to her in a way that would provoke her thinking and support her interest, as Gillian interpreted it. This was an example of a teacher trying to enact their aspiration to foster children’s learning, by making curriculum decisions that were described in the previous chapter as responsive teaching. It was also a demonstration of the potential complexity of that particular approach to intentional teaching. As indicated earlier, this was consistent with the literature that suggested that that teachers’ intentions for children’s learning may not always be realised (Fleer, 2015; Hunter & Sonter, 2012). In addition, Hunter (2012) warned teachers that “intentional teaching involves looking, listening and interacting with children to see if what children are learning is what we intended” (p. 31). This seemed to reflect the idea proposed by Robinson and Bartlett (2011) that intentional teaching equated to being in tune with learners’ intentions, and the implication of that statement, that to be thus in tune may be difficult to achieve.

In the present study it seemed that some teachers interpreted the notion of supporting children’s interests to mean that they should not initiate anything new. For example, the teachers in Setting 1 were seen to make the same, or very similar, materials available in the indoor area almost every morning, only introducing new items if and when children requested them (FN). Such an approach runs the risk of reducing children’s play to being “repetitive…and recreational rather than educational” (Ailwood, 2003, p. 291). Furthermore, this repetitive approach suggests that teachers may believe children’s interests to be either unchanging or created anew each time they attended the centre, ready for the teachers to discover. It fails to recognise that children's interests may continue over a period of time, and be expressed in different ways across multiple areas of the curriculum (Hedges, 2010).

The teachers in Setting 3 discussed how they had been struggling with the notion of a curriculum based entirely on children's current interests. It seemed that they had started to find such an approach quite constraining, and they had been questioning whether it was could be acceptable to design a curriculum that both reflected children's existing interests and introduced new ideas or "provocations" (Viv/S3/FG/p. 8) in order to stimulate new interests. As a result, two of the teachers from Setting 3, Pat and Sarah, had taken the opportunity to visit some other early childhood centres to observe how they planned their curriculum. They had observed curricula that included activities planned around children's interests, as well as planned activities that were not. Some of these were based around major religious festivals; others around local current events. This appeared to have both challenged their thinking, and reassured them:

> …we thought the requirements were more on children's interests and strengths so that is what you plan around. But the centres we have [visited]…have some planned activities, especially around [events like] Christmas and Easter…so [that is what] we are going to be doing (Pat/S3/FG/p. 8).

Reflexive memo.

Christmas and Easter can hardly be described as new ideas to introduce to the children, and it was surprising that the teachers chose those events to describe their new understanding of curriculum planning. However, this comment indicates perhaps that the notion of supporting children's interests has become both powerful and constraining for teachers. It suggests that some teachers may have interpreted the imperative to focus on children's interests in a way that had effectively restricted their decision-making or choices to a narrow spectrum of activities that easily became repetitive and lacking in challenge.

In addition to trying to identify and support children's interests, the teachers in this study were also concerned with fostering children's dispositions to learning, and working theories. As already indicated, these are the two learning outcomes of early childhood education identified in *Te Whāriki*.

Both dispositions and working theories are said to comprise children's "knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (MoE, 1996, p. 44). Children's learning dispositions are considered to provide the "framework for developing working theories and expertise about the range of topics, activities, and materials that children and adults in each early childhood service engage with" (p. 45). Carr (2001a) has suggested five key dispositions. These are: taking an interest, being involved, persisting with difficulty or uncertainty, communicating with others, and taking responsibility. These particular dispositions were specifically linked to the strands of *Te Whāriki*, described in an earlier chapter (p. 109). Other possible dispositions have been suggested; *Te Whāriki* itself suggests: curiosity, reasoning, investigating and collaborating with others (MoE, 1996).

Many of the teachers in this study discussed the importance of helping children develop positive dispositions to learning as a desirable outcome, especially the development of curiosity. In the following vignette, Jackie is seen to have developed a learning activity that was intended, in part, to develop children's dispositions to learning.

Sensory Play: Setting 2.

Outside on the deck Jackie started to pour a large quantity of cornflour into a huge plastic saucer-shaped container. The mobile infants started to make their way across to see what she was doing. Most of the children crawled; one shuffled on his bottom, and two were just beginning to walk so combined taking a few steps with intervals of crawling. Once all the cornflour had been tipped into the container Jackie then added some food colouring and water, and began to mix them all together with her hands into a substance referred to by early childhood teachers as 'gloop' (Auckland Playcentres Association, 1982). Some of the infants joined her, stirring their hands through the mixture. One girl, Evie (10 months), crawled right into the saucer and through the gloop.

When Evie got to the middle of the container, she stopped and put her head down, until her hair was in the gloop. When she lifted her head again, the mixture was running down her face and was all over her clothes. She was laughing and looked delighted. One of the boys however, David (13 months), having crawled across the room to see what was happening, sat back on his bottom and frowned. Jackie held out her hand towards him, and he reached out one of his hands in response. Jackie allowed a little of the gloop to trickle through her fingers onto his outstretched hand. He frowned and pulled his hand back straight away, wiping it with his other hand to make it clean again. Jackie offered him the experience again, but respected his choice not to participate (FN).

At the time of this study, the planning focus in Setting 2 was sensory play (see p. 90). On the day of this vignette, Jackie had decided to make gloop–a mixture of cornflour and water. For many of the infants, this seemed to be their first experience of this particular substance. As they became interested, Jackie encouraged them to make their own choices about how to interact with the activity she had provided. She did not intervene in any way when Evie crawled into the gloop; she did not object to the mess, however neither did she make any comment to support Evie in her full-body exploration of this new material. It seemed at first that she was prepared to maintain a supervisory role only as the infants played with the gloop. This was therefore analysed as an example of resource-based teaching, as described in this thesis.

However, when Jackie noticed David's rather ambivalent reaction to the experience being offered, she switched to a more responsive mode of teaching, and became an active participant in the play as she tried to encourage him to come and join in. David was clearly curious about what was happening, but reluctant to engage in the way that Evie had. Jackie tried to draw David in, adapting the activity on offer by presenting him with a small amount of the gloop to explore before expecting him to explore it in large quantities.

Research suggests that early childhood teachers working with infants may typically step back during periods of engagement with resources, to allow the infants uninterrupted access and time to explore (White & Redder, 2015). However, the same research found that infants' "engagement with artefacts was considerably greater when… [a] teacher was close or at least within range" (p. 13). White and Redder's research focused particularly on infants' relationship with a key teacher, and Setting 2 did not follow a policy of assigning key teachers to individual infants. Nevertheless, the findings from the present study suggest that David's engagement with the sensory play resource depended on the presence and encouragement of a trusted teacher. It seemed Jackie knew David well, and was aware that he did not generally enjoy messy play (Jackie/S2/TI).

Jackie's decisions about this activity seem to have been expressing two areas of intentional teaching: fostering children's learning, and promoting children's happiness. She expressed these intentions by providing the infants with a fun new resource designed to increase their repertoire of sensory experiences and give them pleasure. However, the success of this experience depended on the infants' curiosity and willingness to try something new—two key dispositions to learning. As the event proceeded, Jackie switched intuitively between decision-making approaches throughout this incident, from resource-based to responsive. She became particularly focused on David's responses, and encouraging him to participate. He was interested in the activity, but he required a higher level of support to get involved than some of the other children there. Jackie's relationship-based knowledge of David, together with her insight into his disposition, enabled her to foster his dispositional learning through her intentional teaching practice.

In addition to considering children's dispositions, a few of the teachers talked indirectly about children's working theories as a possible outcome of learning. Working theories are described by *Te Whāriki* as comprising "knowledge about the world, skills and strategies, attitudes, and expectations. Children develop working theories through observing, listening, doing, participating, discussing, and representing within the topics and activities provided in the programme" (MoE, 1996, p. 44). The findings from the present study indicate that some of the teachers were both aware of and supportive of children's working theories, although they did not necessarily use that specific terminology.

The following vignette illustrates an occasion on which the teacher was trying to identify, and respond to, a child's underlying inquiry or working theories, rather than responding solely to his visible activity. In addition, it is an example of responsive decision-making. Recognising children's working theories, and using them as a basis for challenging and extending their thinking, however, may be complex and challenging (Hedges, 2011). Two of the teachers in the present study, Gillian and Viv, recognised and discussed the challenge of accurately interpreting a child's working theories, and then developing strategies to engage with them responsively. Gillian's concern was that she would not be able to extend a child's thinking far enough. Talking about one of the children at her centre, she explained: "[he] is a very curious child…. I can't keep up with him sometimes; I don't know how to extend this kind of [thinking] any more. But I think, if I keep on listening and…you know, thinking with him, then yeah, maybe I can help" (Gillian/S1/TI/p. 5). In contrast, Viv's fear was that she would dominate a child's enquiry, and thus diminish the experience for them. She talked about the "fine line between [me] taking over the kid's experience and them guiding it (Viv/S3/TI/p. 6).

This vignette features the same two protagonists as Hunting for Dinosaurs (p. 158). It seemed that Adam and Viv had an excellent working relationship, and Adam frequently sought Viv's assistance when he was grappling with a particular problem (FN). This incident, including Viv's responses, was reported in Adam's portfolio (Doc).

What makes us stand up? Setting 3.

Adam, 4 years and 6 months, had spent the morning building a tall, skinny structure out of Lego®. Photographs showed that the structure consisted of two towers, joined together at the top (Doc). It came up to Adam's shoulders. However, it was unstable, and he was disappointed that he could not make it stand up independently. He approached Viv and asked her to help him make it stand up.

Rather than starting to work immediately on the structure, Viv decided to talk to Adam about their bodies instead, and "what helped to keep us standing up straight" (Doc). They talked particularly about legs and feet. Adam observed that people had feet at the end of their legs, but that his structure had no feet. He concluded that having feet might be an important aspect of being able to stand.

Viv and Adam then experimented with standing in different ways, and placing their feet in different positions (one in front of the other, one crossed over the other, feet spread wide apart, feet close together, heels together and toes out, toes in and heels apart) in order to decide which position felt most stable. Working together, they decided that there were many positions for feet which left them feeling quite unstable. Finally, Viv recorded that Adam "played around with all these ideas and…settled on attaching a set of feet that were sticking inwards which seemed to be quite stable, and at last [his] construction could stand on its own" (Doc).

This vignette demonstrates how a teacher might engage in joint enquiry with a child, suggesting avenues for possible thinking, without giving explicit direction. This was therefore interpreted as an example of responsive teaching. When Viv discussed this event with me later, she explained that she thought that it was important to try to understand a child's current understanding, in order to use it as a possible foundation for future learning: "[the children] are formulating their own idea, and therefore you can build on that" (Viv/S3/TI/p. 7). This comment demonstrated that Viv was interested in Adam's thinking, not just in his activity. However, building on children's existing thinking presented Viv with a personal challenge. As indicated earlier (p. 133), she was very hesitant about providing children with information or knowledge too quickly, in case it inhibited their own inquiries. On the other hand, she was aware that teachers needed to be able to give children accurate information when necessary, to prevent confusion (Viv/S3/TI). The tension between encouraging children's inquiry, and providing them with information was one that Viv seemed particularly aware of. It was also an issue that other teachers had to confront. The following vignette highlights the possible difficulties that may arise.

A cow or a bull? Setting 3.

Pat had been telling a large group of children the well-known story *Are You My Mother?* (Eastman, 1960), using wooden figurines as illustrations. At the point in the story when the baby bird asks a cow whether it was its mother, Pat showed the children the wooden figure of a cow. This figure had horns and an udder. One of the four year old boys in the group interrupted her, stating categorically that the figurine showed a bull, not a cow, and that therefore Pat was using the wrong one. Pat asked him why he thought this was the case, and he replied that cows don't have horns.

Pat told him that she disagreed with him, and she continued with the story. However, every time she mentioned the word 'cow' the boy interrupted with the word 'bull'. After several repetitions, Pat began to correct herself, and changed from talking about cows to talking about bulls (FN).

I asked her later why she had done this. She replied that because the boy had seemed so certain that he was right she had become uncertain about her own knowledge and had therefore changed the story accordingly (Pat/S3/TI/p. 25).

This incident appears to be an example of a child articulating their working theory about cows and bulls. It is also an example of a child constructing their own learning—something that Gillian and Viv said they valued, but that has certain inherent risks. In this instance, the child apparently believed that horns indicated a bull. It was not clear whether he could see that the figurine also had an udder but believed it was trumped by the horns, or whether he had not noticed the udder at all. Pat did not question him, or draw his attention to this feature. Had she done so, she may have invoked a feeling of "disequilibrium" (Lovatt & Hedges, 2014, p. 2) in his thinking, which could have resulted in "the modification and enrichment" of his working theory (p. 2). She could also have saved the other children from possible confusion. However, she did not do so, and it is possible that her "reluctance to engage in instruction and reticence to intervene appropriately [increased] the chances of [the child] retaining inaccurate ideas and understandings” (Grieshaber, 2008, p. 507).

Pat’s response to this particular incident highlights what is considered a relatively common response amongst early childhood teachers—a reluctance to “challenge children’s inaccuracies, thinking that this might disempower children” (Lovatt & Hedges, 2014, p. 4). Nevertheless, these researchers argue that it is possible and appropriate for teachers to challenge children’s working theories, and help them to develop more accurate understanding and knowledge, if they do so in a sensitive and respectful way.

Reflexive memo.

The incident with the cow and bull was a challenging one to observe. I asked Pat whether she planned to follow up on the question of whether cows can have horns. She said that she might, but I did not observe any follow-up and I felt reluctant to ask her about it again, because I was worried that perhaps my presence during this time had added to Pat’s feeling of being flustered and confused, and thus had contributed to the way she had responded. Meanwhile, I also wondered about the other children who had been in the group, and whether any of them had been left confused by the possibility of a bull having an udder.

The findings reported thus far have shown teachers’ intentional practice related to promoting children’s happiness, through a combination of resource-based and proactive teaching, and fostering children’s learning, through resource-based, proactive, and responsive teaching. In the following section, the findings that describe teachers’ intentional practice relating to preparing children for transitions are reported. This is the only area of intentional practice in which teachers were found to restrict themselves to proactive teaching.

Preparing Children for Transitions

At some point, all of the children in each research setting would transition from the centre to another environment. This could be from one room within a large centre to another as in Setting 2, or from an early childhood centre to school.

The teachers appeared to be powerfully motivated to ensure that children were well prepared for these transitions, and to be conscious that there were certain skills children would be expected to have developed in order to be ready for them (Jackie/S2/FG). Therefore, their efforts to prepare children for transition focused on assessing children's skills, and ensuring that children who had not developed the skills that the teachers thought were required had been taught them. The skills they focused on included self-help skills, pre-academic skills, and social skills (FN).

The only times during this study that teachers were seen to engage in didactic instruction of children was when they were engaged in preparing them for transitions. The learning goals that teachers had for children when preparing them for transition were clearly articulated, easily assessed, and skills-based. Teachers who were preparing children for transitions were not seen to engage in either resource-based or interactive teaching.

The first way that teachers endeavoured to prepare children for transition was in regard to self-help skills, such as "put[ing] on their shoes, or go[ing] to the bathroom, or wash[ing] their hands for themselves" (Isabelle/S1/FN). Another focus of self-help skills was around meal-times. The teachers in Setting 3 had deliberately altered the way meal times were managed in their setting with the specific intention of preparing children for school. Pat explained that previously children had been provided with morning tea by the centre. This had taken the form of pieces of fruit cut up in advance by one of the teachers, and biscuits, which had been handed out to children as they sat on the mat (FN). Children had not stayed for lunch. However, in recent years the practice had changed. Children now brought lunch boxes containing their morning tea and lunch. These changes occurred because the teachers' aspiration for children to be ready for the future had influenced their curriculum decisions, and was ultimately expressed through their actions designed to prepare children for school. In this instance they wanted to ensure that children learned how to open different kinds of packaging, how to make sensible decisions about how much to eat at which time, and how to dispose of their litter appropriately before starting school where it was anticipated they would have to manage these situations without support from teachers (FN).

The teachers in Setting 2 also wanted to encourage the infants' independence around meal times. Any infant who showed signs of wanting to try and feed themselves was supported to do so (FN). Further, infants who were old enough to support their own bottle were propped on pillows and given their bottle to hold. Teachers stayed nearby to prevent accidents. Once an infant dropped or put aside their bottle, it was taken as a signal that they had finished, and the bottle was removed without further comment. Further, the older infants who wanted to try and feed themselves were encouraged to do so, under the watchful eye of a teacher who was ready to step in if needed (FN).

As described earlier in this thesis (p. 89), Setting 2 was part of a larger centre that had rooms specifically allocated for different age groups. One consequence of this organisational structure was that teachers were involved in a continual process of assessing children's 'readiness' for transition from the infants' room to the toddlers' room. The decision when to transition the infants was based on their age, their physical development (specifically whether they were walking) and the teachers' perceptions of their socio-emotional and intellectual development, because "once they are socially ready and…physically read they move over [to the toddlers' room]" (Jackie/S2/FG/p. 14).

In the previous chapter (p. 139) I presented one example of teachers preparing an individual child for transition. On that occasion, teachers were seen to have accelerated the transition process in order to comply with management requirements. In the following vignette, however, teachers are seen to have decided to introduce a regular element into their routine—a mat time for the infants—in order to prepare all of the infants gradually for one of the routines they would encounter in the toddlers' room.

Mat times for babies: Setting 2.

Jackie was taking the morning mat time. She was sitting in one of the corners, and the six infants who were up at that time quickly made their way across the room to sit in front of her. She had a basket with her that contained a number of laminated pictures with Velcro® on the back that made it possible for her to fix them easily to the wall. These pictures were the props for the songs that she sang. She began by singing about five little frogs. She put the pictures on the wall, and sang animatedly, using lots of facial expressions and hand gestures. When she started to hand out the pictures one at a time, as the song indicates, the children became very excited. It seemed clear that they were keen to be given one of the pictures (FN).

Jackie told me that mat times had not originally been a part of the infants' room programme, but that the decision to include had been made by the teachers some months prior to the beginning of the study. The teachers had noticed that the infants became very interested in the music they could hear from the toddlers' room during their mat times, and that the older infants would stand at the low partition between the two areas to watch. The experiment had proven so successful that they had decided "as a team, 'oh we should actually have a set mat-time'" (Jackie/S2/TI, p. 8). Consequently it had become a regular part of the centre routine because:

> …the toddlers have a mat time…and we thought we'd just be helping the older [infants] to get ready for that….We didn't want them to go over there and have mat time and be [confused]. So we wanted them to almost have a taste of it (p. 8).

In this way, the infants' mat times had become both a thoughtful response to their perceived interest in music and singing, and a planned approach to getting them ready for their transition to the toddler room. This deliberate decision by the teachers qualifies this vignette as an example of proactive teaching.

In contrast to the teachers in Setting 2, the teachers in the other two settings were focused on preparing children for school. *Te Whāriki* suggests some of the skills and abilities that children transitioning from early childhood education to school are expected to have developed. These include: "many self-care skills" (MoE, 1996, p. 47), "be[ing] confident in making…new friends… [and] understand[ing] basic concepts about rules" (p. 55), "be[ing] familiar with working co-operatively" (p. 65), "hav[ing] had considerable experience with books… enjoy[ing] writing… hav[ing] some practical concepts about numbers [and] counting" (p. 73), and "locomotor…and manipulative skills" (p. 83). All of these suggestions are reflected in the skills that the teachers in this study emphasised, and that are associated with preparing children for school.

Settings 1 and 3 addressed the question of preparing children for transition to school with formal ready-for-school (RFS) programmes. The programme in Setting 1 was described in the previous chapter (p. 140). The programme in Setting 3 is described in the following vignette.

Getting ready for school: Setting 3.

Two teachers, Pat and Sarah, ran a ready-for-school programme in Setting 3 twice a week. The programme lasted for 90 minutes, and every session followed the same basic structure.

The session began with a period of structured play. Two tables were set with various board games, and one teacher sat at each table. On arrival children would be invited to join one of the tables, and to play a maths-based board game as a group.

After this, there would be three mat times. The first was based around the phonics programme, Letterland®. This mat time consisted of activities focused on words beginning with that particular sound, and lasted around twenty minutes. Following a break for a drink of water and some physical activity, the children returned to the mat for a time of instruction in writing, following the Casey the Caterpillar® writing programme. This programme was also followed in a number of the primary schools near the centre. One of the teachers would demonstrate on a large white board how to write a different letter of the alphabet. Then the children were asked to practice their own writing skills. These skills included making straight lines and curves, then joining these to form letters, and making sure that the letters were placed correctly in relation to a line drawn across a page. Throughout this exercise the teachers provided the children with lots of support and encouragement. Children would then practice writing their own names.

This mat time lasted around fifteen minutes. Following another short break for drinks of water and free play, the children were once again assembled together as a group for around twenty minutes. This was the final activity of the session.

The teachers explained to me that the activity they planned for this time varied considerably during the year, according to children's interests. At times they had used this time for children to engage in science or maths related activities. On this occasion the last group time focused on games designed to develop children's understanding of rhyming sounds, as Sarah had noticed that some of the children were apparently unable to identify sounds that rhymed with each other (FN).

Preparing children for transition to school through a formal programme of instruction is a contentious issue, as is the view that the purpose of early childhood education is to ensure that children are prepared for academic achievement at school (Brown, 2010). Brown critiqued the way in which early childhood educators were increasingly expected to "provide young children with a specific set of academic experiences that both mimic and in turn prepare children for elementary/primary school" (p. 134), and suggested that this may lead to inappropriate pedagogy and curricula, as early childhood education increasingly became a “gateway program that prepares children for academic learning” (p. 134).

The RFS programme described in this vignette had been developed initially in response to demand from parents who were anxious to ensure that their children started school well prepared. At the time of this study the programme had been running for over seven years (FN). The programme was now an established part of the centre’s routine and, according to one of the teachers, feedback from the local schools suggested that the children who attended this programme were considered to be well prepared at school entry. Perhaps as a consequence of this, there was a lengthy waiting list for places (FN). However, it was apparent that parents were not the only supporters of this programme. The teachers described the children who attended as being keen to learn school-associated skills, and my observations suggested that the children seemed to enjoy the programme, and to gain genuine pleasure from learning the new skills that were presented. For example, I observed one child who appeared initially to be very resistant to taking part in the writing activity. However, Sarah sat next to him encouraging him and keeping him on task. When he suddenly succeeded in writing the letter that Pat had been demonstrating his pleasure was evident, and he needed no further encouragement to keep on writing the letter multiple times (FN). The children’s enthusiasm supports the literature that suggests that older pre-school children are keen to embrace the persona of school-children (Carr, 2001b; Hedegaard, 2002, 2014).

This RFS programme was described by Pat as being “very intentional” (Pat/S3/FN), by which it seemed that she meant that it was pre-planned, and not necessarily based on children’s interests. Much of the content was planned up to two months in advance, although there was (limited) room within the programme for adaptability and responsiveness to children's inquiry (FN). Sarah’s involvement in this programme seemed to be in opposition to her earlier statements that she preferred to take a spontaneous, emerging approach to curriculum (Sarah/S3/FG). A conflict between teachers’ beliefs about pedagogy, and their practice, is well recognised (e.g., Blay & Ireson, 2009; Harnett, 2012; Nuttall & Edwards, 2004; Wilcox-Herzog, 2002). Blay and Ireson (2009) found that early childhood teachers “mediated realignment between stated and enacted beliefs” (p. 1114) through the “rationales and justifications” (p. 1114) they offered when questioned. In this present study, it seemed that Sarah was able to justify her involvement in the didactic school preparation programme by explaining that the children were excited to be part of the programme, and interested in the lessons; therefore the programme could be considered to be based on children's interests:

> …they are all four and a half and older and you know they are wanting to write their names and they are wanting to learn to write and read and so if they are wanting to do it and they get excited about it and what we're doing works then I get excited about it too (Sarah/S3/TI/pp. 18-19).

Research in New Zealand into transition between early childhood education and school suggests that the key factors for success are children's friendships with their peers, their relationship with their teacher, and the relationships between the teachers in both contexts (Peters, 2010; Peters, Hartley, Rogers, Smith, & Carr, 2009; Podmore, Sauvao, & Mapa, 2001). In addition, Peters and Paki (2013) recognised that children were most likely to learn when they were happy, and most likely to be happy when they were in relationship with others. This reflects the comments made by Tracy, reported earlier in this chapter (p. 150), and further supports the importance of teachers' intentional practice having a focus on children's happiness.

The literature did not suggest that RFS programmes were a necessary component of successful transitions. Rather, research was located that challenged certain particular components of the RFS programme in Setting 3. For example, research in Australia investigated the reportedly growing trend for early childhood teachers to use commercially produced phonics programmes, and the reasons teachers gave for using them (Campbell, Torr, & Cologon, 2014). They particularly discussed the Letterland® programme. These researchers were concerned that "there is currently no evidence to support the efficacy of commercial phonics programmes in enhancing children's current or later literacy achievement" (p. 42), but that nevertheless teachers were persisting in using them—a phenomenon that their research findings suggested was associated with "providing visible evidence to parents that…the teachers were preparing children for school" (p. 43). These findings are supported by the findings from the present study, which indicated that the RFS programme was developed specifically in response to parent demand. Further, the findings reported in the previous chapter of this thesis indicated that teachers' use of proactive teaching, as in this vignette, was also associated with practices that were inspired by the need to meet external demands, because of the way it could be evidenced.

Similarly, a New Zealand study was critical of the tendency of early childhood teachers to resort to a didactic style of literacy teaching, rather than focusing on providing children with experiences of literacy that were “authentic, holistic and integrated in play” (Foote, Smith, & Ellis, 2004, p. 145). In addition, Campbell et al. (2014) argued that children learn literacy concepts from participating in a “language-rich environment” (p. 40), in which they have the opportunity to engage in book-reading, imaginative play, and “sustained and reciprocal conversations between staff and children about subjects which are based on children’s interests and focus of attention” (p. 40). An example of such a situation might be the letter-writing activity at the end of the Hunting for Dinosaurs vignette earlier in this chapter.

In contrast, however, other studies have found that “to be successful [at school], children need … intentional [pre-school] instruction” (Algozzine et al., 2011, p. 247). Similarly, a review of research into children’s writing concluded that direct instruction in the skill of handwriting or “handwriting readiness” (Dinehart, 2015, p. 98) was likely to benefit children’s later development of reading skills and to “increase the likelihood of academic success in later years” (p. 98). Dinehart (2015) acknowledged the research-based position that children learn to write as a result of exposure to rich and meaningful literacy experiences; however, she contended that handwriting is a skill that is “best taught through explicit instruction” (p. 104). Further, she suggested that in order for that instruction to be effective, children also need well-developed fine motor skills, especially those related directly to writing, such as drawing lines or curves. Overall, the research reviewed by Dinehart seemed to support the approach to teaching children to write that was adopted in the present study by the teachers in Setting 3.

Outside of formal RFS programmes, all of the research settings were seen to emphasise literacy. All three settings provided a print-rich environment, with plenty of books available to the children, and wall displays of artwork and associated documentation (FN). Debbie described how she tried to foster literacy skills in children by spending her morning tea breaks in the centre reading the newspaper. She believed that by demonstrating literacy behaviour, she was encouraging the children to engage in their own private reading (Debbie/S1/TI/pp. 15-16). In Setting 2, the teachers had printed large (A4) size photographs of each child, which they had named and put on the wall low enough for the children to reach. These were frequently removed from the wall by the children, who quickly learned to recognise themselves and their friends (FN). In Setting 3, children were encouraged to try and document their own learning with drawings and symbols. The teachers then transcribed the symbols into words as the children dictated (FN), and the resulting documentation was either displayed on the wall, or inserted into the children's portfolios (Doc).

In addition to promoting basic academic and literacy skills, the teachers were also seen to focus on helping children's development of social skills or "etiquette" (Hannah/S1/FG/p. 39) that they were expected to need at school. In Setting 1, the focus was on teaching children how to behave appropriately during mat times (Debbie/S1/FG). Examples of behaviour that was considered appropriate included: sitting nicely on the mat, not interfering with other children at mat time, and listening to others in a respectful manner (FN). Fleur and Gillian in particular both understood the primary purpose of mat times as being to "have a time together and let [the children] experience …sit[ting] nicely on the mat, listen[ing] to the teacher, listen[ing] to instructions" (Gillian/S1/TI/p. 15). Similarly, in Setting 3, the teachers had introduced the notion of the 'talking stone'' at mat times (FN). The child who held the talking stone was entitled to speak without interruption; other children were expected to sit and listen respectfully. Once a child had spoken, other children were encouraged to ask questions. Teaching children appropriate large group behaviour was one of the areas of practice that the teachers described as "quite intentional… [teaching that] there are some sorts of boundaries…because we can't hit each other and push each other and whatever" (Viv/S3/FG/p. 15).

However, the teachers were not only involved in teaching children the limits and boundaries of acceptable behaviour. Many teachers also made considerable efforts to helping children learn how to initiate and nurture friendships with other children (FN). In an example of the overlapping nature of teachers' intentions, this aspect of teachers' intentional teaching was discussed at the beginning of this chapter in the section related to promoting children's happiness.

Summary

This chapter has reported and discussed the findings related to the third basic social process of intentional teaching that this study has identified: teachers' intentional practice. Intentional practice was described as being the active expression of teachers' aspirations for children, which had been translated into action through their curriculum decisions, and their modes of teaching.

This chapter has answered the research question “How might New Zealand early childhood teachers demonstrate intentional teaching in practice?” It has done so by illustrating teachers’ intentional practice through the use of vignettes that have shown how teachers’ aspirations for children were implemented by their curriculum decisions, and resulted in intentional teaching practice.

This chapter has also provided further evidence to answer the other research questions about the nature of intentional teaching, and the factors that influence it. For example, it has shown that intentional teaching is dynamic in nature. This was demonstrated in the way that teachers moved seamlessly between and across aspirations and modes of teaching, as they responded to the many and various situations that confronted them. They also moved between aspirations and modes of teaching in response to children’s responses to activities and events.

In addition, this chapter has added evidence to support the contention that intentional teaching is holistic in nature. Teachers’ intentional practice was seen to be holistic, in that it related to many different areas of children’s learning and development, and recognised the ways in which those different areas were connected. For example, teachers were seen to be intentional in their practice related to children’s socio-emotional wellbeing, to their development of self-help and social skills, and to their cognitive learning. In regards to children’s cognitive learning, teachers were seen to focus particularly on identifying and supporting children’s interests, on nurturing and supporting their dispositions to learning, and on identifying and extending their working theories.

Further, this chapter has shown that teachers implemented intentional teaching practice both in the form of pre-planned learning experiences, and in their spontaneous reactions and responses to children’s unanticipated, or emerging, interest and inquiry. Intentional teaching was therefore revealed to be, at times, spontaneous in nature. In addition, the findings reported in this chapter have also indicated that intentional teaching may, at times, be intuitive in nature. Claxton (2000) described intuitive teaching as “drawing upon…a largely tacit database of first-hand experience” (p. 41), and there were times when the teachers’ responses reflected this definition.

Although this chapter has demonstrated that intentional teaching practice was common across many aspects of the curriculum in each research setting, it has also revealed that intentional teaching was rarely articulated. The teachers did not tend to discuss their thinking or decision-making with each other, nor did they document it. Rather, documentation and discussion tended to focus on children's actions and responses, and the teachers' actions and responses tended to be invisible.

A final feature of intentional teaching that was identified in this chapter is that it may be, at times, frustrating and challenging for teachers. It seems that these times arise primarily when teachers' intentions do not align with children's intentions. This is a challenge that is recognised in the literature (e.g., Fleer, 2015; Hunter & Sonter, 2012; Leggett & Ford, 2013). Gillian and Viv seemed to be the teachers who were most aware of, and able to articulate, this particular challenge.

The following chapter draws together all of the different components of intentional teaching that have been discussed thus far, and demonstrates how together they form the model of intentional teaching that has been developed. It will consider how this study has answered all of the research questions, and in particular how it has identified the nature of intentional teaching in New Zealand early childhood education.

8. Conclusion

This thesis has differed from previous studies into intentional teaching in its focus, methodology, and aim. The aim of this study was to construct a ground-up understanding of intentional teaching in the context of New Zealand early childhood education and the study was designed and conducted according to the principles of constructivist grounded theory (CGT). Presented in this thesis is the original, research-based, grounded theory that has been developed, and that explains the nature of intentional teaching in New Zealand early childhood centres. It is an original and significant contribution to the literature.

This chapter begins with an overview of the thesis. It then demonstrates how this study has answered the original research questions. To do so, it presents the completed theoretical model that has been developed to explain the nature of intentional teaching in early childhood education in New Zealand. This model demonstrates that intentional teaching is a complex process that incorporates teachers' aspirations, decisions and actions. Drawing on the theoretical model, the chapter then argues that intentional teaching as theorised by this study is aspirational, holistic, and dynamic. It also argues that at times intentional teaching may be spontaneous and intuitive. In addition, this chapter reveals that intentional teaching is typically unarticulated by teachers.

Having answered the research questions, the chapter then draws on some of the findings from the "group validation interview" (Morse, 2007, p. 241), to demonstrate how it meets Charmaz' (2014) criteria of resonance and usefulness, before reflecting on the methodology used.

The focus of the chapter then turns to describing the contributions made by the study to the research literature. It considers the implications of this study for early childhood education policy and practice in New Zealand, and then discusses the limitations of this study, and makes suggestions for future research. The chapter concludes by drawing further on the findings from the group validation interview to demonstrate how the theory constructed in this study has the potential to help teachers identify and articulate their intentional practice.

This chapter argues that the developed theory has the potential to empower early childhood teachers, to inform early childhood policy, and to create an understanding of intentional teaching that is relevant to the unique and specific nature of early childhood education in New Zealand. It may also have applicability in other countries with a similar play-based non-prescriptive approach to early childhood education.

Summary of the Thesis

This thesis began by introducing the rationale for this study. Chapters 1 and 2 demonstrated that at the beginning of the study the notion of intentional teaching in early childhood education was becoming influential in some Western countries, particularly at a policy level, and that it was starting to be discussed in New Zealand. It also identified that the definition of intentional teaching which was widely used (Epstein, 2007) was not itself research based. Further, much of the research that had been conducted into intentional teaching did not explore teachers' understandings of intentional teaching, or the aspects of their practice that could perhaps be intentional. Little research was located that had been conducted in New Zealand; however, those studies that were located here presented a view of intentional teaching that differed from much of the international research, thus suggesting the possibility of a unique New Zealand perspective on this concept.

Accordingly, the argument was made for a research study to be carried out in the New Zealand early childhood context that aimed to understand teachers' views about intentional teaching, and to uncover the aspects of teachers' practice that could be considered to be intentional, in order to construct a ground-up perspective of intentional teaching.

The relatively small amount of research literature that was located early in the study and critically reviewed in Chapter 2, together with the apparent absence of a clear theoretical framework for understanding intentional teaching, led to the decision to design and conduct this study according to the principles of CGT. The methodology, and some of the debates that surround it, was described in Chapter 3, and the research design was described in Chapter 4. Chapter 4 also described the ethical considerations that were an important feature of this research study, and it introduced the research participants.

The following three chapters reported and discussed the three theoretical categories that were constructed, and that form the three elements of the final theory: teachers' aspirations, teachers' decisions, and teachers' intentional practice. Chapter 5 focused on teachers' aspirations for children. Three particular aspirations were identified: wanting children to be happy, wanting children to have a positive view of learning, and wanting children to be prepared for the future. These aspirations were described and discussed. In addition, informed by aspects of cultural-historical theory, the chapter considered some of the possible factors that may have influenced the development of these aspirations. The teachers' participation in the culture of early childhood education in New Zealand, and of the curriculum *Te Whāriki*, was considered to be the strongest likely influence.

Chapter 6 reported the analysis that focused on teachers' curriculum decision-making. Teachers were seen to be engaged in a continual process of decision-making. Three analytic categories of decision-making were identified: resource-based decisions, proactive decisions, and responsive decisions. Teachers appeared to favour particular approaches to decision-making, depending on their primary aspiration at any given time. Thus, for example, teachers wanting children to be happy by ensuring that they were having fun were seen to tend to favour resource-based decisions. In contrast, teachers wanting to prepare children for the future were seen to tend to make proactive decisions, whereas teachers who wanted to support children's learning were seen to move most freely between all three types of decisions. This chapter acknowledged that teachers' decision-making was also likely to be influenced by other factors, such as their beliefs, their personal experiences, their knowledge, and their sense of accountability to parents and government agencies.

Teachers' curriculum decisions were shown to be the process by which their aspirations were translated into action. Chapter 7 therefore contained multiple examples of how teachers' aspirations and decisions interacted and became visible as intentional teaching practice. Three areas of intentional teaching practice were described: promoting children's happiness, fostering children's learning, and preparing children for transitions.

Answering the Research Questions

The overarching research question guiding this study was: what might be the nature of intentional teaching in New Zealand early childhood settings? Three secondary questions were: in what ways might early childhood teachers in New Zealand understand the notion of intentional teaching; in what ways might early childhood teachers in New Zealand demonstrate intentional teaching in their practice; and, what factors might influence intentional practice in New Zealand early childhood settings? This section demonstrates the ways in which the findings from this study have answered all of these questions.

The nature of intentional teaching in New Zealand early childhood education settings.

The overarching question that inspired this study was: What might be the nature of intentional teaching in New Zealand early childhood education settings? This study theorises that intentional teaching is a multi-faceted, continual and reflexive process that consists of the complex interplay between teachers' aspirations for children, their curriculum decisions, and their intentional actions. It underpins multiple aspects of teachers' professional practice, and is influenced by various different factors.

The theoretical model that has been developed is presented in Fig. 8, below. This model illustrates the process by which teachers' aspirations for children influence their curriculum decision-making. These decisions in turn translate their aspirations into intentional teaching practice. Intentional teaching is conceptualised in this study as comprising all elements of this model.

The model also highlights the other factors that have been identified in this study as influencing the process of intentional teaching. These include: *Te Whāriki*, teachers' beliefs and experiences, teachers' assessment of children's learning, and the influence of stakeholders in early childhood education such as centre managers, children's parents, professional colleagues and external authorities. The model also highlights the continual feedback that takes place between teachers' intentional practice, children's responses to that practice, and teachers' subsequent curriculum decision-making.

Drawing on this theoretical model, this thesis argues that intentional teaching in New Zealand early childhood education settings is aspirational, holistic, and dynamic in nature. It further argues that it is at times spontaneous and intuitive. However, the findings also revealed that intentional teaching is typically unarticulated. These aspects of intentional teaching will be considered further in the following sections.

Describing the key features of intentional teaching as theorised in this study may create the impression that intentional teaching is a straightforward, linear process. However, the processes of teachers’ aspirations, decisions, and actions are only “analytically distinct” (Jung, Korinek, & Straßheim, 2014, p. 399); in practice they were closely intertwined, and difficult to distinguish.

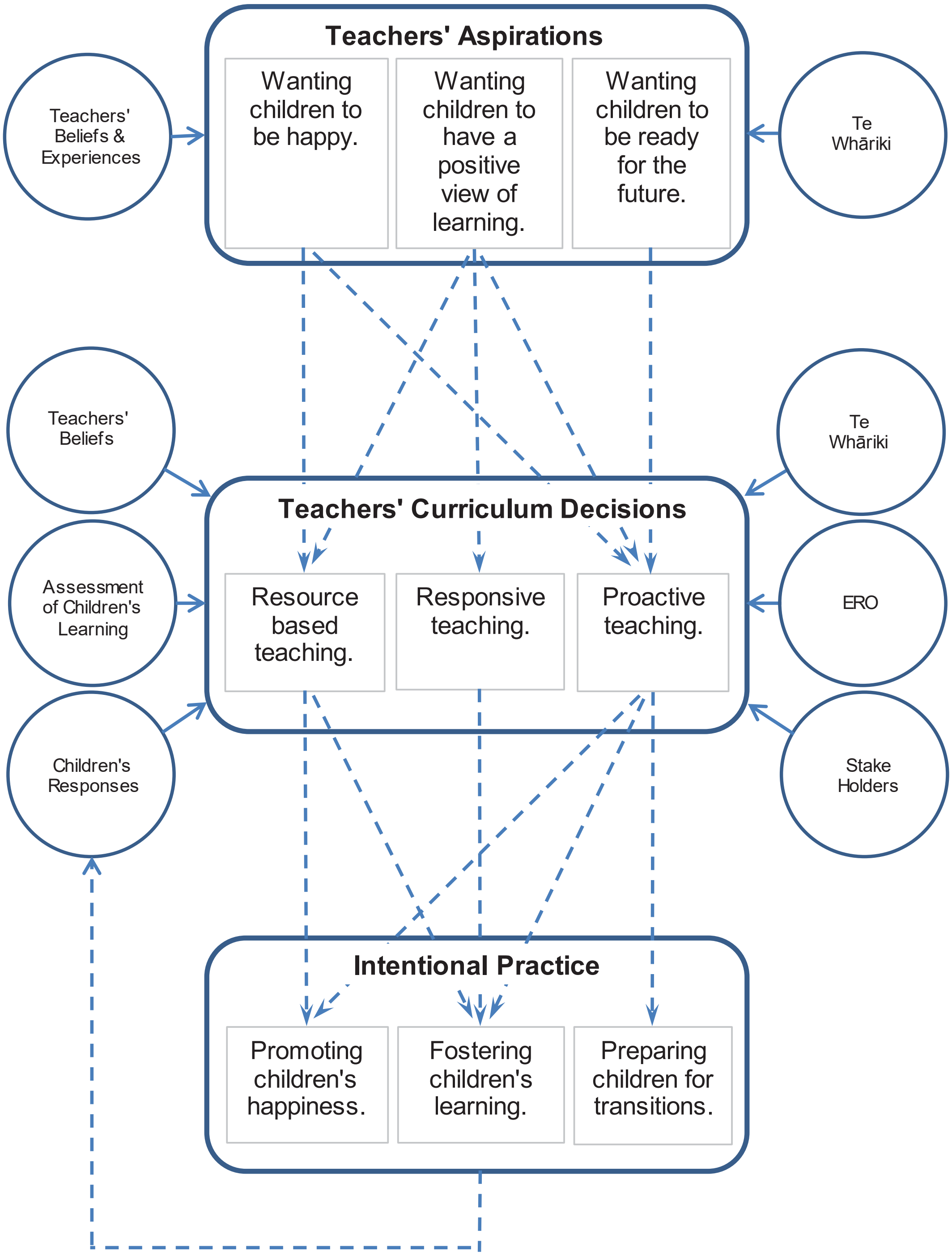
Teachers' Aspirations
Wanting children to be happy.
Wanting children to have a positive view of learning.
Wanting children to be ready for the future.
Teachers' Beliefs & Experiences
Te Whāriki
Teachers' Beliefs
Te Whāriki
Teachers' Curriculum Decisions
Resource based teaching.
Responsive teaching.
Proactive teaching.
Assessment of Children's Learning
ERO
Children's Responses
Stake Holders
Intentional Practice
Promoting children's happiness.
Fostering children's learning.
Preparing children for transitions.

Figure 8: Intentional teaching: The complete model.

Intentional teaching is aspirational.

The teachers who participated in this study were found to be focused not only on children's current interests, abilities and strengths, but also on long-term, future-oriented aspirations for their learning, their participation in the next stages in their education, and their social and emotional wellbeing. No literature has been located to date that has identified and described the aspirations that early childhood teachers might have for children.

It appeared that teachers felt a sense of responsibility to lay the foundations for children's futures in all of these areas. Consequently, they were concerned with trying to engender in children positive dispositions towards learning, rather than with teaching them facts or concepts (p. 163); they were concerned with equipping them with the social skills needed to make and maintain friendships because they understood having friendships to be an essential component of a happy life (p.150); and they were concerned with ensuring that children had the necessary physical and cognitive skills to enable them to integrate easily into their next educational setting (p. 170).

The aspirational nature of intentional teaching identified in this study reflects the aspirational nature of *Te Whāriki*. As discussed in Chapter 5, the curriculum is based on an aspiration for all New Zealand children to grow up "competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body, and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society" (MoE, 1996, p. 9). The close connection between the aspirational nature of the curriculum and the teachers' aspirations for children appears to support the contention that *Te Whāriki* was a significant influence on the development of teachers' aspirations.

Teachers' aspirations were influenced by different factors. They in turn were seen to influence the decisions they made about the curriculum within their centres, and their responses to children. These decisions were seen to be the dynamic process by which teachers' aspirations for children were translated into their intentional practice.

Intentional teaching is dynamic.

The theory developed in this study indicates that intentional teaching is dynamic in nature. Chapter 6 reported the findings that revealed the ways in which teachers were engaged in a constant, changing, and dynamic process of decision-making. These decisions were occasionally made in advance of an event; frequently, however, teachers were required to make decisions rapidly, as they responded to the ever-changing needs and interests of children in their centres.

Furthermore, the findings indicated that intentional teachers were continually moving between one style of decision-making and another, depending on the context. In addition, a small number of teachers were found to adapt their teaching approach and their responses to children, sometimes frequently, as they sought to maintain a dynamic balance between their aspirations for children and the child/ren's response. This reflected the New Zealand literature that defined intentional teaching as the process of being "in tune with learners' intentions" (Robinson & Bartlett, 2011, p. 11).

Intentional teaching is holistic.

Teachers' aspirations, and their intentional teaching practice, were seen to encompass all areas of children's learning and development to a greater or lesser degree, including their social and emotional wellbeing, academic skills, their dispositions to learning, and the development of their working theories. The teachers also seemed to understand the interconnected nature of all of these aspects of children's development and learning. Intentional teaching can therefore be described as being holistic in nature (Fleer, Shah, & Peers, 2013). This reflects the principles of *Te Whāriki* which acknowledge the need for teachers to take a holistic view of children's learning and development.

The theoretical model of intentional teaching constructed in this study is also holistic in that it presents a comprehensive and inclusive view of the teachers and teaching by considering not only their practice, but also the motivating factors behind it. Bredekamp (2011) took a broad view of intentional teaching for example, by describing it as "a multifaceted, multidimensional concept that conveys many of the personal and professional qualities of an early childhood educator" (p. 15). However, much of the literature critically reviewed for this study focused primarily on the connection between teachers' intentional practice, and their decision-making. Those studies considered some of the influences on teachers' decisions, including teachers' professional knowledge of child development, and their personal knowledge of individual children (e.g. Epstein, 2007). No other study has been located to date that foregrounds teachers' aspirations for children in the way seen in this present study, or that positions teachers' aspirations for children as the foundation for their intentional teaching as this study has done.

Intentional teaching may be spontaneous.

The findings reported in this thesis have clearly demonstrated that intentional teaching may be evident in teachers' spontaneous interactions with children, and in their responses to children's emerging interests or inquiry. For example, in Chapter 7, Tracy's response to Daniel's interest in driving cars down ramps (p. 154), or Viv's response to Adam's inquiry about how to make his Lego® tower stand up (p. 167), were both demonstrations of unplanned intentional teaching, based on their ephemeral and in-the-moment assessment of the child's interest and intention for their own learning.

In the literature, many of the texts about intentional teaching referred to the possibility that intentional teaching could be demonstrated in spontaneous circumstances (Bredekamp, 2011; DEEWR, 2009; Epstein, 2007; Grieshaber, 2008). However, the empirical research that had been conducted into intentional teaching, and that was reviewed in Chapter 2, had a particular focus on events that had been carefully and deliberately planned in advance. The findings from the present study that demonstrate spontaneous intentional teaching have therefore extended the research-based understanding of how intentional teaching may be demonstrated by early childhood teachers.

Intentional teaching may be intuitive.

The findings reported in Chapters 6 and 7 revealed that at times teachers' responses to children were not only spontaneous, they also appeared to be intuitive. Claxton's (2000) definition of intuitive teaching was cited earlier, and explained that intuitive teaching is "a matter of drawing upon…a largely tacit database of first-hand experience [rather than] rational deduction" (p. 41).

Fleer et al. (2013) have suggested that intuitive and intentional teaching are incompatible; they therefore "distinguish[ed] intentional teaching from intuitive practices" (p. 24). The findings reported in this thesis, however, challenge that viewpoint, and suggest that intentional teaching, as conceptualised in this model, can be intuitive as teachers make curriculum decisions swiftly and in-the-moment, based on their aspirations, their intuition (Claxton, 2000), and their embedded expertise—defined by Claxton (2000) as "the ability to function fluently and flexibly in complex domains" (p. 50).

Intentional teaching is typically unarticulated.

The findings indicated that the participants in this study had not discussed intentional teaching prior to participating. They were apparently unaware of it as a concept, and uncertain of what it might mean. Furthermore, it seemed that the participants were unaccustomed to discussing their teaching practice, or the decision-making that had inspired it, with anyone other than their immediate colleagues. In particular, there was no evidence that they had ever previously discussed their aspirations for children. This was demonstrated in the penultimate interview I conducted; this interview was with Tracy. She read me a reflection she had written the day before the interview that revealed both the intuitive and unarticulated nature of intentional teaching:

> I constantly adapt what I am doing depending on the environment. It is instinctive and almost unconsciously done. It’s experience and self-belief from what I know about teaching children; it’s years of knowledge that make you a good intentional teacher…my challenge is to document more, reflect more and to challenge my thoughts through a deeper level…*I think intentional teaching is something we’ve always done…but I never ever acknowledged or knew about it and never thought about it* (Tracy/S3/TI/pp. 25-26).

The unarticulated nature of intentional teaching was also evident in the documentation that was reviewed. I did not at any time locate documentation about children’s learning that referred to the teacher’s decisions or actions. The learning stories that teachers wrote were descriptive, and generally lavishly decorated with photographs of children participating in particular activities. However, the teachers were not visible in this documentation. The learning stories did not describe the reasons behind the activities that were illustrated, or the teachers’ decision-making. Intentional teaching was found to be taking place; however, it was not acknowledged or recognised.

This finding supports Cherrington’s (2011) finding that New Zealand early childhood teachers struggle to articulate their intentions for children’s learning. It challenges Epstein’s (2007) statement that intentional teaching is characterised by a teacher’s ability to explain the reasons for their actions.

This thesis does not claim that all of a teacher’s actions should be considered as intentional. Nevertheless, it contends that there are times when teachers may not be able to articulate clearly the reasons behind their decisions but that, when those decisions are interpreted in the light of teachers’ aspirations for children, it is possible to interpret them as examples of intentional teaching practice. By highlighting the unarticulated nature of intentional teaching in New Zealand early childhood education, this study makes a further contribution to the literature.

The theoretical model of intentional teaching developed in this study has effectively answered the primary research question, by explaining the nature of intentional teaching in early childhood education in New Zealand. The answers to the secondary research questions are presented in the following sections.

How early childhood teachers in New Zealand understand intentional teaching.

The first of the sub-questions behind this study was: in what ways might early childhood teachers in New Zealand understand the notion of intentional teaching? The findings from this study have demonstrated clearly that the teachers who participated in this study were all initially unfamiliar with the notion of intentional teaching. This is consistent with the literature that was reviewed at the beginning of the study, and that identified that intentional teaching was only just beginning to be discussed in the local literature. When I introduced the notion of intentional teaching to the teachers who agreed to participate in this study, their preliminary reactions were varied. For example, the teachers in Setting 1 all intuitively associated the idea of intentional teaching with a pre-planned, inflexible approach to teaching that they suspected could involve teachers coercing children to participate in formal learning activities that were not based around the children’s interests (see p. 116). It seemed clear from their reactions that they considered this possible approach to be entirely unsuitable for the context of early childhood education. Nevertheless, Debbie reluctantly acknowledged that there were aspects of the programme within Setting 1 that were inflexible and potentially coercive; she therefore chose to describe those areas of their curriculum as being intentional (p. 116).

The teachers in Setting 2 appeared initially to be almost bewildered by the idea of intentional teaching: : “when you first told me…I was like we don’t do intentional teaching, what the hell, why does she want to come here and listen to us?” (Jackie/S2/FG/p. 18). Like the teachers in Setting 1, they were concerned that it could lead to a formal and highly structured approach to curriculum that they felt was inconsistent with their work with infants. However, Jackie acknowledged that there was a place for formal curriculum planning, provided certain conditions were met (see p.116).

In Setting 3, the teachers wondered whether intentional teaching was an old idea presented in a new guise. For example, both Pat and Tracy intuitively associated the idea of intentional teaching with an approach to advance-planning of curriculum that they thought had been superseded by an emergent approach, in which curriculum was shaped around children's interests rather than determined in advance according to the teachers' decisions (S3/FG). The only aspect of their curriculum that they chose to describe as being intentional was the ready-for-school programme, which was planned by the teachers up to two months in advance. The planning appeared to have been informed primarily by the requirements of the commercially-produced phonics and hand-writing programmes that the teachers had selected.

Very few of the teachers were immediately positive about the concept of intentional teaching. However, Viv explained that: "I do think it's what we do; I just wouldn't have thought of putting it in those terms" (Viv/S3/FG/p. 1). She was not able to articulate why she reacted that way.

Overall, therefore, it seemed that these early childhood teachers initially understood intentional teaching as being a structured, planned, and didactic approach to pedagogy in early childhood education. The only aspects of their practice that they described as being intentional were those that were consistent with that interpretation. This understanding was intuitive rather than informed. Nevertheless, it had much in common with Epstein's (2007) view of intentional teaching being "planful, thoughtful, and purposeful" (p. 1); a definition that was seen to have influenced the view of intentional teaching as presented in the EYLF (DEEWR, 2009), as well as much of the research into intentional teaching. The ways in which their understanding of intentional teaching changed as a result of participating in this study are described later in this chapter.

Demonstrating intentional teaching in New Zealand early childhood education.

The second sub-question was: in what ways might early childhood teachers in New Zealand demonstrate intentional teaching in their practice? This study argues that, in spite of the teachers' objections to the notion of intentional teaching as they initially understood it, they nevertheless demonstrated intentional teaching across multiple areas of their practice in relation to children's wellbeing, their learning, and their preparation for the future. A misalignment between teachers' stated beliefs, and their practice, is not uncommon (e.g., Blay & Ireson, 2009; Varol, 2012). The teachers in this study acknowledged that at times there were discrepancies between for example, their stated commitment to a child-led curriculum, and the high level of adult control that was visible during mat times, meal times, and sleep times (Debbie/S1/FG).

The findings reported in Chapter 7 showed the ways in which the teachers in this study demonstrated intentional teaching practice through their curriculum decisions, inspired by their aspirations for children. Their practice was shaped by the multiple deliberate decisions they made about the environment, their planning, and the ways in which they chose to respond to children. Different types of decision were associated with different areas of intentional practice. For example, teachers were seen to be more likely to engage in proactive teaching when focussing on preparing children for transitions. In contrast, teachers with a focus on fostering children's learning used all three identified approaches to decision-making—resource-based, proactive, and responsive— according to the context; whereas teachers focusing on ensuring children's happiness tended to use resource-based or proactive teaching only.

Factors that influence intentional practice in New Zealand early childhood settings.

The final sub-question was: what factors might influence intentional teaching in New Zealand early childhood settings? The theory constructed in this study positions teachers' aspirations for children as the most significant influence on their intentional teaching practice. Teachers' aspirations were seen to underpin all aspects of their intentional practice.

The teachers' aspirations were seen to have developed in response to different factors. Some of these were personal to individual teachers—their experiences as school students (see p. 106), or as parents (see p. 108), for example. However, the most significant influence on the development of teachers' aspirations was found to be their enculturation into the ethos of early childhood education in New Zealand. This included an emphasis on a play-based curriculum, an emphasis on child-initiated activity and the importance of identifying and supporting children's interests, and in particular, the principles and strands of *Te Whāriki*. The way in which *Te Whāriki* affected the development of teachers' aspirations was described in detail in Chapter 5 (p. 108).

Teachers' intentional practice was also shown to be influenced by their curriculum decisions. This thesis has argued that teachers' curriculum decisions were the mediating factor between their aspirations and their actions. Consequently, this thesis has focused on the connections between aspirations and decisions, and has discussed the different approaches to decision-making that were identified in relation to teachers' aspirations.

However, in addition to teachers' aspirations, the findings also suggested some other factors that may also have influenced teachers' decision-making, including their beliefs about appropriate pedagogy, curriculum requirements, parents' expectations, and regulatory requirements. All of these possible influences were discussed in Chapter 6.

The final possible factor that may have affected teachers' intentional practice was the response of children to the learning activities and experiences that teachers provided. Children's responses provided instant feedback to teachers, and at times led them to adapt their practice, and change their approach. This was discussed in Chapter 7.

Assessing the Theory

Chapter 3 described the criteria that were proposed by Charmaz (2014) to assess a constructed grounded theory. They were: credibility, originality, resonance, and usefulness. Chapter 3 explained how the theory developed from this study met all of those criteria, as well as the criteria of dependability and transferability (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

One of the means of establishing a theory's resonance is to conduct a group validation interview (Morse, 2007), with participants. I conducted such an interview with the teachers from Setting 3 towards the end of my study. The findings from this interview are reported in this section. They add extra weight to the claims made in Chapter 3 that this theory satisfies the criteria of resonance and usefulness.

Resonance and usefulness.

I presented my developing analysis and theoretical model to the teachers at Setting 3 when my analysis was well-advanced but not complete. The final model as presented in this thesis is slightly different to the one discussed with those teachers, as their feedback, together with my further analysis, and my discussions with my academic supervisors, led to some minor adaptations.

I began the group validation interview (GVI) by introducing to the teachers the notion of aspirations, and the idea that their practice might be based on their aspirations for children. I named the aspirations that I had identified—wanting children to be happy, wanting children to have a positive view of learning, and wanting children to be prepared for the future— and asked for their comments. The aspirations that seemed to resonate most with the teachers were: wanting children to be happy, and wanting children to be prepared for the future. Tracy confirmed my earlier findings by stating that children's happiness was a necessary precondition for their learning, and the others agreed.

When I discussed the aspiration, wanting children to have a positive view of learning, they agreed that it was very important to ensure that children's view of learning, and of themselves as learners, was positive, and they explained that the best way to achieve this was to base learning experiences on children's emerging interests. Their reaction supported my finding that they were resistant to the notion of planned learning activities that focused on predetermined learning outcomes:

In addition to agreeing with the aspirations I had identified as being central to intentional teaching, the teachers also agreed with the notion of the three approaches to curriculum decision-making that I had identified —resource-based decisions, proactive decisions, and responsive decisions. Indeed, they appeared to be more interested in this aspect of my analysis than any other. The feature of this aspect of the theory that seemed to intrigue them most was the idea that it was possible for a teacher to move quickly and frequently from one approach to decision-making to another:

> I definitely think I could be operating in [resource-based teaching] with a child or group of children on the same day that I am operating in [proactive teaching] with some more children, the same day that I am operating in [responsive teaching] with some more children, and I could do all three [approaches] with all three different [groups] (Sarah/S3/GVI/p. 20).

It seemed that this perspective on intentional teaching helped them to appreciate the complexity of their daily practice, and the level of ingrained professional knowledge that their intuitive manoeuvring between approaches to decision-making entailed.

As our discussion progressed, the teachers began to reflect on their practice, and their decision-making. They also began to discuss their documentation, and how that might reveal their aspirations for children, and whether they had been engaged in resource-based, proactive, or responsive teaching. As discussed earlier in this chapter, I had not found any reference in their documentation to their teaching or decision-making. The teachers apparently perceived this proposed theoretical model as having the potential to explain both their practice and their documentation to others, in particular to the Education Review Office (ERO) reviewers they were expecting in their centre, in a way that would provide evidence of their intentional teaching:

> Sarah: If you look through pages in our portfolios you'll see examples of all three [types of decision-making]. I mean some are all pictures, and we've just added some resources to their play, and we are [doing resource-based teaching]. Whereas this one might be more [responsive] teaching, and others—you'll look through and go 'there they are'.
>
> Viv: The thing is, if ERO looked at that they wouldn't know why you had just provided things for their play.
>
> Sarah: So you write it up. Easy; just use this model (GVI/p. 28).

The ways in which these teachers responded to my nascent theoretical model and analysis were positive and affirming. They enable me to claim with confidence that this theory meets Charmaz' (2014) criteria that a constructed grounded theory should resonate with—or make sense to—the participants, and that it should have the potential to be useful to them. Overall, it seemed that my proposed theoretical model made explicit some aspects of their practice that had hitherto been implicit; in particular they explained that the notion of aspirations helped them to understand, and to value, the foundations for their practice. Further, by naming areas of their practice as intentional, it appeared that I had highlighted an aspect of their practice that they had not previously been aware of. Finally, it seemed that the theoretical model provided them with a potential new tool for reflection.

Reflections on the Methodology

My decision to design and conduct this study according to the principles of CGT was inspired by the aim of this study, which was to develop a ground-up model of intentional teaching as it was evidenced in some New Zealand early childhood education centres that was not based on assumptions or prior definitions. This decision was reinforced by the discovery that the amount of empirical research that had been conducted into intentional teaching in early childhood education was limited, particularly in New Zealand. CGT, with its emphasis on approaching an area of research without a preconceived theoretical framework, and with its focus on generating new theoretical models, was thus considered to be the most appropriate methodology for this study.

As this study has led to the development of a new theoretical understanding of intentional teaching in New Zealand early childhood education, it can be stated that using CGT achieved the original aim. It gave me as a researcher the freedom to explore new ideas without imposing an existing theoretical framework or understanding of intentional teaching onto the process. However, using CGT methodology also presented me with a number of challenges. Chief amongst those was the imperative to stay true to my data, and to theorise from what was in the data, not from what I thought was supposed to be there (Glaser, 1978). This required patience, and a constant state of alertness. It was very easy to pursue ideas and concepts that I found in the literature only to realise, sometimes later rather than sooner, that the literature had led me away from my data, rather than helping me to understand it. I had to continually refocus myself, to ensure that I did not get distracted or led astray. However, by remaining focused on the data, and developing the analysis accordingly, I have been able to develop an original theoretical model to explain intentional teaching as it is practised in three New Zealand early childhood settings.

The Contributions of this Study

This empirical study contributes a new and original theoretical understanding and model of intentional teaching to the scholarly literature. It adds a New Zealand perspective to the international literature; however its contribution goes further than simply having been conducted in New Zealand. No other literature has been located to date that considers the influence of early childhood teachers' aspirations on their practice, that makes clear the connection between aspirations, curriculum decisions, and intentional practice, or that envisages intentional teaching as comprising all three of these particular social processes (Charmaz, 2014). The model that has been developed in this study therefore contributes a new way of conceptualising intentional teaching.

In addition, the theoretical model developed in this study has explained the nature of intentional teaching in some New Zealand early childhood settings. In doing so it has added to the current understanding of intentional teaching by identifying it as an aspirational, dynamic and holistic construct, and by revealing that intentional teaching can be demonstrated in teachers' spontaneous and intuitive responses to children.

This study also makes a contribution to discussions about appropriate methodology for researching intentional teaching in early childhood education. CGT enabled the development of a theoretical understanding that was not constrained by existing theoretical frameworks. Two studies that claimed to have analysed their data using grounded theory analysis were reviewed for this study; neither appeared to have followed the principles of grounded theory from conception to completion (p. 41). The use of CGT methodology in all aspects of the design and conduct of this study, taken in conjunction with its focus and aim, position it as an original methodological contribution to the intentional teaching literature, and also as a contribution to the CGT literature.

In addition, this study contributes to the New Zealand research literature at a time when the indications are that intentional teaching is a phrase that has entered the lexicon of researchers and policy-makers alike. This study therefore has therefore made a contribution towards an understanding of intentional teaching that is particularly relevant for New Zealand early childhood education.

Finally, this study has the potential to make a contribution to practising early childhood teachers by providing them with a tool for reflection and self-review, either as individuals, or as a teaching team. In addition, it has the potential to help them explain their practice to others, and to increase their sense of professionalism. This is discussed further in the following section.

The Implications of this Study

This study has potential implications for early childhood education policy, for teacher educators, for professional learning facilitators, and for practising teachers. These matters are considered in this section.

This study was based on data grounded in current practice in some New Zealand early childhood centres. It has developed a model of intentional teaching that is compatible with the holistic, play-based, emerging approach to curriculum found in *Te Whāriki*. This study therefore has the potential to inform early childhood education policy by making explicit aspects of teaching practice that have previously been tacit.

Further, the theoretical model that was developed by this study has revealed the complex, aspirational, holistic and dynamic nature of intentional teaching in some early childhood centres. It is expected that this theoretical model may provide a useful and accessible framework for assessment, such as those conducted by the ERO, in their regular reviews of early childhood centres. In addition, it was reported in Chapter 1 that the New Zealand Teachers Council (NZTC) had requested the development of a Teacher Education Refresh (TER) course for early childhood teachers that would include a component about intentional teaching; however, the NZTC were unclear about the nature of intentional teaching. It is expected, therefore, that this study could provide a research-based theoretical foundation for any such TER course, as well as for mentoring programmes for provisionally registered teachers that may be offered by NZTC or its successor, the Education Council.

This study has foregrounded the matter of teachers' aspirations for children. There was no evidence to suggest that the teachers had ever considered their aspirations for children prior to participating in the study. Nevertheless, their aspirations whether explicit or tacit, were seen to have a significant influence on their practice. It may be advisable therefore for policy-makers, reviewers or professional bodies to consider the matter of teachers' aspirations for children, and their influence on practice, when introducing policy or conducting reviews. This could be especially relevant if it was found that teachers' aspirations and new policy, or curriculum approaches, were potentially in conflict. Understanding the important influence of teachers' aspirations may assist all concerned to understand why conflict may at times arise, and how to manage it.

In order to facilitate teachers' awareness of their aspirations for children, it may be appropriate for teacher-educators and professional learning facilitators to consider how to encourage pre- or in-service teachers to reflect on these, and the influence they have on their practice. It is proposed that the model presented in this thesis could provide a suitable framework for facilitating such reflection.

In addition, this study found that some teachers, regardless of the length of their professional experience, were hesitant about describing their practice as teaching, and were apparently uncertain about engaging with children in their learning and exploration. It seemed that the traditional view of teachers as facilitators of children's learning was still strongly influential. In view of current research into the importance of teachers' active engagement with children in their learning (e.g., Hedges, 2014), and of the development of playful pedagogies (e.g., Wood, 2010a), this finding was concerning. It adds support to the literature that calls for increased awareness of the place of teachers and teaching in early childhood education (Grieshaber, 2008, 2010; Siraj-Blatchford, 2009). These findings therefore present a challenge to teacher educators, professional learning facilitators, and to practising teachers themselves.

This study, however, offers a tool that may help teachers become more confident in recognising and articulating their role as intentional teachers. The findings from the group validation interview indicate that teachers felt that the model of intentional teaching I have constructed might help them to explain their practice effectively to others, in a way that would highlight the complex and intentional nature of their professional practice. For example, Jackie described the way she struggled to know how to "prove to [parents] that we're not just babysitters" (Jackie/S1/TI/p. 3). Further, the findings reported in Chapter 6, for example, illustrated the lack of agency that some teachers appeared to experience when confronted by the expectations or requirements of senior teachers, centre managers, parents or ERO. It is the contention of this study, therefore, that the model developed here will provide a useful tool for teachers to explain their practice to others.

Overall therefore, this study has the potential to provide guidance for the early childhood sector. This guidance could be applied from policy level to practical delivery.

The Limitations of this Study

The first limitation of this study was its size. Only three early childhood centres participated. Although I believe that the data I gathered was sufficient to claim 'theoretical sufficiency" (Dey, 1999, p. 257), it was nevertheless a small-scale study. In addition, I made certain deliberate decisions about the settings for this study. For example, I decided not to conduct this study in an early childhood centre with a particular cultural identity such as a Kōhanga Reo. Similarly, I deliberately decided not to conduct this study within a centre with a particular educational philosophy such as a Montessori centre. The reasons for these decisions were clearly explained in Chapter 4. Furthermore, all of the centres that participated were located in the same major city. It is possible that centres in a smaller urban area, or a rural area, may have contributed different data.

I also decided not to interview parents. At the time, this seemed a logical decision as the focus of the study was on teachers. However, as I began to consider the influences on teachers' decision-making, for example, it became apparent that the expectations and aspirations of parents were a potentially significant factor. Nevertheless, the conditions of my study were such that I could not test these ideas with parents.

I have discussed in an earlier chapter (p. 73) some of the practical challenges I encountered using a video camera in the research settings. In addition to those challenges, I discovered that some of the constraints I had imposed on my study as protection for the participants also acted as limitations. In particular, I undertook only to take video footage when teachers were present. My expectation was that I would video teachers' interactions with children, and discuss it with the teachers at a later date. However, particularly in Setting 1 where the teachers often chose not to interact with the children, I found that my opportunities to use video were thus limited. I could not video children without a teacher present, therefore in instances such as Water in the Sandpit (p. 122) when teachers were nearby but not with the children, video was not a useful tool.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research on intentional teaching in New Zealand early childhood education could usefully be conducted in the types of centres that were not included in this study. It is possible, for example, that teachers in centres that are based around particular philosophies, or that seek to preserve and honour particular cultural heritages, may have additional or different aspirations to those identified in this study. Similarly, teachers in smaller towns or in rural areas might have additional or different aspirations for children. Research in these contexts might identify these aspirations, and might enrich understanding of the aspirations that teachers have. It may also establish whether the connection between aspirations, decisions, and actions that is theorised in this study is visible in other contexts.

The findings from this present study indicated that the teachers' aspirations were consistent with the aspiration, principles and strands of *Te Whāriki*. It is possible that teachers in other centres might have aspirations that conflict with *Te Whāriki*. Further study is needed to establish, in such a case, whether the teachers' aspirations would be prioritised over the content of the curriculum document.

In addition, the findings from this study have suggested that the aspirations of parents and children might also influence teachers' intentional practice, sometimes leading teachers to engage in practice that was contrary to their beliefs. Research in this area might establish whether this model enables teachers to explain their practice to others. It may also expand or extend the theoretical model proposed by this study.

One further area for possible future research might be to investigate how the notion of intentional teaching might influence teachers' perception of their professional identity. Research in Australia has suggested that it has positively influenced teachers' professional identity in that country (Ortlipp et al., 2011). As intentional teaching is still a new concept in New Zealand, it is not clear whether the same would be found in this country.

The findings from this present study have the potential to be transferable to other early childhood centres in New Zealand, and perhaps internationally. The engagement of the research community with this model, in order to support or confirm its assertions, is invited.

Concluding Statement

I began this study of intentional teaching in New Zealand early childhood education with the aim of developing a ground-up understanding of intentional teaching as demonstrated by practising teachers. I wanted to investigate whether the notion of intentional teaching was compatible with the play-based, non-prescriptive approach to early childhood education that is described in *Te Whāriki*, and whether intentional teaching could be demonstrated in a mix of planned and spontaneous events. I also wished to understand the factors that might influence intentional teaching in the New Zealand context. In addition, I hoped to approach the research questions with as open-a-mind as possible, and to avoid imposing a pre-determined interpretation of intentional teaching onto either the participants or the findings. I did not locate any similar previous study. For these reasons, I chose to follow the principles of CGT when designing and conducting the study.

I found that many aspects of New Zealand early childhood teachers' practice could be considered to be intentional teaching, when understood as the implementation of their aspirations for children, put into practice as a result of their curriculum decisions. This understanding led me to describe the nature of intentional teaching as being aspirational, dynamic, holistic, frequently spontaneous and sometimes intuitive.

The view of intentional teaching developed in this study represents a significant and original contribution to the research literature. I have argued that it has the potential to inform policy-making, teacher education, and professional learning for practising teachers. I have also argued that it has the potential to empower early childhood teachers by making explicit aspects of their practice that have previously been tacit or unarticulated. In addition, it may also provide early childhood teachers with a possible tool for furthering their reflection, and for enabling them to articulate and explain their practice to others.

The teachers who participated in this study were enthusiastic about the model that was developed. Overall it seemed that participating in this study raised their consciousness of their intentional teaching and increased their professional confidence to articulate their practice. For example, Tracy had initially been hesitant about agreeing to participate in the study; she told me that she did not feel she was really able to contribute to a research study, and she was nervous about taking part. She did however agree to participate after I had spent time talking to her and answering her questions. Eight weeks later, at her individual interview, she summarised her post-participation feelings about intentional teaching:

> It puts words to what we are really doing and it makes a lot of sense, so I like it. I really like it! … Maybe it suits me because… I find [*Te Whāriki*] …really waffly. It just doesn't make any sense to me…. it doesn't explain what I do. Whereas intentional teaching does, [it] explain[s] everything we do (Tracy/S3/TI/p. 23).

Appendix I

Initial Coding

7.3.14	
Teachers had left a container of shredded paper from the office in the garden for children to play with. They had put some toy animals in amongst the paper. Yesterday Viv noticed that someone had tipped water into the paper.	*Provoking, selecting resources* *Designing the environment, coming up with ideas, suggesting activities, being creative.* *Noticing, responding*
Today she has brought a kit for making recycled paper from home to show the children. She is at a table with 2 boys and 1 girl. She has a bowl full of soggy shredded paper. She also has some a beater. She has shredded the paper some more, and is beating it with the beater. The children have helped her pick some Rosemary from the garden and are starting to stir it into the paper pulp.	*Planning/responding, setting up experiences, emergent curriculum?* *Having objectives,* *providing resources, introducing new activities, demonstrating, guiding children, getting children involved, collaboration?* *Working together, sharing the activity, teacher-child balance, sensory exploration, demonstrating, instructing,*
After everything is well beaten and mixed together, Viv starts putting the pulp into a wire frame. She is talking to the children throughout this time, explaining what she's doing. After she has demonstrated how to place the pulp on the frame, she asks the children to do it. Once it is all in place, she demonstrates how to place a mesh screen on top and use it to squeeze the water out. The children are very enthusiastic about this and take turns doing it as well. When they say they are finished, Viv asks them to look and see "can you see any places where you can see the silver criss-cross underneath?" When they find some gaps she encourages them to add more pulp to fill them in, and then repeat the squeezing process.	*talking to children, explaining, giving information, demonstrating a skill, introducing concepts, introducing new equipment,* *demonstrating, introducing a skill,* *making learning interesting* *making learning fun,* *promoting perseverance, questioning, challenging, extending children's thinking, engaging their awareness,* *encouraging involvement, encouraging learning,* *promoting perseverance, achieving a goal,*
Then she asks the children what they have outside that might help the paper to dry. They reply "the sun" so she asks one of the boys to find a safe sunny spot where they can put their paper.	*questioning, provoking, challenging thinking, sharing decision-making, encouraging children to get involved, delegating responsibility, promoting sense of belonging.*

Focused Coding

7.3.14	
Teachers had left a container of shredded paper from the office in the garden for children to play with. They had put some toy animals in amongst	Providing resources
the paper. Yesterday Viv noticed that someone had tipped water into the paper.	Noticing
Today she has brought a kit for making recycled paper from home to show the children. She is at a table with 2 boys and 1 girl. She has a bowl full of soggy shredded paper. She also has some a	*Explicit planning, selecting resources, designing the environment, setting up activities.*
beater. She has shredded the paper some more, and is beating it with the beater. The children have	*Provoking an interest*
helped her pick some Rosemary from the garden and are starting to stir it into the paper pulp. After everything is well beaten and mixed together,	*Purposeful sensory exploration*
Viv starts putting the pulp into a wire frame. She is talking to the children throughout this time,	*Demonstrating/explaining*
explaining what she's doing. After she has demonstrated how to place the pulp on the frame, she asks the children to do it. Once it is all in	*Transmitting information*
place, she demonstrates how to place a mesh	*Demonstrating*
screen on top and use it to squeeze the water out.	*Promoting discovery*
The children are very enthusiastic about this and take turns doing it as well. When they say they are	*Making learning fun*
finished, Viv asks them to look and see "can you	*Promoting inquiry*
see any places where you can see the silver criss-cross underneath?" When they find some gaps she	*Questioning*
encourages them to add more pulp to fill them in,	*Encouraging*
and then repeat the squeezing process. Then she asks the children what they have outside	*Promoting disposition – perseverance*
that might help the paper to dry. They reply "the	*Involving children*
sun" so she asks one of the boys to find a safe sunny spot where they can put their paper.	*Promoting inquiry*

Appendix II: Theoretical Categories

Wanting children to be happy	**Wanting children to be ready for the future**	**Wanting children to have a positive view of learning**
teaching social skills	getting children ready	Exploring concepts/ideas
sharing	ready for school	Enjoying uncertainty
being friendly	ready for transition in centre	trying things out
modelling social skills	ready for society	challenging self and child
promoting/planning for relationships		taking risks
		identifying /extending children's interests
promoting free play	take the lead	understand children's working theories
minimising adult intervention	explicit planning	challenging/extending children's wts
encouraging co-operation	selecting resources	be flexible
be flexible	designing the environment	be spontaneous AND planned
provide resources	set up activities	making decisions
set up at random	selecting learning goals	sharing responsibility
don't set learning goals		promoting peer learning/teaching
		interpret/follow up children's thinking
supporting children's interests	teaching children knowledge and skills	listening to children
provide resources related to development or interests	counting	finding the balance between teacher and child
watching/see what happens	writing	finding the balance between individual and group
not interrupting children's activities/play	gluing	holding self back
entertaining children?	cutting	working together to achieve a goal
don't do teaching	gross motor	understanding children's learning goals
listen to children	phonics	
	communication	
	behaviour	
wanting children to be self confident	wanting children to have self-help skills	wanting children to learn
wanting children to learn independently	wanting children to discover	wanting children to explore new ideas
wanting children to be happy	wanting children to learn skills	wanting children to discover alongside others
wanting children to have friends	wanting children to develop dispositions	want children to be thinkers
wanting children to discover without teacher		foster dispositions
foster dispostions		
promoting mutual respect	using approriate math/science language	scaffolding
reassuring	transmitting information	encouraging
encouraging risk taking	direct instruction	reassuring
encouraging co-operation	indirect instruction/teaching	challenging
	providing purposeful sensory exploration	questioning
	make learning interesting	promote inquiry
	encouraging	making learning interesting
	providing repetition	trying to understand children's intentions
	demonstrating	making learning meaningful
	provoking interests	modelling
		finding the right level of challenge
		provoking interests

Appendix III: Indicative Focus Group Questions

Indicative focus group questions for PLFs.

1. What have you heard about/read about the idea of intentional teaching before this study?

Explore where the idea came from, who first introduced it to the team, what reading they've done about it.

2. In what ways do you think it might be a useful concept for early childhood education? What might be problematic about the concept?

What have they seen that makes them want to address this issue with teachers? What do they expect/hope to see as a result of intervention? What reaction do they anticipate from the teaching community? What barriers/opposition/difficulties do they anticipate? How does IT fit with prevailing theoretical understanding in early childhood education? What is the prevailing theoretical understanding that early childhood teachers refer to?

3. How might you define the role of an early childhood teacher?

Explore: play/teaching; spontaneous/planned; facilitator/teacher

4. How might you define intentional teaching?

5. Tell me what you think intentional teaching might look like in practice.

Have they seen examples? What evidence do they look for? Can they define it by considering what it does NOT look like? How does IT fit within spontaneous interactions/responses to children? Is there a conflict here?

6. What connections if any might you expect to see between intentional teaching, and any other aspects of teachers' practice?

Do they see any connections? Are some areas more obviously associated with IT than others?

7. How might you expect being part of a team to impact on intentional practice?

Consider the US approach of individual teachers v the New Zealand approach of teams. Does IT fit in such a context?

8. How might you help teachers to become more intentional in their teaching practice?

How will they explain it? Which aspect of daily practice will they focus on first?

9. How might you help teachers to articulate their intentional teaching?

How would you expect them to articulate IT? What theoretical framework will you provide for teachers? How will you assure/reassure them?

Indicative focus group questions for teachers.

Introduction: remind group being recorded, recording cannot stop but no-one obliged to answer any particular question.

Give background to study – found this concept of IT in the literature, began to wonder whether it was useful for New Zealand early childhood education.

1. Thinking about IT, what are your immediate reactions to this as a concept?

Had they heard about it before? Have they looked it up since agreeing to be in the study? Do they find it interesting, positive, worrying, off-putting? Why?

What does the language convey? How do they react to the word intentional? Teaching?

2. How would you go about defining IT?
3. Do you think that this could be a useful idea for early childhood education?

Do you see it fitting within Te Whāriki? How? What problems might you have with the concept and why?

4. Do you think this is something you are doing already?

Are there any aspects of current practice in the centre would you say are intentional? That I should be watching out for?

Do they think they are doing it but calling it something different? How much practice is planned, how much spontaneous? Does IT fit within a spontaneous framework?

5. What might prevent you from being intentional?
6. How would you describe your goals/ intentions for children?

How do you express your goals? How do you know if you've achieved them?

7. Is there anything else you would like to say?

Appendix IV: Indicative Individual Interview Questions

These are the indicative questions for individual interviews with teachers; however, the questions for the interviews were tailored for the individual. Comments in italics are my prompts.

1. Please start by telling me a little bit about your background as an early childhood teacher.
2. In the group interview we had together earlier, we talked about the role of a teacher in an early childhood education setting. How did those ideas reflect your own beliefs about that? *(Probe any specific comments made that seem relevant).*
3. How much of your practice would you say was pre-planned, and how much is spontaneous?
4. Which of those, pre-planned or spontaneous, do you think is most important, and why?
5. Which are you most confident with, and why?
6. How would you describe that knowledge/information/beliefs that you base your planning on? *(Probes related to data might be used here).*
7. How might you describe the knowledge/information/beliefs that you base your spontaneous responses to children on? *(Could you tell me a little bit more about that? Where did those ideas/beliefs/knowledge come from?)*
8. At the group interview we also talked about intentional teaching, and tried to define it. Can you remember what we decided? *(Did they agree with the definition? Was it a new idea to them? What did they feel about the notion of intentional teaching when they first heard about it?)*
9. How would you define intentional teaching? *(Probe reasons behind their definition – or their choice not to try and define it).*
10. In what ways might you think it's a useful concept for early childhood teachers? *(Can you tell me more about that? If they don't think it's a useful concept, can they explain why?)*
11. What aspects of your practice might you describe as intentional? *(Probe for more detail. If they don't suggest anything, refer to data to stimulate conversation – what about this incident? Can you tell me what you were thinking then?)*
12. In what ways might you think your spontaneous interactions with children demonstrate intentional teaching? *(Refer to data or video to stimulate memory. If answer negative, can they explain why? If positive, ask for further information).*
13. How would you describe the knowledge/information/beliefs that are the foundations for your intentional practice? *(Omit if they don't think they do intentional teaching. Otherwise, can you tell me more about that? Why do you think that knowledge/information/belief is important?)*
14. In what ways might you think being part of a team impacts on the way you implement intentional teaching? *(Can you think of any examples? Can you tell me more about this?)*
15. Has any of your thinking about intentional teaching changed since this study started?

The interview will include some brief video excerpts of the specific teacher’s recent interactions with children. After each excerpt questions will be asked. The indicative post-video questions are:

1. Please tell me about this incident.
2. What do you/did you think the child was thinking/exploring/learning at that time?
3. Why do you/did you think that?
4. Can you please describe, if you can remember, what you were thinking at the time?
5. Can you please describe for me what you were trying to teach at that time?
6. Are you able to describe the basis for your planning here?
7. Can you please describe for me why you chose to respond in that way?
8. What knowledge, information or beliefs do you think inspire your practice most?
9. As far as you can remember, what were your intentions here, and how were they expressed?
10. What might your overall intentions for this child/group of children be/have been?
11. Why?

Appendix V: Information and Consent Sheets

This appendix includes the Participant Information Sheets (PIS) and Consent Forms (CF) that were distributed during this study. They are ordered as follows:

1. PIS and CF for the manager of the Professional Learning Facilitator (PLF) team.
2. PIS and CF for PLFs
3. PIS and CF for Centre managers
4. PIS and CF for Teachers.
5. PIS and CF for Parents.

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Private Bag 92601, Symonds St
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Participant Information Sheet (Support Organisation Manager)

Project title: Intentional teaching in New Zealand early childhood education.

Researcher: Susan Batchelar.

Kia Ora,

My name is Susan, and I am a PhD candidate in early childhood education at the Faculty of Education, the University of Auckland. My supervisors are Dr Helen Hedges and Associate Professor Mavis Haigh. I am a qualified early childhood teacher with many years of professional experience.

My research is designed to investigate the ways in which early childhood teachers understand and demonstrate intentional teaching in their practice. I wish to include the views of professionals who are engaged in providing pedagogical support to early childhood teachers. I have identified your organisation as one that works in this field. I would therefore like to invite your organisation to participate in this research. I would also appreciate your assistance in informing your employees about this research, by distributing the Participant Information Sheets to them, and asking them to contact me if they are interested in taking part. If you do decide to participate, then I ask you to agree that your individual employees are under no obligation to participate, and that their decision whether to participate or not will have no impact on their employment status here.

Intentional teaching is not a phrase that is typically associated with early childhood education in New Zealand. It is, however, a pedagogical approach that has attracted much research overseas, and the New Zealand literature indicates that it is a topic that early childhood teachers here are beginning to discuss. I hope to find out whether intentional teaching is an appropriate concept for early childhood teachers working with *Te Whāriki.* I am particularly interested in the spontaneous interactions that occur between teachers and children, and in understanding better the professional knowledge and the intentions that inform teachers' decision making at these times.

What this will involve.

Every professional from your organisation who agrees to participate will be invited to take part in one group interview. This will last between one and one-and-a-half hours, and will be held at your office or at another location you choose.

The interview will be audio recorded, and transcribed by a third party who has signed a confidentiality agreement. All participants will be made aware of this beforehand. While one member of the group cannot ask for the recording to be suspended, no-one is obliged to answer any question that they choose not to. I attach a copy of the information sheet for your employees for your information.

Towards the end of the study, participants will be invited to one further meeting at which I will present my developing analysis for their feedback and comment. Attendance at this meeting will be voluntary.

Voluntary participation/withdrawal.

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You are under no obligation to give me access to the organisation. Furthermore, if you do agree, you may still withdraw your organisation, and any data gathered there, from the research at any time up until two weeks after the interview without giving a reason.

Benefits and risks of research.

It is expected that your employees may benefit from engaging in critical professional discussion about the pedagogical approach, intentional teaching, and how they might incorporate this approach in their work with early childhood teachers. No risk to your employees has been identified, other than the very slight possibility that they, or your organisation, may be identified from the written thesis. However, the measures I will take to try and prevent that from happening are explained next.

Confidentiality.

This research is confidential. I will ask those who take part to keep their participation confidential. However, I am happy to provide you with a copy of the summarised findings at the end of the study for your organisation. If you would like them, you may request them on your consent form.

I will use excerpts from the interview in my thesis and in subsequent publications and presentations. Therefore, in order to protect everyone's privacy, I will not at any time disclose the identity of the organisation, or of any of the participants. You may choose a name for your organisation, or I will assign it one that does not in any way reflect its real name. Participants will have the opportunity to choose their own pseudonyms, or to be assigned one.

Nevertheless, in spite of my best efforts to maintain confidentiality, there is always a slight chance that someone may be able to identify either the participants or the organisation.

Use of data.

The data that I gather will be analysed, and will then form the basis of my PhD thesis. I will also potentially use it in future publications in academic journals, or to support conference or teaching presentations.

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Private Bag 92601, Symonds St
Auckland 1150, New Zealand

Consent Form (Support Organisation Manager)

(This form will be held for a period of six years)

Project title: Intentional teaching in New Zealand early childhood education.

Researcher: Susan Batchelar.

I have read the Participant Information Sheet. I understand the nature of the research and why I have been invited to participate. I have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I agree that this organisation may participate in this research YES/NO

I agree that: (please indicate yes or no as appropriate)

- The researcher may invite my employees to participate in this research YES/NO
- Employees' decision whether to participate/not participate will not affect their employment status here YES/NO

I understand that: (please tick)

☐ I may withdraw my organisation, and any data attributable to it, at any time up until two weeks after the interview, without giving a reason.
☐ The organisation will not be identified by name, and the researcher will make every effort to conceal the identity of the organisation, and of the individual participants.
☐ Participants' main involvement will consist of one group interview.
☐ The contents of the interview will not be disclosed to me.

- Towards the end of the study participants will be invited to one further meeting to discuss the developing analysis.
- Data gathered during this study will be securely stored for a period of six years, after which they will be destroyed.
- The findings from this study will be used in a PhD thesis, and to support future publications as well as conference/teaching presentations.

I would like to receive a copy of the summarised findings for the organisation YES/NO

Name:…………………………………………………. Signature:………………………………………….

Name of Organisation:………………………………………………………………………………..

Date:…………………………………………………..

Email address for findings summary: ………………………………………………………………

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

ON 10th October 2012 for three (3) years, reference number 2012/8272.

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Private Bag 92601, Symonds St
Auckland 1150, New Zealand

Participant Information Sheet (PLF)

Project title: Intentional teaching in New Zealand early childhood education.

Researcher: Susan Batchelar.

Kia Ora,

My name is Susan, and I am a PhD candidate in early childhood education at the Faculty of Education, The University of Auckland. My supervisors are Dr Helen Hedges and Associate Professor Mavis Haigh. I am a qualified early childhood teacher with many years of professional experience.

My research is designed to investigate the ways in which early childhood teachers understand and demonstrate intentional teaching in their practice. I wish to include the views of professionals working with early childhood teachers to provide pedagogical support and mentoring. I have identified your organisation as one that works in this field, and your manager has given me permission to approach you. I would therefore like to invite you to participate in this research.

Intentional teaching is not a phrase that is typically associated with early childhood education in New Zealand. It is, however, a pedagogical approach that has attracted much research overseas, and the New Zealand literature indicates that it is a topic that early childhood teachers here are beginning to discuss. I hope to find out whether intentional teaching is an appropriate concept for early childhood teachers working with *Te Whāriki.* I am particularly interested in the spontaneous interactions that occur between teachers and children, and in understanding better the professional knowledge and the intentions that inform teachers' decision making at these times.

What this will involve.

If you choose to join this research, you will be asked to attend one group interview. This will last between one and one-and-a-half hours, and will be held at a time that is convenient to all. I will conduct the interview in your work place.

The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed by a third party, who has signed a confidentiality agreement. My supervisors and I will be the only people who see the transcript; you will not be given a copy. Because of the nature of a group interview it will not be possible to turn the recorder off at any time, but if you are uncomfortable with any of the questions you are not obliged to answer.

Towards the end of the study, I will invite you to one further meeting at which I will present my developing analysis for your comment and feedback. Attendance at this meeting will be voluntary.

Voluntary participation/withdrawal.

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary. Your manager has given an assurance that your decision whether to participate or not will in no way affect your employment status here. Furthermore, if you do agree, you may still withdraw from the research at any time before the group interview. However, it will not be possible to withdraw data you have provided during the group interview.

Benefits and risks of research.

Research literature suggests that teachers benefit from engaging in critical reflection of their practice. I hope that you will benefit from engaging in a critical professional discussion about the pedagogical approach, intentional teaching, and how you might incorporate that into your practice with early childhood teachers. No risk to you has been identified, other than the very slight possibility that you might be recognised from the written thesis. However, the measures I will take to try and prevent that from happening are explained next.

Confidentiality.

Group interviews are not confidential. However, I will ask everyone who takes part to agree not to disclose anything that was said, or the identities of those who attended. Further, I will not disclose the content of the interview to any member of your team who does not take part.

I will use excerpts from the interview in my thesis and in subsequent publications and presentations. Therefore, in order to protect everyone’s privacy, I will not at any time disclose the identity of your organisation, or of any of the participants. You may choose, or I will assign you, a pseudonym that will not reflect your real name in any way. Your organisation will also be given a pseudonym chosen either by your manager or by me.

Nevertheless, in spite of my best efforts to maintain confidentiality, there is always a slight chance that someone may be able to identify either you or your organisation.

Use of data.

The data that I gather will be analysed, and will then form the basis of my PhD thesis. I will also potentially use it in future publications in academic journals, or to support conference or teaching presentations. If you would like a copy of the summarised findings from this study, please state this on your consent form.

Storage and destruction of data.

Your signed consent form will be stored in a locked cabinet in my supervisor’s office at the Faculty of Education, University of Auckland, for six years.

The data I collect will also be securely stored for six years. Electronic data will be stored in a password protected file on the University of Auckland server. Paper data will be stored in a locked

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Private Bag 92601, Symonds St
Auckland 1150, New Zealand

Consent Form (PLF).

(This form will be held for a period of six years).

Project title: Intentional teaching in New Zealand early childhood education.

Researcher: Susan Batchelar.

I have read the Participant Information Sheet. I understand the nature of the research and the reasons why I have been invited to participate. I have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I agree to participate in this research. **YES/NO**

I agree to: (please indicate yes or no as appropriate)

- Take part in the group interview YES/NO
- Keep the content of the group interview confidential. YES/NO

I understand that: (please tick)

☐ My manager has given an assurance that my decision whether or not to participate will in no way affect my employment status.
☐ The group interview will be recorded.
☐ I cannot ask for the recording of the group interview to be suspended, but I am under no obligation to answer any particular question.
☐ The group interview will be transcribed by a third party who has signed a confidentiality agreement.
☐ I will not receive the transcript of the group interview to check.
☐ I cannot withdraw the information I have provided during the group interview.
☐ I have the right to withdraw myself, and any data that may be attributable to me, at any time before the group interview.

☐ Towards the end of the study I will have the opportunity to attend one further meeting to discuss the developing analysis.

☐ Data gathered during this study will be securely stored for a period of six years, after which they will be destroyed.

☐ The findings from this study will be used in a PhD thesis, and to support future publications, as well as teaching/conference presentations.

☐ I will not be identified by name in the study, and the researcher will make every effort to conceal my identity, and that of the centre.

I would like to receive a copy of the summarised findings at the end of the study YES/NO

Name:………………………………………………. Signature:………………………………………………

Date:……… Email address for findings summary:………………………………………………………

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

ON 10th October 2012 for three (3) years, reference number 2012/8272.

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Participant Information Sheet (Centre Manager)

Project title: Intentional teaching in New Zealand early childhood education.

Researcher: Susan Batchelar.

Kia Ora,

My name is Susan, and I am a PhD candidate in early childhood education at the Faculty of Education, the University of Auckland. My supervisors are Dr Helen Hedges and Associate Professor Mavis Haigh. I am a qualified early childhood teacher with many years of professional experience.

My research is designed to investigate the ways in which early childhood teachers understand and demonstrate intentional teaching in their practice. I will be conducting this research in up to five different early childhood centres, chosen to represent the diversity that is characteristic of the New Zealand early childhood education sector. I would value the opportunity to conduct some of my research in your (type of) centre, as I am keen to include the views of teachers who work in such a context. I am therefore inviting your centre to participate in this research.

Intentional teaching is not a phrase that is typically associated with early childhood education in New Zealand. It is, however, a pedagogical approach that has attracted much research overseas, and the New Zealand literature indicates that it is a topic that early childhood teachers here are beginning to discuss. I hope to find out whether intentional teaching is an appropriate concept for early childhood teachers working with *Te Whāriki.* I am particularly interested in the spontaneous interactions that occur between teachers and children, and in understanding better the professional knowledge and the intentions that inform teachers' decision making at these times.

If you agree to participate, then I would like your permission to speak with the members of your teaching team at a convenient time, such as a staff meeting. During this discussion I will explain the research study, and the proposed nature of the teachers' involvement. I will answer any questions they might have, and leave some copies of the Participant Information Sheet for teachers, and the appropriate Consent Form, for those who wish to sign. I will return to collect the signed Consent Form by arrangement with you. If fewer than 50% of your teachers decide to participate, then I will not continue with the research in this centre, but will approach another centre of a similar service type.

If you would prefer, I will send you the Participant Information Sheets and Consent Forms for teachers, and ask you to introduce the research to the teachers, and distribute the forms.

Once some teachers have agreed to participate, then I will discuss with you the best way to approach parents in order to gain consent for children to be involved too.

If you do decide to participate, then I ask you to agree that the individual teachers are under no obligation to participate, and that their decision either way will not affect their employment status here. I would also like your assurance that parents are free to decide whether or not to allow their child/ren to participate, and that their decision either way will not impact on the care and education that their child/ren receives.

The research with teachers.

This research will consist of a group interview, observations of practice, and individual interviews with teachers.

I will begin my research in the centre by asking all of the teachers who have agreed to participate to take part in a group interview. This will last between one and one-and-a-half hours, and will be conducted at a time and in a place that you have agreed is convenient for the centre, and that the teachers have also agreed to. This may either be at the centre, or at the Faculty of Education. If it is held there, teachers will be offered petrol vouchers to the value of $20.00 to reimburse their expenses.

The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed by a third party who has signed a confidentiality agreement. The teachers who participate will be fully informed about the recording, the transcription, and their right to decide not to answer any questions.

Following the group interview, I will be observing the practice of teachers who have agreed to allow me to do this. I will record my observations in writing in field notes, and I may also take notes of any informal professional conversations I have with the teachers.

I would like your permission to be in the centre for three hours a day, three days a week, for a period of up to eight weeks, beginning on or around (Date). I am aware that having a researcher in your centre may be inconvenient at times. I hope that by limiting the days and hours that I attend, that I will also limit the impact that my presence will have on the centre. I plan to vary my times in the centre to ensure that I see all of the aspects of centre life. I will discuss these hours and days with you or the head teacher in advance and the final decision about when I will be present in the centre will be subject to your, or their, agreement. I will respect your routines and policies, and will make every effort not to interrupt the teaching and learning interactions, and the relationships between teachers and children.

With teachers’ agreement, I plan to video some of their interactions with children. I will use excerpts of these videos in individual interviews with the teachers, which will take place towards the end of the observation period. Video footage will not be shown publicly. Parents will be asked to consent to their children being included in these videos. Children whose parents do not give consent will not be filmed. With your permission, I will put a notice in the entrance of the centre on days when I am filming, so that all parents, and in particular parents of non-participating children, are aware that this is happening.

The individual interviews will last for approximately one hour, and will be scheduled at a time that is least disruptive to the centre, in agreement with you, or the head teacher, and the individual teacher. These interviews will also be recorded and transcribed, as with the group interview. Teachers will have the right to ask for the recording to be suspended at any time. They will be given the transcript of their individual interview to review.

As a further aspect of research I would like to view centre documentation relating to planning and assessment, and to photocopy some sample pages for analysis later. I will check with you or the head teacher before I do so.   I will also ask parents for consent to view their children's portfolios, and to copy some pages.

Towards the end of the study I will invite the teachers from this centre who participated to attend a meeting at which I will present my developing analysis, and seek their comment and feedback. Attendance at this meeting will be voluntary.

I have attached a copy of the information sheet for teachers, and the consent form that they are asked to sign for your information.

The research with children.

The focus of my research is teachers. However, as I will be spending a large amount of time in your centre, I expect that I will engage in conversations with children. Children will also feature in the videos I take of teachers. Consequently, I will provide information about myself and about the research, for parents, together with a consent form for them to sign. I would appreciate the help of your teachers, in distributing this information.

I will seek parents' consent to include their children in video footage, to read their children's portfolios, and to copy relevant pages, excluding photographs.   I have attached a copy of the information letters for parents, and their consent forms, also for your information.

I will also provide a letter for children to explain who I am and what I am doing, and an assent form for older children to complete if they wish. I will discuss with you and with the participating teachers how this process might be managed. I attach a copy of this letter for your information.

As a researcher, I am not able to be considered part of the teaching team. I will immediately suspend all research activities should any safety related issues become apparent. I will not film, observe or document children during personal care routines, while they are asleep, or while they are distressed. If children indicate that they are uncomfortable with me, I will move away.

Benefits and risks.

Research has demonstrated that teachers benefit from the opportunity to view their practice on video, and to engage in reflective discussions about their practice with an impartial observer. I hope that the teachers in your centre will feel that they benefit from taking part in this research.

Initially the teachers may feel embarrassed watching themselves on video, especially if they have not done this before. However, I want to assure you that the purpose of the video and the interview is to assist teachers' recollection of events, and their reflection on them. I will not be judging them in any way. Nevertheless, should any of the teachers feel embarrassed or challenged by the process, I will discuss with them appropriate avenues for follow-up and support. Furthermore, if you wish, I can provide you with suggestions about appropriate avenues for support or guidance for your centre.

Voluntary participation/withdrawal.

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You are under no obligation to give me access to the centre. Furthermore, if you do agree, you may still withdraw your centre, and any data gathered there, from the research at any time up until the end of data gathering in the centre without giving a reason.

Auckland. s.batchelar@auckland.ac.nz 027 404 3843	Auckland. h.hedges@auckland.ac.nz 09 623 8899 ext. 48606	Gate 3, 74 Epsom Ave Auckland. m.haigh@auckland.ac.nz 09 623 8899 ext. 48964

You may also contact the head of the School of Curriculum and Pedagogy, Professor Judy Parr, jm.parr@auckland.ac.nz 09 623 8899 ext. 88998.

For any queries regarding ethical concerns, you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373 7599 ext. 87830/83761.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 10th October 2012, for three (3) years, reference number 2012/8272.

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www.education.auckland.ac.nz

The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92601, Symonds St
Auckland 1150, New Zealand

Consent Form (Centre Manager).

(This form will be held for a period of six years)

Project title: Intentional teaching in New Zealand early childhood education.

Researcher: Susan Batchelar.

I have read the Participant Information Sheet. I understand the nature of the research and why I have been invited to participate. I have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I agree that this centre may participate in this research **YES/NO**

I agree that: (please indicate yes or no as appropriate)

- The research may be conducted in this centre YES/NO
- The researcher may invite the teachers to participate in this research YES/NO
- The researcher may invite the parents of children who attend to participate in this research YES/NO
- Teachers' decision whether to participate/not participate will not affect their employment status here YES/NO
- Parents' decision whether to allow their child to participate or not will not affect the care and education their child receives YES/NO
- The researcher may view centre documentation relating to planning and assessment, and photocopy approved sample pages YES/NO
- The researcher may place a notice in the entrance to the centre on days that filming is taking place, to advise parents. YES/NO

I understand that: (please tick)

- ☐ I may withdraw my centre, and any data attributable to it, at any time up until (date) without giving a reason.
- ☐ The centre will not be identified by name, and the researcher will make every effort to conceal the identity of the centre, and of the individual participants.
- ☐ The contents of the interviews will not be disclosed to me.
- ☐ Teachers' involvement will include all or some of: a group interview; being observed and possibly filmed; and individual interviews.
- ☐ Towards the end of the study teachers will be invited to attend one further meeting to discuss the developing analysis.
- ☐ The researcher will include children in the research subject to parents' consent.
- ☐ The researcher will at no time form part of the teaching ratio.
- ☐ The researcher will not provide care or supervision to children.
- ☐ The researcher will not film, observe or document a child during personal care, while they are asleep or when they are distressed.
- ☐ Data gathered during this study will be securely stored for a period of six years, after which they will be destroyed.
- ☐ Research activities will be suspended should any safety issues become apparent.
- ☐ The findings from this study will be used in a PhD thesis, and to support future publications as well as conference/teaching presentations.
- ☐ At the end of the study the researcher discuss with me appropriate avenues for follow-up or support, on request.

I would like to receive a copy of the summarised findings for the centre YES/NO

Name:…………………………………………………. Signature:………………………………………….

Name of Centre:……………………………………………………………………………………..

Date:…………………………………………………..

Email address for findings summary: ………………………………………………………………………

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

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Private Bag 92601, Symonds St
Auckland 1150, New Zealand

Participant Information Sheet (Teacher)

Project title: Intentional teaching in New Zealand early childhood education.

Researcher: Susan Batchelar.

Kia Ora,

My name is Susan, and I am a PhD candidate in early childhood education at the Faculty of Education, the University of Auckland. My supervisors are Dr Helen Hedges and Associate Professor Mavis Haigh. I am a qualified early childhood teacher, with many years of professional experience.

My research is designed to investigate the ways in which early childhood teachers understand and demonstrate intentional teaching in their practice. I will be conducting this research in up to five different early childhood centres, chosen to represent the diversity that is characteristic of the New Zealand early childhood education sector. I have approached your centre because is it a (type of) centre, and I am keen to include the views of teachers who work in his type of context in my research. Your centre manager has given me permission to ask you and your colleagues to participate. I would like to invite you to join me in this research.

Intentional teaching is not a phrase that is typically associated with early childhood education in New Zealand. It is, however, a pedagogical approach that has attracted much research overseas, and the New Zealand literature indicates that it is a topic that early childhood teachers here are beginning to discuss. I hope to find out whether intentional teaching is an appropriate concept for early childhood teachers working with *Te Whāriki.* I am particularly interested in the spontaneous interactions that occur between teachers and children, and in understanding better the professional knowledge and the intentions that inform teachers' decision making at these times.

What this will involve.

There are three phases to this research – a group interview at the beginning, a period of observations, and an individual interview towards the end. You are welcome to participate in all of these phases, or only some. You are also free to choose not to participate at all. I have explained to your head teacher that only 50% of the teachers here need to agree to participate in order for the research to proceed in this centre. The phases of the research are explained in more detail next.

Phase one - the group interview.

The group interview will involve everyone from this centre who has agreed to participate. This interview will last between one and one-and-a-half hours, and will be held at a time and in a place that is convenient to all. This may be at the centre, or at the Faculty of Education. If the interview is held there, you will be offered petrol vouchers to the value of $20.00 to reimburse your expenses.

The interview will be audio recorded, and the recording transcribed by a professional transcriber, who has signed a confidentiality agreement. My supervisors and I will be the only people who see the transcript. It will not be possible to turn the recorder off during the interview, but if you are uncomfortable with any of the questions, you are not obliged to answer. Group interviews are not confidential, as information is shared with everyone. However, all members of the group will be asked to respect each other's answers, and not to disclose the content of the interview to anyone else.

Phase two – observations.

If you choose to continue your participation, then following the group interview I will be conducting observations in the centre. I will record my observations in writing, in my field notes, and may also take notes of informal professional conversations that we have during the day.

I will be in the centre for three days a week, at different times of day, to conduct my observations. My expectation is that I will start here around (Date). By coming on different days and at different times I hope to observe all aspects of centre life and of your practice. I am aware that having a researcher in the centre may be seen as inconvenient, but I hope to minimise the impact I have by varying the times and days on which I come. I wish to observe the regular events and experiences within this centre, so I will not be asking you to set up, or introduce, any new or special activities. Thus children who are not participating will not miss out on anything.

I will respect the centre routines and policies, and will make every effort not to interrupt the teaching and learning interactions, and your relationships with children. Further, I will suspend my research activities immediately should issues concerning children's safety become apparent.

On some of the days I will bring a video camera to record your interactions with children, as research has shown that viewing video can really help teachers to remember incidents, and reflect on their practice. Video of you will be private. Apart from you and me, the only other people who will have access to the video will be my University supervisors, as part of the analysis process. You may choose to be observed, but not filmed, and you can indicate that on the consent form. You can also ask me to stop filming at any time. I will request parents' consent to include their children in any video footage. Children whose parents do not consent, or who are clearly uncomfortable with the camera will not be included.

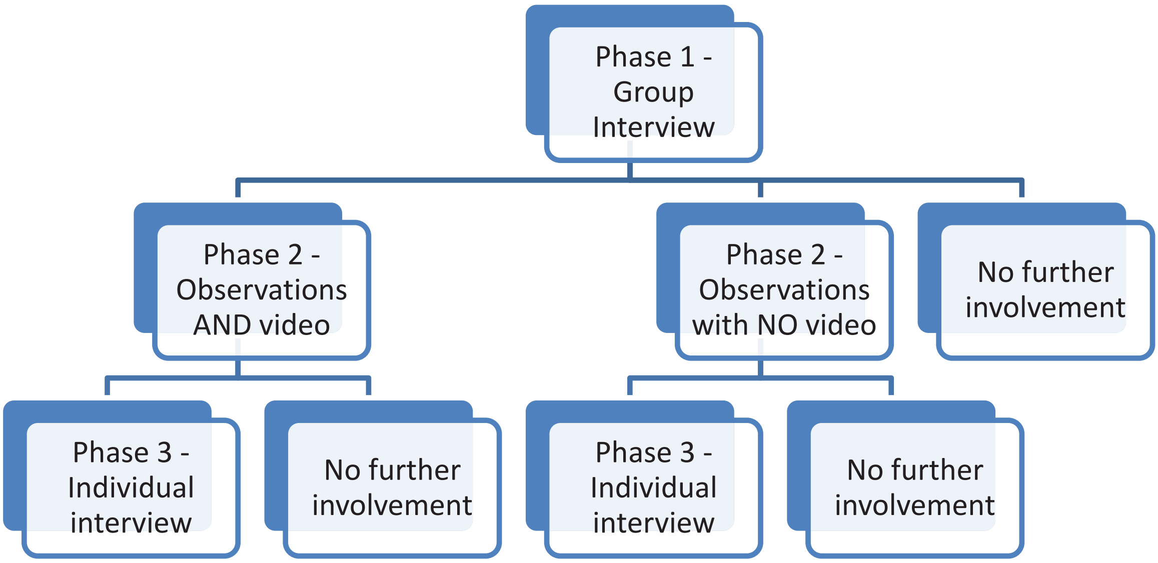
Phase three – the individual interview.

These observations, and excerpts from the videos which I have edited, will form the basis of individual interviews with teachers. These interviews are an essential part of the observation process, as they are the opportunity for us to discuss your practice and my research in detail. The interview will last for about one hour, and will take place at a time that suits you. If the interview takes place during work hours, it will be at a time agreed to by your head teacher. This interview will be audio recorded, and transcribed by a professional transcriber, who has signed a confidentiality agreement. However, you will have the option of asking me to turn the recorder off at any time. Once the interview has been transcribed, I will give you a copy of the transcript to check, to ensure that it accurately conveys your meaning, and to allow you to remove any information you wish. You will have until a specified date to return this transcript to me.

Your options.

You have the option to participate in all phases of the research, or only in some. You may wish to decide gradually – only committing yourself to phase one for example, and then choosing to continue with the next phase, or you may start by agreeing to all phases. You may want to change your mind at some point, and either join in, or drop out. Any of these options are available to you. If you wish to join a phase of the research you originally chose not to participate in, I will ask you to sign another consent form. If you wish to withdraw from the research you may do so at any time, without giving a reason, up until I have finished data gathering in this centre. You may also withdraw all data that you have contributed up until that time. The only exception is if you have participated in the group interview. You may withdraw yourself from any further involvement in the research, but your contribution to the group interview cannot be withdrawn.

The research process is summarised in the following diagram. You may follow any one of these pathways, or join at any stage:


Phase 1 - Group Interview
Phase 2 - Observations AND video
Phase 2 - Observations with NO video
No further involvement
Phase 3 - Individual interview
No further involvement
Phase 3 - Individual interview
No further involvement

In addition, towards the end of the study I will invite all of the teachers from this centre who have participated in the study to a meeting at which I will present my developing analysis for your feedback and comments. Attendance at this meeting will be voluntary.

Benefits and risks.

Research has demonstrated that teachers benefit from the opportunity to view their practice on video, and to engage in reflective discussions about their practice with an impartial observer. I hope that you will feel that you have benefited from taking part in this research.

Initially you may feel embarrassed watching yourself on video, especially if you have not done this before. However, I want to assure you that the purpose of the video and the interview is to assist your recollection of events, and your reflection on them. I will not be judging you in any way. Nevertheless, if at the end of the research process you feel challenged about some aspect of your professional practice, I will discuss with you appropriate avenues for follow-up or support.

Communicating with parents.

Whether or not you choose to participate in this research, I would appreciate your help in distributing information sheets and consent forms to parents. Please reassure all parents that participation is entirely voluntary, and that their child/ren will not miss out on anything should the parents decide not to consent.

Voluntary participation/withdrawal from the research.

Taking part in this research is entirely voluntary. You may choose to join for some or all of the research, as I explained earlier. You may also choose not to take part at all. Your manager and head teacher have given written assurance that your decision to participate or not will in no way affect your employment status here.

If you do decide to participate, you will still have the option to change your mind. You may withdraw yourself, or any information you have given me, without giving any reason, up until the time I finish data gathering here. Please note, however, that once you have taken part in the group interview it is not possible to withdraw your contribution from that.

Use of data.

The data that I gather will be analysed, and will then form the basis of my PhD thesis. I will also use the data in future publications in academic journals, or to support conference or teaching presentations. I will not use video footage in public presentations. Further, as I explain next, I will not identify either you or your centre by name. If you would like a copy of the summarised findings at the end of this study, please indicate this on the consent form, and I will send it to you.

Confidentiality.

This content of the interviews is confidential – I will not disclose it to your employer or your colleagues. I will also ask all those who take part in a group interview to agree not to disclose the content of the interview, or the names of those who took part. However, I will use excerpts from the interviews, and from my observations, in my thesis and subsequent publications or presentations. In order to protect your identity and your privacy therefore, I will never identify either you or your workplace my name. Instead you may choose a pseudonym for yourself, or I will assign you one that will not reflect your real name in any way. Your head teacher will be able to choose a pseudonym for the centre.

Nevertheless, early childhood education centres are public places, so there is always a slight chance that someone may be able to identify either you or the centre.

Storage and destruction of data.

Your signed consent form will be stored in a locked cabinet in my supervisor's office at the Faculty of Education, University of Auckland, for six years.

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Consent Form (Teachers)

(This form will be held for a period of six years)

Project title: Intentional teaching in New Zealand early childhood education.

Researcher: Susan Batchelar.

I have read the Participant Information Sheet. I understand the nature of the research and the reasons why I have been invited to participate. I have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I agree to participate in this research. **YES/NO**

I agree to: (please indicate yes or no as appropriate)

- Take part in the group interview YES/NO
- Keep the content of the group interview confidential. YES/NO
- Allow the researcher to observe my practice YES/NO
- Allow the researcher to video my practice YES/NO
- Take part in an individual interview YES/NO
- Allow the researcher to audio record the interview YES/NO

I understand that: (please tick)

☐ My (employer/manager) has agreed that my participation/not participation will not impact on my employment status.
☐ The group interview will be recorded.
☐ I cannot ask for the recording of the group interview to be suspended, but I am under no obligation to answer any particular question.
☐ The group interview will be transcribed by a third party who has signed a confidentiality agreement.

- ☐ I will not receive the transcript of the group interview to check.
- ☐ I cannot withdraw the information I have provided during the group interview.
- ☐ If the group interview is held at the Faculty of Education, I will receive petrol vouchers to the value of $20.00 to reimburse my expenses.
- ☐ The researcher will make written observations of my practice.
- ☐ The researcher may make written notes about informal professional conversations we have.
- ☐ When the researcher if filming me, I can ask for the filming to be suspended at any time.
- ☐ The video footage will only be seen by me, the researcher, and her University supervisors.
- ☐ My individual interview will be recorded.
- ☐ I can ask for the recording of my individual interview to be suspended at any time.
- ☐ The interview will be transcribed by a third party who has signed a confidentiality agreement.
- ☐ I will receive the transcript of my individual interview to check for accuracy and meaning.
- ☐ I need to return the checked transcript to the researcher by (date).
- ☐ I have the right to withdraw myself and any information I have provided, except for information provided during the group interview, by (date) without giving a reason.
- ☐ Towards the end of the study I will have the opportunity to attend one further meeting to discuss the developing analysis.
- ☐ Data gathered during this study will be securely stored for a period of six years, after which they will be destroyed.
- ☐ The findings from this study will be used in a PhD thesis, and to support future publications, as well as teaching/conference presentations.
- ☐ I will not be identified by name in the study, and the researcher will make every effort to conceal my identity, and that of my workplace.
- ☐ If, as a result of the study I feel challenged about my practice the researcher will discuss with me possible avenues for follow-up or support.

I would like to receive a copy of the summarised findings at the end of the study YES/NO

Name:……………………………………………. Signature:………………………………………………

Date:……… Email address for findings summary:……………………………………………………

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

ON …10th October 2012 for three (3) years, reference number 2012/8272.

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Participant Information Sheet (Parents)

Project title: Intentional teaching in New Zealand early childhood education.

Researcher: Susan Batchelar.

Kia Ora,

My name is Susan, and I am a PhD candidate in early childhood education at the Faculty of Education, the University of Auckland. My supervisors are Dr Helen Hedges and Associate Professor Mavis Haigh. I am a qualified early childhood teacher, with many years of professional experience.

I am in this early childhood centre to conduct some research. This research is focused on teachers. I am trying to increase my understanding of teachers' intentions for children's learning in early childhood education. I am particularly interested in the spontaneous interactions and events that happen in early childhood centres, and in what inspires teachers' responses to children in unplanned learning opportunities. I will be conducting my research in several different early childhood centres.

I have chosen to come to this centre because I am very interested in the types of teaching that take place here. The head teacher has given me permission to be here, and the teachers have agreed to allow me to observe their practice. I will be in the centre for about nine hours a week, at different times and on different days, for about eight weeks.

I would like to offer you the opportunity to participate in this research, by giving your consent for me to include your children. This letter outlines what that will involve. You are entirely free to choose whether or not to allow me to do this. I will not be changing anything at the centre or introducing any new activities, so your child/ren will not miss out on anything should you decide not to agree.

As a researcher I will not be part of the teaching team, so I will not be teaching or caring for your child/ren. Nevertheless, your children's safety and wellbeing will, at all times, be paramount, and I will suspend all research activities if any issues relating to child safety become apparent. I will respect the centre's routines and policies, and will make every effort not to interrupt the teaching and learning activities, or the relationships between teachers and children.

I will ask the teachers to introduce me to the children at the centre, and to explain why I am there in an appropriate way. As I will be in the centre for a long period of time, I expect that I will be interacting with the children informally, and I am interested in what I can learn from them.

What this will involve.

As I explained earlier, the focus of my research is on teachers and their practice, not on children. However, I believe that children can give adults valuable information and insight. I would therefore like your permission to include some of your child/ren's conversations with teachers or me in my study. I will not be introducing any new activities or setting up any special experiences in the centre. Nor will I interrupt your child/ren's play, or interactions with other children or their teacher, at any time.

I would also like permission to read his/her/their individual portfolios, to gain a deeper understanding of the teaching that takes place in this centre. I may wish to photocopy a small number of pages which are relevant to my research, but I will not photocopy any of the photographs. I want to emphasise that my interest in the portfolios is to gain more information about teachers' intentions for children's learning in this centre. I am not in any way assessing your child/ren or their learning.

In addition, I will occasionally be filming teachers' interactions with children. This footage will be used in individual interviews with teachers, as a way of stimulating our discussion. It will not be shown in public. Once again, the focus of the video will be the teacher, but your child/ren may be with the teacher at the time, and I would like your permission to film him/her/them. I may place a notice in the entrance of the centre on days that I am using the video camera, so that you are aware of what is happening.

If you do not agree to this, then I will not film that teacher if your child/ren is with him or her. Your child/ren will never be asked to leave a teacher or an activity so that I can start filming. In addition, once any filming has started, I will immediately stop again if your child approaches the focus teacher, or joins in the activity I am observing. I have experience in managing situations of this type in a sensitive manner, so that no-one feels embarrassed that they have interrupted the study.

Finally, if I find that I have included your child by mistake in any video footage, I will delete that section of film on the same day.

I will not film, observe or document your child during personal care routines (such as nappy changing), while he or she is asleep, or when they are distressed. If your child/ren indicates that they are uncomfortable with me, I will move away.

To summarise, I would like your permission to:

- Record in writing informal conversations I may have with your child/ren
- Read your child/ren's portfolio, and photocopy pages that are relevant to my research (but not the photographs)
- Include your child/ren in video footage of teachers.

Voluntary participation/withdrawal from research.

Taking part in research is entirely voluntary, and you are under no obligation to agree that your child can participate. If you choose not to agree, this will have no effect on the care and education your child receives. Furthermore, if you do agree, and then change your mind, you may do so at any time up until the end of data-gathering in this centre, without giving a reason. If you decide to withdraw your consent, I will delete any data I have relating to your child/ren. I will not be able to remove them

Susan Batchelar.

Susan Batchelar, School of Curriculum and Pedagogy, The University of Auckland Faculty of Education. Gate 3, 74 Epsom Ave Auckland. s.batchelar@auckland.ac.nz 027 404 3843	Dr. Helen Hedges School of Curriculum and Pedagogy, The University of Auckland Faculty of Education, Gate 3, 74 Epsom Ave Auckland. h.hedges@auckland.ac.nz 09 623 8899 ext. 48606	Assoc. Prof. Mavis Haigh, School of Learning, Development and Professional Practice, The University of Auckland Faculty of Education, Gate 3, 74 Epsom Ave Auckland. m.haigh@auckland.ac.nz 09 623 8899 ext. 48964

You may also contact the head of the School of Curriculum and Pedagogy, Professor Judy Parr, jm.parr@auckland.ac.nz 09 623 8899 ext. 88998.

For any queries regarding ethical concerns, you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373 7599 ext. 87830/83761.

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Consent Form (Parents)

(This form will be held for a period of six years.)

Project title: Intentional teaching in New Zealand early childhood education.

Researcher: Susan Batchelar.

I have read the Participant Information Sheet. I understand the nature of the research, and why I have been invited to consent on behalf of my child.

I agree that my child/ren can participate in this research. YES/NO

I agree that (please indicate yes/no as appropriate)

- The researcher may document in writing informal conversations she has with my child/ren YES/NO
- The researcher may read my child/ren's individual portfolio YES/NO
- The researcher may photocopy relevant pages of my child's portfolio, (excluding the photographs). YES/NO
- The researcher may include my child/ren in video footage of teachers YES/NO

I understand that: (please tick)

☐ The focus of this research is the teachers, not the children.
☐ The centre (manager/owner) has given their assurance that my decision to allow my child to participate or not will in no way impact on the care and education they receive.
☐ This study does not in any way include an assessment or evaluation of my child/ren.
☐ The researcher will not be teaching or caring for my child/ren.
☐ The researcher will not film or observe, or take any documentation about, my child during their personal care routines, while they are asleep, or when they are distressed.
☐ Research activity will be suspended if any safety issues become apparent.

☐ The teachers will introduce the researcher to the children, and explain why she is there.
☐ If my child/ren seems unwilling to be filmed or to let the researcher read their portfolio, their wishes will be respected.
☐ My child/ren will not be identified by name in the written study, and the researcher will make every effort to conceal their identity and that of the centre.
☐ The centre will not be identified by name in the written study.
☐ The video footage will not be shown to anyone other than the teacher involved, and the researcher's University supervisors.
☐ I have the right to withdraw my child/ren, and any data associated with them, without giving a reason, at any time up until the end of data gathering in this centre.
☐ The data collected during this study will be securely stored for a period of six years, after which they will be destroyed.
☐ The findings from this study will be used as the basis of the researcher's PhD thesis, and in possible future publications and conference/teaching presentations.

Name:…………………………………………… Signature:………………………………………………..

Child/ren's name(s):………………………………………………………………………………………

Date:………………………………………….

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

ON 10th October 2012 for three (3) years, reference number 8272.

Appendix VI: Research participants

Participant	Qualification	Setting	Years at Centre	Years of teaching experience
Debbie*	B. Ed (Tch) (ece)	1	10	10
Erica	B. Ed (Tch) (ece)	1	10+	30
Fleur	Grad Dip Tch (ece)	1	1	1
Gillian	B. Ed (Tch) (ece)	1	1	1
Hannah	Dip Tch (ece)	1	5+	10
Isabelle	Dip Tch (ece)	1	5	7
Jackie*	B. Ed (Tch) (ece)	2	3	5
Lisa	Grad Dip Tch (ece)	2	1	1
Maria	B. Ed (Tch) (ece)	2	1	1
Pat*	Grad Dip Tch (ece)	3	10+	20
Sarah	Grad Dip Tch (ece)	3	7	7
Tracy	B. Ed (Tch) (ece)	3	5	10
Viv	Grad Dip Tch (ece)	3	2	2

Name * denotes teachers with leadership roles within the settings.

Number of years + indicates that the participants could not remember exact number.

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