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## Editorial

Timu Niwa, on behalf of the editorial team



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Nau mai and welcome to the first issue of Kairaranga for 2025. For over two decades, the journal has collaboratively foregrounded the kaupapa of supporting and lifting educational practice across Aotearoa for the benefit of ākonga and tamariki mokopuna. There are two common threads that are woven between and throughout the articles presented in this issue. The first is working in effective and collaborative ways to ensure inclusive and equitable practice. The second is giving primacy to children's voice and children's rights. We know that in the current educational climate, the importance of effectively working together to ensure that the voices of students are heard, valued, and engaged with, is as tantamount as ever.

This edition begins with an article which forefronts the rights of autistic children to have their learning needs met in ECE settings across Aotearoa. Collaboratively written by Kate McAnelly, Laura Hall, Samuel Odom, Erin Hall, and Kerry Purdue, our contributors acknowledge the challenges that many ECE teachers face in translating policy into inclusive and effective pedagogy. Drawing from evidence-based practices and research, the authors outline a range of strategies that ECE teachers can embed to better support autistic children within their settings.

The impetus to embed better support for autistic children is built on in the second article. Estelle Pretorius, Sally Clendon, and Tara McLaughlin discuss the findings of an online questionnaire that was distributed to specialist providers with the purpose of describing their use of supports and practices that enhance the communication development of autistic toddlers and preschoolers. In considering the responses from speech language therapists and early-intervention teachers, it was noted that while a variety of supports exist across different early intervention services, the authors call for greater consistency and timely provision of support and resources for caregivers and kaiako of autistic children across Aotearoa.

The third article shares the findings of a small-scale exploratory study on the experiences of nine intermediate and secondary students from Aotearoa who use a remote microphone (RM) to assist them with their auditory processing disorder (APD). Erica Webb and Jill O'Brien articulate three key themes from their findings. These are accompanied by a set of implications at the policy level and for teachers at the practice level.

Our next article presents a case study which explores the complexity of leading adaptive change within a large RTL cluster in Aotearoa. As a Practice Leader of this RTL cluster, Erin Sawyer deeply reflects on the dilemma of adapting an internal case management tool (eRTL) to strengthen best

practices. Using Robinson's (2022) collaborative complex problem-solving model, she articulates how her team led and navigated inclusive, adaptive, and responsive challenges to continuously refine what 'best practice' means within their unique context.

The fifth article shares the findings from a strengths-based, appreciative inquiry which explores how ten RTLBs in Aotearoa were using the He Pikorua framework to support the elicitation of student voice and giving due weight to their perspectives within their collaborative teams. Drawing from Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Katrina Stephenson outlines two overarching themes from her study, noting the importance of the deliberate enactment of student voice in decisions that impact them.

Each issue of Kairaranga ends with a section called 'Reimagining Education'. To conclude, we share a transcript of an interview with Year 13 student, Dan O'Brien. In 2024, Dan published a blog on the inequity of streaming across schools in Aotearoa. This interview further explores his sense of justice and equity through a Te Titiri lens. As a young Pākehā man, he obliges us to ensure that our educational policies and systems uphold the principles of Te Tiriti.

#### KAIRARANGA ARTWORK



Artist: **Douglas Irimana-Mulu**, Year 7, Tawhero School

This artwork depicts the recent local celebration of Puanga. Puanga, the star otherwise known as Rigel, holds a special place in the hearts of the Whanganui iwi as the harbinger of the Māori New Year. Unlike Matariki, which is observed in other parts of Aotearoa, Whanganui's unique geographical features mean Puanga rises first, heralding the start of a new year. In this artwork, you can see our maunga (Ruapehu), our awa (Whanganui) and also the nine Matariki stars above them.

Puanga is celebrated with a blend of traditional and contemporary activities that bring the community together. Whanganui's Puanga festivities included cultural performances, storytelling, art exhibitions, and communal feasts, celebrating Māori heritage and the cycles of nature. It's a time for reflection, honouring our ancestors, and looking forward to new beginnings. At Tawhero School in Whanganui, we celebrated by inviting whānau for a hāngī feast and to share stories, waiata and reflections.

