



Exploring **how Te Whāriki and the New Zealand Curriculum** prepare children and students for an Art of Living

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ABSTRACT

*This qualitative study looked at Wilhelm Schmid's concept of the Art of Living (AoL) in relation to the current New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) and Te Whāriki. The methodology included a brief content analysis of both Te Whāriki and the NZC in relation to relevant knowledge areas and skills for the development of an AoL, as well as interviews of three participants to provide empirical data. From the participant data, four key themes emerged: support from parents; need for practical aspects within the curriculum(s); post-secondary school guidance; and positive working experiences. The overall findings suggest that **Te Whāriki places a large emphasis on the relationships between kaiako, whānau and tamariki**, relating to theme one. It was also found that the NZC could provide more opportunities for practical life skills to be included in the curriculum, as well as providing clearer instruction on how to implement effective careers education and other knowledge areas and thinking skills relevant for students to develop their own art of living.*

Keywords: Art of Living; New Zealand Curriculum; Te Whāriki

INTRODUCTION

Striessnig (2015) explored the relationship between levels of education and subjective well-being **and the potential effects this could have on students'** happiness. Striessnig points out that education indirectly affects happiness, for example, through income, employment status, and marriage success. However, according to Striessnig, education can directly affect the well-being of individuals, stating that educational attainment is related to a higher probability for **happiness. In addition, being able to live one's own vision of a good and beautiful** life can assist in heightening the levels of life-satisfaction, which is often used interchangeably with subjective well-being. The OECD (2020) describes life-satisfaction as how people view their life as a whole, rather than their current and immediate feelings. This can be difficult to measure, however, as many factors are circumstantial and relative to the individual (OECD, 2020). Therefore, a supportive curriculum which provides the life-skills and allows students to

become active and self-guided life-long learners could potentially improve their overall life-satisfaction and happiness.

In this context, philosopher Wilhelm Schmid discusses the concept of the Art of Living (AoL), a notion that focuses on individuals actively shaping their own life towards their personal view of a good and beautiful life (Teschers, 2013). **The AoL is a holistic, yet individualistic approach, arguing that each person's view** of a good and beautiful life is relative to their personal circumstances. Like a piece of art, what it means to live a beautiful life is a question of personal taste; therefore, this cannot be generalized or prescribed (Teschers, 2013). The concept of the AoL has been discussed in relation to education, and Teschers (2017) argues that education and schooling should aim towards enabling students to develop **their own art of living. D'Olimpio and Teschers (2016) contextualised Schmid's AoL further to show how early education centres and schools can** provide the opportunity to equip students with the skills to effectively engage in their own AoL and shaping their own lives into what they see a good and beautiful life to be.

In this article, we explore how aspects of Schmid's art of living concept relate to **both Te Whāriki and** the 2007 New Zealand curriculum (NZC). The curriculums were analysed in this study, alongside participant interview data, to understand what opportunities the current education system provides for students to gain skills and knowledge necessary to develop their own art of living. This study also contributes to the scarce body of literature that relates **philosophical approaches to an art of living to people's lived experiences**, particularly in Aotearoa New Zealand. Using participant voice in this study ensures the data being used comes from the lived experiences of the participants, providing greater insights into the actual effects their schooling has had. In consequence, this study aims to understand what knowledge, skills and content already exists or can be integrated into the NZC to assist with the development of a student's own art of living.

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative research study is designed in two-parts. Firstly, relevant educational and philosophical concepts represented in the literature are used to **analyse the NZC and Te Whāriki in relation to Schmid's AoL, using** content and concept analysis. Secondly, participant interviews are used to gather empirical **data on individuals' experiences with the NZC in relation to Schmid's AoL.**

In this study, conducted as part of an honours level research project, three participant interviews were conducted in order to gather empirical data to further inform the content and concept analysis of the curriculums for practice. While the small sample size is a limitation, it was necessary to fit the scope of this student research project. To ensure these interviews were also relevant to the wider study, selection criteria from the international study were considered **(participants had to be 'mature', i.e., 25 or older)**, and for the focus of this study the requirement was that the participants undertook their schooling in New Zealand. The age requirement ensured the participants had enough life experience to speak to their own art of living and what they value as a good and beautiful life. Using a semi-structured interview approach ensured that the researcher was able to follow a natural progression of conversation (Roulston,

2010). Two of the interviews were carried out in person, and were audio recorded and the third interview was carried out via zoom and was recorded in the app. Interviews were then transcribed and coded, using an existing coding table from the wider study, with the option to create further codes that emerged in relation to the local schooling and curriculum focus of this study.

Following the empirical part of the study, in Part 2 content and concept analysis were used (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) to analyse the NZC and Te Whāriki to gain a deeper understanding of their contributions to students' ability to develop their own AoL. Directed content analysis involves coding the selected texts to a pre-determined coding scheme, allowing for new codes to be created if necessary (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Sections of both the NZC and Te Whāriki were coded using findings from Part 1 of this study and the literature reviewed, focusing on enabling and hindering aspects for the development of people's AoL. As part of a wider research project, this study sits under the umbrella of the ethics approval by the University of Canterbury Human Research Ethics Committee.

BACKGROUND AND CURRICULUM ANALYSIS

An Overview of Schmid's Art of Living

The concept of the Art of Living (AoL), as it is understood here, is based on the German concept of '*Lebenskunst*' by contemporary philosopher Wilhelm Schmid. Teschers (2013) explains Schmid's notion of the art of living to be a holistic approach to actively shaping one's own life into what one conceives a beautiful life to be. While Schmid, according to Teschers, acknowledges the social nature of human beings, the concept is anchored at an individual level. People engaging in the art of living are responsible for being active agents in their life's journey towards what they perceive a 'beautiful life' to be. Schmid particularly points out that, under the umbrella of the art of living, one cannot prescribe how any person should live, as a 'beautiful life' will look different for each individual (D'Olimpio & Teschers, 2016). This does not mean, however, that one can just do whatever one wants. According to Schmid, a person engaged in the art of living will, through the development of prudence and practical wisdom, come to understand that they are part of a larger community and/or society, and that it is in their own best interest to create an environment that is conducive for the development of each person's art of living and pursuit of their version of a beautiful life, as such an environment will support their own pursuit of a beautiful life and an art of living as well.

As indicated above, Teschers (2017), drawing on R. S. Peters, Dewey, and German bildungs-idealism, argues that, while education is guided by a number of contextual (in time and place) aims, an overarching aim or "*proper end of education*" and schooling ought to be to develop the students' own art of living and "*to support all human beings to live the most beautiful life possible under the circumstances they are living in*" (p. 70, italics in original)¹.

¹ Tescher's argument relates to other recent arguments positioning *flourishing* as an overarching aim of education (cf. White, 2011; Kristjánsson, 2019), but takes a different focus based on Schmid's AoL. While there are connecting points, it needs to be mentioned that the philosophical model drawn on here is only one that is discussed in the larger context of educational aims and ends.

To develop an art of living, Teschers lists a number of skills and faculties **as important for the development of students' own art of living, such as "critical self-reflection; critical, creative, and caring thinking; [and] the development of practical wisdom" (p. 72), drawing on the Aristotelian notion of *phronesis***. In addition, Schmid (2000, as cited in Teschers, 2017) provides a range of topic areas that should be addressed in school curricula: "*the human being as individual; the social human being; difficulties and burdens of human life; striving for fulfilment and meaning in life; religions, beliefs and cultures of humanity; and the personal shape of one's life and global perspectives*" (pp. 69-70). In the following, we will discuss how some of these skills, faculties and knowledge areas might be addressed in *Te Whāriki* and the *New Zealand Curriculum* already, and which are arguably missing or could be strengthened.

The Art of Living within Te Whāriki

Teschers (2017) has argued the relevance of the AoL for education. His article in relation to early childhood education (ECE) looks at how even as early as in ECE, educators have the ability to teach children relevant skills that contribute to the development of their own AoL and actively leading their own lives (Teschers, 2016). This is reflected in *Te Whāriki, Aotearoa's guiding framework for ECE*. The curriculum outlines four key principles: empowerment; holistic development; family and community; and relationships, and five main strands: wellbeing, belonging, contribution, communication, and exploration. Using this framework in ECE centres can support children from an early age to develop the **skills required to actively lead their own lives. Te Whāriki states in this context "Ehara taku toa I te toa takitahi engari he toa takitini – I come not with my own strengths but bring with me the gifts, talents and strengths of my family, tribe and ancestors"** (Ministry of Education, 2017a, p. 12). This quote highlights a holistic approach to education, explaining how children succeed when their wider connections are incorporated into their school experiences. Also, embedded throughout the curriculum is the notion that children are **"competent, capable and rich, complete and gifted no matter their age and ability"** (Ministry of Education, 2017a, p. 12). In this way, *Te Whāriki* already considers children as active agents shaping their own lives and effectively nurtures the development of their own AoL.

As outlined by Teschers (2016) and argued further by D'Olimpio and Teschers (2016), Philosophy for Children (P4C), and particularly the pedagogy of Communities of Inquiry (CoI) can be integral tools to support the development of **students' own AoL** – in ECE and other settings. The P4C is a concept pioneered by Matthew Lipman in the 1970's to encourage the teaching of thinking skills through the subject of philosophy (Gatley, 2020). Since then, the P4C has been implemented into primary and secondary schools globally as a tool to encourage critical and creative thinking, and has also seen some implementation in the form of CoIs in ECE settings. The overall goal of this framework is to teach children from a young age how to **"think for themselves and make informed choices"** (Trickey & Topping, 2004, p. 369). In addition, P4C has also been shown to have a positive effect on communication and listening skills, especially for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and to have positive effects on students'

overall educational achievement (Trickey & Topping, 2004)². P4C and CoIs are **used to support the development of the ‘4Cs’: critical, creative, collaborative and caring thinking** (Trickey & Topping, 2004) – **skills that link closely with Teschers’ list of skills relevant for an AoL**. Using P4C pedagogies such CoIs can further **support Te Whāriki’s four main principles of empowerment, holistic development, family and community, and relationships**. P4C and CoI, if implemented properly by trained professionals, can grant children the opportunity to express their opinions and ideas in a safe and encouraging environment, building on their self-reflection and critical and creative thinking skills as they are exposed to different ideas, cultures and situations. As Schmid states, the notion of a beautiful life comes down to individual taste and is reflective of their norms, values and beliefs. Therefore, using these principles in such a way ensures children are equipped with the tools to practice this from a young age. Further, these practices allow children to draw on their own experiences which opens up space to relate their learning back to their individual contexts.

The Art of Living within the New Zealand Curriculum

The current primary and secondary school curriculum is covered under the same document labelled **The New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) and is described as “...a statement of official policy relating to learning in English-medium New Zealand schools” (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 6)**. At the time of writing, the 2007 NZC is getting a refresh, announced by the government in 2021 and will be implemented over the next four years (Ministry of Education, 2022). Currently, the NZC is used as the main guiding policy for years 1-13 in English-medium schools.

We want to note some of the differences in focus between **Te Whāriki and the NZC. Te Whāriki takes on an inclusive and diverse approach that bases their framework on Māori values and beliefs, whilst ensuring it is still accessible for all children, regardless of background**. The NZC, while endeavoring to be similarly inclusive, has some limitations, which is expressed, for example, in the existence of two separate documents that are suited to either English-**medium or Māori-medium** schools (Ministry of Education, 2017b).

The NZC outlines eight principles which are said to underpin all school decision making. These are High Expectations, Treaty of Waitangi, Cultural Diversity, Inclusion, Learning to Learn, Community Engagement, Coherence, and Future Focus. Further, the values outlined in the NZC are Excellence, Innovation, Inquiry and Curiosity, Diversity, Equity, Community and Participation, Ecological Sustainability, and Integrity (The Ministry of Education, 2007). Here, the principles are described as passive foundations that build up the curriculum, whereas the values are action based, focusing on being exemplified by staff, teachers, and students. It needs to be noted here, that while (mostly) shared cultural values have a place in schools and societal education systems, from an AoL point of view a critical element is missing that would encourage

² It needs to be mentioned here that P4C has seen some critique from a range of perspectives, including its effectiveness (cf. Ide, 2021). This said, evidence from studies quoted here suggests that if implemented properly by trained professionals it has the potential to support necessary skills for an AoL as outlined here and argued in earlier work.

students to reflect on these and make up their own mind rather than being directed into adopting these values out of principle. This said, the current setup of the NZC sees the policy as a framework rather than a detailed plan which **should be strictly followed. This gives school's some flexibility to cater their individual curriculum to the needs of their students, whānau, and communities,** while keeping a clear alignment with the NZC (Ministry of Education, 2007).

The NZC further includes a section regarding effective pedagogy. Two **approaches that are noted there align well with Schmid's AoL by utilizing skills related to P4C and CoI. Firstly, in "Encouraging reflective thought and action" (p. 34)** it is explained how children learn most effectively when they take a step back and look at the learning materials objectively, which, over time, can develop their **creative and critical thinking skills. Secondly, "Facilitating shared learning" (p. 34) with classmates, whānau, and the wider community is promoted to create a learning community,** suggesting similar collaborative learning as in a CoI.

Some criticism of the NZC in relation to our topic needs to be mentioned. Hughson (2022), for example, looks at the curriculum reform and the differences between the 2007 NZC and what will be included in the refresh, stating that the **current NZC upholds an 'industry led agenda' which places a particular emphasis** on the type of student to be formed (Hughson, 2022). Further, Hughson mentions that the current values somewhat contradict each other, such as diversity and community participation contributing to the common good, which Hughson contrasts to excellence, which can encourage competitiveness. The principles outlined in the NZC also have a less direct relation to the AoL than **Te Whāriki seems to have. Although the values include inquiry, curiosity, diversity,** community and participation, the curriculum itself does not provide in-depth reasoning or details as to what this may look like in a classroom setting, or how it may be implemented. Looking briefly at the suggested content areas per year level, we would argue, the NZC is broad enough that it allows inclusion of knowledge, skills and faculties relevant to the AoL, as discussed above, but does not readily cater many of these as is. A more detailed exploration of the achievement objectives per year level in relation to the relevant knowledge areas indicated by Schmid could provide further insights, but unfortunately goes beyond the scope and focus of this article.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF PARTICIPANT VOICES

Turning to the participant interview data, four key themes stood out in relation to the art of living and education in the New Zealand context: *support from parents; the need for practical aspects within the curriculum(s); post-secondary school guidance;* and *positive work experiences.* The findings from the interviews will be discussed in relation to relevant literature, **Te Whāriki and the NZC.**

Support from Parents

All three participants reflected on the relationship between themselves and their parents, including the extent of support and guidance they received growing up. They all expressed how they had the freedom and opportunities to try new things

and did not feel pressure to take a path they did not want to. Luke, for example, expressed this by stating:

I think I have pretty much been able to do what I have wanted to the whole way, like never really had any hiccups or was unable to do, like, kind of what I wanted to.

He firstly mentioned not feeling held back from participating in activities he enjoys. When studying abroad in America, he had financial support from his parents so that he was able to go. This has allowed Luke to continue doing the things he enjoys and gave him a feeling of encouragement. Similarly, Andrew mentions that growing up in a family where his parents had a good relationship and showed care for him and his brothers allowed him to feel supported and provided him with opportunities such as traveling. Andrew states

I could see that in my parents, that they wanted to do well, and they wanted to do well for us ... **And I suppose that's a culture that I got...that I was used to. Um, so, for me I suppose I had...I was positive** about having those ambitions as well and wanting to do well in life.

Andrew mentions adopting a culture, or a set of values from his parents that continue to encourage him to pursue his ambitions and try to do well for his family now. Anne pointed out how her parents were really good at listening and understanding, as well as making her feel special and valued as she was growing up.

Um, I really believe a lot of it was probably the love and encouragement from mum and dad. You know, I always felt special, I always felt valued.

She also states that the love from her mother was unconditional, something she really valued. This stood out for Anne and enabled her to feel valued throughout **her childhood and adolescence. Her parents' support has also allowed her to try** new things with the opportunities she was given.

Support from parents and family/whānau is often talked about in relation to education. Chohan and Khan's (2010) study looked at the impact of a family's role on their child's educational achievement, finding a positive relationship between more involvement and higher achievement. They state how families play a pivotal role in enabling the "complete development of personality and career" for their child (p. 15). Further, Kerpelman, Eryigit and Stephens (2008) state that parents still have a large role in the development of adolescents as they pass down values, goals and interests that relate to how students view their futures. From this, it is not surprising that parental support is an on-going need for children throughout their education careers. Te Whāriki has a strong link to the inclusion of whānau and family in their curriculum, with family and community being one of the four underpinning principles. Whānau and family are encouraged to share their aspirations and goals for their child's education and an important role for kaiako is to ensure these are respected (Ministry of Education, 2017a). Relationships and connections between kaiako and whānau are also encouraged to assist in making links between the student's personal and school life.

Within the NZC, the principle of community engagement mentions the **support from the child's families, whānau and communities**. Further, in the section of learning in years 1-6, the NZC states that a key factor in supporting a **student's transition from ECE to primary school** involves welcoming **relationships with the whānau and family**. After these years, there seems to be **little mention of whānau engagement or relationships within the NZC though**. **Te Whāriki and the primary aged years in the NZC have a stronger focus on whānau relationships** to ensure the child is able to get the most out of their learning; however, as Kerpelman et. al. (2008) state, the involvement of family is important right throughout the schooling years and even into adolescence. They further mention that **parents' involvement and communication with their adolescent** heightens educational achievement and has positive impacts on future orientation (Kerpelman et. al., 2008). This was the case for the three interview participants as they received constant support and encouragement from their parents. Although their educational achievement was not discussed, they all still attributed this support as being an enabling factor of their AoL. The importance **of the involvement of parents and whānau at all stages of a child's schooling is** exemplified both by literature and participant data. Therefore, this should be something that is considered when developing curricula and the engagement of **schools with parents and whānau**³.

The need for practical experiences within the curriculum

The participants were asked if they had any opinions on what could be included into the NZC. The answers indicated that all participants felt the need for a wider range of practical subjects to be included. Luke stated that curricula should provide the opportunity for everyone to find their niche at school beyond the importance of subjects such as English and Maths. As examples, he named art and outdoor education experiences that might appeal more to the interests of some students to *"be able to find their, sort of, spot"*. Andrew supports the importance of traditional academic subjects as necessary, but also points out the importance of other experiences:

But I would think, probably more, more practical things, too, to help kids find what they really like. Um, you know a lot of people, you know want to work with their hands, you know like things we did at school like woodwork.

Andrew also states that due to the digitisation of many media forms, classes on software such as Microsoft Word and Excel could be very beneficial skills to have, especially for the workforce.

Anne points out that the curriculum should involve practical life skills that enable students to learn skills that are not necessarily of academic nature, but are necessary for living, such as financial literacy and what is involved in buying a

³ We acknowledge that **whānau and family support is not always existent for students**. The limited data from this study would suggest that some consideration should be given to how schools might be able to compensate to some extent **for a lack of support from a student's home environment**. However, there is not enough data in this study to expand on this challenge further. We thank the independent reviewer for drawing our attention to this limitation.

car, or moving into a new home. Preparing adolescents to move out of home with the knowledge of how to budget or what services you will need within a flat or home are the type of practical skills Anne deems as important. She also comments on job skills, such as the ability to create a CV or be able to be prepared for a job interview. She found this particularly important as a matter of social justice for those students who do not have these resources at home.

The NZC has an array of subjects that include both practical and theoretical aspects. The likes of English, Mathematics, Sciences and Social Sciences are considered to be theoretical subjects that often have text-based learning areas (Ministry of Education, 2007). There are also subjects such as the Arts, which includes Dance, Drama, Visual Arts and Sound Arts, Physical Education and Technology which includes Technological Practice, Technological Knowledge and Nature of Technology. These are often context-based and have practical based learning areas (Ministry of Education, 2007). While there is a selection of practical subjects available, few relate to the everyday skills that happen outside of an educational setting, such as Anne discussed. **Teschers (2017) suggests key knowledge areas, skills and faculties, based on Schmid's work, that should be included in the school curriculum to allow students a broader understanding of the world they are living in and to take prudent and effective actions as part of developing their art of living, as outlined earlier.**

However, the practical subjects mentioned by the participants and outlined above often come with a stigma of not being as academically advanced or are sometimes not even listed as subjects that grant university entrance. These contextually-focused courses, as outlined by Hipkins et al. (2004) maintain more **practical aspects and are often assessed using unit standards such as a 'not achieved/achieved' grading system. Luke, however, states that there needs to be a supportive curriculum that enables students to take the subjects best suited to them, which also resonates with Schmid's art of living approach. So, when subject choices bear the consequence of not granting university entrance, students must decide between choosing subjects they want and enjoy, or subjects that allow them entry to post-secondary pathways. Still, Hipkins et al. (2004) note that many students choose these life-skill focused courses for the practical skills they provide, therefore highlighting that students do have a desire to obtain these sorts of skills, and already make active choices shaping their own life pathway rather than being purely driven by external forces⁴.**

Post-Secondary School Guidance

The third key theme emerging from the data related to *post-secondary school guidance*. The participants were asked about the sort of guidance they received during school about tertiary study and potential career paths. All three participants reported a lack of genuine support or guidance in these areas. While **Luke met with a career's advisor in school, he did not consider the advice received helpful, as it seemed rather generic ("just go to uni") or unrelated to his interests.**

⁴ It needs to be mentioned here that the NZC allows much flexibility for New Zealand schools and teachers to design their local curricula and as such allows for the implementation of the mentioned life skills in schools. How much this is done in any local context and across schools, and why or why not, will require further research beyond the scope of this study. More explicit mention of this in the NZC could lead to stronger implementation across Aotearoa New Zealand schools.

Luke indicated that he did not know what he wanted to do in future and conceded that career advisors might be more helpful in how to reach a goal rather than to define a goal in the first place:

I didn't really have any idea of what I wanted to do either so I don't think that sort of helped the experience, like if you go in and you know what you want to do, then they could be a lot more helpful with like how you can get there.

In this context, the question arises what career advice in schools is for: the pathway to a student-defined goal, or to support the student to identify a suitable career and possibly life goal in the first place. The data from this participant study suggest **the latter, and based on Teschers' (2017) considerations about the aim of education towards and art of living**, one could argue that the ability to find **suitable life and career goals for students, i.e. a direction of how to shape one's** life in these aspects, should be considered throughout school and curriculum design and not left alone to a single session with a career advisor who might or might not know the students in the first place.

Andrew does not remember meeting with a career advisor throughout high school. He mentions that it was a lot easier to go straight into work after leaving school in his time, so there may have been less of a need for a career advisor. At the time, students could leave school and go into work or into apprenticeships. Anne, however, also did not attend any careers advisor meetings, although she recalls them being available. As she did not want to attend university, she and her peers did not feel the need to make use of the service, which suggests, similar to Luke, that career advisors might have been seen as something more relevant to higher education pathways. Anne also was offered a job in retail before she left school, possibly being a contributing factor to not attending a guidance meeting.

The National Administration Guidelines (NAG) has mandated careers education in New Zealand, meaning it must be available to all students over year seven (ERO, 2012). A high-quality careers education is stated to provide students with a clear understanding of themselves and how their life may look after they finish school (ERO, 2012). Further, there are three competencies outlined to assist in achieving this, namely, developing self-awareness, exploring opportunities, and deciding and acting, which arguably link with some of the skills and faculties Teschers argued as necessary for the development of an art of living, as mentioned above. These three competencies from the NAG also relate to the five key competencies outlined in the NZC: managing self, relating to others, participating and contributing, thinking, and using language, symbols and texts (Ministry of Education, 2009). This clear and direct link between the competencies allows for careers education to be integrated into everyday learning, rather than being a standalone programme. This resonates with the notion proposed above that schools should incorporate aspects that can **contribute to students' ability to actively shape their lives based on their self-**reflected norms, values and beliefs throughout rather than separate from the key curriculum.

Many students across Aotearoa receive different levels of advice and support when it comes to careers education, given there is no specific instruction mentioned in the NZC or elsewhere. However, ERO (2012) found that the

integrated, whole-school approach was the most effective when it came to implementing careers education. It focused on an individual approach that included goal setting, building relationships and exploring opportunities. It also provided them with links to workplaces **or ‘real-world’ scenarios (ERO, 2012)**. From what the participants have stated, this type of careers education is necessary to ensure people are able to get a solid understanding of their options after school, as well as gain the relevant self-knowledge of their own aspirations in relation to future job and life opportunities. Setting individual goals means that students are able to receive advice that is personal and relatable to them and their proposed future plans. As Luke stated, there needs to be more advice that goes beyond only attending university. This sort of career education could also benefit **individuals who choose pathways similar to Andrew and Anne’s. Even though they did not attend university, having access to careers education (rather than simple ‘advice’) could provide support to identify their aspirations for their future.** Therefore, having a more consistent approach to careers education that is based on an integrated whole-school approach would likely lead to more students receiving adequate support not only for their career but their life pathways.

Positive Working Experiences

The last key theme that emerged is *positive working experiences*. While there were no interview questions that asked specifically about work, all three participants mentioned how their working experiences have positively impacted their lives and enabled them to achieve the things they desired. Luke mentions, for example, how his current role includes mentoring for others, which provides **a level of fulfillment he has not experienced in other areas before. Luke’s job** allows him to build connections with his trainees and assist them in achieving their qualifications and apprenticeships. He states how being a mentor for them is a fulfilling part of his work and feels like he has an important role in their achievement.

Andrew also enjoys passing on his knowledge to and looking after those who he manages. Andrew states that, as general manager, he finds it important to perform well as a boss and use the knowledge and experience he has gained over the years to teach those he leads. Further, Andrew states that he was able to get into good working opportunities at a young age, enabling him to reach the position of general manager by working his way up, but he also comments on his personal motivation and goal to run his own business as a contributing factor to his success. This highlights again the importance of personal goals that allows people to take targeted action towards achieving these goals as part of their life pathway. Ideally, considering the art of living, these goals would be derived **through internal reflection on one’s norms, values and aspirations and not** adopted from external sources, such as parents, peers or society.

For Anne, she and her husband both had jobs that enabled them to travel around Aotearoa. This led to them deciding to start their own business. They identified a shared passion for traveling, which led them to start their own luggage company which provided them the opportunity to travel around the world with their family, something very important to Anne. Further, she describes the flexibility of working for yourself to be very enabling:

... **we've pretty** much been self-employed. So, you can work your life around, you know, if the girls had a graduation or whatever, it's like

you went, you know, you didn't have to ask for annual leave, or couldn't not go.

Luke, Andrew and Anne have described how their past and current working experiences have provided fulfilling and flexible opportunities which have contributed to their art of living. As mentioned throughout this study, the AoL is a continual, life-long process. The need to start young is increasingly important so that individuals are able to begin this process earlier and start to shape their life to match their vision (Teschers, 2013). Work can play a large role in how one **value's one's life, as stated by Ötken and Erben (2013), with the idea of** a work-life balance being increasingly important. Ötken and Erben discuss how work-life balance relates to well-being, job satisfaction and life satisfaction. Although it is difficult to commit to one description of happiness, using the idea of subjective well-being can better describe how one values their life based on their relative circumstances (Diener & Ryan, 2009). In this case, satisfaction is a key measurement (Diener & Ryan, 2009). Ötken and Erben (2013) found that, when work imposes on an individual's **personal life, their happiness decreases;** however, when motivation and support are high in both work and life domains, happiness increases. Therefore, having a sustainable work-life balance is important for life satisfaction. Once again, this highlights the importance of a high-quality careers education into the NZC that exposes students to the skills and tools which can help them figure out who they are, what their strengths are and what they want for their future (ERO, 2012). The effects of this would hopefully be positive in ensuring students have some idea of what they would like to do once they leave school, and if not, be equipped with the tools to explore their options. Further, this ideally would lead to a higher level of job satisfaction for (young) people early on, and therefore enabling their work life to be a contributor to their AoL.

CONCLUSION

Following a brief evaluation of how Te Whāriki and the NZC relate to Schmid's concept of the art of living, we reported on four key themes emerging from the **participant study as being important or enabling factors of developing one's own** AoL. This allows us to draw some conclusions regarding the research questions underpinning this study. The first research question asked: *is there specific content or skills learnt within school that interview participants and previous literature have associated with supporting their Art of Living?* From the participant data, there was no specific content or skill identified in their schooling experience that they attributed to supporting the development of their own AoL; however, a key theme that emerged from the data was the support they received from their parents. The relationships with their parents were loving and encouraging and provided them with opportunities throughout their development. They found many of their values had been passed down by their parents and helped them understand their vision of a good and beautiful life. Existing literature supports the importance of this, stating that the involvement of **parents in their child's education careers is increasingly important to help** children shape their beliefs and values, and having an important role in the

development of their character (Chohan & Khan, 2010; Kerpelman et. al., 2008). It could be said that the **involvement of whānau and family relationships with schools and children** right throughout the NZC is an important factor in helping **children to participate in their own AoL. As mentioned above, Te Whāriki focuses heavily on the relationships between whānau, tamariki, and the education centre. This curriculum values the knowledge that whānau can bring to ensure the education their child is receiving is beneficial and relative to their circumstances** (Ministry of Education, 2017a). This carries on into the early years of primary school where these relationships are considered to help the transitions from early childhood education into the mainstream primary school level (Ministry of Education, 2007). However, the NZC does not provide much insight into how these relationships are valued in the later years of schooling, despite literature stating this to still be of importance throughout adolescence. So, although **parental support is not traditional subject content, Te Whāriki's involvement of whānau can be an assisting factor in enabling students to participate in their AoL, with room for the NZC to make these relationships stronger.**

Other findings from the study are relevant to research question two: *what content may be missing from the New Zealand Curriculum that could further enable individuals to live a beautiful life?* The participants noted areas they felt the current curriculum was lacking and where more options could be provided to ensure students were able to make the most of their education. Firstly, the need for life skills within the curriculum was mentioned. While the NZC does provide options for practical subjects, such as physical education and technologies, these do not necessarily provide the type of content mentioned by the participants. Having subjects that prepare students for life out of school and living away from home was the main focus here. With agency being a crucial part of the AoL, it is important that students are prepared to take on such responsibility. There was little academic literature that spoke to these claims, however, some previous research identified that students choose specific subjects due to their practical application, reinforcing the importance of having these options available (Hipkins et. al., 2004). Secondly, the lack of adequate careers education was noted by the participants, identifying an area where the NZC could improve. Careers education is mandated in Aotearoa and therefore must be available to all students in year seven and above (ERO, 2012). Despite this, schools' delivery of **careers education differs significantly. ERO's findings suggest that a whole-school approach was the most effective form of careers education which allowed students to set goals and gain key competencies that helped them to figure out what they wanted for their futures. This enables students to begin thinking about what they value and picture their idea of a beautiful life to be and equips them with the tools to work towards this throughout their lives.**

To conclude, this study found evidence that both Te Whāriki and the NZC does include relevant knowledge and skills to support students to develop their own art of living. However, if the knowledge and skills targeted in the NZC especially are sufficient for such development is questionable and other aspects not specifically mentioned could be incorporated more strongly. Existing pedagogies, such Communities of Inquiries, can strengthen the development of relevant thinking skills, and we would propose that the inclusion of philosophy in schools can further support these developments as would the structural inclusion of relevant topic areas as discussed above.

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