A Playcentre learning story: Te Whāriki as a framework for reflecting on emergent leadership

Carleen J Mitchell

College Work Based Learning, Otago Polytechnic, New Zealand

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Abstract

Research into leadership in early childhood education in Aotearoa New Zealand is in its infancy. At this early stage, distributed leadership has been identified as the most common style of leadership used in teacher-led early childhood education and care services. However, as a parent-led early childhood education service, Playcentre uses emergent leadership. Currently, professional development opportunities on leadership in early childhood education are geared towards teacher-led services. Therefore, how can a parent who has experienced emergent leadership identify the leadership skills gained that will form part of their professional practice when they return to paid work? This enquiry uses Te Whāriki as a leadership framework for reflecting on leadership skills gained through Playcentre. An autoethnographic case study method was employed to explore this framework in the context of the leadership skills that I gained while working at Playcentre over a 16–year period. The enquiry concluded that combining Te Whāriki with the early childhood education assessment for learning framework provides a matrix for examining leadership practice, as well as a way of developing insights into personal leadership practices. The use of the matrix provides scope for Playcentre leaders and other early childhood education leaders to reflect and gain insight into their leadership and for developing their own leadership framework of practice.

Keywords: *Playcentre; leadership; Te Whāriki; Assessment for Learning; Early Childhood Education; autoethnography*

Early Childhood Education, Playcentre and leadership

Research into leadership in early childhood education in Aotearoa New Zealand is in its infancy and is proving challenging due to the complexity and diversity of the early childhood education (ECE) sector and that there is no single approach to ECE leadership that is all-encompassing (Klevering & McNae, 2019; Nicholson et al., 2018; Notman & Jacobson, 2019; Thornton et al., 2009). Aotearoa New Zealand's diverse early childhood education landscape has two types of early childhood education services: teacher-led services (e.g. kindergarten, education and care services) and parent-led services (e.g. Playcentre, Ngā Kōhanga Reo). Teacher-led services have registered early childhood teachers, while parent-led services have parents who have upskilled through the organisation as they have volunteered alongside their children.

The diversity of early childhood education and the differences in leadership practice is not only between teacher-led services and the parent-led service of Playcentre but is also between the different sectors within education. Early childhood education, as a collective, is still being grouped with primary and secondary education when it comes to strategic frameworks. For example, the Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand has developed an Educational Leadership Capability Framework (Wylie & McKinley, 2018) as part of the Leadership Strategy for the teaching profession. The leadership capabilities are intended to provide early childhood education services and schools with guidelines for leadership development. However, Playcentre does not have registered teachers and many researchers caution the use of leadership frameworks designed for schools being used in early childhood due to the lack of research into leadership in the diverse (teacher-led and parent-led) early childhood education sector (Denee & Thornton, 2018; Klevering & McNae, 2019; Notman & Jacobson, 2019; Thornton, 2010; Thornton et al., 2009).

Notman and Jacobson's (2019) recent research into leadership practice in Aotearoa New Zealand ECE services found that there is a lack of studies on leadership practices in early childhood education. A notable exception is research undertaken by Kate Thornton and associates (Denee & Thornton, 2017, 2018; Thornton, 2005a, 2005b, 2010, 2015; Thornton & Cherrington, 2014), which is beginning to address this gap in the literature (Denee & Thornton, 2018). Thornton et al. (2009) suggest that, because of the diversity of ECE contexts in Aotearoa New Zealand, it would be inappropriate to apply one leadership model across the entire early childhood sector.

Traditional business concepts of leadership are problematic when applied to the early childhood education context. Lockie (2010) cautions that the business-originated roles within early childhood education, such as administration and management, are seen by some as leadership roles. There is also the risk that managers who incorrectly identify themselves as leaders also believe they hold power (Bishop, 2003). Education leadership concepts need to address these power relationships and recognise the social construct of leadership, particularly in early childhood education (Bishop, 2003; Nicholson et al., 2018). One such approach has been for ECE leadership around the world to shift from hierarchical leadership to distributed leadership (Nicholson et al., 2018) and this has also been identified in Aotearoa New Zealand ECE (Denee & Thornton, 2017; Klevering & McNae, 2019; Lockie, 2010; Roder & Jovanovic, 2008).

Currently, distributed leadership is seen as an effective model of leadership in ECE (Clarkin-Phillips, 2009, 2011; Denee & Thornton, 2017, 2018; Nicholson et al., 2018; Notman & Jacobson, 2019; Rodd, 2012; Scrivens et al., 2007; Thornton, 2005a, 2005b, 2010, 2015; Thornton et al., 2009). The common characteristics of distributed leadership include: the group sharing responsibility, valuing individual strengths, autonomy, collaborative decision making, professional growth, relinquishing control, and shifting the balance of power to the whole group (Clarkin-Phillips, 2009). In this approach positional leadership (e.g. head teacher) still plays a role, by way of co-ordinating and developing leadership within the team (Denee & Thornton, 2018). Playcentre has no "head

teacher" role as it is a parent-led service. Some Playcentres have a session facilitator who could be seen as a positional leader, however, a session facilitator does not distribute leadership roles. A session facilitator may encourage or mentor someone to step into a leadership role but does not distribute the leadership role to that person. Instead Playcentre uses "emergent leadership" to describe its approach (Manning, 2012).

Emergent leadership, where there is no one leader (Lockie, 2010) is about people moving out of leadership roles for others to become leaders (Manning et al., 2011). Manning (2012) identified two aspects to emergent leadership in Playcentre: one passive and the other active. Passive emergent leadership is where someone steps aside to allow others to fill the role, while a more active approach sees emergent leadership developed by active mentoring or sharing of leadership roles alongside existing leaders. As such, experienced parents support and mentor less experienced parents around pedagogical and management practices so that they take a more active role in supporting children's learning and the operation of the centre.

While leadership in early childhood education is diverse there remains one constant throughout all early childhood education services, the bicultural curriculum Te Whāriki: He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa Early childhood curriculum (Te Whāriki), (New Zealand & Ministry of Education, 2017). The following section discusses the bicultural context in which all early childhood education services operate and the application of Te Whāriki as more than a curriculum framework for young children but also a framework for leadership in early childhood education (Clarkin-Phillips, 2009; Clarkin-Phillips & Morrison, 2018: Core Education, 2018; Roder & Jovanovic, 2008).

The cultural context for Early Childhood Education leadership

The following section gives a brief overview of the cultural context of early childhood education in Aotearoa New Zealand by discussing the impact of Te Tiriti o Waitangi on the writing of the early childhood curriculum Te Whāriki. The bicultural framework of Te Whāriki is then introduced, and the section concludes with a discussion on the connection between ECE leadership and Te Whāriki.

The cultural context of Aotearoa New Zealand is reflected in Te Tiriti o Waitangi and as such has impacted the writing of Te Whāriki. The original version of Te Whāriki was written in 1996 as a partnership between both partners to Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Māori and non-Māori) and its contents emphasise participation of Māori and protection of Māori language and culture (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2017). Te Whāriki is underpinned by four principles (Empowerment, Holistic Development, Family and Community, Relationships) and five strands (Wellbeing, Belonging, Contribution, Communication, Exploration) which were conceptualised from traditional Māori thinking and sociocultural theory. The principles provide the framework for the two distinct curriculum pathways, one indigenous and the other bicultural. Te Whāriki, therefore, unites all early childhood education services regardless of the service type (teacher-led and parent-led) or philosophy (Playcentre, Montessori, Rudolf Steiner).

As a Tiriti-based curriculum, the principles and strands of Te Whāriki have dual Māori and English names and dual definitions. These dual names and definitions are "not, however, synonyms as they had their origins in different world views" (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 69). Many early childhood researchers believe Te Whāriki, as a sociocultural framework, has application beyond that of an early childhood curriculum (Clarkin-Phillips, 2009; Core Education, 2018; Jovanovic & Roder, 2008; Rodd, 2012; Roder & Jovanovic, 2008; Shearsby, 2015).

The bicultural context of early childhood education in Aotearoa New Zealand supports the use of distributed and emergent leadership (Hawkins, 2017; Manning et al., 2011; New Zealand Playcentre Federation. Working Party on Cultural Issues, 1990). This is reinforced by Hawkins (2017), who believes that distributed leadership aligns well with the Māori concept of rangatiratanga. The use of emergent leadership in Playcentres is in agreement with Māori culture as a familiar way of learning to lead (Manning et al., 2011; New Zealand Playcentre Federation, 1990). Thus, Te Whāriki is suggested as a framework for leading as well as the teaching and learning of young children (Roder & Jovanovic, 2008). Te Whāriki is rooted in sociocultural theory—learning through relationships and collaboration—likewise distributed and emergent leadership, as collaborative models of leadership, can be viewed as sociocultural ways of leading (Jovanovic & Roder, 2008). The suggestion that sociocultural theory can be used as a leadership development framework is supported by Rodd (2012) who believes it is a useful way for teachers to analyse their leadership.

More recently a Te Whāriki webinar on leadership (Core Education, 2018) goes one step further and suggests that those working in early childhood education use Te Whāriki as a framework for leadership for learning and proposes a reflective question for each of the four principles. Similarly, Shearsby (2015) used Te Whāriki to develop a framework for the mentoring of early childhood teachers, which consists of the four principles and five strands with a mentoring statement for each and reflective questions for the mentor to use with the mentee (Shearsby, 2015). As there remains a lack of leadership professional development available to early childhood educators (Klevering & McNae, 2019), and this includes Playcentre leaders, Shearsby's (2015) mentoring framework and the webinar on leadership (Core Education, 2018) provide useful starting points for using Te Whāriki as a professional development tool for leadership specifically for Playcentre.

The purpose of the following professional practice enquiry was to investigate Te Whāriki as a leadership framework and analyse how it could be used to reflect on leadership experience and leadership practice in Playcentre. The resulting matrix was developed from my own experience both as an (informal) emergent leader and as a (formal) positional leader within Playcentre and, as such, it has relevance for emergent and positional leaders. The enquiry is retrospective (reflecting on a 16–year career), introspective (making sense of where I am now), and prospective (positing a matrix that is useful for myself and other Playcentre leaders in the future). Finally, the development of the leadership matrix is based on my experience at Playcentre, and the application of the matrix by others lay outside the scope of the enquiry.

Te Whāriki Leadership Framework Matrix

The nature of the enquiry was one of professional practice, where I undertook a critical reflection of my practice to inform my future practice. The critical reflection process I used in the enquiry was taken from the assessment for learning framework of notice, recognise and respond (Ministry of Education, 2004), used in early childhood education as part of all educators' work with young children. This familiarity means ECE educators will be very comfortable working within this reflective framework. Educators notice a lot when observing and working with children; they will recognise some learning and then educators will respond to some of the learning they recognise to further support and extend the child's learning (Dreaver et al., 2004). In the context of examining Te Whāriki as a leadership framework using the assessment for learning framework, Notice, Recognise, and Respond became the questions for each principle and strand.

Figure 1: the Principle matrix, demonstrates how the Te Whāriki principles and assessment for learning framework (Notice, Recognise and Respond) were brought together in a matrix form. With the principles down the left-hand side and Notice, Recognise and Respond along the top, this allowed for the documentation of answers to each question. Thus, a leader takes an example of their leadership practice that relates to the principle and records what they notice about their leadership practice. Next, the leader asks: What learning, in the form of leadership knowledge, skills, or attitude do I see in these examples? Finally, the leader responds with where to next, by asking: How can I extend my leadership learning in relation to the leadership principle? This matrix is essentially an individual learning plan which leaders and aspiring leaders can use as a professional development tool.

A similar matrix was created with the Te Whāriki strands; unlike the principles each strand has a statement, goals around the environment that children experience, and learning outcomes which a child becomes capable of. However, as Figure 2 demonstrates, the strand matrix differs in that the noticing became the goals from Te Whāriki, so the leader was noticing the goal experience. The recognise part of the matrix uses the strand learning outcome so leaders could recognise what to look for that would indicate the environment was meeting the goal. Leaders then respond to the centre's current leadership practice with ideas for where to next that could either enhance the current leadership culture or indicate where and how improvements could be made. Thus, the strand matrix creates an assessment framework that assesses the leadership culture and environment, highlighting if the environment for leaders is as positive and supportive as it could be.

The evaluation of the matrix was relatively easy due to the familiarity of Te Whāriki and the assessment for learning frameworks used as part of my everyday role as a Playcentre educator. Autoethnography was used as it allows for the analyses of personal experience to understand the cultural experience (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011). My lived experience as a Playcentre leader was recorded in the form of vignettes to describe my experience as a Playcentre leader. Vignettes for each principle and the strands were used to evaluate Te Whāriki as a leadership framework, thus

Te Whāriki Framework Principles	Leadership Statement	Notice Examples of practice	Recognise What learning (skills, knowledge & attitude) do I recognise?	Respond Where to next? How can I grow or extend my learning?
Empowerment Early childhood curriculum empowers the child to learn and grow.	Leaders empower others to learn and grow.			
Holistic development Early childhood curriculum reflects the holistic way children learn and grow.	Leaders understand the holistic way they learn and grow.			
Family and community The wider world of family and community is an integral part of early childhood curriculum.	The wider world of family and community is an integral part of being a leader.			
Relationships Children learn through responsive and reciprocal relationships with people, places, and things.	Leaders learn through responsive and reciprocal relationships with people, places, and things.			

Figure 1 Principle matrix

	Notice	**Recognise**	**Respond**
Strand	**Goal**	**Learning Outcome**	**Where to next?**
	Leaders experience an environment where:	Over time and with guidance and encouragement, leaders become increasingly capable of:	
Wellbeing The health and wellbeing of Leaders are protected and nurtured	Their health is promoted	Protecting and nurturing their health	
	Their emotional wellbeing is nurtured	Managing themselves and expressing their feelings and needs	
	They feel safe	Keeping themselves and others safe from harm	
Belonging Leaders feel a sense of belonging	Connecting links with the wider EC community is encouraged	Making connections between people, places and things	
	They know they have a place	Taking part in caring for this place	
	They feel comfortable with the routines, customs, and regular events	Understand how things work here and adapting to change	
	They know the limits and boundaries of acceptable behaviour	Show respect for kaupapa, rules and the rights of others	
Contribution Opportunities for learning are equitable, and each Leader's contribution is valued	There are equitable opportunities for learning and leading	Treating others fairly and including them	
	They are affirmed as individuals	Recognising and appreciating their own ability to learn	
	They are encouraged to learn with and alongside others	Using a range of strategies and skills to work and learn with others	
Communication The languages and symbols of Leaders	They develop communication skills for a range of purposes	Expressing themselves in a range of contexts	

Figure 2: Strand matrix

uncovering my leadership practices. The vignettes illustrated instances of my leadership practice that were relevant to the principle and became the noticing part of the matrix from which I was able to recognise the leadership learning and respond. Therefore, the case studies had a dual role, one to evaluate the matrix and Te Whāriki as a Leadership Framework for Playcentre Professional Development, and the other to examine mine and the centre's leadership practice to identify strengths and weaknesses to inform my leadership practice and the leadership environment of the centre.

Applying the Te Whāriki Leadership Framework Matrix: Examples

The case studies for each principle and the one case study for the five strands, were used to examine in detail my own experience as a leader in Playcentre, the leadership environment of the centre and to explore the matrix as a professional development tool for Playcentre. To do this I used vignettes of my own experience that related to each of the four principles at Playcentre. Firstly, I reflected on what I Notice about each principle and what I Recognise about my leadership in Playcentre. Finally, I discussed how I could Respond to what I recognised to enhance my professional practice further. The final case study was of the strand matrix and my response to Noticing the goals and Recognising the outcomes to assess the environment in which I lead. For the purposes of this paper, I will include in detail one of the principle case studies, Relationships, and one example from the Strand case study.

Principle example: Relationships

The leadership statement for the relationship principle is: Leaders learn through responsive and reciprocal relationships with people, places and things. Relationships are one of my core values and sit at the heart of my professional practice; like young children's learning from relationships, I too learn through the relationships I have with people, places and things. The following are the vignettes of my practice that I used to explore my leadership practice in relationships using the principle matrix.

Notice: Principle—Relationships

Vignette 1–What a lovely morning to be outside playing. The sun is shining, and I can feel its warmth on my back. I am enjoying being back in this environment. It is so much fun to be playing alongside the children and talking with parents about their child. I hear footsteps crunching down the driveway; I look up to see who it is. Oh, a new face, I better welcome them. I stand and walk towards the gate, smiling as I greet the visitors – a mum and daughter. "Welcome to … Playcentre; I'm …." I'm greeted in return with a warm smile that mirrors my own. I listen intently to the mother as she introduces herself and her daughter. I welcome them again using their names and invite them inside to meet the other parents and children. As we walk, I ask about the age and interests of her daughter and if they have recently moved into the area. We arrive inside where I introduce her to the parents and our centre information person.

Vignette 2–I took the opportunity today to talk to our new team members as many of them were together at the Kai table, along with a few experienced parents. I talked about being a big team of six, who are relatively inexperienced, and Harriet offered to go over the induction checklist with them individually. I said I would do the learner map with parents/care givers using the new resources during session over the coming week. I handed out the sheet about the role of the parent/caregiver helping during session for them to take away and read. Then I gave them a rundown of a typical session. It was great that Emma re-enforced that their child comes first.

Late–This morning's meeting appears to have worked really well as the parents took photos during the session and joined in at the end of session meeting. They engaged with the children's diary sheets and joined the conversation about children's play and learning during the session. Harriet and I are really pleased with how this session went, so we will endeavour to do the pre-session meeting in a group setting with experienced parents joining the meeting.

Two days later – It was great to hear Raelene comment that Tania (one of our new parents) had come in and set up an activity for her child. Our induction meeting two days ago must have inspired and empowered Tania to set up an activity for her own child.

Vignette 3–Sitting at the Kai table chatting with the children and parents, Emma says to me, "we need to make this korowai for Child A to wear on her last day at Playcentre". Oh yes, I've been thinking about making one for a while but never got around to it. "Ok," I reply. As we discuss the details, others are drawn into the conversation, asking questions about the korowai we plan to create. Then Lilly asks if we are going to get it blessed. Wow, what a great idea and culturally appropriate thing to do. Boy, this feels great, here I am with an idea that others are helping to ensure it comes to life for the children. Emma and I will purchase the materials and hand sew the korowai while Carolyn said she would ask her father-in-law a kaumatua from the local iwi to bless the korowai.

Vignette 4–I am outside, and as I walk past the door, I see inside Child B is in her mother's arms while mum is having a conversation with another mum. I have been building a relationship with Child B and know she loves being outside but I'm not sure if our relationship is strong enough yet for her to trust me without mum. I decide to see how much trust she has built in me. I put my head in the door and ask Child B if she would like to come outside. Her face lights up with a big smile, she wiggles to let mum know she wants down and comes toddling out to me. Together we head off to the sandpit.

Recognise: Principle—Relationships

These vignettes show I have an open and effective communication style that allows my relationships to be responsive and reciprocal. These attributes come from relationships being a core personal value, a fundamental principle of my professional practice, and the belief that positive relationships are a necessity in a learning environment. The co-operative environment of Playcentre, the use of an emergent leadership model, and the tiriti-based context of early childhood education has meant I have developed my relationships and leadership in a power-sharing way. Therefore, I do not see myself as a leader with power or control. Yet, reflecting on these vignettes has highlighted that while I do not perceive myself to have power, others could, particularly new parents who are most likely to see me in a position of power as I have a lead educator role due to my knowledge and experience.

These vignettes also reveal to me the the kaupapa Māori values from Te Whāriki within my practice. In particular, manaakitanga is evident in my mana enhancing behaviour towards others and the expression of whanaungatanga as we work together to build a sense of belonging for our new whānau. Another kaupapa Māori value that is reflected in my leadership is ako, the reciprocal learning, and teaching that occurs between myself and the child or parent.

Respond: Principle—Relationships

I need to be more aware in my professional practice when I am in a potential position of power. When I identify I am in a potential position of power, I need to use communication that indicates that I view our relationship as one of power with rather than power over.

The number of kaupapa Māori values evident in my relationships has surprised and empowered me in the knowledge that my professional practice reflects the tiriti-based curriculum I am delivering. I would like to continue to build my understanding of Te Ao Māori and develop a better awareness of kaupapa Māori values in my professional practice.

Strand example

The second case study example is of the Strands matrix (Figure 2) which explores the leadership environment of the centre. Emerging leaders are vital in ensuring the continuation of a Playcentre, therefore the leadership environment at a centre needs to promote wellbeing and create a sense of belonging so new and existing members feel valued. Leaders and adult members should feel they can freely contribute to the centre management and operation and that their contribution is valued. A centre that values open and effective communication and provides a supportive environment will see the benefits through members exploring ways to support and enhance the running of the centre.

In this second case study example, the strands of Te Whāriki were used as an assessment of the environment in which leadership occurs. Using the strand matrix to *Notice* and *Recognise* a healthy leadership environment, I was able to *Respond* with how I felt about the leadership environment at the centre and reflect on ways I could continue to support, enhance or improve the leadership

environment in which I lead, thus, ensuring a positive and supportive leadership environment for other leaders and emerging leaders.

The following is my *Response* to *Noticing* the goals of each strand of my experience as a leader in the centre environment and using the learning outcome to *Recognising* what I have become or could become increasingly capable of. The following are vignettes of my *Response* to one goal from each strand in the strand matrix on the leadership environment.

Respond: Strand

Vignette 5–Wellbeing: Leaders experience an environment where their emotional wellbeing is nurtured. I have always felt emotionally supported and have been fortunate enough to have Parent Council representatives that I am comfortable to approach to discuss any emotional issue or need.

Vignette 6–Belonging: Leaders experience an environment where they know they have a place. In the beginning, I was warmly welcomed and quickly built positive relationships with parents and children, which gave me a strong sense of belonging. Because I live the Playcentre value of families learning together, I have a strong sense of pride in my centre. I therefore want to take care of the centre, so it continues to be a welcoming place for families as it was for my family.

Vignette 7–Contribution: Leaders experience an environment where there are equitable opportunities for learning and leading. As Playcentre has its own education programme, there are always opportunities for learning should parents wish to become involved, which I encourage. I enjoy supporting parents who choose to go through the programme. When I work with parents on the daily education team, I always take opportunities to encourage and support learning for all parents/ caregivers and children during each session. If I identify a parent who shows leadership potential or an opportunity that allows a parent to lead, I will encourage them to have a go. I'm always looking for new and novel ways to bring new parents into the daily team, so they feel a sense of belonging and want to contribute to the team. New parents/caregivers are encouraged to take photos of children at play.

Vignette 8–Communication: Leaders experience an environment where they develop communication skills for a range of purposes. I believe relationships are at the core of my professional practice. Therefore, I have developed effective communication skills to build positive relationships with children and parents over a short period. I believe that parents and children need to quickly feel a sense of wellbeing and belonging before the parent commits to the centre and the child feels relaxed and free to play. Most of our parents now use social media as their main form of communication, and I feel I need to upskill on the use and communication style of social media apps like Facebook and Instagram.

Vignette 9– Exploration: Leaders experience an environment where they learn strategies for active exploration, thinking and reasoning. I have built up a good tool kit of strategies and techniques for working with children and adults. These have helped me to identify what is happening in any given situation and being able to explain it to others or problem solve on the spot.

Insights into professional practice

While I consider myself an experienced Playcentre leader who engages in ongoing critical reflection, there were times when I would have found it valuable to discuss my interpretation of each principle with a mentor or critical friend. This would have provided additional insight into what I consider strengths and limitations in my practice, thereby adding rigour to autoethnography. The process of examining my leadership using Te Whāriki as a leadership framework has nonetheless generated valuable insight into my leadership. In determining my understanding of each principle, then recognising aspects of my leadership and responding to the principles and strand matrix, I gained several insights into myself, not just as a leader but as a person, including a realisation that I was becoming increasingly culturally competent. I now have an awareness of my own world view, a positive attitude towards cultural diversity, and understand cultural practices with the ability to interact and communicate (Rodd, 2012).

Insights from case studies on my leadership practice made me aware of the position of power that I am in. I need to be aware of this when communicating with others, even though I don't see myself as having power over them. The case studies also highlight compassion and empathy demonstrated within my leadership roles. These insights have contributed to my self-awareness of how I lead and, therefore, my ability to make changes to my practice to be a better leader. I have developed a strong sense of emotional intelligence and see the world differently, no longer through the eyes of a parent but through the lens of a leader.

Conclusion

This exploratory study has provided the following insights into the the value of utilising two frameworks which are already deeply embedded in Playcentre's core practices as an ECE provider. The enquiry explored the use of the Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood curriculum Te Whāriki as a leadership framework by using the Assessment for Learning framework (Notice, Recognise and Respond) used in ECE. In bringing the two frameworks together into a simple matrix layout and with the familiarity of the two frameworks to Playcentre, leaders are easily able to reflect on their individual leadership practice and the emergent leadership practice of the centre. Thus, the outcome of the enquiry was twofold, the viability of the leadership matrix for use by Playcentre leaders and aspiring leaders, and the examination of my leadership capability using the framework. The insights into my own leadership practice and the emergent leadership environment of the centre demonstrated the matrix provides a simple, easy to use professional development tool in

which to reflect on and highlight current leadership practice of the individual and centre. Therefore, the leadership matrix provides a reflective practice framework for reflecting on the action of being a leader in Playcentre and other ECE services.

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Author

Carleen Mitchell is currently a learning facilitator in the College of Work Based Learning at Otago Polytechnic Te Pūkenga. She spent 16 years at Playcentre as a parent, educator, workshop facilitator and two years as president of the Otago Playcentre Association. Carleen has a Bachelor of Social Services and a Master of Professional Practice from Otago Polytechnic.

Email: carleen.mitchell@op.ac.nz

ORCID: 0009-00014788-8161