Championing Inclusion:
An Interview with Professor Luanna Meyer

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In May 2012, after a long and impressive career, Luanna Meyer retired from her role as Professor of Education and Director of the Jessie Hetherington Centre for Educational Research at Victoria University. The tributes paid at her retirement ceremony bear testament to a woman who is held in high esteem in the educational community. This is certainly the case for members of Massey University's Inclusive Education Research Centre who deputised Jill Bevan-Brown to interview Professor Meyer for this article. Members of the Centre contributed questions for Jill to ask. In general, they were interested in finding out more about this amazing woman - not just in respect to her educational career but they wanted a glimpse of the person behind the Professor – to find out about her early influences and the passions that have driven her work over the years. They also wanted her opinion about New Zealand's present education system and her advice on how we can make it more inclusive in the future.

Luanna grew up in Oshkosh, a small town in Wisconsin, which is known as 'America's Dairyland'. She continues her story:

There's one thing I would like to talk about and it's my first experience with disability and how I ended up with Special Education which is my major passion and area of interest and research. I grew up in a typical American town where one never saw people with disabilities, it's almost as if they're invisible, they were nowhere. I don't know where they were, but they certainly weren't in my school and they weren't in my classroom. I do remember though one classmate who had polio, that would have been the only thing you would have heard of growing up in a typical town in mid-America.

I was born in 1945 so this would have been the early 50s, early 60s, and we had an institution - in those days every state in America had at least one mental institution and at least one hospital with people with disabilities. The hospital for people with disabilities was outside of Madison and that was quite a distance away. Later, I went there for my undergraduate degree. But I lived in Oshkosh through high school, and just a few miles outside of town is Winnebago Mental Health Institute which was a polite word for everybody who was institutionalised for schizophrenia, serious mental illness, except for those with criminal records. Oddly enough there was an autism unit and a children's unit at this mental health institute. The rest of this facility was for adults with serious mental illness, not people with disabilities. It was considered to be quite a scary, dangerous place by everybody in Oshkosh; you didn't drive out to Winnebago.

But when I was a teenager going to high school I decided it was time I did something kind of different. I'd heard that there was a children's unit just started up at Winnebago Mental Health Institute. I didn't know anything about what kind of kids were there or what it was like but I thought it would be kind of interesting to go and volunteer. I was about 16 or 17 and I remember this nice man saying "We're going to pair you up with a little girl, she's eight." He didn't tell me anything about her. He said "All you have to do is be friends with her. She just needs someone to spend time with her. Her family never visits, she's pretty much by herself in this children's unit." It was a mental institution with big chains and fences around, and hospital looking. It didn't look at all like a home, not where you'd think of a child spending a childhood. I can't even remember her name, it was so many years ago. I went back about three or four times. It was a drive, it took me about a half hour to get there and my parents were really very dubious about this whole experience. I think they had all kinds of ideas about what disabilities were. They were nice people but they'd never had any contact with disabilities and it was getting to be winter. I remember a huge amount of pressure not to do it anymore because I was taking the family car and driving out of town on icy roads, snow was starting to fall. I finally made the decision to discontinue my volunteer work. My socially acceptable reason for stopping was pressure from my parents, driving on icy winter roads, but I think the real reason was I just felt completely helpless. As I now know looking back, the child would have been diagnosed as having autism. She was quite severely developmentally delayed. She engaged in what the literature refers to as 'elopement', isn't that a cute term? Which means running away, so I would spend my entire time with this little girl, running after her. We'd walk along nicely, I'd read her a story or something but the first chance she got she would run and I would chase her. I remember going back to the man a couple of times and saying "What do I do when she runs away from me?" "Oh no, it will be fine, just spend time with her." I thought "Someone has to tell me what to do, there must be something I can do that would be appropriate and positive." Eventually it just wasn't a worry anymore because I stopped volunteering and I never saw her again. But years later when I was doing my PhD at Indiana University, I thought "I want to go back to Winnebago Mental Health Institute and see if that unit is still there" and sure enough it was.

And was it the same?

Well the same kids weren't there anymore, it was a whole different population, but the unit was still there and it was still primarily children with autism and they were living in this hospital setting. This was around the early 1970s, and I decided I would do my PhD thesis and use this unit. My interest by then was children with autism but also children with emotional behaviour disorders, and children who had very severe handicaps, which is what the term was at the time.

Luanna went on to explain how she visited this institution over a period of years and got to know the staff who were running the first applied behavioural analysis unit in the state of Wisconsin:

They were really gifted teachers, they were lovely, they were doing all the right things. They were actually teaching these kids functional skills and it was a really well-run little school. Totally segregated, completely inappropriate setting but they were running this excellent programme and I just became more and more committed. So I did my PhD thesis there with a group of kids in that unit and I thought "When I'm finished that's going to be my area of interest and focus."

What was the topic of your thesis?

The thesis was on language development and children with autism and I particularly focused on echolalia because the fiction of the time was that echolalia was a meaningless, random behaviour that these children engaged in. It was just echoing and it didn't mean anything. My theory was that they were processing language and what they were doing was repeating the language back to you but that it would have been processed and that they understood it. If they were being 'echolalic' they were in fact indicating that they understood you. What I did was a fairly linguistic study. I had a group of kids who had some verbal language and gave them opportunities to engage in echolalia and recorded everything they said. Then I had a group of kids that weren't vocal, who weren't verbal but could repeat a few syllables. They would echo syllables or maybe a word but they didn't actually use it in any way, so they were in a phonetic part of the study but I demonstrated that they could surpass their memory span. It's the old Millar memory span for digits - you can remember seven plus or minus two. Some people can remember up to nine random bits of information, digits, that's the way it's usually tested. If I gave the higher functioning kids seven plus or minus two random strings of words they would be okay up to about seven words or so, but if I went up to nine or 10 random bits, the echolalia just fell off completely. They were unable to repeat any of it and when they did repeat it back, this so called echolalia wasn't really echolalia, it sounded more like when young children would talk, when they dropped the modifiers *et cetera*, it wasn't meaningless repetition, it was actually sounding very much like processed language. I never did another linguistic study because I wrote that up and I submitted it to a top journal and I got back what I read as a rejection. This was after I found my first job and I was so intimated by that feedback from the editor that I put that away in a drawer and I didn't look at it for about five or six years when I started to learn more about what 'revise and resubmit' meant.

In the meantime, and this is a true story, someone else demonstrated exactly what I did with my thesis, published it and became quite well known in the field. When I looked back at my letters years later, it was clearly 'revise and resubmit', but I just had no mentor. There are two lessons here: I had no mentor, nobody to tell me what that meant, nobody to help me through the process of publishing and research, looking at it and giving you advice, giving you the little boost you need to go ahead and make changes and send it off again. That didn't come until I developed some collegial relationships with people. The other lesson was just kind of renewing that commitment to working with disabilities and just being so irate really about where those kids were spending their lives, because that was their life, their entire life was passing them by living in this awful hospital setting.

My first job was at the University of Hawai'i. I took a one-year visiting appointment and I moved my family of five. Everyone thought I was crazy but it was the only job in the country at the time that included emotional disturbance, behaviour disorders and severe disabilities. Every other behaviour disorder job was linked with learning disabilities and I've never been that interested in mild disabilities, I was always interested in severe disabilities. Hawaii was great. It was the greatest thing that ever happened to me because they worked us really hard. There were only four of us on the faculty in Special Education, we had the only programme in the state and it was when 94-142[1] was being introduced, 1976. We always joked that we were over there in that little island in the Pacific. We read the law which said that children should be educated in their neighbourhood school etc., etc. and we didn't know what everyone else was doing. So little Hawaii out there in the Pacific Ocean didn't know everyone else ignored all those parts of the law. We just read the law and we said "Oh alright, we have to put them all in schools" and it was great. Every child was de-institutionalised and put into one of the regular schools, in a special class, and we did it over a period of three years.

The way the university worked was that one day a week I was inservice: I was assigned to the state's Department of Education one day a week and my job was to help the districts in Hawaii set up these classrooms for these kids with severe disabilities. This was 1976, 77, 78 and I can remember tramping around in the plantation fields on the island of Kauai, for example, finding kids who'd been living at home their whole lives. I remember being on the island of Maui working with a teacher who brought the kids from the institution, the hospital up on the side of the mountain, in to school and from day one setting up that programme in the school building, getting all the 'right technology' in place. They had very good supports for kid's physical needs and it was a very functional curriculum. Lou Brown[2] had been coming to the University of Hawai'i for the past three years so everybody was totally cutting edge in what we needed to do for severe disabilities. We were in the forefront of having functional curriculum for those kids. It was very exciting, nearly killed ourselves because we trained everybody in the country. It was the brand new start of Special Ed and for three or four years nobody really cared if I published at all because we had so much work to do just getting everything started in the schools.

Luanna went on to describe how she had a great mentor, James Apffel, who taught her to write grants and how she met Ian Evans who taught her how to publish. Having the same academic interests, she and Ian went on to do a significant amount of work together in Hawaii. Luanna also described what she terms her 'work on inclusion' in Hawaii:

There was this really dynamic parent, Chris, who came into my office one day and said "I've got an idea and I need somebody to work with me on this idea because I don't know how to make it happen in schools and people told me about you. Here's my idea: I went to pick up my daughter at Elementary School (as America calls it) and walked past this room and I saw that all these severely physically handicapped children there. I've never seen children like that. None of them were walking, they were in wheelchairs and they were being fed. I didn't know kids like that existed and I had this reaction. I thought to myself "If I had that reaction, what do the children think in this school? What is everybody telling the other children?" Then I asked my daughter about it and she said "We don't know much about them, they're just in that room." So they may have been on the campus, but they're like our units, totally separate from the other kids and no one knew anything about them.

So this really dynamic parent had this thing she called "special friends". She had a friend who was an excellent photographer, and together they took these beautiful slides of the children, these kids with severe disabilities. You usually see a picture making them look very handicapped, she would take a picture of a child with disabilities looking absolutely splendid. Two children playing together, just so you'd just see all the humanity, that this is, in fact, a six year-old like any other six year-old, and this is a 12 year-old. They'd never be in a demeaning position, never doing age-inappropriate things. She just had a gift and she put together this slide show of 26 to 32 slides of all the children in that classroom in these different situations around the school and she set it to music. "I want you to be my friend" - a song that was very popular at that time. It was an electronic slide show, the slides would go one after the other and the music would play and she would show it to classroom after classroom. This was her idea and then she would ask the kids whether they would volunteer to be a special friend.

She asked me to work with her on this. Part of me thought "It sounds a little stereotyped but actually it might be a way to get started" so I said "Let's try it out and we'll do a formal evaluation." So we went, she did the slide show, it was unique to every school, unique to every class. It was of the kids in that particular school, kids in that classroom, all personal. We would get like all the grade three kids together… we'd show the slide show and then we'd say "Would you like to learn how to play together? You know you've seen those children in the other room, they would really like to spend recess with you, if you'd like to learn to play together." We wouldn't sign them up right there on the spot 'cos right after them seeing the slide show they'd all put up their hands. We'd say

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[1] This refers to the United States Public Law 94-142 - Education of All Handicapped Children Act which was later renamed as Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 'IDEA'. 94-142 was introduced in 1975 and required that in order to receive federal funds States must develop and implement policies that assure free appropriate education to all children with disabilities in the least restrictive environment.

[2] Lou Brown is an Emeritus Professor at the University of Wisconsin. Information about his work in the disabilities area can be found at http://website.education.wisc.edu/lbrown/

"We'll come around tomorrow and see who wants to sign up." We would never allow them to teach the kids how to do a task. We didn't use them like tutors. The principle of the programme was that they were there to play together and they were sent off on their own - take off the brakes on the wheelchair, take the child out in the playground. We showed them how to communicate with each other, how to use their [communication] board or their system or whatever. We showed them what movements were safe and what they could do. We made sure the teachers understood "Don't ever ask this child to help, or watch, or behaviour manage." Then we did an attitude measure that I developed … called the Attitudes Towards Handicapped Children. It was adapted for different age levels, a simple little scale. We ran that programme with hundreds of kids in all the schools in Hawaii, 'cos Hawaii was quite open to research and it was a wonderful environment for doing research. We were able to demonstrate longitudinally that the kids in schools with a structured programme, that showed them how to play together, had significantly more positive attitudes on dimensions of this attitude scale than kids in schools where the kids were there but nobody showed them how to play together. They had significantly more positive attitudes than the kids in schools where there were no children with disabilities. So it was like Allport's old contact hypothesis[3] that structured contact will lead to positive relationships more so than just random contact, certainly more so than no contact.

Luanna left Hawaii in 1982 and although she returns periodically to visit family and friends, she felt she was no longer in a position to comment on the state of Special Education in Hawaii today. She was aware that things had changed over the years and mentioned a famous court case, the Felix Consent Decree, that required a number of services be put in place for children with disabilities.

She explained one of the factors that prompted her move from Hawaii:

I was doing very well winning federal grants. We had quite a lot of support for our research in Hawaii but the feedback I was getting on my inclusion research and integration research was "it sounds good but Hawaii is really weird, it's not like the rest of America and this research wouldn't work anywhere else." So I said "I'm going to go somewhere that nobody would say was not 'typical.'" So I went to the University of Minnesota where I got a big grant right away from the US Department of Ed, and … demonstrated exactly the same thing [as in Hawaii]. We had a lot of money from the US Department of Education over the years, my last 12 or 13 years in the US I averaged a million a year in competitive research grants. Some of that work was on behaviour, some of it was evaluating professional development but most of it was around inclusion.

Luanna explained how she and Ian married and moved to New York. She won a job at Syracuse University and then worked with every school district in New York to develop inclusive classrooms. This work was evaluated and, again, was proved successful.

So what brought you from Syracuse to New Zealand?

In 1987 when I was at Syracuse University I got a letter just out of the blue, from Anne Bray. I'd never met Anne, she came from what was then the Roy McKenzie Institute of Mental Retardation. The Roy McKenzie Foundation had established an Endowed Chair for Mental Retardation, and she sent me a letter saying "We would like you to be our first Endowed Chair. You'd be based in the Medical School at Otago" but the main purpose of it was to do a kind of road show up and down the country about Inclusive Education. I remember standing in our kitchen in New York saying "Ian I got this letter, where's New Zealand?" and of course being a Brit from Scotland he knew where it was … "that sounds really interesting, I've never been to that part of the world." I learned quite quickly that the Māori population is very closely related to Hawaiians, Tahitians, that Pacific triangle, and we loved Hawaii and just everything about it. It sounded like a great opportunity and we said "We can't come for a year but we'll come for six months." We lived in Dunedin, they sent me all around the country to do talks everywhere about Inclusive Ed. Ian did a sabbatical in the Psych Department down in Otago and we just loved that. It was fabulous and we thought if we ever got jobs, we'd come back here to live.

In 87 there was a lot of political activism and it was a lovely little social democracy kind of country. This was a very high-powered medical school, my office was in the medical school, and I can remember at tea time (I'd never heard of tea time, morning tea time, afternoon tea time) all the academics, these famous professors of surgery, and the secretaries would all sit around and have tea together. That would never happen in an American university, in a country where we don't have 'social class' but you'd never have tea together, it just wouldn't happen. "This country is a true democracy, what a lovely place: we're

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[3] Gordon W. Allport (1954) is often credited with the development of the Contact Hypothesis, also known as Intergroup Contact Theory. The premise of Allport's theory states that under appropriate conditions interpersonal contact is one of the most effective ways to reduce prejudice between majority and minority group members. If one has the opportunity to communicate with others, they are able to understand and appreciate different points of views involving their way of life. As a result of new appreciation and understanding, prejudice should diminish. Retrieved from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contact_hypothesis

gonna come back here. They want to do inclusion everywhere and everyone's all excited and committed and dedicated." So Ian got the first job in the mid-90s at Waikato [University] and I came about a year and a half later. I had a big grant I had to finish-up first and I took the job at Massey. Then we discovered the country had changed a little bit. It wasn't quite the same and inclusion hadn't worked out either. I still think it's a lovely country, we've never looked back and been sorry, but it was interesting how things could change so quickly.

What do you think happened – those early days of promise that weren't realised?

I wonder what happened and I also think it's been a little disappointing in other parts of the world as well. Part of my theory around that is that I think the inclusion agenda got co-opted by a relatively small group of people who promoted what ended up being quite expensive services for a small number of children and everyone else sort of dropped off the radar. I don't think the inclusion movement in America or anywhere else has ever really fully-engaged with the equity issues, and the cultural issues that ought to have been at the forefront. So Inclusion in America even today is very much about white, middle class children being included in small districts in isolated situations in a few schools, and it really never was spread widely to include the majority of children who had severe disabilities who remained where they'd always been, in units and in special classes. Then, of course there are all those issues - equitable services that weren't stigmatised and weren't deficit-oriented for kids with more moderate disabilities. So New Zealand was never going to spend the kind of money that was being spent for fully inclusive services for a small number of children. New Zealand spent so many years struggling even with what kind of model we were going to have with Special Ed. Remember it was SE2000, before that it was something else and we had the RTLB network for a while, now that's changing a little bit. Before GSE there was SES. So every time there was a major change like that, there has been a disruption or interruption of that commitment. I also think, in a sense, we've been partly to blame because there's only been a handful of people who have continued that commitment and I'd say, I would be partly to blame - I have taken that on as my major ongoing commitment … [but] I've been enlisted in many ways to do more generic things that needed doing. I'm evaluating the impact of the NCEA [National Certificate of Educational Achievement] on teenagers so, other issues around culture and responsive pedagogy seem to me to be important for where New Zealand is at right now.

Yes, but you can't do everything, can you?

No, and I think you do pick your battles. At a certain point in time, you say "Well I can have a bigger impact here doing this than carrying on over there doing that, and there are good people doing that." But I think we do lack a champion right now. Somebody who's going to really excite this field and get things going on behalf of kids with disabilities. When I moved to Wellington a few years ago I did make a special effort to go around and visit where all the kids were again, who I knew in the Manawatu. I knew where they were when I was at Massey and it just made me despair, the services are not what they should be. We should be doing better.

So what do we need to do to become better?

Well there're some very simple things we don't do. There are bits and pieces of Special Education training for teachers, but there is no required, systematic sequence of coursework and practica leading to certification and registration as a Special Education teacher.

No, although that's the American model isn't it? What we ideally are pushing is that in an inclusive school and classroom every teacher that goes into those schools should be trained to teach all children including those with special needs.

Well then, you have to give them the training, they don't actually receive any Special Ed training in a programme in this country. Compare that to the programme I started at Syracuse [University]. We developed the Inclusive Elementary and Special Education Teacher Education Programme that eliminated both the separate Special Ed programme and the separate regular education programme. Nobody came to Syracuse unless they did the inclusive programme. They had a four-year degree in which they did the full programme for becoming a Special Ed teacher, that would be the equivalent of 30 credits and they did the full programme for being a regular education teacher, side by side. It was all coordinated rather than being a dual programme or dual degree or a dual certification which is how the state awarded it, but for us it was one programme and they had to meet a dual set of requirements.

In the early stages of planning this, right before we implemented it in 1990, I think, I remember one of the Special Ed faculty members saying "But what if someone comes to Syracuse and they don't want to do Special Ed, they just want to do regular education?" and one of the regular Ed faculty looked that person in the eye and said "Well then Syracuse is not the place for them. There are plenty of other places where they can go, but we wouldn't want that person at Syracuse. If they go to

Syracuse they're going to be trained to work with all children." But the trouble here is that we talk the language but what Special Ed training do they get in a year programme? I would not ever claim that you don't need some [special] skills in order to teach a child with severe disabilities.

Of course you do.

It's not the same. They can sit right side by side with a Year 3 student. They can be working with the same materials, they can be doing similar kinds of things but you'll have to individualise and give a great deal of thought to how that child's learning can be engaged at the same time as this child's learning is being engaged at a level that's appropriate for that child.

Luanna went on to explain how the Syracuse teacher education programme included Special Education content in every class, content such as how to position and handle a child with physical disabilities and how to set up a verbal training programme. This Syracuse programme still exists today and has been "hugely successful" as evidenced in a range of publications about the programme over the intervening years.

Other programmes have emulated it. There's one at Teachers College, Columbia University, and many others. Linda Blanton and Marleen Pugach[4] updated their research on dual programmes a few years ago; some of these programmes operate side by side, and some of them are sequential. Not very many of them are completely integrated like the one at Syracuse is, but to say every teacher is going to be equipped to teach every child implies that you give them the skills to be able to do it. I'm not one of those people who says all you have to do is accept the children and you will be right. You do need to have some skills. Some of these children have some very significant challenges and teachers need to feel comfortable and competent that they can teach and create a constructive learning environment for them.

So our first big task is to increase that content in our initial teacher education?

Yes, I'll put my neck out here. I think one of the problems we've had in teacher education in New Zealand is this legacy of teaching the curriculum, that we somehow think that we should spend the majority of our time teaching our student teachers all about the curriculum documents. Now we've got a change in the curriculum which will take us away from that. We won't have to be so obsessed about making sure every person who leaves our programme knows what all those curriculum documents say in science and maths and English and literacy. We've got different kinds of outcomes. But teacher education has been obsessed with teaching the curriculum as opposed to teaching children. I don't think we have as strong a pedagogical orientation in teacher education as opposed to curriculum orientation. To be perfectly honest, they will learn the logistics of the way we do things around here when they get out in the schools, we don't really need to be teaching them all those details. What we need to be teaching them is the pedagogy, teaching them learning - how to do the job, be a teacher.

That's one, and I know that's a huge one, but are there any other things that you think would really contribute towards us being more inclusive? What about attitudes? How can we teach to change attitudes?

I think behaviour is a serious issue in our schools and we haven't, as a nation, come to grips with our expectations around children's behaviour, our acknowledgment and recognition that we have a dominant culture in our schools that has certain unreasonable expectations of all children and that we have teachers who largely reflect a dominant culture and who themselves represent the previous era of education. We really don't know what to do with cultural diversity in our schools. I don't think we know how to be culturally responsive. Government tells us that suspension rates have seriously declined in the last 10 years. What really has been happening, 'cos we've just finished our analysis of those statistics for the last 10 years, numbers have been pushed around. We have a huge increase in stand-downs, whereas exclusions and expulsions are pretty much the same and there has been a decrease in suspensions.

So are we just calling them something else?

Well they're moved around. We now do a lot more stand-downs that don't require any kind of formal approval, a stand-down doesn't require going to a Board or filing paperwork in the same way that a suspension does, so we move those numbers around. The category of 'continual disobedience' which is incredibly vague is something that is increasing dramatically. Even more scary is the increase in the age range, six, seven, eight and nine. While there are significant decreases in stand-downs, suspensions, and exclusion of Pākehā children, these are accompanied by huge increases for Māori, Pacific and Asian [children]. And you don't see those statistics broken down on any of the websites by ethnicity, by year, for the four different categories. If you look at that closely,

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[4] Blanton, L., & Pugach, M. C. (2007). Collaborative programs in general and special education: An action guide for higher education and state policy makers. Washington, D.C.: Council of Chief State School Officers. Available at http:///www.centerforteacherquality.org

I think what it reflects is a very old fashioned idea about children's behaviour that we just aren't coming to grips with - the fact that something isn't working and we need to figure out how to make it work because it isn't an answer to send children out of the classroom. What do we think we are accomplishing? Whether you call it a stand-down, suspension, exclusion, or expulsion, it's sending children out of the classroom, out of a learning situation, and we can't solve our problems that way. They're with us for life: we can either work this out now and figure out how to support them in their learning so that they aren't sent out of the classroom, or where do we think they're going to be by the time they're 14, 15, 16, and then adults?

So, a change in attitudes around behavioural expectations for children coupled with a raised awareness of and commitment to accommodating cultural diversity are two further ingredients Luanna believes are essential to New Zealand schools becoming more inclusive.

Although this interview was over an hour long, it really just scratched the surface of the life, work and ideas of this inclusion champion. We are really fortunate that Anne Bray sent her the invitation to take up the inaugural Roy McKenzie Endowed Chair many years ago and that her husband, Ian Evans, knew where New Zealand was! If you would like to learn more about Luanna's work and ideas, some selected publications are included below.

On behalf of the Inclusive Education Research Centre, "thank you Luanna" for this interview and for your lifetime of work for the inclusion cause.

"Ina te mahi, he rangatira"

See from her work (for the welfare of others) – a leader indeed.

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INTERVIEWEE'S PROFILE

Professor Luanna Meyer

Throughout her academic career, Luanna's focus has been on validating practical, evidence-based approaches that can be implemented in real-life, typical situations and settings. She works closely with school leaders, teachers, and behaviour specialists towards achieving inclusive schools where all children and youth belong and feel valued. Her contributions to the development of positive approaches to behaviour problems are acknowledged by her current appointment to the Technical Review Committee on Behavior for the National Center for Students with Disabilities who Require Intensive Interventions led by the American Institutes for Research in the USA. She was among the first to demonstrate that even the most severe behaviour can be managed with positive approaches, supported by her published research conducted in typical settings with children with severe behaviour disorders, autism and other disabilities. She has been invited to speak in eight countries and 30 US states about her work, and she has published more than 120 journal articles and book chapters. Her 12 books include two 2012 books on restorative practices co-authored by Ian M. Evans (who is also her husband) and *Making Friends: The Influences of Culture and Development, Critical Issues in the Lives of People with Severe Disabilities; Behavioral Intervention: Principles, Models, and Practices; The Syracuse Community-Referenced Curriculum Guide; Non-Aversive Intervention for Behavior Problems: A Manual for Home and Community; and An Educative Approach to Behavior Problems: A Practical Decision Model.* Just as important, Luanna is a proud parent and grandparent.

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INTERVIEWER'S PROFILE

**Associate Professor
Jill Bevan-Brown**

Jill Bevan-Brown is an Associate Professor at Massey University where she is Programme Director of the BEd (Special Education), Director of the Inclusive Education Research Centre and Co-Director of the Postgraduate Diploma in Specialist Teaching. Her tribal affiliations are Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Wehiwehi, Ngāi te Rangi and Ngāti Awa ki Waikanae. She has a particular interest in culturally-appropriate provisions for Māori children with special needs, gifted education, the education of learners with ASD and parent voice. Her association with Professor Meyer dates back to when, as PVC of Massey University's College of Education, Luanna mentored her and other Special Education lecturers. Since then she has acted as a cultural advisor for various projects directed by Luanna and is presently co-supervising a PhD student with her.

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