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## Editorial

Wendy Holley-Boen, on behalf of the editorial team



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There is a common theme across this Kairaranga edition – **the importance of understanding and planning for diversity**. Each submission studies diversity from a different perspective, from the diversity of mokopuna and whānau to the diversity of our kaiako and communities. In a rapidly evolving, sometimes unsettled education climate, it can be tempting to reach for One Size Fits All solutions and to pathologise those whose needs are not met by standardised framing and approaches. In contrast, contributors to this edition deeply consider the nuance and complexity of our learners, communities and educators themselves, and the value of difference. Across a range of early years, primary and secondary contexts, they position diversity as a strength and emphasise the need for deep appreciations of context, experience and possibility.

In the first article, *Finding our place: The experiences of neurodivergent kaiako in ECE*, Solomon and colleagues capture the voices of neurodivergent kaiako in early childhood settings. This article underscores the importance of inclusive settings and workplace cultures, and foregrounds the strengths neurodivergent educators bring to the profession, including empathy and creativity.

The second article, *The assessment of children with disabilities in ECE settings in Aotearoa New Zealand*, approaches planning for diversity through authentic, strengths-based assessment in early childhood. Cameron affirms the value of Te Whāriki and learning stories as uniquely Aotearoa approaches to effectively noticing, recognising and responding to the strengths, needs and interests of children. Additionally, her research identified the importance of a range of assessment approaches in planning for and supporting mokopuna with disabilities and all mokopuna.

The article by Csata and Nam, *Weaving Māori culture into specialist education: Connection and belonging through dramatherapy*, examines the synergies between dramatherapy and pūrākau Māori. The authors discuss the positive impact of integrating students' cultural identities with strategies such as individualised teaching, value-based learning, and collaborative practice, particularly for students with complex needs.

Kaiako diversity is the focus of the article, *Reflections of cultural and pedagogical adaptation to bicultural practice from four migrant teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand*. Chellapan and colleagues share the education journeys of educators as they seek to find their place in Aotearoa, grow their bicultural pedagogy, and draw on support and reflection for their professional growth.

Lin and Harris explore the diverse experiences of Chinese secondary students in the article, *Chinese student perceptions and voice: Navigating intergenerational perspectives on learning success and learner identity*. Students share their beliefs about learning success and the importance of open, direct communication with parents – both shaped by the complex cultural dynamics and multi-generational perspectives of migrant Chinese families.

Planning for diversity features strongly in the initiative to support both migrants and kaiako in *Trauma-informed, culturally responsive education for refugee-background students: An evaluation of the RASNZ Welcoming Schools initiative in Aotearoa New Zealand*. Mortensen and colleagues used the feedback of over 500 educators across 15 workshops to evaluate the effectiveness of this professional development programme on educators' knowledge, attitudes and practices. Their findings illustrate the importance of professional development in growing the strengths-based practice and interprofessional networks of educators supporting learners from refugee backgrounds.

This edition's *Reimagining Education* piece features a video interview with Prudence Walker, Disability Rights Commissioner for Aotearoa New Zealand. Prudence draws from personal experiences and key legislation in a way that integrates the ideas and challenges across this edition:

“There’s got to be the culture and opportunity for people to continue their learning and receive the support that they need to be able to facilitate really inclusive environments for children.”

E mihi ana ki a koutou – we acknowledge every contributor to this edition, and you as readers, in working together to create an education system by all, with all, for all.

## KAIRARANGA ARTWORK



Artist: **Rukutai Tonihi-Craig**, Year 5, Pukehou School

This photo shows one of the many robots Rukutai has made. He likes to make things from card, paper, wooden blocks and LEGO, and he LOVES robots. Rukutai also likes to draw, which he does every day at school. He has made his own cartoon book with his drawings. Blue is Rukutai's favourite colour, so this often features in his artwork. He makes structures out of blocks and LEGO without following a set of instructions. To help Rukutai with his communication his class is learning some New Zealand Sign Language every week so all the students can communicate better with each other. Additionally, the whole school is learning one new sign each week.

