Surfing and negotiating the waves of change in visual art education

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The calm before the storm brings that sense of early childhood teachers passively following the routine of accepted approaches to visual art learning. With time different teaching approaches and ideologies have challenged the early education sector bringing waves of change that unsettled traditional ways of teaching visual art. This conference theme draws many parallels with art education. We consider ways in which curriculum theory and pedagogical approaches could transform teaching practice and influence the way that visual artefacts are compiled and presented in young children’s portfolios. We explore how visual art is valued and upheld in the light of gathering evidence as part of professional practice. Theoretical perspectives from national and international literature along with research findings from our ongoing early childhood visual art investigations inform discussion about pedagogical approaches. This presentation looks at the storm clouds of debate and knowingly waits for them to pass to reveal moments of clarity.

Presenter biographies:

Helen Wrightson:

Ki ngā maunga o Moehau oku maunga
Ko Waihou te awa
Ko Dauntless te waka
Ko ngāti Pakeha te iwi
No Thames ahau
E noho ana ahau ki o Wairaka
Ko Helen Wrightson taku ingoa

Helen Wrightson is a lecturer at Te Whare Wananga o Wairaka Unitec Institute of Technology. She is passionate about quality early childhood experiences for young children of Aotearoa so currently this means inspiring student teachers through her role as a lecturer. Her special interests are children’s visual art experiences and the teacher’s role in supporting children’s learning through creative experiences. This interest has evolved through her work as an early childhood supervisor for over 20 years and art teaching papers culminating in her research topic for her Masters of Education. She is currently studying at Auckland University of Technology (AUT) towards a Doctor of Education. Helen co-wrote a chapter in *Kia tipu te wairua toi - Fostering the creative spirit: Arts in early childhood education.*
Julie Plows:
Ko Maungawhau te maunga
Ko Waitemata te awa
Kei Tamaki Makaurau toku kainga
Ko Julie Plows ahau

Julie Plows has a background in visual arts and early childhood education and works as a teacher education lecturer at New Zealand Tertiary College. Julie became interested in visual arts education by pondering the nature of young children’s visual arts experiences in early childhood settings. Julie has recently published articles about the findings of her Master of Education early childhood visual arts education research at the University of Auckland and has presented nationally and internationally.