

NZC Key Competencies: ***Supporting Self-Determination, Participation, and Decision-Making in Learning***

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"If they don't listen (kaiako), they don't really know how to improve us. You can't just tell what we do by looking at our work"

(Nine-year old boy).

"My classroom cannot operate if their (ākonga) voices are not being heard. There's just no point me teaching them stuff that they're not a part of"

(Whaea Tupou)

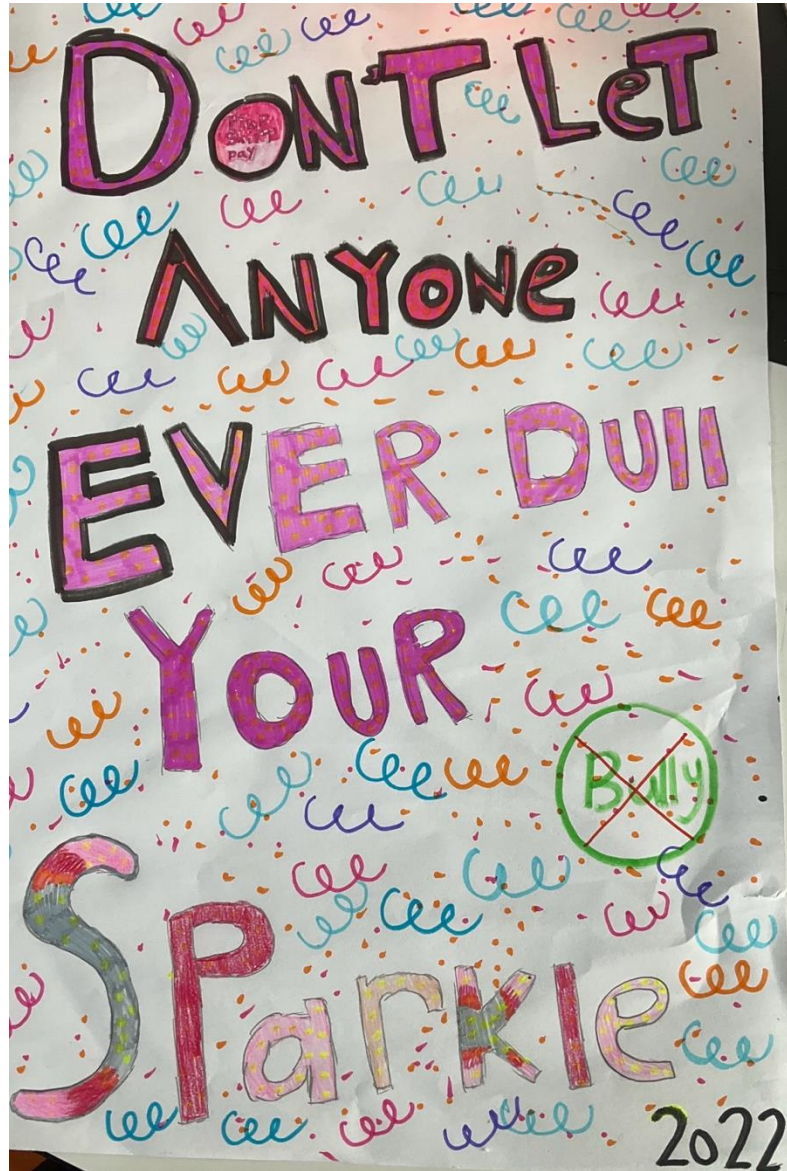
Background to Research

- United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) adopted and ratified 1989
- Aotearoa New Zealand ratified in 1993
- Currently 196 countries and states have ratified the UNCRC

The focus for this research study is the UNCRC, specifically article 12.1:

State parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child

(United Nations, 1989, p.4).



Guiding Principles

- Non-discrimination (Article 2)
- Best interests of the child (Article 3.1)
- The right to survival and development (Article 6.2)
- The views of the child (Article 12.1)

“A crucial dimension of the Convention is expressed through another principle, the one about respecting the views of the child. In order to know what is actually in the interest of the child it is logical to listen to him or her.”

The principle is formulated in Article 12:1 (UNICEF, n.d.).

A group of children, wearing red protective aprons splattered with paint, are working in a workshop. They are using rollers to apply yellow and blue paint to large white boards. A white tray containing yellow paint sits on a wooden workbench. The scene is brightly lit, and the children are focused on their task.

Children's Participation in Curriculum Decision-Making and the Impact on their Self-Determination

Methodology

Qualitative exploratory study

- 1) Identify the extent ākonga currently participate in curriculum decision-making
- 2) Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) supporting partnership with tamariki and kaiako to explore how influence and decision-making can be a shared, dialogic experience.
- 3) Reflexive research approach

Children's Research Advisory Group (CRAG)

- Ākonga involved from the beginning
- Expert witnesses to life, learning, language, & context

Data gathering

- Multiple data collection points
- Observations, conversations, products
- Ākonga-friendly methods

Data set

- Year 5/6 classroom
- 18 participants (9 female; 9 male)
- 9 Māori; 6 Pākehā; 2 Asian; 1 Pasifika
- Low socio-economic community



Data Analysis

Data analysis—telling the stories and experiences of ākonga through three case narratives based on Rogoff's planes of analysis

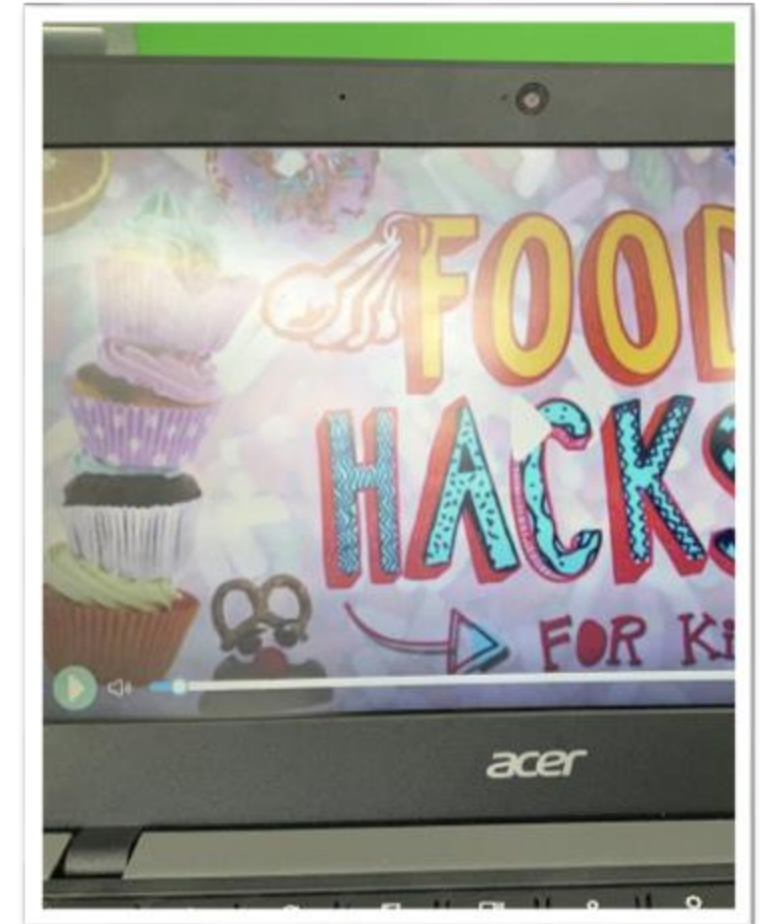
1. Curriculum-based learning;
2. Teacher- and school-initiated inquiry; and
3. Child-initiated inquiry

An established collaborative community of practice saw ākonga:

- experience **active and contributing roles** in curriculum decision-making alongside kaiako;
- actively engaged in the **social context for learning**; and
- demonstrating **self-determining attributes in collaborations and learning**.

Demonstrating increasing sophistication over the course of a school year when they were:

- i. negotiating and identifying meaningful pathways to learning
- ii. recognising their strengths, strengths of others, and
- iii. collaborating to improve their learning outcomes.



Rogoff's Planes of Analysis

Community plane (apprenticeship)

Ākonga and kaiako experience active and contributing roles:

"I had to observe everyone and how they work, so I could know what they like and how they do things. So, that's changed my thinking a lot since the beginning of the year" (nine-year old boy).

Interpersonal plane (guided participation)

Ākonga actively engage in the social context for learning:

"So, we decided what activities we were doing as a class, and that helped more than doing it individually" (nine-year old girl).

Personal plane (participatory appropriation)

Ākonga demonstrate self-determining attributes in collaborations and learning:

"I think it's the people near me that help me and getting to know them. So, then it's easier to pick who I can co-operate with better, because you also don't want to pick someone that is the exact same as you because then you might talk about the exact same things, and then just get distracted" (ten-year old boy).



A brief background to the key competencies

- Included in the 'front half' of the New Zealand Curriculum (2007)
- Resources for KCs are included in Tahurangi
- The idea for the key competencies originated from the OECD in response to PISA results
- Seeking to evaluate:
How well students apply skills in reading, mathematics, and science in the context of their everyday lives (Hipkins, 2018)
- In response, the **DeSeCo Project** was initiated (late 1990s & early 2000s) the development of a **framework focused on the concept of 'competence'**.
- The aim was to equip children and young people with *key competencies* all children need:
 - regardless of circumstances
 - relevant in all cultures
 - meaningful in all learning areas

Key Competencies in the Aotearoa Context

The Ministry of Education drew on the DeSeCo conceptual framework, translating this into the Aotearoa context that included the addition of the following:

(see Hipkins, 2018; McDowell & Hipkins, 2018)

Communal learning

Contributions to the well-being of others

Inclusion of whānau

Explicit development of 'thinking' (including metacognition)

Reflectivity

Creativity

Resulting in what we now know as the 5 key competencies:

- Thinking
- Managing self
- Relating to others
- Participating & contributing
- Languages, text, & symbols

*“...it is accepted that children have the potential to exercise considerable autonomy to make reasoned and rational decisions in their own interests within their everyday social worlds”
(O'Neill, 2018, p. 46).*

Enacting the key competencies in the research school

Ākonga actively engaged in:

- Collaboration
- Autonomous ways of learning
- Self-regulation
- Self-assessing
- Know the benefits of 'benefitting learning inside and outside of school'



This research demonstrates...

Ākonga actively engaged with the key competencies through:

- Whānau, community, and ākonga informed school values
- Drawing on the strengths of self and others
- Engaging in learning to improve outcomes
- Increasing ways of autonomous and self-determining ways of being

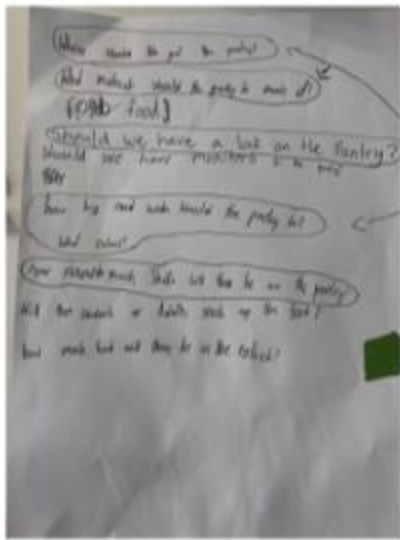
“Hakopa, who was part of the reviewing process for the positioning of the pantry, thought that adding the school values would be a good idea as people walking past would then know what these values were. This demonstrated that the school values informed children’s decisions and learning daily in multiple ways”
(Dacre, 2024, p. 175).



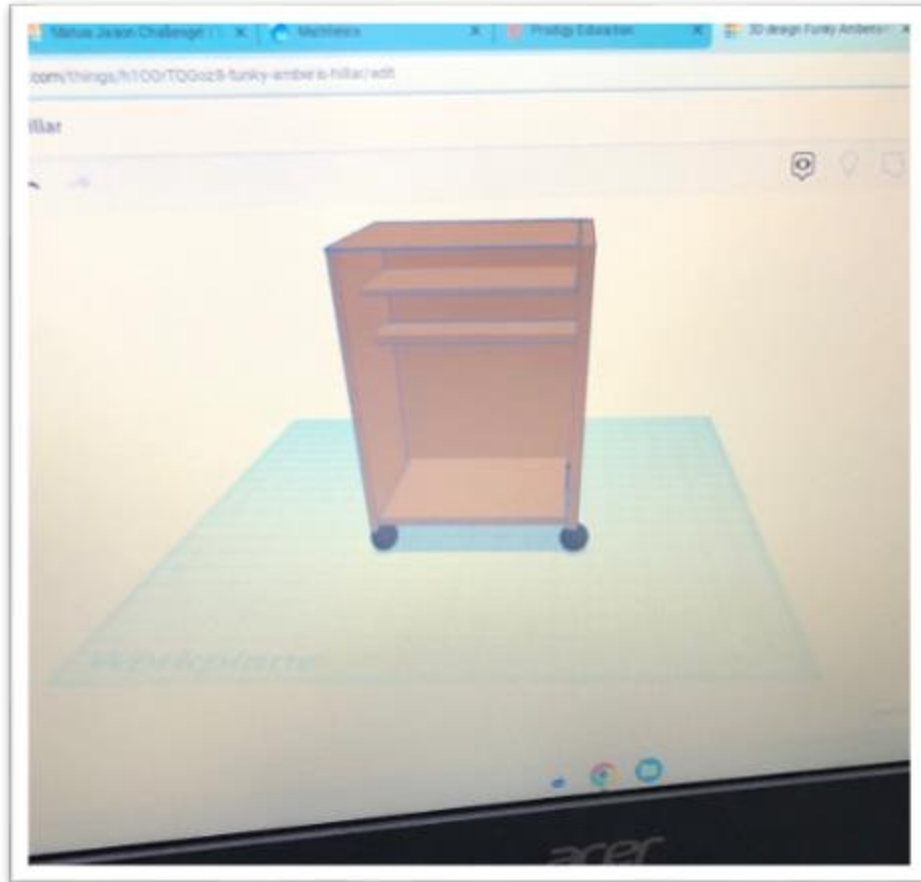
Community Pantry: A Child-Initiated Inquiry

- Adapting curriculum to unexpected opportunities
- Ākonga drawing on each other's strengths and knowledge
- Ākonga engaged with prior knowledge, lived experiences, and developed new knowledge, and skills
- Ākonga connecting the curriculum in meaningful ways

"I think it's knowing what supplies to use, because you might get wood that looks very stable, but then within a week, it just breaks" (nine-year old boy).



The Community Pantry: Living out the Key Competencies in Self-Determining Ways



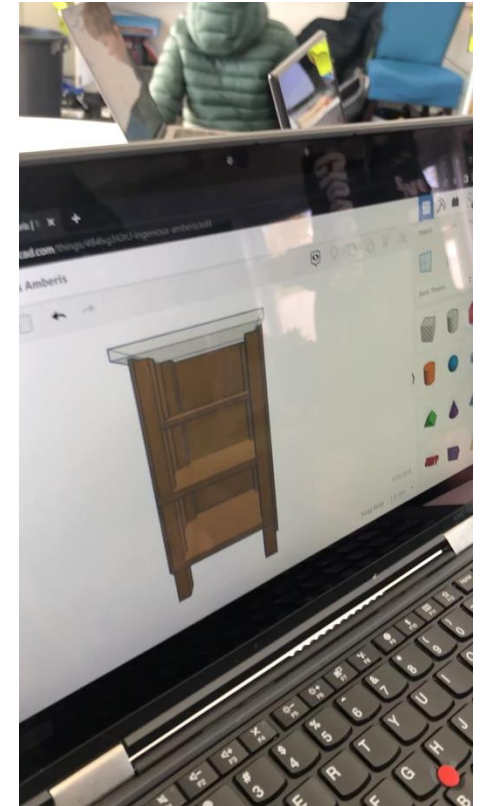
- Individuality
- Creativity
- Cultural identity
- Problem-solving
- Goal setting & attainment
- Decision-making

“Well, we had to go on an online app, and it’s called Tinkercad, and we had to try to design a little frame, or something for the pantry, and I think that it was difficult to use. I’m never using it again. Nah, that’s my resilience being low; I’d get frustrated with that” (ten-year- old girl).

Using Language, Symbols, and Texts

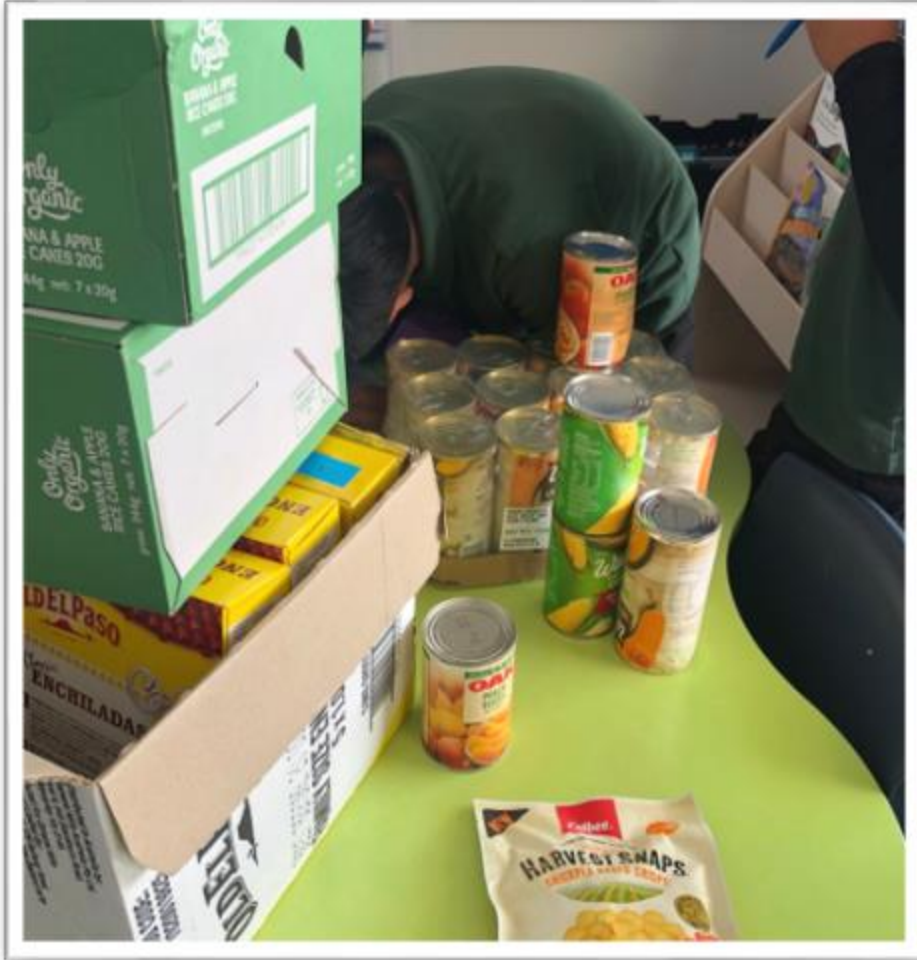
- Effective communication skills
- Using tools in interactive ways
- Design engineers
- Measurement tools
- Researching products

“Hipkins (2018) notes using language, symbols, and texts is often seen as literacy and numeracy competency, the emphasis is to expand ideas about meaning-making across all curricula” (Dacre, 2024, p. 263)



“It’s just like you’re doing huge measuring, so that’s kind of maths because you have to measure how many things—well, while you measure, we have to see how many things could fit in one thing because we kind of wanted three [shelves], so we were deciding how big each one would be” (tine-year-old boy)

Relating to others



- Relationship building – kaiako & ākonga; ākonga & ākonga
- Creating a whānau culture
- Respect for diverse identities and personalities
- Self advocacy & leadership skills
- Community endeavours, helping others
- Personal growth

“Well, it teaches you that sometimes people need this, and you don’t. Because then you can help them” (Ten-year-old girl).

“When we do hauora, we were thinking about growing up and eating food to get energy. We, we thought about making a pantry for the community” (nine-year-old boy).

Participating & Contributing



- Ideals of community of learning
- Sense of belonging
- Making connections in their worlds (Bishop, 2023, Riwai-Couch, 2021)
- Self-awareness & self-knowledge
- Awareness of social issues that impact tamariki and whānau
- Understanding the distributed and active nature of learning (Hipkins, 2018)

“If we have it out the front, it would be better because some people might get embarrassed and worry that people don’t think they have any money” (nine-year-old girl).

Managing Self

- Self-motivation
- Self-regulation
- Self-assessment

Supported by:

- Interests and strengths of ākonga
- Appropriating new skills and knowledge from others
- Real-life learning opportunities to practice and learn new skills, knowledge and be innovative.



“Treated timber is waterproof wood. My uncle does building, and I usually help him with building—even though Matua told us about it” (nine-year-old boy).

“I think it’s knowing what supplies to use because you might get wood that looks very stable, but then within a week, it just breaks” (ten-year-old boy).

What Kaiako say ...

*“I have to say, it’s letting children direct learning. What I mean by learning is plan and explicitly do what you do in your classroom based on your learners. I guess, what I’ve loved the most - and I know that the children will highlight or what they’ll talk about most is probably that they will remember this year is the pantry - and that was around decision-making. So, a project or something where the children can make a decision around their learning, make the choices, decisions, and direct their learning - more inquiry learning”.
(Whaea Tupou).*

What does this mean for the self-determination of ākonga?



Collaborative communities of practice set the conditions for children to be self-determining persons.

In doing so:

- Ākonga are supported to participate and influence curriculum decision-making in meaningful ways.
- Ākonga act in both autonomous and collaborative ways of learning.
- Ākonga demonstrate their self-determining participatory rights in-line with Article 12 of the UNCRC.

Research findings affirm the benefits of:

- The social context of learning
- Known structures & routines
- Drawing on the interests of ākonga
- Prior knowledge and lived experiences in meaningful ways:
 - core learning
 - teacher- and child-initiated inquiries.
 - Building meaningful partnerships with tamariki where tamariki can participate and influence learning and teaching in the classroom.

Kia ora, ngā mihi nui

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