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Supporting continuity of learning through assessment information sharing during
transition: A comparison of early childhood and new entrant teachers beliefs,
experiences and practices

A thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Education
at Massey University
New Zealand

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2018

Abstract

Recent policy initiatives in New Zealand and internationally have focussed on the importance of continuity of learning for children transitioning to school. Effective transitions occur when continuity of learning is supported, with the sharing of assessment information seen as an important strategy to support continuity of learning for children transitioning to school. The perspectives of those directly involved in the sharing of assessment information between early childhood services and schools are underrepresented in the research literature. This study therefore aimed to compare the beliefs, experiences and practices of New Zealand early childhood and new entrant teachers regarding the sharing of assessment information to support children's continuity of learning as they transition to school. Using self-administered online surveys, qualitative and quantitative data was gathered from early childhood and new entrant teachers in the Canterbury region.

Analysis of the data identified several areas of similarity within and between the sectors including valuing continuity of learning whilst experiencing barriers to information sharing. A number of significant differences in perspectives emerged from the data, in particular regarding the utility of information shared, given the reported emphasis on the provision of strengths-based information. Findings suggest that inconsistent information sharing practices have led to new entrant teacher dissatisfaction with current processes, and a desire to see more formalised processes enacted.

The study identifies several recommendations, including that there is a need for greater collaboration and communication between the two education sectors to ensure assessment information is shared effectively. The provision of guidelines and the development of a template would improve the utility of the information supplied and ensure a more consistent approach to information sharing. The sharing of assessment information should be made compulsory, thus removing the inconsistencies in information sharing practices that are currently occurring

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to extend my thanks to my research supervisors Dr's Monica Cameron and Karyn Aspden, who steadfastly believed in me throughout the process, even when my confidence and belief waivered. Thank you for patiently reviewing my work, providing insights and suggestions throughout.

I would like to thank the teachers from both sectors who took the time to complete the surveys. Without their engagement this study would not have been possible. In particular Bronwyn Webster who helped me to gain an invaluable insight into assessment in schools and who shares my passion for effective transitions to school.

I would like to extend my thanks to the teaching team at my centre. Not only did they show an interest in what I was doing, they went out of their way to help in any way they could. In particular, my head teacher Sarah Ellison-Jones who kept the centre running beautifully in my absences.

Finally without the support of my family this study would not have been possible. To my husband Justin thanks for all the moral support you provided. To my sons Jack and Alex, thank you for your understanding and I hope I have shown you that if you put your mind to it, anything is possible.

Table of Contents

Abstract	2
Acknowledgements	4
Table of Contents	5
List of Figures and Tables	10
Chapter One Introduction	11
1.1 Introduction	11
1.2 Background to the study	12
1.2.1 Context	12
1.2.2 Early childhood education in New Zealand	12
1.2.3 Primary school context in New Zealand	13
1.2.4 Defining transition to school	14
1.2.5 Defining continuity of learning	15
1.2.6 Assessment and information sharing practices	15
1.3 Rationale for the study	16
1.4 Researcher background	17
1.5 Overview of thesis	19
Chapter Two: Literature review	20
2.0 Introduction.	20
2.1 Search strategy	20
2.2 Transitions	21
2.2.1 Transition to school	21
2.2.2 Defining a successful transition to school	22
2.3 Continuity of learning	24
2.3.1 International policy	25
2.3.2 New Zealand policy	25

2.3.3 Continuity of learning in practice	27
2.4 Assessment	28
2.4.1 Assessment in early childhood education	28
2.4.2 Assessment in primary schools	31
2.5 Sharing of Assessment information	33
2.5.1 Sharing of assessment information: New Zealand policy	33
2.5.2 Sharing of assessment information: Practice	34
2.5.3 Sharing of written assessment information: international policy and practice	37
2.6 Comparative research	39
2.6.1 Comparative research: International research	39
2.6.2 Comparative research: New Zealand	40
2.7 Conclusion	42
Chapter Three: Methodology	44
3.1 Research purpose	44
3.2 Research paradigm	46
3.3 Research design	47
3.4 Data collection	48
3.4.1 Administering surveys	48
3.4.2 Online surveys	50
3.5 Survey design	51
3.6 Ethical considerations	53
3.7 Pilot testing	54
3.8 Participants and recruitment	55
3.8.1 Participant recruitment	55
3.8.2 Email invitation	56
3.8.3 Response rates	57
3.8.4 Data collection period	58
3.9 Data analysis	59
3.9.1 Quantitative analysis	59
3.9.2 Qualitative analysis	60

3.10 Conclusion.....	60
Chapter Four: Findings	62
4.1 Demographic data.....	63
4.1.1 Qualifications and teaching experience.....	63
4.1.2 Roles of survey respondents.....	63
4.2 Benefits of sharing assessment information.....	64
4.3 Satisfaction levels	64
4.4 Barriers to sharing of assessment information	65
4.5 Responsibility for initiating the sharing of assessment information	66
4.5.1 Current responsibility for information sharing.....	66
4.5.2 Beliefs about responsibility for information sharing.....	67
4.6 Communication channels used for information sharing.....	69
4.7 Frequency of information sharing	70
4.8 The nature of assessment information shared	72
4.8.1 Transition information shared and received.	72
4.8.2 Sharing of summative assessment information.....	74
4.9 Understanding and using the information supplied.....	76
4.9.1 New entrant understandings of assessment information: EC beliefs ...	76
4.9.2 New entrant teachers understanding of the early childhood curriculum: EC beliefs	76
4.9.3 How assessment information is used: EC beliefs.....	77
4.9.4 How assessment information is used: New entrant experiences.....	78
4.10 Usefulness of transition information.....	79
4.11 Curriculum continuity	80
4.11.1 Links between the curriculum documents.....	80
4.11.2 Use of <i>Te Whāriki</i> in schools	81
4.11.3 Blending of curriculum documents	81
4.12 Recommendations for improvements.....	82
4.12.1 Improved communication and collaboration between the sectors.....	82
4.12.2 Content and format of information shared	83
4.12.3 Provision of guidelines	83

4.12.4 Making information sharing compulsory	84
4.13 Conclusion	84
Chapter Five: Discussion and conclusion	86
5.1 Key early childhood sector findings	87
5.1.1 Frequency of information sharing	87
5.1.2 Curriculum continuity	88
5.1.3 Levels of satisfaction	89
5.1.4 Barriers to information sharing	89
5.1.5 Collaboration and communication	90
5.2 Key new entrant findings	91
5.2.1 Frequency of receipt of transition information	91
5.2.2 Curriculum continuity	92
5.2.3 Levels of satisfaction	93
5.2.4 Barriers to information sharing	95
5.2.5 Collaboration	95
5.2.6 Recommendations from the sector	95
5.3 Similarities and differences between sector perspectives	96
5.3.1 Frequency of information sharing practices	96
5.3.2 Continuity of learning	97
5.3.3 Use of transition information	98
5.3.4 Cross sector relationships	100
5.3.5 Channels of communication	102
5.3.6 Usefulness of transition information	103
5.3.7 Assessment tools	104
5.4 Recommendations	106
5.4.1 Recommendations for policy makers	106
5.4.2 Recommendations for EC teachers and management	108
5.4.3 Recommendations for new entrant teachers and management	109
5.5 Strengths and limitations of the research	110

5.5.1 Strengths of the research	110
5.5.2 Limitations of the research.....	111
5.6 Areas for Future Research.....	111
5.7 Final Reflections	112
5.8 Conclusion	113
References	114
Appendix 1: EC teacher survey.....	126
Appendix 2: NE teacher survey.....	140
Appendix 3: Ethical approval.....	154
Appendix 4: Information sheet	155
Appendix 5: Email invitation to participate in online survey	158

List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1. The key competencies: cross-sector alignment.....	14
Table 1. Levels of satisfaction with current assessment information sharing practices.....	65
Table 2. Current responsibility for initiating the sharing of assessment information.	67
Table 3. Beliefs about responsibility for initiating the sharing of assessment information.....	69
Table 4. Frequency of information sharing.....	71
Table 5. Nature of information shared.....	73