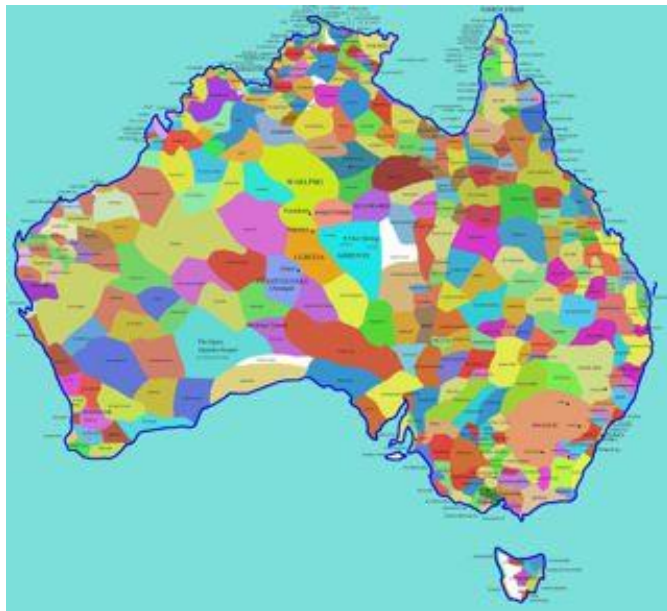


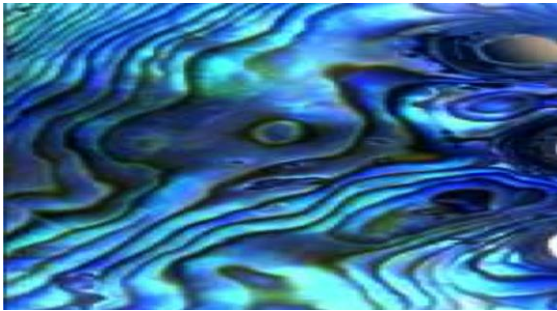
**“Glasses Have Become a Fashion Accessory, but What About the Accuracy of Our Professional Lenses? -with reference to privilege and resources, resourcefulness, and power and control in terms of an ‘Active Learning Approach’ for educationalists in Early Childhood Education.”**



**Greetings to the many languages of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, custodians of the land.**



**Tēna koutou!**  
**Tēna koutou!**  
**Tēna koutou katoa!**



**“Glasses Have Become a Fashion Accessory ...”**



**“...but ...”**



**“...What About ...”**



**“...the Accuracy of Our Professional Lenses?”**



Glasses have become a fashion accessory, but what about the accuracy of our professional lenses? -with reference to privilege and resources, resourcefulness, and power and control in terms of an “Active Learning Approach” (ALA) for educationalists in Early Childhood Education.



The background to this paper, ‘contextualising’ for the meaning of the content- When I was introduced to an “Active Learning Approach” (ALA) some four years ago, I felt a sadness and was inspired at the same time. It was as if a light had been turned on

to expose power and control from a new perspective in terms of learning and development -the personal and the professional.

A new perspective in relation to having experienced the repercussions of a child rearing practice using physical discipline, a society that disenfranchised my identity as a gay male child, and, a professional life of 'swings and roundabouts' in terms of power and control within a variety of organisations.

Contradictions of practice: "Active Learning"/self-directed play is adhered to for some aspects of a child's early childhood education but not for others.

If an (ALA) is to become a pedagogy within an organisation, does it not need to be incorporated into both our practice with children and embedded within an organisation, as a foundation for a learning and development culture for all staff?

How can we step outside the perpetuation of familiar mindsets and break patterns of behaviour around power and control unless we reflect as an individual, team and organisation on what we experienced and how things were done historically, personally and professionally, and use the impetus of literature to think and behave differently –the personal is the professional!

Can an organisation afford to concentrate primarily on the sets of knowledge and methodologies pertaining to children's play and learning at the expense of the less 'tangible' options of pedagogy for staff, their behaviour and organisational culture?

I invite you to consider:

Who holds the locus of power and control when we give feedback to a child or an adult?

Who holds the locus of power and control when we praise a child?

Have we considered that facilitated conversational questions may allow for greater learning and development while the human-ness of a child or staff member remains intact!

A normalising of power and control

I wonder if we have become oblivious to the use of power and control in our culture and society and have therefore become normalised to its misuse personally and professionally?

Active Learning could be defined "...as learning in which the child, by acting on objects and interacting with people, ideas, and events, constructs new understanding. No one else can have experiences for the child or construct knowledge for the child.

Children must do this for themselves. ..."active learning" stands for four critical elements: (1) direct action on objects, (2) reflection on actions, (3) intrinsic motivation, invention,, and generativity, and (4) problem solving." (Hohmann, M. and Weikart, D. 1995).

Human behaviour is determined by more than just the individual. Behaviour takes place within a context.

## THE ICE-BERG OF ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE



Can we practise an ALA without reference to privilege and resources, resourcefulness and power and control in relation to self-determination within our society as evidenced by statistics?

In most cases, NZ and Australia cannot be statistically compared. These statistics are indicative of systemic issues and need to be analysed further for greater accuracy.

### **Child Abuse**

Have we become oblivious and normalised to the misuse of power and control?

#### **NZ/Aotearoa**

5<sup>th</sup> worst in OECD countries

[Māori –at a level of 55% although only 24% of child population]

Australia

7.7 per 1,000 in out of home care

[Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islanders –4.3 to 8 times higher depending on the state; at a level of 20% although only 2.7% of child population]

### **Youth Suicide**

Have we become oblivious and normalised to the misuse of power and control?

#### **NZ/Aotearoa**

one of the highest in the OCED -double in the most deprived areas

[Māori -2.4 times higher; 27.6 per 1,000 compared with 8.2 for youth population]

Australia

number 20 of 30 in OECD

[Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islanders -3.4 per 1,000, with 6.1 for female; at 75% rate for those between 0 -24 years of age]

### **Teenage Pregnancy**

Have we become oblivious and normalised to the mis-use of power and control?

#### **NZ/Aotearoa**

3<sup>rd</sup> highest in the world, 1 in 10 of mothers under 20 years

[Māori -23.2%; 2½ times higher]

Australia

number 20 of OCED; 14%

[Aboriginal, Strait Islanders Torres -19% of teenage births]

### **Youth Unemployment** (Inactivity)

Have we become oblivious and normalised to the misuse of power and control?

### **NZ/Aotearoa**

30 of 31 in the OECD; 11.2%, not engaged in education or training (NEET)

[Māori -2.5 times higher; 23.4% (NEET)]

Australia

15%

[Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islanders -15%; 39% -'non participating' (insufficient documentation)]



Let us pause here and consider "Lifetime Effects: The HighScope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40", video.

I choose to refer to this resource not in terms of its research per se but for its mindset in considering early childhood education as an investment in terms of its long term effects. As a philosophical practice, the HighScope Perry Preschool uses an Active Learning Approach with the absence of praise and rewards.





Within the context of Aotearoa/New Zealand and te tiriti o waitangi, te rangatiratanga/self-determination could be seen as the taiaha, a value that children experience and adults both experience and hold close to their heart –the child in relation to learning and development through play and the adult in relation to their interactions within a team, regional office and organisation and in relation to children, parents, whānau/hapu/iwi and each other, and, an informedness and responsibility for the learning and development environment -kaupapa Māori and kaupapa manuhiri (visitors).

A parent explained self-determination as “determine for themselves how things will go”.

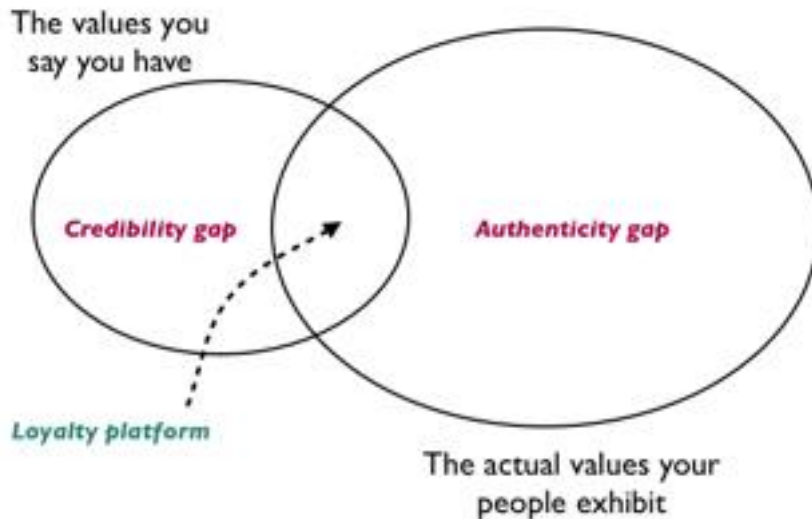
David Brown, states that when “...considering progress towards self-determination in a young learner it is important to think about the way the child is being understood by their family and the way the family are interpreting the child’s behaviours” (“Self-determination for Babies Also”).

“Self-determination includes choice-making, problem-solving, personal advocacy, assertiveness and goal setting (1997, “Lifetime Effects: The HighScope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40”).

(Children) Students with visual impairments often have less opportunities to practise and develop the specific skills that lead to self-determination.

(Children) Students who know and value who they are and who have self-determination skills become effective advocates for themselves and more control over their lives”

(Texas School for the Blind).



To say it in another way, the title of this paper could be written as a series of questions for enquiry:

Can we practise an ALA without reference to privilege and resources, resourcefulness, and power and control (PRRPC) in relation to self-determination in our own familial and adult lives –personal and professional?

Can we practise an ALA without linking it to our own identity and (PRRPC) in relation to self-determination as human beings individually and collectively within our society and culture?

Can we practise an ALA with children out in the field but not within our own team, regional office and organisation –one set of behaviours for out in the field and another set of behaviours in-house?

Can we practise an ALA in the absence of a pedagogy embedded within a mission statement, values, an identified organisational culture, a learning and development policy, annual goals, team protocols and a learning and development appraisal system?

Are we willing to envisage a professional life where (PRRPC) in relation to self-determination are addressed?

Are we willing to envisage a professional life where there is recognition of and a talking to the difference between content, processes and procedures in all of our interactions?

Are we willing to envisage a professional life where the content of learning and development about children is initially talked to in terms of our own individual learning and development and then professional learning and development develops from that?

Are we willing to envisage a professional life where the 'clients' of more senior staff are the teaching staff, and, the 'clients' of the teachers are the children, parents/whānau - both groups having learning and development opportunities whether their 'clients' be adults or children?

Are we willing to consider that our lenses, as educationalists (teachers and 'leaders'), are usually no more than a myriad of perceptions and opinions from personal, educational, organisational experience and political rhetoric, with or without reference to literature and research, not to mention reflection on and of our teaching and leadership practice.



Are the sets of knowledge for a teacher transferable to leaders, or do they need a different knowledge and skill base?

The willingness and ability to change lenses (perspective) may be a more informed foundation for our lives as educationalists.

The two main questions of enquiry for this paper are:

Does an ALA need to be of importance for both the child and educationalists within early childhood, whether it be play and learning or professional learning and development?

Does the culture of an organisation, in terms of how all staff learn in-house need to be congruent with how we facilitate learning through play and learning out in the field –ie. practice at ‘home’ first?

If an ALA is to become a pedagogy within an organisation, does it not need to be incorporated into both our practice with children and embedded within an organisation, as a foundation for a learning and development culture for all staff?

Can an organisation afford to concentrate primarily on the sets of knowledge and methodologies pertaining to children’s play and learning at the expense of the less ‘tangible’ options of pedagogy for staff, their behaviour and organisational culture as a whole?

The focus of this presentation pertains to the locus of power and control and the degree of congruency of our observable professional behaviours as an individual, team member, senior teacher, senior management and organisation (school) as a whole, and how, that in turn, may affect our working relationship with children, parents, family/whānau and staff within early childhood education.



Let us conceptualise what power and control looks like.

What is power and control?

“The potential of one person to have an effect on the attitudes, perceptions, behaviours” (French & Raven, p.68), health and wellbeing and/or future personal/professional development of another, whether that be as an individual or within the context of a team, organization and/or system (education), culture and/or society.

**Table 1: Types of Power and Control:**

<p><b>designated authority</b> from an agency –elected, selected  <b>position or legitimate power</b>  <b>coercive</b> –perceived as able to do harm</p>
<p><b>reward power</b> –compensates for an action  <b>resources power</b>  <b>‘blocking’ of power</b></p>

**Table 2: Power and Control as Continuums:**

past .....	present .....	future
micro .....		macro
individual or group .....		context
unintentional, unconscious .....		intentional, conscious
power over .....	power for .....	power with
documented and static (a paper record.....)		interactional and dynamic (able to be talked to and changed)
privileges and rewards .....	at the expense of ...	losses, denials, punishments
prejudice .....	racism. classism. sexism. heterosexism. ablism. bigotry	



As a metaphor, I will endeavour to talk to the various components associated with a pair of 'professional' glasses from within the context of power and control, with reference to an ALA and a Learning and Development Culture.



A. the ophthalmologist, optometrist, orthoptist (staff within the context of the organisational, regional office and team culture)

Reflective Question

Have we considered that the locus of power and control between you and another staff member at any one moment in time may unknowingly communicate about the culture of an organisation, and, in turn, shape how we behave in our practice, and, a child's learning experience?

Comment for Enquiry

A staff member focuses almost exclusively on content instead of also referring to and/or negotiating the process ie. the 'how'.



B. the neck cord (ongoing learning and development)

Reflective Question

Have we considered that a fluidity in terms of the locus of power and control in relation to senior staff, your regional office, your senior teacher, your team and/or your colleagues provides a greater 'robustness' to engage in ongoing learning and development and may unknowingly communicate about the culture of an organisation, and, in turn, shape how we behave in our practice, and, a child's learning experience?

Comment for Enquiry

Power and control pertains to more than just our interactions between more senior staff, teachers and/or colleagues but also the contexts and content of interviews, meetings, performance appraisals, regional professional development days, professional bodies

(registration, professional learning and development, unions etc.), exit interviews and how the Ministry of Education conducts business.



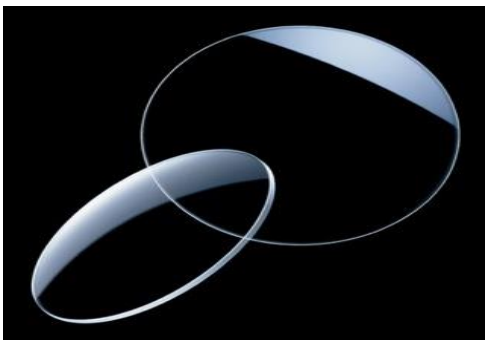
C. the frames (philosophies, theories, values, curriculums)

Reflective Question

Have we considered that the locus of power and control between the theories, mission statements, beliefs, values, annual plans, curriculums, programmes etc. and the degree of congruency of the observable behaviours of educationalists in an early childhood centre may unknowingly communicate to us about the culture of an organisation, and, in turn, shape how we behave in our practice, and, the child's learning experience?

Comment for Enquiry

Do the interactions between educationalists within an early childhood centre and children, parents, whānau, staff, colleagues and other professionals as a whole indicate whether the locus of power and control is held by the individual and/or is embedded within the culture of a centre?



D. the lenses (locus of control)

Reflective Question

Have we considered that the locus of power and control for how activities are facilitated within an early childhood centre may unknowingly communicate about the culture of an organisation, and, in turn, shape how we behave in our practice, and, the child's learning experience?

Comment for Enquiry

The locus of control between a staff member and children's play has inherent contradictions –consider self-directed play outside compared with a 'mat time' or toileting?



E. the 'temple locks' (the learning environments –child, teacher, physical)

Reflective Question

Have we considered that the accessibility of an early childhood learning environment pertains to a locus of power and control and may unknowingly communicate about the culture of an organisation, and, in turn, shape how we behave in our practice, and, the child's learning experience?

Comment for Enquiry

A child with a vision impairment can take days, weeks or months to get familiar with an outdoor play environment but a more senior staff member with a lesser informedness around vision impairment may rationalise and/or override this need?



F. the lens cleaner (centre philosophy etc.)

Reflective Question

Whether difference, diversity and/or impairment (ie. vision impairment) is referred to in the documentation of an early childhood centre may unknowingly communicate about the culture of an organisation, and, in turn, shape how you behave in your practice, and, the child's learning experience?

Comment for Enquiry

Early childhood centre documentation reads as if all children are able bodied and included and the absence of reference to difference et al is rationalised as indicative of inclusion.



# The Denison Organizational Culture Model

Home » Model & Diagnostics » Denison Model



The all-pervasive questions are:

How can we as educationalists practise an ALA if we do not have an awareness of, and a working definition of power and control that is alive and breathing within our personal and professional lives, not to mention the organisational culture within which we work?

How can we as educationalists practise an ALA if we cannot recognise power and control within our professional selves, our team and organisations?

How can we as educationalists practise an ALA if we are not willing and/or encouraged to talk to power and control in terms of our personal and professional selves, team, regional office and organisation?

How do we collude with and/or interrupt privilege and resources, and power and control in our personal and professional lives?

Are we willing to envisage an ALA for children as well as adults, which in turn would be compatible with a learning and development organisational culture?



**Tēna koutou!**



**Tēna koutou!**  
**Tēna koutou katoa!**

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