

# Abstract for 6<sup>th</sup> International Art in Early Childhood Conference

**Art: Home, Schools, Communities, Hong Kong June 2015.**

***Starry, Starry Night***

***How poetry intersects with art in Aotearoa, New Zealand Kindergartens***

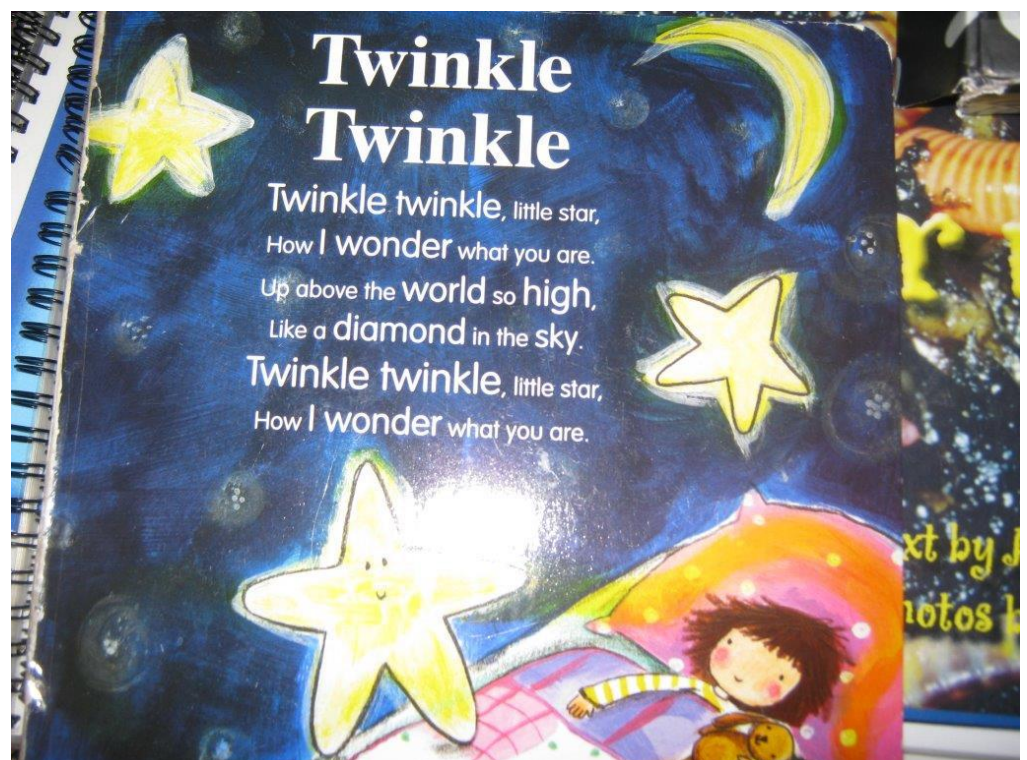
**Key words: Art, poetry, kindergarten**

As part of my Masters' Thesis with Otago University New Zealand I am exploring the ways in which poetry aligns to the cultural capital in kindergarten settings. The research is also unravelling the role and purposes of poetry for kindergarten children.

The research context is the kindergartens of the Napier Kindergarten Association, Hawkes Bay, New Zealand. Napier Kindergartens are state funded to provide education and care for children aged 2- 5 years with fully trained registered teachers. My employment role in this organisation is as an Education Manager, overseeing the professional development of over 70 teachers. In New Zealand all early childhood services base their teaching on the national ECE curriculum, Te Whāriki (1996). This aspirational curriculum document reflects the bi-cultural commitment of New Zealand to value the partnership between the indigenous Māori people and others of Aotearoa, New Zealand.

Some of the emerging data from this ethnographic study has highlighted the link between the visual arts and poetry for young children in our kindergarten settings. The Greek term *mousike*, a generic term for the expressive arts, recognises that the boundaries of one discipline are interdependent with another. This presentation will showcase some rich interconnections that teachers and children have made between art and poetry. Art appears to complement poetry and poetry appears to complement art. Cultural influences from America, Europe, Britain and the indigenous Māori culture are evident in these artistic expressions. One of the emerging themes is how teachers' own cultural knowledge and traditions influence the artistic work of young children.

Eileen Kennedy



## **Visual art and cultural diversity in Napier Kindergartens – Aotearoa, New Zealand**

Multiculturalism brings the globe within our borders of New Zealand. We have become an enriched society of diversity bringing a melting pot of cultural values and language. Early Childhood Education is a crucial component in providing an environment that is sensitive and responsive to different cultures and heritages. The New Zealand early childhood curriculum, Te Whāriki, 1996, affirms and celebrates cultural identity and aims to help children gain a positive awareness of their own and other cultures.

I am employed in the role of Education Manager for the Napier Kindergarten Association, New Zealand. I wanted to find out more about how our kindergarten environments celebrate culture through the visual arts. My research is qualitative within a socio-cultural framework. Over a 6 month period I worked with six kindergartens to investigate how the visual arts are used to celebrate children's cultural heritage. A literature review underpins the content of this research. My presentation will take the form of visual images. Visual arts provide a way of making meaningful connections with the world and creating a place of belonging within the kindergarten environment.

Beth Huddleston





