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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Children's Right to Participate: How Can Teachers Extend Child-Initiated Learning Sequences?

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Abstract
Children's participation is valued in early childhood education but how this is achieved in pedagogy is less obvious. The methodology of conversation analysis is used in this paper to show how specific interactional practices afford opportunities for children to initiate, explore, and assert their own perspectives in everyday activities. The analyses illustrate how teachers' practices can encourage child participation through the ways in which teachers respond to and extend child-initiated sequences of learning. Data are drawn from research projects conducted in New Zealand and Australia that explore how teachers construct learning opportunities for children within talk-in-interactions. Three data excerpts of teachers and children, aged from 4 to 6 years, are analysed. The analyses of video-taped interactions reveal that teachers' contributions to (or silences) in interactions and unfolding talk can create particular trajectories of action in early learning environments. Evidence provided by these analyses can inform professional learning for teachers to illustrate how teachers' interactions with children can support children's rights to participation in early childhood education.

Keywords Early childhood education · Child participation · Child–teacher interactions · Conversation analysis

Résumé
La participation des enfants est valorisée dans l'éducation de la petite enfance, mais la façon d'y parvenir en pédagogie est moins évidente. On utilise dans cet article la méthodologie de l'analyse des conversations afin de montrer comment des pratiques interactionnelles spécifiques offrent aux enfants des occasions d'introduire,

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explorer et affirmer leurs propres perspectives dans leurs activités quotidiennes. Les analyses illustrent comment les pratiques des enseignants peuvent encourager la participation des enfants selon la façon dont les enseignants réagissent aux séquences d'apprentissage initiées par l'enfant et les agrandissent. Les données proviennent de projets de recherche menés en Nouvelle-Zélande et en Australie cherchant à explorer comment les enseignants établissent pour les enfants des possibilités d'apprentissage dans le cadre d'interactions avec la parole. L'analyse s'applique à trois extraits de données sur les enseignants et des enfants âgés de 4 à 6 ans. L'analyse des interactions enregistrées par vidéo révèle que les contributions (ou silences) des enseignants dans les interactions et les discussions en cours peuvent créer des trajectoires d'action particulières dans des environnements d'apprentissage précoce. Les résultats de ces analyses peuvent éclairer l'apprentissage professionnel des enseignants afin d'illustrer comment les interactions des enseignants avec les enfants peuvent appuyer le droit des enfants à la participation à l'éducation de la petite enfance.

Resumen
La participación de los niños en la educación preescolar tiene gran valor; sin embargo, no resulta clara la forma en que dicha participación pueda incluirse en los métodos de enseñanza. Esta investigación utiliza la metodología de análisis conversacional con el fin de ilustrar la forma en que las prácticas de interacción ofrecen oportunidades para que los niños inicien, exploren y reafirmen sus propias perspectivas en las actividades diarias. Los análisis ilustran la forma en que las prácticas de los educadores pueden motivar la participación de los niños mediante la forma en que responden y amplían secuencias de aprendizaje iniciadas por los niños. Los datos se obtuvieron de proyectos de investigación realizados en Nueva Zelanda y Australia que exploran la forma en que los educadores construyen oportunidades de aprendizaje para los niños en interacciones orales espontáneas. Se analizaron tres muestras de diálogos de educadores y niños entre los 4 y 6 años de edad. Los análisis de interacciones grabadas en video revelan que las contribuciones (o momentos de silencio) de los educadores en las interacciones y diálogo espontáneo pueden crear trayectorias de acción especiales en ambientes de aprendizaje preescolar. La evidencia suministrada mediante estos análisis puede contribuir a la capacitación de educadores para ilustrar la forma en que las interacciones entre educadores y niños pueden apoyar los derechos de los niños a la participación en su educación preescolar.

Introduction

Children's rights to participate in decisions and practices that affect their lives are enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC; United Nations 1989). In particular, Article 12 of the UNCRC emphasises children's right to express opinions on matters that concern them, and for these opinions to be considered, and taken into account in matters that directly influence their experiences of family life, education, health care, and justice. Within this rights-based imperative, we are particularly interested in what participation looks like for children in their everyday activities in early childhood education. Typically, this is conceived as opportunities for children to make choices about events and curricula planning in early learning environments (Houen et al. 2016a; MacNaughton 2004). However, in this paper, we are looking to even more mundane matters of participation with a focus on children's interactions with their teachers in learning activities.

We will illustrate how participation can be a child-led practice in early childhood settings and how child-initiated conversations can be extended by early childhood teachers. Before detailing this evidence, we briefly consider how rights to participate in conversations are managed in early childhood settings and why the methodology of conversation analysis can offer us understanding about how such conversations might unfold. The practical implications of these findings for early childhood education are also identified in light of the need to provide empirically driven professional learning opportunities for teachers.

Children's Right to Participate in Interactions

The premise and practice of participation "… captures an essential feature of the Convention" (Krappmann 2010, p. 502). The UNCRC's commentary on participation focuses on children having the right to contribute to decisions that affect them and to have their opinions taken into account (United Nations 1989, Article 12). In the context of early childhood education, this has primarily been considered in relation to consultation with children about the programme, procedures, and ways of making decisions in early childhood settings (Clarke et al. 2005; Groundwater-Smith et al. 2015; MacNaughton et al. 2007).

Opportunities for children to have a say on matters that concern them are tied to perceptions of competency. Authentic consultations with children necessarily rest on knowing children to be competent and capable members of society (Hester and Moore 2018; James & Prout 1997). Research with toddler-aged children (2 years of age) in Iceland has demonstrated how competent and capable even the youngest children are at participating in the co-construction of their own social worlds within early childhood education (Gunnarsdottir and Bateman 2017). This research offered insight into how children can demonstrate achievement to express personal views and goals, as they participate in their everyday interactions with others. Similarly, in Denmark, children's right to participate is supported by teachers through an approach which "… involves listening to children and giving them the opportunity to influence their lives" (Bronström 2019, p. 224).

The rights of children articulated in the UNCRC in 1989 have been ratified by 196 countries, with varied interpretation in policy and practice in early childhood education. We are focusing our discussion on the New Zealand and Australian contexts because data in this paper were collected in these two countries. Active citizenship is embedded in educational policy in New Zealand, and valuing children's contributions is articulated in the early childhood curricula *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education 1996; 2017). Specifically, the principle of empowerment and the strands of *mana atua* (wellbeing), *mana whenua* (belonging), and *mana tangata* (contribution) underscore that learning builds on children's intrinsic abilities, as well as their rights and responsibilities within the community. The *Australian Early Years Learning Framework* (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations [DEEWR], 2009) also invokes practice principles based on respectful relationships, in which collaboration, inclusion, and participation are essential for all children. The *Australian Early Years Learning Framework* states that:

> Children actively construct their own understandings and contribute to others' learning. They recognise their agency, *capacity to initiate and lead learning*, and their rights to participate in decisions that affect them, including their learning. Viewing children as active participants and decision makers opens up possibilities for educators to move beyond pre-conceived expectations about what children can do and learn. This requires educators to respect and work with each child's unique qualities and abilities. (DEEWR 2009, p. 10, emphasis added).

Children's right to participation is clearly articulated in early childhood policy and curricula, but is less accessible in practice (Bae 2009; Theobald et al. 2011). Even "…where the child's voice is welcomed, there remains little guidance for education professionals on how to seek and incorporate children's perspectives in a practically focused way" (Sargeant and Gillett-Swan 2019, p. 122). The UNCRC is open to interpretation, and it is through beliefs, experience and professional vision (Goodwin 1994) that children's rights are implemented and upheld in the work of early childhood education. For example, how teachers frame questions or invitations to contribute inevitably determines a set of possible next actions for children to participate: "Adults, whether teachers or parents, have differing rights to hold the conversational floor than do children; in that adults typically manage children's speaking turns (Sacks 1992; Speier 1973)" (Houen et al. 2016b, p. 261).

The point we want to make with the data in this paper is not that teachers must follow all child-initiated enquiries but that: (1) We do not follow/encourage child-initiated participation as often as we think; and (2) When we do, the depth of enquiry that becomes possible is worth noting and detailing for professional reflection. Early childhood teachers understand the importance of professional reflection—it is embedded in the New Zealand and Australian curricula—yet, as with embedding children's participation in their own learning, the rhetoric is more visible than the 'how-to' of practice. For example, guided participation (Rogoff 2008) and sustained shared thinking (Siraj and Asani 2015) are familiar concepts in early childhood education, but illustrations of these practices and practical examples of how such interactions are actually achieved can be opaque. Our main aim in the analysis, and the discussion that follows, is to show how respecting children's right to participate can be achieved by responding to and extending child-initiated sequences of learning.

Methods

To capture the detail of interactional practices, we are using the methodology of conversation analysis (CA) to reveal how teachers and children co-construct ongoing activities. In using conversation analysis, we see what happens in practice, how the contiguity of learning interactions are built, rather than how we 'assume' they are built. With an insistence on naturally occurring data and attention to what participants themselves are oriented to, within the interaction, conversation analysis focuses on the actions achieved by participants through the sequential turns in talk (Schegloff and Sacks 1973; Schegloff 2007). This approach allows us to see how participation frameworks are built, as a practical rather than a theoretical concern (Goodwin 2018). This methodology aligns with an interest in the enactment of rights because conversation analysis "gives analytic priority to the perspective of the participants" (Pomerantz and Fehr 1997, p. 167).

Data and Analytic Approach

The data presented here were collected as part of two different research projects: (1) *The Young Learner's Project* in Melbourne, Australia which explored influences on children's preschool literacy development (Church, 2010); and (2) a research project investigating the affordances of the natural environment for supporting pedagogical interactions between children and early childhood teachers in New Zealand (Bateman 2018). Both projects focused on how teachers construct learning opportunities for children within talk-in-interaction. The analyses from these two projects will show how spontaneous intentional teaching can be designed in response to child-initiated enquiry, thus demonstrating implementation of children's rights in situ. A rationale for including the particular excerpts explored in the analyses is provided in the introduction to each transcript.

Both projects involved video recordings of interactions between teachers and 4-year-old children (Australian project) and children aged 4–6 years (New Zealand project). Permission was gained from parents, teachers, and children to use the videos for teaching and research purposes. The recordings were made over multiple observations of child–teacher interactions in typical learning exchanges, occurring both indoors and outdoors. The video recordings were then transcribed using the conventions of conversation analysis (see "Appendix 1" for an outline of these analytic conventions). This allows us to see what features of the talk itself were significant for the participants themselves. By significant, we mean what the children and teacher were ostensibly attending to, made explicit by what they do (i.e. actions achieved) in each subsequent turn-at-talk (Mondada 2017).

For readers unfamiliar with conversation analysis, the transcript captures—as much as possible—how the talk-in-interaction is *done*. Intonation, emphasis, pauses, speaker overlap, and accompanying nonverbal actions are noted, in addition to the words actually spoken. Transcribing the video recordings with this type of forensic detail, with a stance of unmotivated looking (Sacks 1984), allows the researcher-as-analyst to see how contiguity is built and how the organisation of responses leads to particular outcomes. Essentially, conversation analysts identify sequences of actions, which are made up of turns taken by the speakers involved in the activity. Conversation analysts look to see how these actions are done, how they relate to prior and subsequent actions, and how speakers collaborate to make sense of, and draw inferences from these actions (Pomerantz and Fehr 1997).

Findings

Conversation analysis research presents findings by detailing the relevant next actions and providing evidence of what these actions achieve in the interaction. In other words, rather than presenting a ‘results’ section then a ‘discussion’, the analysis below provides simultaneous illustration of what we found and what this means. Our concluding comments then return to the significance of this research in relation to the CRC. Although this structure may be atypical in early childhood publications, it allows us to illustrate the empirical data and explain its importance to pedagogy and implications for practice on a turn-by-turn basis. Refer to Bateman (2015), Bateman and Church (2017) and Sidnell (2013) for further details about the form and function of conversation analysis in early childhood research. The analysis and discussion that follows will illustrate how these methods are used to identify practices in child–teacher interactions.

These analyses of teacher–child interactions illustrate how intentional teaching can be designed in different ways to respond to child-initiated learning enquiries and facilitate children’s rights in action. The first set of analyses from the Australian literacy project focused on *Inviting participation.* The second set and third set of analyses are drawn from the New Zealand project on affordances of the natural environment for learning and focus on *Cultivating participation* and *Encouraging Participation*.

Inviting Participation: “What Will Happen?”

The first excerpt comes from a project detailing influences on literacy learning in early childhood settings, where the dataset are video recordings of 4-year-old children interacting with ten teachers in ten kindergartens in Melbourne in three distinct literacy activities (Church 2010). The 30 video recordings (each between 8 and 20 min duration) captured shared book reading, writing activities, and other literacy-focused events chosen by the teachers.

Excerpt 1 (below) is remarkable, because it is one of only two instances of interaction (in the 30 distinct literacy activities recorded with 10 different early childhood teachers), where the teacher extended a child’s question or comment and used this as a teaching and learning opportunity. In all other cases, child-initiated questions or comments, teachers were more likely to respond with 'minimal' acknowledgement. When children were asked a question or when they commented on the text, teachers were more likely to ignore (no response), postpone ("You can tell me in a minute."), acknowledge ("Hmm"), or confirm ("Yeah"). Church (2010) provides further details about this dataset and the analyses.

It is also worth noting all child-initiated turns in the data were relevant to the ongoing activity: about the text in the book, the story itself, predicting next actions, or playing with language. This is not meant as a critique of the teachers' practices because it is not always possible, or productive, to follow-up every idea or topic but rather to point out that child-initiated participation depends on the teacher enabling subsequent talk around the concept introduced by the child. This is the important point to consider when exploring how children's rights to participate are enacted in everyday educational practice.

In Excerpt 1, the teacher (TCH) is reading a book with four 4-year-old children about a child who goes in search of time. In the story, Karin, the protagonist, goes to the village clock tower and asks the man there to stop time, so that her parents will have more time to spend with her. In the excerpt that follows, Max takes up this proposition (line 3) to suggest that people can actually stop time. In line 7, you will see that the teacher acknowledges this contribution from Max. But it is the pause, then the teacher's format-tied question (lines 10–11; refer to Goodwin 2006 for a discussion of format-tying) that creates the opportunity for Max to assert his right to participate in a discussion of the fluidity or consensus of time. The excerpt begins with the teacher reading what the man in the clock tower explains to Karin.

Excerpt 1: Talking About Time

```
01 TCH:   "no one (.) can stop time you know."
02        (2.2)
03 Max:   people can stop the time. (0.3) they can just- (0.5)
04        turn the clock and hold it where it is (.) and then
05        they- (0.2) (yeah) (.) people allow them to have time?
06        (0.5)
07 TCH:   (well). maybe we could !try that one day. (1.4) and
08         see what happens.
09        (0.6)
```

Max reacts to the statement in the story that it is not possible to stop time, by proposing a simple solution of stopping the clock hands from turning: 'turn the clock and hold it where it is' (line 4). There are a number of pauses in Max's turn, notably the first in a turn transition-relevance place (Sacks et al. 1974); that is, where the teacher or any of the other children could reasonably have spoken next (line 3). This implicit go-ahead allows Max to expand on his assertion 'people can stop time', the form of which projects a subsequent, and duly produced, explanation of how this time stopping can be achieved (lines 3–5). Max was also able to express his idea in full; the hesitations, pauses and self-repair are not treated as opportunities for other speakers to talk. The idea receives a warm response from the teacher, who smiles and demonstrates she is receptive to the idea ('we could try that', line 7).

At this point, we might anticipate that the teacher continues the story, having positively acknowledged Max's contribution. Participation, however, is enacted by what happens next.

```
09          (0.6)
10 TCH:      what will happen to the rest of (0.6) all the other
11           children if we put the clock back.
12          (0.8)
13 Max:      um (.) be too much time (.) no one could
14           [be-]     [ °xxx ° ]
15 Ali:      [and](.)  [and we'll] be muddled up and we'll have
16           dinner at- (1.6)<!breakfast ti:me.>=
17 TCH:      =we could¿ what do you think Bel? (0.3) if we turn my
18           clock back for one hour?
19           (0.7)
```

Following Max's claim that it is possible to stop time, the teacher asks the children; she looks mainly towards Max, at the turn opening and closing, but shifts her gaze briefly to each child during her turn (lines 10–11)—what might happen if the clocks were stopped. The children have an opportunity to consider their response (the pause of 0.8. seconds in line 12), as the teacher does not pursue the turn immediately, categorised elsewhere as 'wait time' (Hindman and Wasik 2018; Rowe 1986). Max responds by identifying a problematic consequence of putting the clock back ('too much time', line 13). Alice interjects with her own hypothesis that the result would be general confusion ('we'll be muddled up', line 15) and domestic chaos ('dinner at breakfast time', line 16).

The teacher acknowledges the suggestions made by Max and Alice ('we could', line 17), then moves to include two other children, naming Bella as the recipient of the question ('what do you think Bel?') and reframing the problem ('if we turn my clock back by 1 h?'; lines 17–18). It is worth noting that both Max and Alice have freely and enthusiastically offered their ideas, and the teacher actively invites participation from one of the two children who have not yet shared their perspectives.

Once again, the teacher waits for Bella to respond, enacted in the pauses in lines 19 and 21 below.

```
17 TCH:    =we could¿ what do you think Bel? (0.3) if we turn my
18         clock back for one hour?
19         (0.7)
20 Bel:    yeah?
21         (0.9)
22 TCH:     and we keep thinking (0.6) we're an hour either behind
23          the ti:me?(0.5) what would happen to the rest of
24          everything else(.) though.
25 Max:     they will have breakfast.
26 TCH:     hmmm $ it could be a mixed up day$.
27 Tim:     i know [ and the clock would be m]ixed up.
28 Max:            [it would be night time again.]
29 TCH:     it might be mixed up, what will happen to the traffic
30          (0.5) people (0.4) and businesses.
31          (1.2)
32 Max:     ehuhuh ·hhh they (xx) will sta:rt going ho:me.
33 TCH:     $they might start going home when they should be at
34           work maybe Max.$ .hhh?
```

The teacher invites rather than insists on Bella's participation, as Max steps in (line 25) by recycling Alice's prior idea that breakfast will be at the wrong time of day. Appreciation for, and acknowledgement of, the children's hypothesising is evident in the teacher's affect (smiling while summarizing 'it could be a mixed up day', line 26), and the children's own willingness to contribute to the topic. For example, Tim volunteers his own commentary, reformulating the phrase 'mixed up' (line 27). Max is laughing by the time he suggests that people might leave work early (line 32), and all four children and the teacher are smiling and visibly enjoying the discussion of stopping clocks and treating time as a malleable concept. Throughout Excerpt 1, the teacher responds—not with an evaluation—but an open stance of acknowledging and affirming the children's contributions to the ongoing activity. As noted by Theobald and Kultti (2012, p. 217), "… not evaluating the children's responses suggests to the children that their viewpoint is valued and respects each child's right to have an opinion or differing idea."

Paying close attention to the sequences of actions between children and teachers is essential to understanding the practice of participation, as an action can only be understood in relation to how it is received, or what "response it engenders" (Enfield and Sidnell 2017, p. 516). An exploration of the concept of time and the willingness of children to contribute their ideas is dependent on how these ideas are received in the first place. Respecting the rights of children to express ideas and opinions is a *practice* for this teacher: she waits for Max to express his idea in entirety; she affirms each child's ideas and invites all members of the group to participate. In doing so this teacher is enacting the respect and patience detailed in the *Australian Early Years Learning Framework* (DEEWR 2009) and articulated in the UNCRC: "To achieve the right of participation requires adults to adopt a child-centred attitude, listening to young children and respecting their dignity and their individual points of view. It also requires adults to show patience and creativity by adapting their expectations to a young child's interests, levels of understanding and preferred ways of communicating." (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child 2005, p. 7).

Cultivating Participation: "Why Do You Think That Is?"

Excerpts 2 and 3 are taken from video recordings of a group of children aged 4–6 years and their two teachers on one of their regular walks in protected bushland in New Zealand. The focus of analysis for this research project was the opportunities provided by the outdoor environment for children to initiate interaction and knowledge enquiry during their walks. The following two transcripts (Excerpt 2 and 3) were chosen from the database as explicit examples of child-initiated learning, where each child self-selects to participate and articulate their views. In both episodes, we see a child orienting to an environmental feature that they find interesting—feeling cold even though the sun is out (Excerpt 2) and a waterfall being dry (Excerpt 3). The children's right to participate in and initiate discussions is visible in these excerpts. The children freely offer observations and opinions and these views are warmly received and encouraged by the teacher for further enquiry. The physical positioning of the teacher and the child is of significance in demonstrating listening to children, and so will be marked in the transcription. The observations took place in 2018, so provide some insights into 'where we are now' in enacting children's rights in early learning environments.

The children are walking on a bushland track, Marcus (MCS) makes a noticing about an environmental feature—this time the temperature—and the teacher and another child, Emma (EMM), who is walking with them, respond.

Excerpt 2: It's Cold

01 MCS: It's cold today (0.3) but the sun's out? (0.5) but in the
02 ↑forest. it's co::ld.
03 TCH: It <is> it was ↑much colder in here than it was out by
04 the **v**a:n wasn't it¿
05 MCS: It's wa::rm in the- (0.3) **out** in the va:n
06 TCH: out beside the carpa↑rk where we were at the map? (0.3)
07 it was quite warm there and then we came here and it's
08 rea:lly >cold<=why do you think that is Marcus.
09 MCS: er because .hhh the **wi**:nd comes
10 TCH: can you feel [wind=
11 EMM: [wind comed
12 MCS: no::.
13 TCH: no::?
14 (0.4)
15 TCH: well what e↑lse might be it.
16 EMM: I know wh↑y because we- because we're **co**:ld because we
17 have to change into warm clothes. (0.6) **th**at's why it's
18 cold¿

Children often have restricted rights to talk, and navigate these restrictions by using a range of opening gambits to enter into conversations with adults (see Keel 2016). In this example, Marcus does not use any pre-sequence, but instead assumes speaker rights and launches into a topic by commenting on the relativity of the (perceived) temperature (lines 1–2). His right to participate through contributing an opinion is affirmed by the teacher in her subsequent turn (lines 3–4). Not only does the teacher align with Marcus's right to speak (also in lines 6–8), she also invites Marcus's opinion regarding an aspect of his chosen topic (line 8).

The teacher's sequence of talk here elicits further reasoning from Marcus, supporting his working theories about how the world works. The concept of working theories has been developed from Guy Claxton's (1990) *mini theories* where children adapt knowledge from prior experiences to new experiences in the process of making sense of their world. The process in which working theories are developed can be 'hijacked' (Davis and Peters 2011) though, if the adult re-directs the learning trajectory. In Excerpt 2, we see the teacher following Marcus's observations, as striving 'to understand *the child's intentions* and goals and avoid[s] hijacking the direction of learning' (Davis and Peters 2011, p. 5; emphasis added). This support of Marcus's right to investigate his interest in the world demonstrates the teacher's commitment to build on the interest of the child in their natural environment; in another practitioner's words: '*using* children's interests rather than just *following* them' (Touhill 2012, p. 1; emphasis in original; MacGraw 2011). Each child's right to participate in the discussion is further demonstrated in lines 16–18 where, even though the teacher is speaking to Marcus, there is also opportunity for Emma to contribute her opinion, and to have this opinion valued. The valuing is implicit—and evident—in the open invitation to contribute ideas or hypotheses (line 15).

Encouraging Participation: "Can You Tell Me Again?"

A little later in the bushland walk, the same group of children and teacher reach a waterfall. Marcus once again initiates a topic for the group, by making an observation on the environmental conditions. We see that a child's right to initiate a topic depends on the other speakers legitimizing this action by taking up the topic of conversation. Participation necessarily relies on the co-operative and collaborative actions of those present (Goodwin 2018).

Excerpt 3: No Water in the Waterfall

```
01 MCS: the waterfall doesn't have any wate::r.
02      (1.3)
03 TCH: what was that sorry?
04 MCS: [(    )
05 EMM: [the waterfall doesn't have [any water.
06 TCH:                             [so wh:y: do you think
07      ↓Marcus that now there's no water when before there ↑was
08      water.
09     (2.1)
10 EMM: It's dry::.
11 TCH: $yes$ it is it's dried up hasn't it.
12      (3.3)
13 MCS: I- I think it's- (0.3) I think the tap- (0.4) a tap (°is
14      here somewhere°)
15 TCH: can you tell me again that Marcus=Marcus we have to wait
16      for the others they're still looking. (1.2) what did you
17      just tell me then?
18 EMM: because it's dry::¿ (0.5) it's dry because there's no
19      more wa↓ter↑ there's only a li↓ttle bit?
20 TCH: there's only a little bit¿ (0.4) there's only a tiny tiny
21      tiny s- trickling stream.
22 EMM: yeah because [and-
23 TCH:              [and [sometimes it's a really b↑ig stream.
24 MCS:                   [↑somebody makes-
25      maybe somebody left the tap on and then it came down here
26 TCH: huu you think there might of been a tap up there
```

As with Excerpt 2, Marcus initiates the interactions here through orienting to a specific environmental feature (line 1). In the NZ national curriculum, early childhood teachers are encouraged to 'notice, recognise and respond' to learning opportunities (Ministry of Education 2005). This is a sequential process whereby the teacher *notices* a child's interest, *recognises* the interest as a possible learning opportunity, and *responds* in ways that support the child's learning through their noticeable interest. This specific way of orienting to what children do as a noticeable learning opportunity offers a demonstration of professional vision (Goodwin 1994) in practice. Here, and in Excerpt 2, the teacher's professional vision is evident as she notices, recognises and responds to Marcus's right to articulate his interest and point of engagement.

Also like the prior excerpt, through her question (lines 6–8), the teacher responds in a way that provides opportunity for the children to contribute to the current context through articulating their working theories about the waterfall and the volume or absence of water. The teacher's question here is responded to by both children, Emma (line 10) and Marcus (lines 13–14), as they offer differing perceptions of what might be happening. The sequence of actions here highlights how the teacher's actions elicit children's opinions, and as such implement children's rights in practice, as she provides opportunities for the children to share their views and responds to those views in respectful ways (Article 12; United Nations 1989).

Conclusions

Each of the three sections in the analyses (Inviting participation, Cultivating participation, and Encouraging Participation) highlights the teacher's question-as-response that fostered further participation by the children in a sequence that was notably initiated by one of the children. Readers familiar with the talk between children and teachers in early learning environments will have noticed that these excerpts are remarkable because the interactions are extended, although the teacher had not proposed the topic. These examples provide insight (evidence) into children's understanding of complex concepts (time, temperature, and precipitation). Notably, the teacher had not set out to explore these concepts, but rather the collaborative learning-in-interaction is made possible by the teacher following and extending the children's lead.

Waters and Bateman (2015, p. 266) have noted that outdoor learning environments "afforded more child-initiated talk with teachers about a wider range of content than the indoor space". Here, we argue that although there may be fewer constraints in certain activities at certain times of the day to follow child-initiated enquiry, it is ultimately the role of the teacher to respond to children's questions and commentary in ways that maximise child participation. In our own data, we have seen that children frequently, persistently and eagerly offer topics for further exploration. These child-initiated enquiries mark the child's willingness or disposition to learn through participation (Claxton and Carr 2004), in which teachers' ability to notice, recognise and respond in ways which align with children's right to participate. This offers opportunities for realising children's rights-in-interaction.

Our main point is that, if upholding children's rights and participation in enquiry-based learning is a priority in early childhood education, children have a right for the enquiry to begin with their own interests or curiosity, and for teachers to respond to their interests in ways that mark them as valued and respected. Importantly, it is entirely appropriate for teachers to lead discussions and ask the questions. However, there is still room for, and much to be learnt, by children posing the questions when we are concerned with *how* we support children's right to participate in everyday interactions. If we are to take the enactment of children's rights seriously, current and future practice in early childhood centres provides the platform for praxis. Early childhood teachers' knowledge of the UNCRC articles and *how* children's right to participate can be encouraged, supported and extended in everyday spontaneous ways is essential, in order for practical implementation of children's rights. We have shown in the analyses presented here how this might be achieved.

A UNICEF fact sheet on the right to participate (UNICEF 2015) reminds us that "the key to genuine participation is ensuring respect for children's views" (p. 1). Our aim in this paper has been to illustrate the practice rather than describe a theoretical concept. Teachers can facilitate fully fledged participation, not only by inviting children's contributions, but in allowing children to be the instigators of learning sequences. Participation, in this sense, is not limited to census-taking on decisions in early learning environments but by embedding the talk-in-interaction of learning activities throughout the everyday.

Theobald and Kultti (2012) have noted that, "while much political and social investment has been made in the inclusion of participatory approaches, little has been reported on the *practical achievement* of such approaches in the day-to-day of early childhood education within school settings" (p. 210, emphasis added). This paper has aimed to respond to this call to action by highlighting the practical achievement of participation in the most locally grounded practice of talk between teachers and children. Rather than conceiving of participation as inviting children to contribute to decision-making in early childhood education programs, we can frame participation as a collaboration endeavour, where pedagogy can respond—not broadly or theoretically, but practically and spontaneously—to children's focus of enquiry. The data and analysis in this paper have shown that where child-initiated learning sequences are taken up by teachers, there are opportunities for concept development, abstract thinking and the practices of cooperation and compromise.

The UNCRC is firmly embedded in education philosophy and teacher attitudes in the early learning environments where we are privileged to collect data. The concept of children's right to participate, however, is less clearly articulated in the everyday transactions of teaching and learning. Current professional learning resources need to detail opportunities for child-led participation, so that teachers can seek a range of evidence to inform their practice. Future research and practice in the implementation of the CRC will benefit from a breadth of approaches and methodologies that both uncover and inform pedagogy and the praxis of children's right to participation in early childhood education.

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Appendix 1: Transcription Conventions Used in the Analyses

The transcription conventions used in this article, follow the original work of Sacks et al. (1974).

. Falling intonation.

, Slightly rising or continuing intonation.

? Rising intonation.

¿ Intonation that rises more than a comma but less than a question mark.

:: Lengthened syllable.

↓ Sharp fall in pitch.

↑ Sharp rise in pitch.

Bold emphasis.

CAP increased volume.

[ ] Overlapping talk.

() Unintelligible stretch.

(0.5) Length of silence in tenths of a second.

> < Increase in tempo, rushed stretch of talk.

< > Slower tempo.

hh Audible outbreath.

.hh Audible inbreath.

[°] Talk that is quieter than the surrounding talk.

$ Spoken while smiling.

(()) Description of accompanying behaviour.

→ Points to a phenomenon of particular interest, to be discussed by the author.

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