



29 SEPTEMBER - 01 OCTOBER 2015

ON LEARNING AND TEACHING INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE



RE-THINKING
TEACHING
RE-DESIGNING
LEARNING

USING E-PORTFOLIOS FOR FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT AND PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Tracey HOOKER

Waikato Institute of Technology, New Zealand

While there is a significant body of research on the use of ePortfolios as an assessment tool in schools, especially in tertiary education (Barrett, 2007; Kim & Olaciregui, 2008; Lambert & Corrin, 2007; Ledoux & McHenry, 2006), there has been no apparent research conducted on the use of ePortfolios for this purpose in early childhood education. This presentation is based on a study which sought to find a new way to engage parents, families and children in young children's learning through presenting assessment for learning in an ePortfolio. Furthermore, it aimed to investigate whether using this platform led early childhood educators to change or adjust their formative assessment practices. The study was carried out with two early childhood education services, one centre-based and one home-based. The centre-based setting did not have Internet access prior to the study and this form of assessment presentation was entirely new to the teachers, families and children. The home-based service had been using ePortfolios for eighteen months. Both settings had been using paper-based portfolios prior to the study. The research was qualitative using case study methodology. A mixed methods approach was used and data was collected through observations, interviews, surveys and a collection of assessment documentation. The notion of an early childhood education setting as the hub of a 'community of practice' (Lave & Wenger, 1991) provided a useful theoretical framework for this study. A community of practice in some form was already evident in both settings. Something was already known about the connections inside this community of practice (children, teachers and parents/families) utilising paper-based portfolios; however, it was not known what connections would be made with the ePortfolio platform, and indeed how members would engage with it. This presentation will present the preliminary findings of this research.