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**Why Unstructured
Self-Directed Play?**

WHO AM I?

- Grad Dip Teaching Primary - Massey 2018
- Masters of International Education - Vermont, USA 2009
- Bachelors International Studies/ Spanish - Maryland, USA 2004
- Secondary Teacher - Spanish 5yrs - Cullinane College & Proctor Academy
- Field Staff- Therapeutic Expeditions - 2004/2005
- Backpacking, Kayak, Rock Climbing Guide



Haize (Age 11): “Whaea - what are we doing next week?”

Whaea Dani (Age 39): “Well, I don’t know yet”

Haize: Rolls eyes. Incredulous look.

“Don’t you have to do **PLANNING, and write it all out?””**

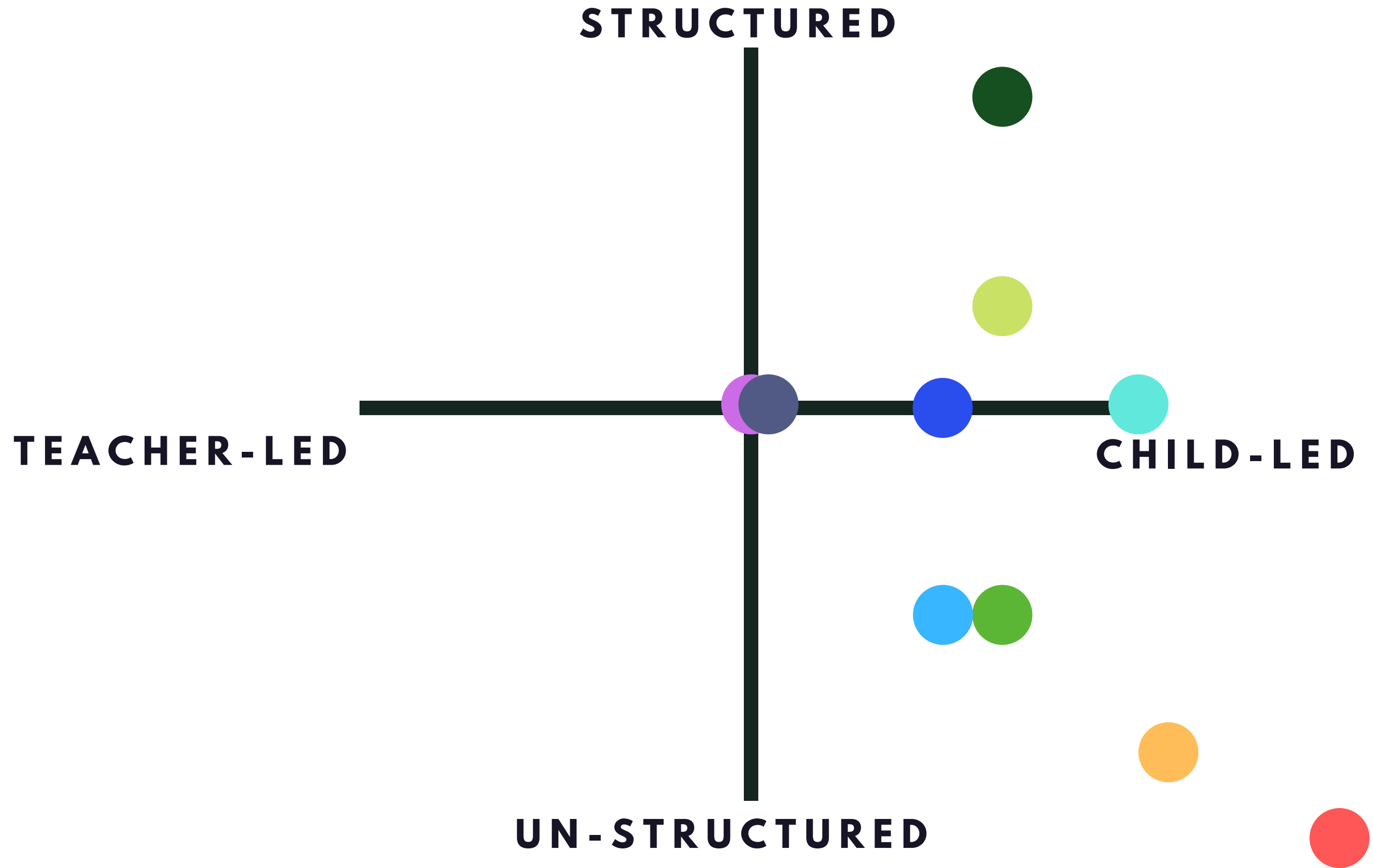
Whaea Dani: Launches into mini-dissertation fit for ERO.

“NOPE**. What we learn next depends on what you are interested in today. I look at what you did, I pay attention to what questions we are asking, and then I think about what we might do next week. It is called **Emergent curriculum**.”**

Haize: “Oh. All school should be like that.”

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

Integrated Curriculum
Project-based learning
Inquiry
Discovery
Play-based Learning
Montessori
Reggio Emilia
Steiner/Waldorf
Forest Schooling
Unschooling



A decorative grid pattern consisting of thin, light yellow lines forming a square grid, located on the left side of the slide.

Why Play?

A vertical yellow grid pattern on the left side of the slide.

Why Play?

**Why Self-
Directed Play?**

Being in ako

AKO

KAI AKO

Kai - someone
who makes it
happen

WHAKA AKO

Whaka - To make
it happen

Letting go.

Child-led learning

- The child is the best judge of what they are ready to learn and what they have learned.
- 70% of what the teacher does is observation
- Trust



*What we
learn with
pleasure we
never forget.*



Why Play?

**Why Self-
Directed Play?**

**Why Unstructured
Play?**



Why Play?

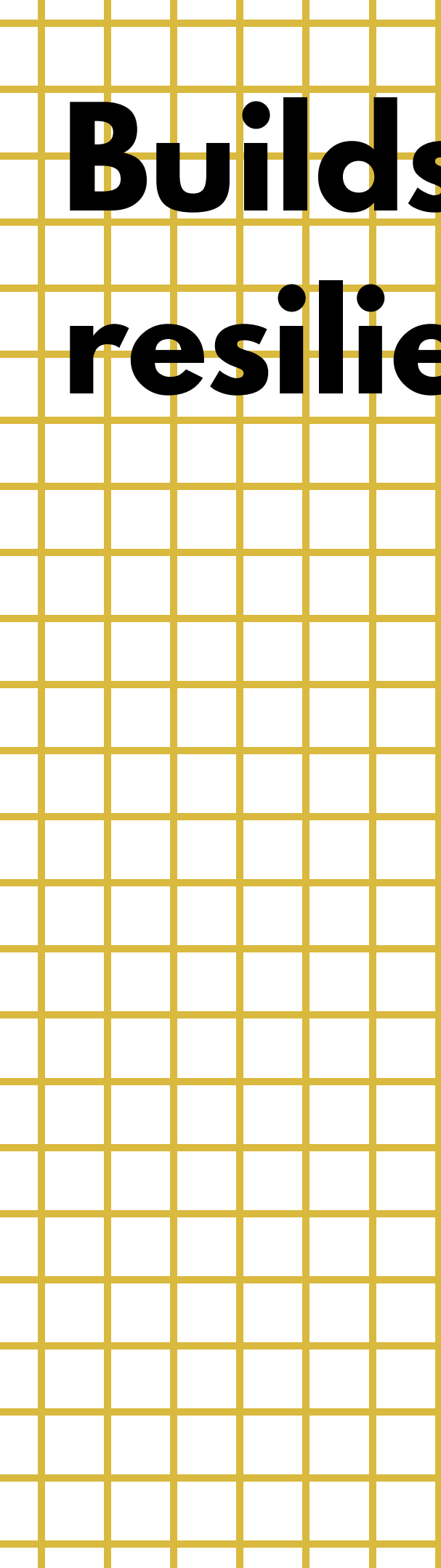
**Why Self-
Directed Play?**

**Why Unstructured
Play?**

**Why Unstructured
Play in Nature?**

**Provides
genuine
opportunities
for
collaboration
and problem-
solving.**





**Builds
resilience.**



**Inspires
wonder in
the natural
world.**



**Invites
appropriate
risk-taking.**



**Encourages
kaitiakitanga.**



**Allows space
and time for
students to be
tau.**



Develops key-competencies necessary for learning.



**Makes
literacy
and
numeracy
accessible
to all
learners.**



**Eliminates
most
behaviour
challenges.**



**It makes
our hearts
happy.**



Being bored is good for your brain

Nathan Wallis



**TRUST.
OBSERVATION.**

**BUT IF I'M NOT
TEACHING... WHAT
DO I ACTUALLY DO?**

First, do no harm.

- Take pictures & videos
- Make notes
- Use a tracking sheet
- Offer invitations
- Refocus
- Ask questions
- PLAY ALONGSIDE



BACKMAPPING

...or learning objectives are overrated...

How can I tie my observations and student observations to the NZC?

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

*Hooray- the student learned what I
intended them to learn*

v.

LEARNING INVITATION

*Hooray- the student chose to engage
and learn something that they thought
would benefit them*

WHAT DOES AN INVITATION LOOK LIKE?

Make an "I wonder..." statement
Ask a question
Be intentional with your play set up
Play With

Play Alongside
Set out an example
Tell a story

Trust.

What is the student telling you?

- What need is this activity filling for the child?
- What learning is the child showing?
- How can I help them reflect on this need/learning?
- What is next for them along this pathway?



DOCUMENTING LEARNING

Why are you documenting and for who?

- Tracking/ Observation Sheets
- Picture Folders on G Drive for each student
- Storypark, Seesaw, Class Dojo
- Video Interviews
- Learning Stories

Learning Stories


- Maximise student voice
- Create opportunities for meta cognition
- Provide a record of student learning
- Take the pressure off of formal assessments
- Parents love them
- *Kids can do them themselves!*



In my head I was thinking:
I know I can do this. I want
to be the one to light the fire.
This is so hard. I did it!

What I learned about fire:
Grass with a bit of green
doesn't burn. Fire can start
without matches.

Now I am wondering:
Why does the striker make a
spark? Do other rocks make a
spark? Did the Māori have fire
strickers?



KC's: Managing Self,
Participating & Contributing

School Values: Persistence,
Resilience

Level 1/2 Science:
Observe, describe, and
compare physical ...

Explore everyday examples of
physical phenomena...

Find out about the uses of...

Level 1/2 Technology:
Understand that technological
products are made..

Level 1 Social Science:
understand how the cultures of
people...

Level 1 PE:
Develop a wide range of
movement skills...

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How might this look in my structured classroom setting?

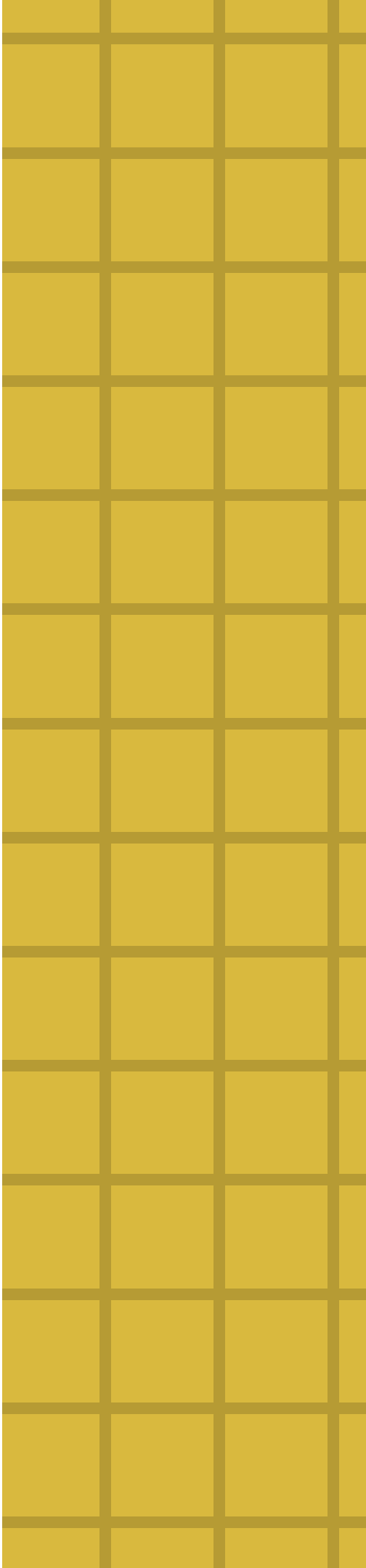
Fractions Play

Bee Inquiry

*How does a writer
play?*

The Calabash Breakers

Selina Tusitala Marsh



**READ ALL
ABOUT IT.**

FOREST SCHOOLING

<http://forestschoools.com/forest-schools-research/>

Richard Louv- The Last Child In the Woods

Sarah Knight- Forest School for All

Leather, M. (2012) Seeing the Wood from the Trees: constructionism and constructivism for outdoor and experiential education, University of Edinburgh, accessed at <http://oeandphilosophy2012.newharbour.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Mark-Leather.pdf>

An academic appraisal of the pedagogy of Forest School.

The Ngahere Project – Waikato University

https://www.waikato.ac.nz/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/146176/Ngahere-project_3-2013-03-14.pdf

**READ ALL
ABOUT IT.**

NZ BASED THINKERS

Wally Penetito (Place Based Education, Maori teaching models)

Pennie Brownlee (Child-led Education in the Early Years)

Scott Duncan & Charlotte Jellyman – AUT (Risky play)

GREAT READS

Paolo Freire – Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Pedagogy for Freedom

David Orr – Earth In Mind

Get in Touch...



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Regulations - Bushcraft - Storytelling - Links to the NZ Curriculum & Te Whariki.

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