Contents

From the Editorial Panel

Welcome to the third and final journal Educating Young Children for 2005 - how time flies! This journal contains an eclectic mix of information for you to enjoy, capturing the depth, diversity and richness of our profession. From children's services to schools, TAFE and University we feature the voices of educators who in some way touch children's lives with the same passion and dedication that we know to be the hallmark of our profession.

Shae Conomos shares her experiences at the Early Childhood Australia National Biannual Conference held in Brisbane this year. Ann Le Marseny and Lindy Austin reflect on the importance of partnerships and building relationships. Catherine Meehan explores early childhood teacher's beliefs about teaching and learning. Jeanette Harrison reminds us of the critical role that early childhood educators have in developing social competence in young children. Ronit Baras shares her knowledge of language acquisition and we welcome contributions from Leith McDougall and Charlotte Cobb who challenge our thinking about children as active governors and creators of places and curriculum makers.

As ECTA grows and changes we welcome new members and farewell others. Lyn Hunt, who for many years has given so much to the early childhood profession will step down as President, and Toni Michael will once again step forward to take on the position in a mentoring capacity. Kim Walters will become Vice President, Shae Conomos, Treasurer and we welcome Gary Davey as Secretary. With the year rapidly drawing to an end we look forward to the year ahead with optimism and wish each and every one of you a very peaceful Christmas and New Year.

Lynne Moore

President's Address

2005 has seen ECTA further established in its position as a principal provider of professional development for early childhood teachers in Queensland. You can indeed be very proud of your professional organisation which serves its members with a very high degree of excellence through a wide variety of means.

These include provision of three high quality and well respected journals annually, a comprehensive and informative website, a regular e-newsletter, several videolink seminars every year offered in conjunction with OLI, regional groups operating in areas all over Queensland, support for early childhood students and early childhood professional alike, representation at government level in a range of reference groups, along with the very best annual one day early childhood conference with a strong practitioner focus.

These activities do not simply happen. What the members see is the end result of many hours of hard work and commitment undertaken by committee members who are dedicated to helping their peers gain more from their chosen profession.

Whilst it a vast amount of the work that is undertaken for events such as a conference seems relatively apparent, it is the smaller, less obviously rewarding and occasionally mind-numbingly repetitious tasks that are undertaken behind the scenes that make things tick over smoothly at the end.

For example; Imagine putting together 500 plus conference bags containing a host of flyers, leaflets and goodies – your conference committee members do that before each conference.

Imaging devising new brochures from the initial concept stage, to writing text, working with designers, selecting photos and proofreading copy so that the new brochure can emerge – members of the executive committee do that for each new production.

Imagine seeking articles from anyone and everyone you know or have simply heard about for the journal, then working things through from a collection of emailed documents to the final published form including negotiating the many and varied stages of production that is involved in eventually holding a completed publication in your hand. Member of the editorial panel do this for each journal.

This list could continue for several pages but I will stop there. I really simply wanted to make the point that with such a huge variety of tasks undertaken by your ECTA Committee Members, it is possible that everyone or anyone who wishes to become involved could take an active role and find a task that they are comfortable doing. I urge anyone who would like to become a committee member to take the opportunity available at this AGM and enjoy the camaraderie that working together can bring. I would like to personally thank each and every member of the Executive Committee, the Conference Committee, the Editorial Panel, the

Web Weavers group, and all others, for their support and more importantly for their commitment to ECTA. There are so many names that I am loathe to mention any for fear of missing someone out; but you all know who you are and I know that you are all justifiable proud of the work that you undertake for this group. However I will mention Toni Michael – whose commitment to the Early Childhood Teachers of this state is something of which I am constantly in awe. Thank you Toni – you are an inspiration. I could not have managed as President without your help.

This year has seen ECTA move to employing more extensive administrative than we had previously utilised. I would like to thank also to Lorelei Broadbent whose company Agenda Management has provided the excellent administrative support necessary for us to function in this busy world where all committee members are juggling their employment and their commitment to ECTA. We greatly appreciate the work of both Lorelei and her husband and business partner David, on our behalf.

I intend to finish my time as President this year and am very grateful and proud to have worked with such a special group of people. I have learnt a great deal, enjoyed the support and guidance of an enthusiastic and knowledgeable group that has made my time as President a pleasurable journey from start to finish and had a truly wonderful time. Thank you everyone – committee members and all ECTA members across Queensland alike.

Next year will see ECTA undertake some new processes that will further refine many aspects of our operation. I look forward to seeing this organisation further grow and develop as we progress through to yet another stage of our development as a professional body and wish all members a very Merry Christmas .

Lyn Hunt

Message from the 2006 Incoming President

As incoming ECTA President for 2006, I would first like to thank our outgoing President, Lyn Hunt, for her dedication and commitment to ECTA and the early childhood profession as Vice-President and President over the last nine years. She has been an inspirational leader who always sees the bigger picture and has taken ECTA to where it is today with 470 members who are receiving a range of services almost double to what they were receiving seven years ago. I am very grateful that Lyn has agreed to stay on the Co-ordinating Committee and the EYC Journal Committee as her experience and insights are invaluable.

I am looking forward to leading ECTA in 2006 as we have many new initiatives planned eg a mentoring project in digital portfolios, a free student membership package and a long awaited succession plan. You will receive more details about these initiatives after we have met with all committees at our annual planning day on Saturday 26 November. The planning for the 2006 Annual ECTA Conference is already in full swing and all speakers have been confirmed - look out for the Date Claimer in this journal.

Thank-you
Toni Michael

Ian Wallace Conference
Held in Mackay at North Mackay State High School - Senior Auditorium
November 5th

Mackay and District ECTA regional group held a very successful conference on Saturday the November the 5 at North Mackay State High School. The calibre of our speaker, Ian Wallace a consultant psychologist from Sydney, was extremely high and entertaining. The MADECTA Regional group would like to sincerely thank ECTA for supporting us financially so that we were able to have Ian in Mackay.

Ian talked about dealing with children with disruptive and defiant behaviours in both the home and the classroom. It was made very clear to the audience that as part of addressing and dealing with these behaviours it is vital that we always look for each child's unique strengths. In doing so we are looking for the positives instead of dwelling and dealing in negatives. While this topic is of a very serious nature, Ian was able to provide some light-hearted moments that not only entertained but lightened the mood.

Ian's interactive manner with the audience was highly effective as he was able to address problems of an immediate nature and relevant to many people. Ian also highlighted other conditions that we as teachers and parents need to be aware of when dealing with children with challenging and defiant behaviours.

Whilst the MADECTA committee was in the planning phases of the conference, we anticipated a small audience because of the time of the year and similar conferences that were already held earlier. After we reached the 100 participants mark we realised we would need to find an alternate venue. When we finally reached 160 North Mackay High School came to our rescue with a fantastic venue. A big thanks to North Mackay State High School.

The MADECTA Regional group also advocated quite strongly for the benefits of being a member of ECTA and many membership forms were taken so we may see an increase to the ECTA membership.

Prep is a comin' oh yeah!

By Judy Pfeffer - Teacher/Director Holland Park Kindergarten

Singing the old favourite at Group time, 'Train is a comin' oh yeah!...' I liken it to the 'journey' we at Holland Park Kindy (HPK) have embarked upon in the past year, readying ourselves for the big 'trip' in 2007 when we arrive at our 'destination'- Prep and Pre Prep.

At first the thought of changing to a new system was daunting - no more two consecutive years at Kindy and Preschool or even a third if children weren't ready for school. Where would the 'community' feel of our centre go? Will we have to make wholesale changes to our staffing, enrolment, wait list policies, curriculum offered and what will our children face in a 5 day, full-day Prep programme at school?

These were the questions that have concerned co-workers and colleagues. I have attended Prep year forums, visited a very positive functioning trial Prep year class, been involved in many workshops, discussions and read numerous articles over recent years.

That train song came back to me again - would I join in the 'game', would I sit on the outside and watch the train go round the track as a bystander or would I take on the role of 'driver' and call for the other 'passengers' to climb on board and join me at HPK.

Excitement about the new challenges Prep will afford us in the Early Childhood field has now overtaken my initial trepidation about this emotive venture. Just as the children 'play' at Kindy, I have asked questions, explored options, asked friends to join in, asked for assistance where needed and found that playing the 'game' has become a lot of fun, has offered challenges and of course learning has occurred during the process.

The challenge this year was to instill a feeling of 'community' into the Holland Park area by utilising our newly renovated centre as a hub for discussion, introspection, garnering knowledge and indeed instigating and maintaining partnerships in the education field within our local area.

Approaches were made to our immediate 'neighbours'. We are in the unusual situation where Mott Park C & K centre is our nearest neighbour - we share a fence! It was imperative that we communicated, co-operated and worked cohesively to achieve the most equitable outcomes for our families in the area. We have shared and edited our letters to the 2007 families and waiting lists to inform them that we will offer two groups of Pre Prep at each centre, one with a five day fortnight, the other with two and three day groups. Offering a united front and positive approach can only help allay some of the inevitable fears of the new and unknown for our local families about Pre Prep and Prep. From this first collaboration, our networking 'train' had taken off. .

The next task was the establishing with some and re-establishing links with the schools in the local catchment. Holland Park State School has an active Early Phase Committee and we

consulted them on who we should contact in our region. HPK was the venue for our Pre - Prep/Prep networking meeting, inviting attendance and/or questions and topics from local schools, preschools, (state and independent), the childcare sector, C & K Centres and C & K Consultancy staff.

This year our State Member, Gary Fenlon, organised a public forum in our area to discuss Prep year issues with the then Minister of Education Anna Bligh and a panel of State and Catholic School representatives who are operating Prep year trials. Our local Member has supported our network with letters, his presence at meetings and he has taken our concerns direct to the new Minister and has given us written replies and assurances of continued support.

It was apparent at this open forum, that parents and teachers were concerned about the allocation of Teachers Aide time and the subsequent ability of Prep classes being able to offer a play based curriculum. Issues of professional development for teachers and aides and the very strong feelings about more flexibility needed in the change-over year for the second half of the year Birthday children were raised.

To best answer these queries and to clarify assumptions and misconceptions, Mark Cooper from Ed Qld was invited to our ever growing group for our October meeting. Much active discussion followed with questions from the State Member, Principals, Teachers and parents transpiring. The lack of representation from the independent schools in the area is a concern. This will hopefully be remedied as the Catholic Education Prep Year Task Force has been contacted directly for input. As most of our local centres have children following on to local Catholic Schools we were keen to find out their policies.

Mark Cooper related the more flexible approach to late entry for children in need of a year in Prep rather than having to go straight to Year 1. Parents will need to approach their individual schools, armed with observational data and reports from their Preschool to request a late entry by the second week of term 3 in 2006. A Special Ed teacher has been invited to join our network and should be able to assist our local teachers in discussions pertaining to criteria guidelines for 'late entry' in 2007.

I have been buoyed by the interest in our Network meetings and minutes from our October meeting and plans for the next get together are being disseminated to over 30 interested parties.

Invitations to attend Early Phase discussions, and indeed a full staff meeting at Holland Park State School have offered insights into concerns at the school level. The Early Phase group and Administration staff are working on how they will manage the 'Prep' precinct, sign-in procedures, toilet routines, reporting, capping, uniforms, playground supervision as well as which staff will take on the challenge of the Prep classes. These issues were raised and staff from Greenslopes and Marshall Road State Schools were able to offer ideas and recommendations they are considering at the October Network Meeting at HPK.

Early Childhood Education is receiving unprecedented attention in the media - it is an exhilarating time to be involved in teaching young children. Yes the 'Prep Year train' is indeed coming and in preparing for it, relevant and working partnerships have been forged and will continue to encourage an ongoing sharing of skills, information, knowledge and experience via this Net work.

Prep Year has activated the Holland Park region into an innovative collaboration between all participants - no longer working in isolation, now combining for the benefit of the children and their families inspiring confidence in this new Early Childhood 'journey'   -   "All aboard!"

A Day in the life of a Preschool teacher

by Linda Meinicke

As a general rule the public believe preschool teachers get to work at 8.00am leave at 3.15pm and have 11 weeks holidays a year. I decided to document a normal working day for a Kindy director and the diary result follows:

7.10am left home, battled road rage

7.30am Arrive work. Unlock gates and open up centre.

7.40am Check and respond to emails

7.45am Notice child's painting from last week of a police shirt, remembered he wanted to cut it out but it had been too wet. Put shirt on gluing table so child can finish later. Organise music session, set up indoor environment based on last weeks observations. Notice, chocolate drive boxes on desk in office, mental note to find where these should go. Fill in additional paperwork for special needs assistant. Organise space for chicken hatching program arriving this morning.

8.00am Set up Outside. Whilst outside phone rings, run to answer phone (Kathy Freeman style), parent ringing about an absent child.

8.25am Back inside to teach staff a new song we are learning today. Discuss with staff activities and focus children.

8.50am Children and families arrive.

8.52am Phone rings, telstra wanting to know if we would like to talk about our phone line. Graciously hang up!!!

9.00am Try to go downstairs to begin spending time with children, talk to two, then 4 different parents wanting information or feedback.

9.30am Attempt to begin spending time observing and scaffolding children's play.

9.45am Engaged in volcano making in the digging patch which leads to a discussion about fire and what would happen if our building was on fire...

10.15am Chicken's arrive. Great excitement, everyone runs to the gate screaming the chickens are here, they're here.

10.20am Try to get the children to pack away so we can see the chickens.

10.25am Man who bought the chickens wants to talk about their care arrangements. Meanwhile a child has wet their pants, and another is crying. Phone rings!!!!

10.30am Children sit beautifully inside and listen to the instructions on how we are to care for the chickens. Great excitement. Phone rings!!!!!

10.40am Head out to verandah for Morning Tea. Phone rings, Waiting List. Parent wishes to discuss their child's requirement with regard to the prep year for 15 minutes. Coffee cold. Toilet breaks none.

11.00am Head inside for music session. Great session. We then plan for the day, as this is happening a parent turns up who had forgotten something from last week.

11.20am Inside activity time. Hard to document interruptions and individual children's needs as not time. Still not toilet break, coffee or even water.

12.30pm Pack away, story, toilet transition and make beds.

1.00pm Lunch time. Help children open items they wish to eat, try to have a bite of lunch, look at what children have eaten before they have a drink, take another bite. No drink, no coffee, AND STILL NOT TOILET BREAK.

1.30pm-2.15pm Rest time. During this time, write up days planning for parents to read, settle restless children, hang up special chicken paintings done today for parents and children to share, post plan days activities and think about tomorrow's activities. Pack children who are awake up and get beds away and shoes on. THE PHONE IS NOT RINGING.

2.15pm Parents arrive. More discussions about children's day, most children have gone by 2.40pm Two different people turn up with items requiring attention. Trying to get away by 3.30pm as have a home visit. Quickly write up an observation wanted to document for parents to see in the morning, sorted through mail marked roll, prepares some items for next day. Went to toilet.

3.35pm Home visit. Chocolate cake and coffee.

5.00pm Leave home visit to go home. Get groceries on way home.

6.00pm Arrive home.

And this was a quiet day ...

Fruit vs Fruit Juice

Claire Flanagan - Project Coordinator (Accredited Practising Dietician)

Children love the taste of fruit juice and adults love it because it is a natural, healthy beverage full of vitamins. However, fruit juice like other sweet drinks, such as soft drinks, sports drinks and cordial contain sugars. Although the sugar in fruit juice are those naturally occurring in fresh fruits, they become very concentrated when made into juice or when used to make soft drinks or cordial. Too many sweet drinks can lead to a range of problems including tooth decay, reduced appetite, picky eating, diarrhea and can contribute to overweight and obesity.

Fruit juice or sweet drinks are not required to achieve a healthy balanced diet. Choose whole fruits and vegetables instead, they are rich in fibre, lower in kilojoules than a concentrated glass of juice and provide you with a variety of vitamins and minerals for good health.

Children particularly should be encouraged to eat whole fruit rather than drink fruit juice to help them develop skills such as peeling and chewing, enable them to experience different textures, colours and flavours as well as provide them with important fibre.

Fruit juice is also loaded with kilojoules, filling you up quickly and making you less hungry for other nutritious foods. This can be particularly detrimental to children who have additional nutrient needs for growth. Fruit juices do not contain protein, fat, iron or calcium needed for a child's growth. Children who consume fruit juice or other sweet drinks are at risk of a low nutrient intake, including those essential for growth. Problems such as iron deficiency anaemia, failure to thrive and impaired growth may occur in toddlers & children who replace other nutritious foods (including breast milk) with fruit juice or other sweet drinks.

It is also much easier to consume excess kilojoules, if you have a high fruit juice intake, which may lead to unwanted weight gain.

Water should be your and your child's preferred drink. Reduced fat milk is also an important part of a healthy diet; however 3 serves of dairy products daily is all that is required. So don't over do it on the milk either as too much can have the same affect on appetite as fruit juice.

If you wish to include fruit juice in your or your child's diet limit it to 1/2 a cup a day.

For a healthy body & smile drink plenty of water and eat your 2 serves of fruit and 5 serves of vegetables each day as part of a healthy balanced diet.

Promoting Consumption of Fruit and Vegetables in SA Project

Kaleidoscope Changing Images of Childhood

Early Childhood Australia National Biannual Conference 2005

In 2005 it was the Queensland branch turn to roll out the carpet for the 900+ international and interstate and local delegates attending the three day conference at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre. Over the

three days there were four international and national renowned keynote speakers including Joe Tobin discussing his work with immigrant families in the preschool setting; Dr Jackie Marsh's study into children and popular culture; Associate Professor Margaret Carr's keynote was directed at assessment in the early years and lastly Associate Professor Ann Sanson whose main interest revolve around the social and emotional development of young children in their families and communities. The keynotes and sessions explored creative and inventive approaches to working with young children focusing on three central themes; popular culture and technologies, cultural diversity and

changing relationship in early childhood education and young children's health.

The message Joe Tobin gives us is that entering into a meaningful dialogue with newly arrived parents is necessary to provide culturally appropriate program for all young children. Jackie Marsh makes the point that children are provided with more opportunities to interact with some digital literacy practices in their homes and communities than they do in the early childhood settings they attend. It is suggested that early childhood teachers need to find innovative ways to get around the barriers to digital technology whether resources, training etc to allow children the opportunity to experience digital literacy in the classroom. Margaret Carr shared her thoughts on assessment which has been considered and included in the Queensland's Early Years

Curriculum Guidelines, as she outlines in her keynote and in more detail in her book titled Assessment in Early Childhood Settings: Learning Stories for anyone working with young children, learning stories offer some of the richest ways of tracking and sharing children's experiences, interests, talents, abilities and passions. Lastly Ann Sanson presented data from the Growing up in Australia Longitudinal Study that shows links

A favourite for many including me was the many social events held throughout the conference including a beach reception and a beach party. Only one thing can be said about these and that is early childhood people definitely know how to have a good time. This conference also allowed the opportunity for networking and socialising amongst peers. The chosen venue was amazing, the days ran

between children's early years of life and their later social, emotional, cognitive and physical development and well-being. Once again highlighting an important fact early childhood teachers have known for a long time, the early years is the most important part in a person's life, what we must remember is how this impacts on our work as early childhood professionals.

The delegates had a choice of over 100 workshop sessions. There was an emphasis on current Australian research that allowed early childhood professionals from different background an insight into the theory behind practice. It was an opportunity to hear up to date, new and relevant research on a variety of issues relating to early childhood. A highlight was a forum on childhood obesity with recognised Australian experts.

smoothly and the shopping at the trade displays superb. Well done Early Childhood Australia QLD branch. I thoroughly enjoyed the whole experience the conference had to offer especially as it was my first ECA conference. Can't wait till the next one in Canberra. For more details about ECA or the biannual conferences go to www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au.

Kristian Brennan

School Officer – Teacher Aide – Artist

I am a School Officer at Holy Family Primary School, Indooroopilly. I have been a practising Artist for over ten years, a gallery curator, arts administrator, radio announcer and I now find myself in Primary education.

I started working as a Teacher Aide in Melbourne. I had a thought that I might like to teach. I needed to know what it felt like in the classroom and if I enjoyed the interaction. As a boy in primary school and particularly in the early years I found it painfully hard. In the beginning this was partly how I felt to be back in a school. It felt strange to be an adult in a school. Thankfully it was okay to be called Kristian and not Mr. Brennan!

I soon understood that my experience as a child at school was not individual to me and some of these boys and girls are feeling like I did, in their own ways. I understood that I could facilitate a transition for them to grow into this new big world.

My nature as an artist, as a teacher and as a person is calmness, investigation of process and thinking abstractly about ideas. I ask students to tell me what it is they know about subject matters, I then try to draw in my ideas to the exchange.

I began as a teacher aide at Fitzroy Primary School. Fitzroy Primary is a culturally and individually diverse inner Melbourne school. I worked mostly in the grade prep, one and two classes. My role was to assist the teacher in the classroom. I also presented the reading programs. Later I was allocated some students with difficulties to work with in the class and the playground. I needed to build on the strategies that were already in place for these students. Some of the time it took patience and tolerance to get to a working position with these children. I discovered that they needed to feel confident and trusted. I saw that they needed to feel they had come to me rather than me trying to make friends with them. Even at this early stage of their learning they were used to aides trying to pre-empt and stop 'bad behaviour'. I took the role of being a constant for them; to talk to, or work with and to help them. In my time in Melbourne I was very lucky to be at schools that I could have such varied practice of working within a mentoring role. To me it is about mentoring, it is between a friendship and philosophy. I also worked at Penderís Grove Primary School as a Teacher Aide, Receptionist and after school care assistant. Fitzroy and Penderís Grove Primary Schools were excellent places to start my education journey. I had great support and a variety of experiences at two different and diverse environments.

In my current role at Holy Family Primary School I take small groups of year 2 students for extra literacy work. This includes a focus on story writing and reading. I use story writing as a way of improving the spelling, fluency, structure, comprehension and enthusiasm of the students in literacy. The process that I have come up with works in a number of stages and is preformed over numerous weeks. It is introduced in stages (not to overwhelm the students) with a little of an overview to keep them interested to the next stage. We have been doing this program since the middle of the year and they know the stages well so they are able to choose which order to do the steps in or what to do next. This moves away from the structure of the classroom and allows them to make decisions. Recently they took the process one step further and made a poster of the story as if it had been made into a movie. I also work with years 1, 3,4,5,6 and 7, in the environment of the classroom, one to one and group work.

As a Teacher Aide it is sometimes hard to explain what it is that you do. Sometimes it is such a subtle supporting role. It is just being there to predict the next experience. All of the students in the early years need extra supporting people around, it is incredibly important as they are often used to one on one contact. It helps the transition into the school environment; it often supports and identifies patterns in this early stage.

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ECTA and USQ Building Partnerships in the Wide Bay Community

By Ann Le Marseny - USQ - Wide Bay

The early childhood staff of USQ-Wide Bay, have had a very busy and successful year building partnerships within the local Wide Bay community. With support from the regional group of the Early Childhood Teacher Association (ECTA) and USQ Wide Bay, they organized a number of interactive workshops for local educators. All in all over 150 participants, including representatives from state and private preschools/schools, TAFE, kindergarten, and USQ preservice teachers and lecturers attended these professional development opportunities.

The first workshop was 'Choosing and using books with young children'.which was facilitated by Assoc. Professor Gillian Potter. USQ-Wide Bay's Provost Professor Ken Stott, opened this workshop. He congratulated the local ECTA members and USQ early childhood staff on their collaboration to provide joint professional development opportunities for local community members.

Professor Ken Stott welcomes the participants

In the interactive workshop Gillian discussed strategies and techniques to use when choosing and using books with young children. Additionally she demonstrated how to incorporate props and drama with books. Gillian had a wide variety of resources to demonstrate specific points of books she made. After the formal section of the workshop the

Libby Gaedtke, a local preschool teacher, talks to Assoc Professor Gillian Potter

participants were able to re-enact their favourite children's stories. A wide variety of resources and props were available for each group to dramatise a children's book of their choice. The winning group, which re-enacted the story "Who rocked the boat?" was awarded the prize. Jane Boss-Walker received the prize of a book and puppet for her pre-school class at the Fraser Coast Anglican College.

Our second workshop for the year was a very popular 'Digital Documentation Workshop'. The focus of this workshop was the use digital cameras to document young children's work. Kim Walters facilitated this workshop. Kim is an

Associate Professor Gillian Potter and preschool teacher Jane Boss-Walker

early childhood educator at the Gympie Community Kindergarten and Preschool. Additionally, she is a renowned Australian speaker and receives invitations to facilitate workshops all over the country. Kim's expertise in the area of digital documentation with young children is now being recognised overseas and she is now making connections in New Zealand.

Kim is proudly displaying the new ECTA banners

Kim's workshop focused on the advantages of using digital photography in the early childhood setting to enhance communication and learning. She demonstrated a wide variety of resources which could be made by using digital photos. Additionally, she demonstrated how she uses photos to document children's thinking and learning experiences in posters and children's individual portfolios.

Some participants looking at Kim's resource

By popular demand, Kim Walters joined us again in July to facilitate a sequel to her previous workshop. This time she demonstrated a wide variety of uses for digital documentation, apart from the individual children's portfolios.

Kim Walters demonstrates a point.

The second "hands-on" workshop was facilitated in one of USQ-Wide Bay's computer laboratories with about 35 participants. Kim walked participants through the steps of using digital documentation creatively in early childhood settings. Kim advocated that all centres should have digital cameras for both teachers and children's use on a daily bases.

The USQ early childhood staff plan to finish this very productive year with a professional development conference 'Understanding Children' planned for Saturday 22 October. With financial support from ECTA we were able to ask Ian Wallace to be the keynote speaker. Ian will focus on strategies for dealing with challenging behaviour at school and home in an interactive format. Other workshops will include; 'Respect, Responsibility and Relationships: The new basics of behaviour' which will be facilitated by Roxanne Finn and 'Child's Hero Play' which will be facilitated by Dr Patrick O'Brien.

The USQ early childhood staff would like to acknowledge the ongoing support of the Executive of ECTA, and USQ Wide Bay for the use of facilities and support with funding.

"Understanding Children" Conference
ECTA (Hervey Bay) & USQ - Wide Bay

By Lindy Austin - Lecturer of Education (early childhood)
University of Southern Queensland - Wide Bay

Another very successful professional development event has been held for early childhood educators residing in the Wide Bay region. Towards the end of October, 70 early childhood educators attended the conference "Understanding Children" which was held at the University of Southern Queensland - Wide Bay. Participants included representatives from state and private schools, university and TAFE students, childcare, occasional care and family day-care carers. Once again this conference was organised collaboratively with the regional ECTA group and early childhood lecturers at this campus. Professor Ken Stott, Provost of the USQ-Wide Bay campus, officially opened the conference.

Professor Stott, Provost of USQ-Wide Bay opening the conference

The title of this conference was reflected its theme. The 3 speakers addressed various aspects of the theme 'understanding children" in the early childhood age range. The keynote speaker was Ian Wallace. Ian, a consultant psychologist, is the Director of the Forestway

Psychology Centre in Sydney. His key note was titled "Practical strategies for dealing with defiant behaviour". Ian discussed a myriad of disruptive behaviour disorders and ways to differentiate these. He provided practical strategies for dealing with challenging behaviours in a variety of settings.

The choice of three workshops was offered to the participants. Ian ran a master class titled "A positive practical approach to defiant classroom behaviour" and this built on his key note address. Early childhood lecturer Roxanne Finn's workshop was titled "Celebrating behaviour". This workshop provided an opportunity for participants to discuss behaviours which practitioners find challenging. Roxanne challenged the participants with the question of celebrating misbehaviour and discussed alternatives to use when traditional behaviour management techniques have failed. The third workshop was facilitated by Dr. Patrick O'Brien. This workshop was titled "Child's hero play". Discussion focussed on the acceptance of superhero play. Patrick argued that the

Conference organisers and presenters
Lindy Austin (ECTA/USQ), Libby Gaedkte (ECTA)
Roxanne Finn (ECTA/presenter/USQ), Patrick O'Brien (USQ/presenter), Ian Wallace (Key note presenter),
Ann Le Marseny (USQ/ECTA) and Lisa Cooper (ECTA)

acceptance of the inevitability of superhero play calls for some special considerations for teachers and parents which are not dissimilar to the strategies used by therapists and counsellors.

The ECTA (Hervey Bay) committee members and the early childhood lecturers would like to express their appreciation and thanks to the following organisations for their sponsorship for this conference. The ECTA executive's generous donation covered the costs of the key note speaker. The Faculty of Education, USQ paid the conference fees of 19 early childhood students. Use of facilities and some stationary/printing was provided for by USQ-Wide Bay. Finally, a variety of prizes were donated by the following organisations: The Book Garden (Brisbane), Ultra-Music (Hervey Bay), Book City (Hervey Bay), Baby Bundles (Hervey Bay &
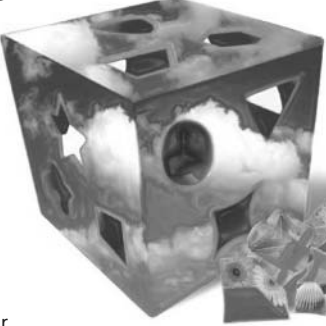
Maryborough) Mind Games (Hervey Bay) CKS Educational Supplies and Payless Business Furniture (Hervey Bay).

Very positive feedback was received in the evaluation forms. Many participants thanked ECTA (Hervey Bay) and the USQ-Wide Bay early childhood lecturers for organising local professional development opportunities of such a high calibre. In fact this is the third professional development event in Hervey Bay to which internationally renowned Australian speakers have presented this year.

The ECTA (Hervey Bay) committee members and/or USQ-Wide Bay early childhood lecturers Libby Gaedkte, Lisa Cooper, Ann Le Marseny, Roxanne Finn and Lindy Austin have "hung up their hats" for 2005.

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Where children come first

MADECTA Regional Group Conference

Friday July 8th, 2005 - Holy Spitit College, Mackay

The MADECTA committee worked tirelessly to ensure a great day would be held by all. We had a wonderful range of guest speakers who created a day which was amazing and inspiring. Kim Walters, from the digital preschool in Gympie, opened up the world of digital portfolios, Shane Funnell, a highly motivated preschool teacher from Mackay North, presented an inspiring workshop titled "Literacy Through Play'. Lyn Duncan the district maths advisory teacher shared her wealth of knowledge about the new maths syllabus with an early childhood focus and Sue Galletly presented some new findings with regard to how young children learn to read.

The day ran smoothly due to careful planning and also to the venue, Holy Spirit College. The College provided us with not only a fantastic venue but also data projectors, screens, computers for all participants, microphones, display boards, full use of their kitchen facilities and a beautiful garden area to have morning tea and lunch. The college also allowed us to access some of their personnel and special thanks need to be extended to Julie Ward, their computer genius, who supported Kim during her workshop, Tim Galletly, who for him nothing was too much trouble, and the office staff who were very supportive before and during the conference.

I would also like to sincerely thank the hard working and dedicated MADCTA committee. This conference was a first for us and our learning curve was very steep. Leanne Coppo our treasurer, Tracey Galletly and Trish Hobson our secretaries, thank you very much for all your time, dedication and support for each other. Well done.

Below I have included a brief overview of each presenter.

Kim Walters - travelled from Gympie to teach many of us how to create digital portfolios within our early childhood centres and classrooms. Kim, who effortlessly produces highly technical masterpieces of digitalised reporting, displayed a great deal of patience and understanding as we all gradually learnt many of her amazing computer techniques successfully! What a new world she opened up. She generously shared all her knowledge, tips and short cuts with us as such is her passion for the use of digital technology in the early year's classroom. She is in her own words "keen to pass the word on".

Concentrating in Kim's workshop

Now all that is left is to practise, make mistakes and therefore learn. Luckily most of us bought the 'bibles according to Kim'-her easy to follow step by step guides.

Thankyou Kim for your inspiration and come back soon!!

Lyn Duncan - Maths EA for the Mackay district talked with us about the new maths syllabus for the early years.

Lyn provided a wealth of information for many of our early childhood teachers. It is clearly

evident that the new maths syllabus has a more "hands on" focus and this clearly reinforced the good practises that are evident in early childhood classrooms and centres.

Lyn's Maths workshop

Lyn provided some hands on materials for the participants to try and there was a lot of discussion and questions being fielded as the workshop progressed.

Shane Funnell - Preschool teacher from Mackay North talked about "Literacy through play". Shane is very passionate about the way and manner young children learn.

"Literacy through play" workshop

It is very clear that children learn when they are motivated, on task and having fun. Play provides

this very important medium for maximum learning to take place. Through child centred play, children are engaged in many literacy experiences. They are discussing, problem solving, making decisions, writing, identifying letters and sounds, reading and researching.

Through out Shane's workshop early childhood teachers were able to realise the learning that was taking place when young children are playing. Shane brought along a wonderful assortment of photos of the children in her preschool so that the participants were able to clearly identify the literacy development that was taking place whilst the children were engaging in play.

Sue Galletly - discussed her findings from the cross linguistic research she has recently undertaken. Her research included studies of reading accuracy in countries such as Finland, Estonia, Italy, Scotland and Wales. Children in Finland learn to read very quickly as they have a transparent orthography, meaning each letter

Sue Galletly's workshop

only has one sound. English on the other hand is far more difficult to learn as the orthography is opaque and therefore far more complex. At the University of Eugene in Oregon, Sue was trained in DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Early Literacy Skills). These one minute assessments of reading accuracy can provide a teacher with the knowledge to greatly enhance a child's reading skills and are currently being trialled in some Mackay schools.

Young Children - Active Governors and Creators of Places

By Charlotte Cobb

Spaces for children and children's places

Today, children often seem to spend a vast majority of their time within adult-constructed spaces, such as schools, child-care centres, after-school programs, and playgrounds. Blackford (2004) comments that "we live in an era when children's spaces are increasingly circumscribed... and increasingly organised by adults" (p. 229). Spaces for children are increasingly created by adults and imbued with adult conceptions and regulations. When children enter these spaces, they contend with adult-imposed expectations and governance. Within these spaces, children are able to take an active role in shaping their play environment and creating places of their own within adult constructed spaces (Blackford, 2004; Cobb, Danby & Farrell, 2005). This paper presents extracts of interaction among Preparatory aged children, examined in response to the question of how young children create and manage their own places in a preparatory year classroom.

Within this paper, the term 'place' refers to spaces to which children have assigned personal meanings through their activities and peer interactions; whereas 'space' will be used to denote physical locations and areas designed by adults for children. Children's places, though impacted by adult-imposed regulations, are created by children themselves and influenced by their social orders and peer cultures. These places therefore reflect the social order of the children who created them, rather than that of adults. The data presented in this paper are drawn from a recent research study conducted in Australia, demonstrating how children themselves enact governance in a preparatory classroom context and how they create places when doing this.

The study and its findings

The study is conceptually based on the sociology of childhood framework, which enables children to be viewed as competent and active members in constructing and interacting within their peer cultures (Danby & Baker, 1998, 2000; James & Prout, 1997). It was conducted within a Preparatory Year (Prep) classroom at an urban independent school. A video-recorder was used to capture children's naturally occurring interactions. The video-recorder was introduced into the classroom gradually, allowing the children to become familiar with it, as well as with the presence of the researcher. The recorded episode that this paper refers to is an extended sequence of interaction that occurred during a creative activity (free-structure) session. The setting was in home-corner, which had been arranged to correspond with the week's theme of transportation (boxes of toy vehicles, a toy petrol station, car mat etc.). The details of the children present during the data collection are presented below (see Table 1.1).

Table 1.1 The participants' pseudonyms and ages

Name	Age (in years)
John	5.4
Alice	5.3
Campbell	5.11
Tommy	5.6
Bill	6.1

The video-recorded data was transcribed and then analysed using the ethnomethodological methods of conversation analysis and membership categorisation (Heritage, 1984; Sacks, 1992). These methods allow for an in-depth analysis of the interaction, providing insight into how social orders and structures within the interaction are constructed.

The children in the preparatory year setting used a variety of strategies to govern their peers, including use of verbal and non-verbal language; developing or drawing on adult and child-formulated rules and social orders of the classroom; and manipulating materials and

places. Of particular interest was how the children created their own places within the adult-constructed space of home-corner. Five children (see Table 1.1) were present during the interactional episode. Resources, such as toy vehicles and a toy petrol station, had been placed in the area for general use. Soon after entering the area, the children began to create their own places. The children initiated this process by claiming toy vehicles as their own and then by placing them in certain areas which then too became theirs. Once toys and places were claimed, they were effectively out-of-bounds to anyone other than the claimant. The owner of the toys and place had the authority to deny or permit access to these. The following extracts of data demonstrate how this situation unfolded.

Extract 1: The claiming of place is initiated

1. John: These are my - these are my cars ((pulls 2 blue fire-engines onto his lap)) (you can't steal) their home. 'cause their home is (.) you can't steal these fire-engines home. ((puts fire-engines inside the toy petrol station))
...
7. Campbell: John I've got a car and it can't fit in my garage ((referring to a space near the far wall))

John initiated the claiming of toys and materials, when he placed the toy cars inside the toy petrol station and called this petrol station "their home". He also emitted a warning that this place was out-of-bounds for other players ("(you can't steal) their home"), introducing the rule into the game that players could take ownership of certain places and exercise authority over these places. Campbell too indicated that he had ownership of an area, "the garage", or a place by the wall. He followed John's claiming materials and space as one's own property. In this extract we can see that by gathering materials (the toy cars and fire-engines) in certain places, both John and Campbell shape the space in ways that govern others without resistance.

The children continued to establish their own places within the adult-constructed space, drawing upon strategies to protect their places from peers and thereby enact governance within the area. The following extract provides an example of how the children protected their places and regulated the behaviour of their peers.

Extract 2: Protection of place

158. Tommy: ((moves towards to Alice's place/pile of cars in the corner. Picks up a red car)).
Oh, ye:ah!
159. Alice: ((turns around, moves towards Tommy)) NO, that's mine! That's MY Pile! NO! ((takes the car off Tommy and drops it on the pile))
160. Tommy: Oh, that was mine ((reaches for the car again))
161. Alice: No (.) that's mine that's mine. That's my cars (..) that was my pile. That's my pile ((turns around, so that back is against the wall and is facing Tommy, with the pile of cars beneath her))
162. Tommy: ((moves away, picks up a toy person)) (.1) This is a boy (1) yes.

In this extract, Tommy tried to gain ownership of a toy car by moving to Alice's place, where she had accumulated a pile of cars, and attempted take these. Alice quickly defended her pile of vehicles, proclaiming her ownership of the vehicles both verbally, through imperatives, and physically (taking the car away from Tommy). Alice moved quickly and forcefully in this particular situation, speaking loudly and emphatically taking on a superordinate role. Tommy attempted to reclaim ownership over the toy car. Alice refuted his statement, using an unmitigated response, beginning the utterance with an outright "no" and then positioned herself on top of the pile of cars while maintaining eye-contact with Tommy. Tommy appeared to accept Alice's rule, signified by his moving away and choosing another toy, one that had not been claimed by the other players. Such strategies were used throughout the interactive

episode by the children to regulate each other's play that occurred within the area. The children also drew upon teacher constructed rules and social orders, such as sharing. However, even within the classroom space framed by the teacher, the children were able to create their own social spaces and accompanying social orders (Gracey, 1972).

What does this mean for educators?

The extracts examined within this paper show children as competent participants who take an active role in shaping their interactive environment. The children of this study were able to govern their peers' movements by creating certain places where they could store their claimed cars. The children then could control who had access to these and they had the right to deny access to other players, thereby controlling the interactive play space (Whalen, 1995). In this way, the children enacted governance over particular places and materials, as well as governing the actions of their fellow players in relation to these places and materials.

Young children spend increasing amounts of time in adult constructed spaces, such as schools and child-care centres; spaces which have been created for them by adults, and imbued with adult conceptions. As educators of young children, we impose many forms of governance within the classroom and are involved in creating spaces for children - do we, though, consider how young children themselves enact governance and construct their own places within the spaces that have been designed for them? As we develop our understandings of the complex ways in which children are able to interact, their ability at enacting governance over their peers and competence at creating their own places, this may well influence our teaching practice. The findings of this study are significant as they demonstrate children's own competence and abilities in shaping and creating spaces in which they interact everyday and explicate the complex social orders that children can co-construct in an early childhood classroom.

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The Mural Project

By Leith McDougall with Felicity MacArdle and Sharon Clark

As part of my Bachelor of Education studies at the School of Early Childhood, QUT, I am enrolled in the arts pathway. EAB416 is one of arts units in this pathway, taught by an artist/teacher team, Sharon Clark and Felicity Mcardle. Through this unit, they encouraged me to spend time exploring my particular developing interests in arts education in the early years. I had become focussed on looking for alternatives to the traditional methods of creating curriculum, pedagogy and documentation in early years programmes. Following are some extracts from my assignment notes and reflections, on what I learned through this study.

On August 1, 2005 I visited Campus Kindergarten for the first time. I was there to observe and document the collaborative visual arts project unfolding in the Kindy room. I watched, listened, asked questions, read through the displayed documentation, experienced the interactions, and participated in their program. I reflected on the processes the children and their teachers undertook to create the Campus Kindy learning experience. These processes included negotiating, investigating, observing, recording, exploring, researching, sharing, discussing, designing, making, evaluating and many more.

I reflected on what I was learning from this experience, and how I could apply it to my own philosophy and pedagogy. I realised I was finally being part of a teaching and learning approach/philosophy that I have heard about and really wanted to see in practice.

The CK Kindy room teaching team (Robert, Sharon and Sarah) take a flexible, emergent, negotiated approach to curriculum planning . The interests of both the children and teachers are discussed and recorded during the daily planning meeting. The interests of the teachers take the form of meaningful investigative projects often originating from observations of the children's play and explorations. The teachers' personal interests in visual arts and environmental sustainability are also reflected in the curriculum. Staff interact with the children guiding and scaffolding their investigations, and promoting play, creativity and risk-taking.

Several documents and early childhood theories guide the curriculum and pedagogy at Campus Kindy. These include: the theories of Gardner and Malaguzzi who believe all children are competent and communicate their ideas and strengths in multiple ways; Vygotsky who believes children learn through scaffolding and interacting with more capable others. Campus Kindy also draws from the Foundation Learning Areas described in the Preschool Curriculum Guidelines (1998) and the principles assessed by the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (National Childcare Accreditation Council, 2001).

This is the story of one project which developed during the time I spent at CK. This art project provides open-ended learning opportunities in a supportive, motivating and safe learning environment. It empowers children to make choices about their learning, contribute at their own level, create, share and respond to art, learn new skills and vocabulary, and investigate and express their own ideas and theories. Projects like this one promote the acquisition and construction of knowledge, the mastery of social and basic skills, the strengthening of important intellectual and social dispositions, and the development of desirable feelings (Katz & Chard, 2000, p. 54).
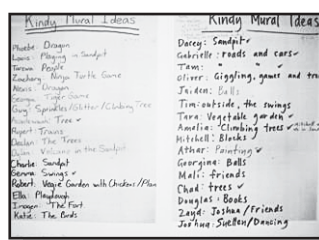
Beginning of project

The teachers selected the project based on the children's interests in painting and drawing from their explorations of different types of visual arts media earlier in the year. They aimed to combine and strengthen the children's developing artistic knowledge and skills, as well as support and enhance their self- and social-awareness (Wright, 2003). The teachers brainstormed their goals for the project and recorded these in a web which became the planning foundation for the project.

To introduce the project, Sharon read the picture book For the love of Vincent (Northeast, 1996) to the kindy friends. The Kindy friends discussed painting and Van Gogh, sharing their diverse experiences, ideas and current understandings. Sharon guided the children through the processes of analysing, critiquing and contextualising (McArdle, 2003) focussing their observations, discussion and learning on the art works and artist.

Sharon launched the idea of painting a collaborative mural representing Campus Kindy. She invited the Kindy friends to share their ideas on the subject.

Research for the mural

The children conducted research in the field using a variety of modes for gathering data including digital cameras, and a variety of quality painting and drawing materials. Their primary source of information was through direct observation of their chosen subject matter.

The children used the photos and their initial sketches as the basis for further observational drawings. Their drawings and paintings became increasingly more focused and detailed. Sharon extended the children's visual language and skills, made suggestions, and, at times, explicitly directed them to specific tasks which she believed would support their developing skills and artistry.

Sharon gave Asantawah and Chad a larger piece of paper and a permanent marker and suggested they create a larger representation of their ideas. She then suggested developing their image further with acrylic paint.

Designing the mural

Sharon organised a large piece of paper for the mural design. The children referred to their earlier images as they added to the design. Concepts of spatial awareness were explored, and Sharon urged the children to think about where other images were going to fit. As the paper filled up, she guided them in locating a section to draw their image and pointed out to them the importance of respecting other images and not overlapping.

An expert

Another primary source of information for the children's research is experts in the field. Similar to the atelierista in Reggio Emilia schools, the kindy teacher Sharon is a practising artist who guides, scaffolds and documents the children's learning and is able to help them with questions and suggestions.

Stretching the canvas

Sharon brought in a large wooden frame and a piece of canvas she had at home. She introduced this part of the process by initiating a discussion reflecting on prior steps in the process. She explained what they were going to, modelling and talking the children through the process. Many mathematical as well as art

concepts were introduced in the course of the conversation that followed.

The children discussed the size of the frame and compared it to their own size by standing beside it. They measured the required size of the canvas against the size of the frame and the mural design. They took turns to cut the canvas. A discussion about different types of scissors occurred when the paper scissors they had wouldn't cut the canvas.

I steadied the staple gun and held the canvas tight while Gabrielle stapled the canvas to the frame. The stretching, preparing and painting of a canvas were unfamiliar experiences to the children and they relied on Sharon for instructions. Other, less adult structured learning occured during the conversations children have with peers and adults. Kindy friends regularly share their experiences, thoughts and ideas about the project via: informal chats; reflections with peers, teachers and parents; and more formal discussions during the daily group reflection and evaluation session.

The children used rollers and white acrylic to prime the canvas.

Mapping out the design

The children helped Sharon set up the environment ready to continue mapping their images on the canvas. The mural design was set up where it could be referred to by the Kindy friends as they mapped out their image.


Sharon added water to the acrylic paint and explained, "This is thin acrylic paint and you are going to use line to outline your shape." Together, the children and Sharon looked for a space where each could map out their images. Sharon says to Gemma, "This is your section here. You might think about the space you have remembering to respect the other friends work and not overlap.....You could wipe the side of your brush so that it doesn't drip down the canvas."

Gemma: "I'm going to do the two girls on the two swings."

Sharon suggested, "Why don't you let the paint dry today and we can add the colour to it next time."

Painting the mural

Prior to painting the mural, Sharon facilitated an experience where the children could explore and enhance their knowledge of the visual arts element of colour. Sharon introduced a lot of arts related vocabulary during this process. The colour resource book was set up alongside the paints and the canvas for the Kindy friends to refer to.
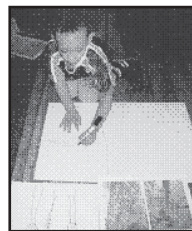
Sharon, Karly and I each guided a child through a colour mixing episode. We noticed the children's actions were very different and dependent on their level of understanding. Some children were still at the exploratory level, adding more and more paint for the sheer joy of watching it change

colour, not really interested in applying it to the canvas. Others were trying to make a colour specifically for the mural.

My reflections

Throughout this project, my big questions were:
- How much control and direction should a teacher take?
- Are the children missing opportunities to solve their own problems because we give too much direction?
- When should we expect them to exercise more control? (For example do we keep reminding them to wash their brushes before adding another colour?)
- Does this take all the fun out of exploring colour? (Maybe, but it doesn't waste as much paint.)

There is a fine line between too much teacher guidance and not enough.

Secondary sources of information

Sharon organised a drawing area. Each friend's visual diary was kept here. The space could be used to look through Visual Arts resource books or draw in their Visual diaries. Drawing materials and book displays are changed regularly. Sharon hopes this area will inspire the children to further develop their drawing and artwork whether it is from imagination, memory or observation.

Completion?

This project is yet to be completed. As a culminating event the teachers will arrange for the mural to be displayed at Campus Kindy. In this way the children will have the opportunity to share their project with their families and other members of the Campus Kindy community.

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Developing Social Competence in Young Children

by Jeanette Harrison

"Early childhood educators have a critical role in developing social competence in young children. We have evidence that if a child is unable to develop effective social relationships with their peers by about 6 years of age, then that child may be at risk of encountering later academic failure and dropping out of school.

Young children require quality environments in order to thrive socially, academically and emotionally"

Early childhood educators work closely with both the child and the family in these formative years. They are in this unique position to contribute to raising a more effective, caring and capable future community from a number of different perspectives.

likely to be involved in inappropriate social behaviours (misbehaviour), whilst those who feel valued and competent (high self esteem) are more likely to behave acceptably and be socially responsible. We only need to look at studies3 of different parenting styles to see these outcomes! Early childhood educators have a responsibility to establish these self esteem enhancing environments in order to encourage the best possible outcomes for children.

1. The environment that is created in a quality early childhood centre will be developmentally planned to enhance (among other things) children's self esteem, independence, responsibility and prosocial behaviour. Longitudinal studies in the U.S.("Toward a State of Esteem"2) have demonstrated the correlation between self esteem and behaviour: children with low self esteem ("as I am I'm not okay") are more

2. Much of young children's learning comes through their social play with peers, the response they gain from adults and the role modeling of others around them. When children are able to accept limits within acceptable boundaries, learn skills of problem solving rather than conflict, show respect for other children and adults, animals and the environment, they are on a "treadmill" that I refer to as "a cycle of encouragement"4. The more encouraged they feel (and I clearly distinguish between praise and encouragement) the greater improvement in social, emotional and academic behaviour.

3. Relationships are developed in early childhood centres which can nurture and support the whole family. For many new

parents this is their first experience with young children and they value supportive assistance from responsive professionals. When educators can promote successful parenting practices, both through their own role modeling with children and also by offering more structured parenting skills programs, then young children's home environments can be improved. Thus again allowing children (and parents) to experience "the cycle of encouragement".

4. Again the U.S. study "Toward a State of Esteem" indicates that where parents develop appropriate parenting skills, creating home environments that encourage freedom whilst setting firm but fair boundaries or limits, practice effective communication and conflict resolution, and demonstrate respectful behaviours, then children are more likely to develop into adults who "live responsibly ... against the lures of crime, violence, substance abuse, child abuse and failure".

5. Early childhood educators can lead by example, or become advocates, for high quality infant and preschool programs that are responsive to the changing needs of contemporary families thus assisting young children develop all the above.

6. When professionals have a sound knowledge and understanding of children's behaviour then they are more able to respond in an effective and encouraging manner. The basic motivation behind children's social behaviour is the subconscious need to belong, be accepted, gain recognition.5 Educators who can learn to recognize children's needs and develop responsive skills to manage behaviour, using encouragement, effective limit setting and consequences (among other strategies) will provide an environment where young children will thrive - thus creating a strong foundation for our future community.

It is for these reasons that I believe early childhood educators are in a unique position and have a responsibility to children, parents and the community, to create appropriate self esteem enhancing programs in order that we effectively nurture our future generations.

Jeannette Harrison
Director - Corporate & Family Care
From paper presented at the C&K Conference
Children & Communities Wearing the Fabric of Society

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Language Acquisition and Young Children.
Do they need a Second Language?

by Ronit Baras

Primary vs. Secondary Language

For years, people have been researching the acquisition of languages. I believe that distinguishing between primary and secondary language is the key to understanding the power of language.

Primary languages are stored in an inner, protected place in the brain. Secondary languages are stored in a place closer to the surface of the brain. First, second and third primary languages are learned by creating patterns from a load of seemingly random information, while secondary languages are learned by using the primary language as a reference and building a "translation net" to map the secondary language back to it.

Experts still argue about the critical age for forming primary languages, but all estimate it to end between the ages of 7 and 12. This leaves the early childhood educators to deal with one of the most important factors of the education in the most critical age - the early years.

Language Acquisition - Myth vs. Fact

Popular belief is that children learn languages better than adults do.

In fact, adults are better at learning secondary languages because they have better pattern-matching techniques. By the time they learn a secondary language, they already have an established language they can relate to.

Young children, on the other hand, are better at learning primary languages. Their "machine" for sorting masses of information into language boxes is very efficient at an early age. In fact, children can have several primary languages, with the amazing ability to switch from one to another.

Secondary Languages in Primary School

Based on this, secondary languages in primary or secondary schools are not very successful because they are taught while the primary language is not completely formed. On the other hand, immersion programs, if done fully, are wonderful and can be very beneficial to the children, because they create primary languages. Due to the nature of the language learning process, immersion in early childhood is the most effective and successful way to teach another (primary) language.

It is very important to note that secondary languages are an excellent tool to enhance cultural and social skills. Teaching secondary languages at every stage of a person's life "oils" the thinking process but does not give the students the full advantage of another language.

Bilingual Children and Academic Achievement

While working with children around the world, I observed that bilingual children had advanced thinking skills. I found that having to deal with a second primary language did not bother children with learning difficulties. Bilingual children had better analytic abilities, better memory skills, broader general knowledge and one major factor of emotional intelligence: flexibility. Since they had a better language machine, they displayed better skills at other "languages," like Maths, Music, Logic and Computers.

International Programs

During my work in Thailand and Singapore, in order to create a program to enhance intelligence, I studied the international program thoroughly. In my research, I found that children in those programs generally had high academic achievements. I discovered that the success of the program was based mostly on two components:

- The program in the international school emphasised emotional intelligence - flexibility, acceptance, tolerance and altruism. The school year included only 169 days, during most of which the teachers and students worked on cultural events and worldwide issues. They had a major festival, event, party or presentation once a week

- Most kids were at least bilingual

The main idea behind the international program was that all kids were already made from the right material: high emotional intelligence and a second primary language.

While school emphasised the emotional intelligence, parents contributed their share of the education by giving their children the advantage of a second primary language. Together, this created children with "big heads," children with sophisticated "language machines."

Approaches towards Multilingualism
In some places around the world, communities that stick together in the same language environment are not able to adjust. In the Persian community in Los Angeles, for example, there is a big group of people that can't speak English, even after 20 years of living in an English-speaking environment. They use a Farsi Yellow Pages directory, watch Farsi channels, listen to Farsi news, read Farsi papers and thus still pretend to be living in Iran. The lack of integration into society limits these people's options for employment and self-sufficiency and creates an unnecessary burden on the government.

At the same time, their children have no problem learning both English and Farsi. This gives them the emotional and practical advantages of meaningful communication with both cultures.

Seeing only the dark side of such communities, the Australian government tried to prevent segregated ethnic environments and actively encouraged non-English speakers to use English as their home language.
In Melbourne, I taught children with speech problems. Upon arrival in Australia, their parents had been strongly advised to switch to

English, but had not been able to communicate properly in English. These children were therefore exposed at home to very basic English that was spoken incorrectly and with a foreign accent. At the same time, they lost the opportunity to learn a strong primary language during the critical period in their life. This put them at a disadvantage later on, to the point where they needed government-sponsored help.

In some cases, this forced change to using English contributed to cultural devastation, like in the Aboriginal communities all around Australia.

The Australian government invests millions of dollars to enhance academic achievement and cultural awareness, while in the field there are many reports of parents who are "forbidden" from talking with their kids in their primary language. Unfortunately, instead of using the "cheap" resource of primary foreign languages for enhancing intelligence and cultural awareness, there is a trend to minimise migrants' use of primary languages.

While communities like the Persian community of L.A. are a burden on the government, eliminating the migrants' primary languages causes a bigger burden on migrant families and deteriorates all aspects of home education. Parents, who are unable to contribute to their children's education in the language of their values, perceive the system as the enemy. They believe the system does not value them and work against it. Instead of collaboration between parents and the education system, there is a contradiction of values, which significantly increases the need for government support.

Culture and Language Challenges Faced by Migrants
Outside their countries of origin, migrants face conflicts between keeping their culture and adjusting to the local customs.

- Migrant families face many communication challenges with their kids. They find it very hard to pass on feelings, ideas, beliefs, morals and values in a secondary language. Parents are not fully understood by their children, because of lack of cultural understanding. Since culture is formed in

the primary-language "place," this misunderstanding causes conflict. Parents report they feel inferior and ashamed in their relationships with their kids and are not able to take part in their children's education. Families report that in a secondary language (English) they communicate at a basic level with their children, and are therefore not able to support their education

- Another problem they face is dealing with family members who can't speak English (children can't speak to grandparents). People who do not speak the children's language can no longer be resources for them, which puts a burden on the early childhood system

- Later on, peer pressure makes teenagers avoid speaking their home language

The system reports that children of migrants are a challenge compared to English-speaking children, because migrants cannot support their children's education in a secondary language. The parents' primary language is perceived as a barrier, rather then an asset, when the main vehicle for education is the primary language.

The Solution

The advantage of the international programs in Singapore and Thailand was that they didn't put any pressure on the students to adapt to the local culture. Every culture received its fair share of the cultural curriculum. Children were not ashamed to be part of their culture and were encouraged to speak their home language.

The Solution to the above challenges is to encourage family languages to enhance communication at home. Family languages must be primary, to ease the flow of communication. Parents will be able to pass on values and culture, and children will be able to communicate with their parents using the "language of the heart." In this scenario, instead of educating the children outside of their home environment only, their education can be supported at home. By allowing parents to take a major part in their children's education, we can create a multi-dimensional education where parents and education system, collaborate into creating "big heads" with high academic achievement, emotional intelligence and cultural awareness.

Summary

- It is important to distinguish between primary and secondary languages
- Having an additional primary language promotes academic achievement and emotional intelligence
- Because of the nature of the language learning process, immersion in early childhood is the most effective and successful way to teach another (primary) language
- Feelings, values, needs, ideas, beliefs and culture are formed in a primary language place and a primary language is formed in the same way (sorting ability in a critical age)
- The ability of parents to pass on feelings, values, needs, ideas, beliefs and culture is crucial to the development of children, especially in the early years
- One of the ways to form an even relationship between the education system and parents and to enhance the collaboration between them is to encourage multilingualism and to use the parents as a resource by valuing and supporting their culture - their language
- Encouraging parents to keep their primary languages alive with their children will promote communication, pride, academic achievement and cultural awareness

About the Author

Ronit Baras has a bachelor of education in Special Education and 15 years of experience in learning difficulties and gifted children, especially in the early years. She specialises in writing programs to enhance intelligence and "produce" gifted children. She's lived with her husband and 3 children in Israel, the United States, Thailand, Singapore and Australia. Each of her kids was born in a different place in the world and they are all bilingual. She owned and directed a child care centre in Israel. She was the academic director of an early childhood centre in Singapore. She was a teacher and an educational consultant in Australia, USA and Thailand. She's a presenter on life coaching, education, language and culture.

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Early Childhood Teacher's Beliefs about Teaching and Learning and the Factors that Impact on their Practice

Catherine Meehan - QUT - School of Early Childhood

Introduction

Teachers' beliefs about learning and teaching underpin classroom practice (Charlesworth, Hart, Burts, & Hernandez, 1991). An understanding of this complex relationship and the factors that impinge assists in the development of meaningful professional development for teachers. This paper reports on the preliminary findings of an Australia wide study that investigates the beliefs and practices of early childhood teachers in Catholic schools. Teachers involved in the study were teaching four to six year children in Preschool (QLD), Prep (VIC), Kindergarten (NSW), Reception (SA) and Preprimary (WA). This paper reports a small portion of the data collected during a wider investigation into early childhood teachers beliefs and practice with regard to learning, teaching and Religious Education.

Why study teachers' beliefs and practice?

Stipek and Byler (1997) suggested that early childhood teachers do not always practice what they preach. Similarly, Wood and Bennett (2000) found that studying teachers' beliefs provides an opportunity for teachers to reflect on their own professional learning: "The findings confirm the importance of teachers' voices in confronting the relationship between their theories and practices" (p. 646). The research also examines the factors that impact on teachers' day to day classroom practice.

It is highlighted in the literature, that the relationship between beliefs and practice is complex. Both intrinsic and extrinsic factors impinge on beliefs and practice. Charlesworth et al. (1991) and others identified several factors that are internal to an individual teacher (Smith & Shepard, 1988a; Stipek & Byler, 1997). These include beliefs, knowledge (both theoretical and practical), values, stress, experience, attitudes and feelings of self-worth, self-efficacy, self esteem and locus of control. For example, Spidell-Rusher, McGrevin and Lambiotte (1992), found that Kindergarten teachers perceived an increasing

emphasis on academic skill development and first grade curriculum being pushed down as factors influencing their practice. This intrinsic factor or pressure are teachers' perceptions (real or perceived), an influenced their classroom practice.

Extrinsic factors are more visible and observable. The literature identifies several factors that may influence teachers' beliefs. These include: formal education, social networks, classroom structure, colleagues, principal and school administration, systemic policies and demands, laws and regulations, experience, familiarity with the content of the curriculum area, school climate and philosophy, parents' beliefs and expectations and interactions with children (Abbot-Shim, Lambert & McCarty, 2000; Aston & Hyle, 1997; McMullen, 1999; Smith, 1997; Stipek & Byler, 1997; Tomchin & Impara, 1992). It is these factors that may force a mismatch between beliefs and practice. Early childhood teachers do not always feel free to implement a program which is consistent with their beliefs (Stipek & Byler, 1997) For example, Bryant, Clifford and Peisner (1991) found low levels of developmentally appropriate practice in some classrooms. It was asserted by Bryant et al. (1991), that this was due to limitations in teachers' knowledge and there was in fact a gap between teachers' purported beliefs and classroom practice.

Methodology- Data collection and analysis

Following an extensive review of the literature, a mixed method approach to data collection and analysis was used. There was not one instrument that covered all aspects of the area of study. An instrument grounded in the literature was developed, it assessed teachers' beliefs and practices about children's learning and teaching with regard to early childhood and Religious Education. The instrument collected the following data:
- Demographic details about teachers including gender, age, education and qualifications, and teaching experience;
- Teachers' beliefs about learning;
- Teachers' beliefs about teaching;

- Teachers' beliefs about learning in Religious Education; and,
- Teachers' beliefs about teaching in Religious Education.

For the purpose of the research, the entire population of Early Childhood Teachers (that is, those working with four to six year old children) in Catholic schools in Australia was surveyed. The following table shows the breakdown of potential participants for Phase 1.

Table 1. Location and number of participants

State	No. of schools	No. of Diocese
QLD	181	5
NSW (inc ACT)	444	11
VIC	390	4
WA	125	4
SA	12	1
TAS	27	1
Total	1175	26

The study included teachers from 26 of the 28 Catholic Dioceses in Australia. One diocese from SA and another from the Northern Territory declined the invitation to be involved in the research. The questionnaire items focused on early childhood teacher beliefs about learning and teaching. Following the data analysis of the quantitative data, four teachers were purposefully selected for the qualitative phase of the study.

Three methods were employed to collect data in this phase. Firstly, the observation and documentation of teacher's typical classroom practice using digital photographs with the aid of an audio-tape to record the teachers' classroom practice. Secondly, a semi-structured interview in which the photographs and transcripts were used to stimulate a discussion about what was observed. Thirdly, the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale- Revised Edition (Harms, Clifford & Cryer, 1998) was used to as a measure to evaluate teachers' classroom practice. A grounded theory approach to data analysis was used to explore the patterns and categories that emerged from the data.

Results

Teachers responses to learning items on the questionnaire suggest that they sit somewhere between social-constructivist and behavourist in their beliefs about children's learning. This was confirmed in the teachers comments in open-ended responses and in early data analysis is appears that teachers adapt their beliefs according to the context. Teachers' beliefs about children's learning fell into two main categories. These include: Active, hands on learning and skills based or academic, content learning. Similarly, teachers responded to items in the questionnaire about their beliefs about teaching young children in both the quantitative and qualitative phases of the data collection. Teacher responses were similar to those about learning, suggesting that 2 main categories of beliefs exist. These categories are: Child-centred approaches to teaching and teacher-directed approaches. A majority of the teachers indicated the belief that both approaches were used in their daily classroom practice and this was evident in all four of the case study classrooms. Teachers selected approaches based on the context and objectives for various learning experiences and interactions.

The observation, interview and ECERS-R data provided an insight into teacher's classroom practice. Practice was generally congruent with their stated beliefs. Classroom observations, conversations and interviews with these teachers confirmed the complex nature of teachers beliefs and practice and that in fact all teachers drew on an amalgam of beliefs to teach. When speaking with teachers in the interview, all four had difficulty naming specific child development theories and teaching approaches that influence their teaching. They were all comfortable describing their classroom practice and justifying and discussing their program. With regard to the factors that impact on a teachers ability to teach according to their beliefs, two factors were most prominent. That is factors that support teaching and factors that constrain. Factors that the teachers named that support their ability to teach according to their beliefs include: Principal and administration support, colleagues, networks with other 'similar' teachers in a range of settings, meaningful professional development, supportive families and teacher aide relationship. Parental expectations, being part of a school community, expectations from other colleagues in the upper school about appropriate curriculum content and pedagogy for early childhood settings, physical implications of a 'school' environment, and feeling 'different' from

other teachers were some factors identified by teachers as limiting of hindering their ability to teach according to their beliefs.

In addition, internal factors such as teacher confidence and knowledge in a subject or discipline area had a major influence on their ability to teach according to their beliefs. This was particularly the case in the teaching of Religious Education in the early childhood setting.

Discussion

The results presented reflect an early analysis of the data. However, at this stage it is apparent that the results are linked to three themes presented earlier in the literature review. The themes are presented below:

1. That early childhood teachers educators often have clear ideas about the elements of good programs but have difficulty in articulating their beliefs (Stipek & Byler, 1997; Stipek, Rosenblatt & DiRocco, 1994) this was found to be true in the four case study teachers and also in the extent to which teachers responded to the open ended questions attached to the questionnaire.
2. That external and internal factors identified in the literature impact on teachers' ability to teach according to their beliefs about learning and teaching (e.g. Charlesworth et al., 1991; Stipek & Byler, 1997). The results indicate that that a range of factors support or hinder a teacher's ability to practice what they believed.
3. That there is generally a congruent relationship between teachers beliefs about teaching and learning and their everyday classroom practice (e.g. Bryant, Clifford & Peisner, 1991; Charlesworth et al., 1991; Kemple, 1996; Smith, 1992; Stipek, 1991; Tomchin & Impara, 1992; Smith & Shepard 1988a; Spidell-Rusher, 1988). Teachers' intentions are generally for best practice and grounded in deep beliefs about the best way to support and teach young children. However, in the classroom reality actions sometimes do not reflect their beliefs due to the external and internal factors that impact on their teaching.

Conclusion

Teacher's beliefs and practice are important to study, because they provide insights into the decision-making processes used by teachers. As a teacher educator, this knowledge is useful when thinking about the types of knowledge and processes that pre-service teachers need to develop in order to become effective and reflective teachers who are responsive to young children and to be able to clearly articulate their beliefs and be confident in their classroom practice. This paper draws on a small portion of the data collected in a larger project. There are larger issues which will be discussed in the thesis that cannot be covered within the limitations of the paper.

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Compromised or Competent? *A Longitudinal Study of Twin Children's Social Competencies, Friendship and Behavioural Adjustment*

Karen Thorpe and Susan Danby - Qld University of Technology

Associate Professor Karen Thorpe and Associate Professor Susan Danby (Queensland University of Technology), Professor David Hay (Curtin University) and Dr Elizabeth Stewart (London School of Economics) have been awarded a research grant by the Australian Research Council in the latest round of awards (November 2005). This grant has been awarded to investigate twin children's transition to school with a focus on social competence. Specifically, the social competencies, friendships and behavioural adjustment of twin children will be investigated. The study will be conducted over the next three years (2006-2008), following twin children in preschool through the transition to school. The results of this study will inform the early childhood education community, particularly policy makers, educators and parents about the needs of twin children as they transition to school.

Twinning rates are significantly increasing. In Australia, one in 32 children in preschool will be a twin. The introduction of new technologies in reproductive (e.g. IVF) and neonatal medicine, and the trends to later motherhood, are all associated with increased rates of multiple birth (ABS, 2002). This trend is likely to continue upward and means the need to understand twin children's social and educational needs has become more pressing.

This increase is particularly significant because twins are at greater risk of biological adversity. Amongst multiple births, rates of obstetric and neonatal complications are very much higher (Hay, 2005). A higher rate of overt disability occurs in twins (Hay, 2005) but there may also be subtle effects on development for a larger number of twin children (Pharoah, 2002).

Twin children also experience social adversity (Rutter & Redshaw, 1991; Thorpe, Rutter & Greenwood, 2003). Comparisons with single-born children, even those with closely spaced siblings, indicate that twins experience poorer quality of social interaction within the family (Thorpe et al., 2003). These effects are direct: young twin children spend less time in individual interactions with adults; more time with a child of the same age; have shorter interactions with adults; and experience more parental control and less cognitively stimulating interactions (Rutter & Redshaw, 1991; Thorpe et al, 2003). Further, mothers of twins have increased rates of maternal depression (Thorpe, Golding, MacGillivray & Greenwood, 1991), which can diminish quality of mother-child interaction and adversely affect development (Murray & Cooper, 1997). Many of these effects arise from the increased demands on parents of twins.

There is little documentation of the social world of young twin children outside the family (Stewart, 2003). Thus, it is unknown whether twin children experience greater adversity in the social environment outside the home. Two hypotheses are possible: 1. Risk Hypothesis focuses on higher levels of biological and social adversity experienced by twins. It suggests poor language and social competency would limit social interaction, friendship formation and subsequent developmental outcomes. 2. Competency Hypothesis suggests the twin situation would increase social competence whilst facilitating social interaction and friendships and promoting development. Some recent studies have found support for the competency hypothesis. One study of adolescent twins in Finland, found that peers rated twins as more socially competent (Pulkkinen et al., 2003). Our own study of language (Thorpe, Greenwood, Eivers & Rutter, 2001) indicates that twin children may have higher levels of social understanding gained from their close relationship with their co-twin. This study seeks to address the lack of documentation on the social world of young twins, and will identify whether twinship is a risk or advantage for social development.

This study will also be examining the impact of twinship on the nature and quality of twin children's friendships. Both the Risk and Competency hypotheses emphasise the importance of friendships in mediating positive development and behavioural adjustment. Friends are a cognitive and social resource from children (Danby & Baker, 2001; Hartup, 2000). They provide a context for social skill learning, and are models for later relationship development (Bukowski et al., 1996). Children who have supportive relationships adjust more readily to life transitions, such as the transition to school, while those with friendship difficulties are more likely to encounter adjustment problems (Bukowski et al., 1996; Ladd et al., 1999). There is individual variation in how friends affect development. The identity of the friend and the quality of the relationship are two important factors (Hartup, 2000).

This study will be examining twin children in the transition to school period. This period has been selected for study, as little is known about twin children's social experiences in the transition to school. Further, the transition to school is a critical point in which the importance of family relationships and early learning experiences become apparent (Thorpe et al., 2004). At this point, children experience the challenges of: 1. Increased formality of the learning environment; 2. Expanded peer relationships and reduced adult supervision and intervention (Smith, 2002).

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A Snap Shot of a Rural Japanese Kindergarten

by Sue Webster

The following photos depict the children of the Yasugi Kindergarten in the Matsue District of Japan. It is located a couple of hours north of Hiroshima. The children are aged three to four years old. The kindergarten is attached to the Yasugi Elementary School.
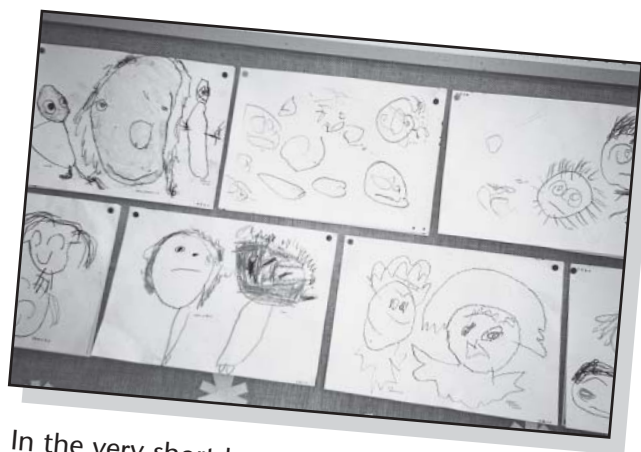
In the very short hour that I had in this classroom, it was clear that these children were operating at a very similar level to Kindergarten children in Queensland.

The space was a little smaller than our typical areas but class size in this case was also small - 16 children. I was informed that this is on the low end of class size scale.

One assistant was looking after these children. The children were attending for a full day session.

The day included indoor and outdoor activities similar to those run in our Kindergarten and Preschools.

The children were a little shy at first because it was thought that I was the first foreigner to converse with them and be in touching distance. I was quickly invited into home area will tugs on my shirt and much Japanese language -none of which I understood - but their intentions were clear. I was made many cups of tea and assorted foodstuff.

Children dragged me to the rather spare collage table to help with a sticky tape problem.

I was then guided to the foam block construction and shown where they kept their belongings. Each personal tray contained a set of felt pens and a small tin of white dough.

The children also had a separate place to hang their coat, hat and water bottle.

The children thoroughly enjoyed the story of Possum Magic read in English by myself and retold in Japanese by a friend, though I am not sure the retold version was quite the way Mem Fox intended. The children and staff at the Yasugi Kindergarten were perfectly delightful and I felt very privileged to spend even a short time with these lovely children.

Title: Poems by Young Australians Volume 3

**Author - Many Talented Australian Children aged 8 to 19**
Illustrations - Bradley Trevor Greive
Forward - Bradley Trevor Greive

'Poems by Young Australians volume 3' is the collection of winning and commended poems from the 2005 Taronga Foundation Poetry Prize. It is the third anthology in this exciting series - volume 1 won the APA Best Designed Children's Non Fiction Award, and volume 2 was a Children' Book Council Notable Book. This book is a delight and a revelation, showcasing the remarkable talent of poets from 8 to 19 years of age. These poets display a deep understanding and appreciation of the world around them - the brilliance and energy of their fresh young minds will take your breath away.

The topics explored by the poems are as diverse as the many and varied forms the poetry takes - from haiku to graphic, visual explorations of language. Many of the poems are inspired by nature. "Nature has always been one of the greatest inspirations for poetry. In fact, it is virtually impossible to appreciate the beauty and wonder of nature without a love of poetry" - Bradley Trevor Greive.

This is a collection to share and enjoy - the very best poems by young people, for people of all ages.
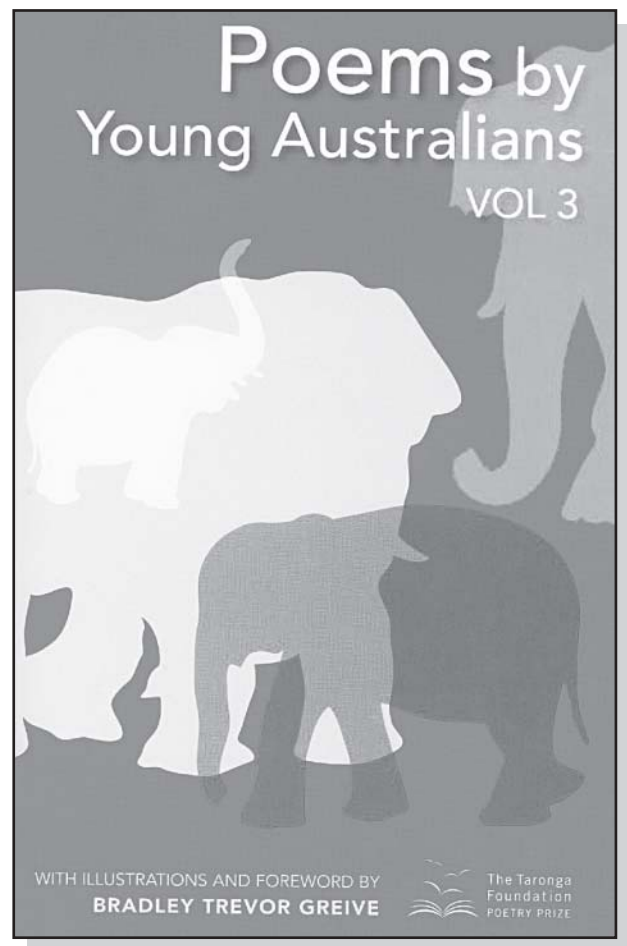
Poems by Young Australians Volume 3

Title: Literacies in Early Childhood - Changing Views Challenging Practice

Author - Laurie Makin and Criss Jones Diaz
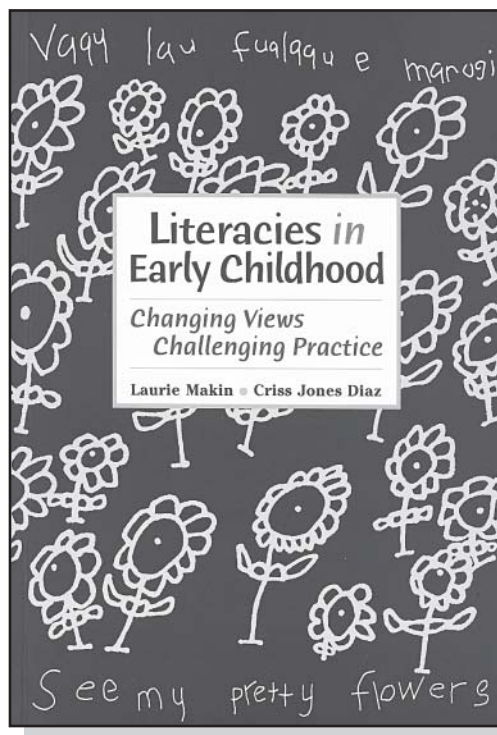**Publisher - MacLennon & Petty**

This book is a very comprehensive text which addresses the changing face of literacy. It features chapters from many contributing authors all of whom write about contemporary theories of literacy and how they inform pedagogical practice.

The book recognises that there have been major philosophical shifts in the traditional perspectives of literacy. As we know, children live in a time when they are constantly confronted with new literacies which has huge implications for our teaching practices. It also highlights the importance of the "early years" and how critical children's home and community experiences are to the acquisition of literacy skills.

The book covers a wide range of topics including literacy frameworks, literacy and diversity and new technologies. All chapters are easy to read and readers are able to choose those topics which are relevant to them.

Of particular interest is the section on "Pathways to literacy". In this section chapters focus on literacy transitions, children as readers and writers and authentic assessment. Many practical ideas and examples are provided in these chapters.

This book is written by Australian and New Zealand authors and therefore the contexts in which the papers are set are recognisable. It was specifically written for undergraduate students and is an easy to read, valuable resource for educators who are interested in changing theories and in the acquisition of literacy skills.

Kim McNamara
Head of Curriculum
Wellers Hill State School

Title: Turn-around Pedagogies: Literacy Interventions for At-risk Students

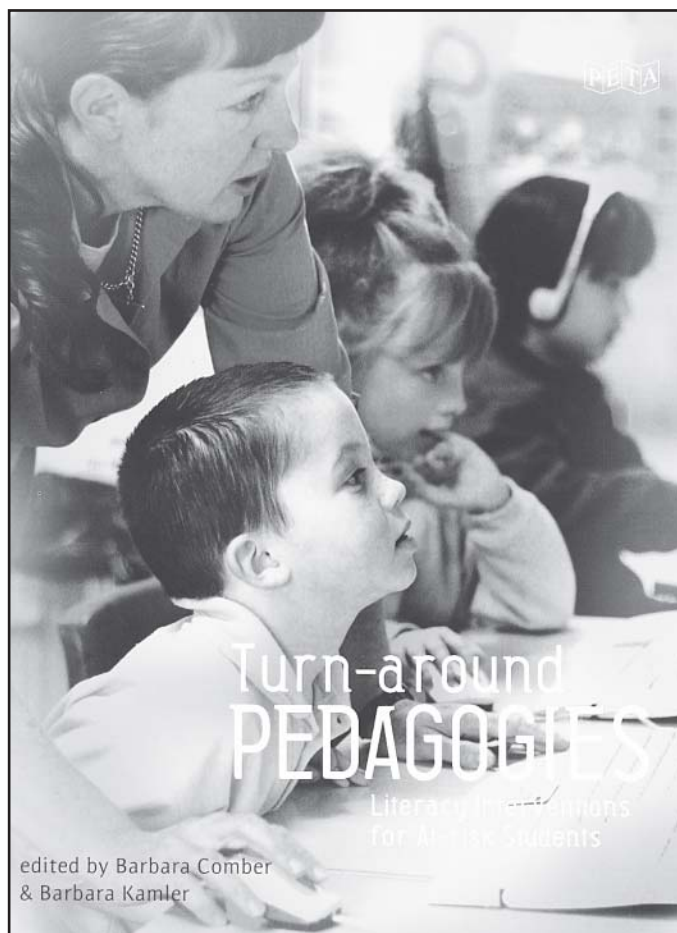**Editors - Barbara Comber & Barbara Kamler**
Publisher - PETA

There has been much talk in recent years of students who are failing to reach identified levels of literacy. Every classroom teacher is aware of a present or past student who is in danger of falling behind their peers in expected reading and writing levels. In this collection of edited case studies, classroom teachers explain how they implemented practical ideas and strategies and embraced students' interests in new technologies, encouraging students to actively take responsibility of their own learning.

According to Robyn Ewing, President of the Primary English Teaching Association (PETA), such a publication, that communicates the real classroom practices of teachers who have integrated the learning needs of students at risk of falling behind in their literacy achievements, has been long overdue.

Robyn Ewing said, "Here is a bool that will inspire teachers to 'turn around' their own teaching.

"In this book of case studies, each of the classroom teachers decided to assress the needs of the 'at-risk' student, making the student central to the class program rather than expecting the student to 'catch up' with the others.

"By engaging with the students themselves and their families, and incorporating students' interests and new media into the program, each of the teachers have shown that a failing in literacy activities can be turned around to re-engage in a most positive way."

ECTA

DATE CLAIMER
Saturday 24 June 2006
ECTA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2006
KEYNOTE SPEAKER -
DR SUE BREDEKAMP

*"**Effective early childhood curriculum and teaching: Staying true to our principles**".*

The Annual ECTA Conference for 2006 will be held on Saturday 24 June at John Paul College, Daisy Hill, Brisbane. This time the Keynote Speaker will be Dr Sue Bredekamp the famous author of "Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs" (1997). She has written many books since then, including "Play and school readiness" (2004) and has just recently co-authored the book "Where Bright Futures Begin" (2005). Sue is currently Director of Research for the Council of Early Childhood Professional Recognition, Washington, DC and Senior Program Advisor for RISE Learning Solutions, Cincinnati, Ohio.

With the movement toward state funded Prep classes, the emphasis on a uniform curriculum framework, and the increased demand for acccountability, early childhood professionals and teacher educators confront new challenges as well as opportunities. The keynote address will present key findings of research on effective early childhood curriculum and teaching and describe ways the curriculum can be adjusted to become more effective, while also preserving the fundamental values of the culture of early childhood education, including emphasis on the whole child and play. This theme will be further extended on in a Masterclass to be held in the morning.

There will also be 2 other Masterclasses - Ian Lilico (Boys in Education) and Phil and Susie Splitter (Music) at least 15 other Workshops to choose from dealing with a range of professional and curriculum issues. There will also be an exciting and interesting Lunch-Time Program.

Conference brochures will be posted to ECTA members sometime in late March but at least two weeks before the general mail-out. This will give ECTA members a chance to register early and get their first or second Masterclass/Workshop preference. The 2006 Annual ECTA Conference looks to be another successful professional learning event. Look out for further information on the ECTA web-site www.ecta.org.au over the next few months.