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*Learning and teaching in the early childhood years*

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## ***From the President***

2006 has been another exciting year for ECTA and we now have over 600 members. This year we introduced free Student Membership for full-time students who are studying early childhood at a tertiary institution. Nearly 150 students took up this offer with approximately 30 choosing to pay extra for the journals and DVDs. Hopefully this initiative will see some of those students renew their ECTA membership when they graduate.

The AGM will see the last of our very successful eight Videolinq Workshops for 2006. Our partnership with the School of Early Childhood at QUT and the Open Learning Institute of TAFE (now part of Brisbane North Institute of TAFE) has allowed ECTA the opportunity to present a wide range of professional learning events with quality speakers all over Queensland. This year we have been able to include some of the more remote areas of Emerald, Cherbourg, Blackwater, Moranbah and Mareeba as part of these workshops. Hopefully this arrangement is giving some ECTA members, QUT students and TAFE students, greater access to professional learning opportunities that they wouldn't normally be able to attend. We have also been fortunate to be able to record four of these workshops and send them to all ECTA members as DVDs. Please email us at [info@ecta.org.au](mailto:info@ecta.org.au) with suggestions of future topics and/or presenters.

Our E News, collated by our Web Weaver Gail Halliwell, goes from strength to strength as we refine the layout and relevant content. It allows ECTA members quicker access to a wider range of professional learning activities and news. The new look ECTA website, managed by Gail and her committee, also provides members with easy reference to professional learning events and issues.

As I mentioned in my last report, another successful ECTA Annual Conference was held at



John Paul College this year. Again, I would like to thank my Co-convenor Robbie Leikvold and the other committee members for their time and valuable contributions in making this such an outstanding event.

ECTA's other communication and professional learning mechanism, the Educating Young Children (EYC) journal, is also providing members with

a high quality reference to professional learning events and issues. Lynne Moore and the Editorial Panel have reviewed many of the processes used to collate the journal, and as a result, it is being produced in a more timely and efficient manner.

The Digital Photography Mentoring Project was another one of our successful initiatives undertaken this year. Our Mentor and ECTA Vice President, Kim Walters, visited nearly 20 ECTA members over the year to assist them in developing digital photography portfolios. The feedback from the Mentorees has been very positive. We hope to secure some further funding next year to enable this project to continue.

Our representation on various committees e.g. Child Care Skills Formation Strategy (CCSFS), QSA's Early Years Curriculum Reference Group, the SEEDS Project, QSA's Early Childhood SAS, ECA's Under Eights Week and the Joint Council of Queensland Teacher Associations (JCQTA), has given ECTA a much higher profile at both the state and national levels.

We continue to work with the other Queensland early childhood organisations, C&K and ECA, to promote each other's various events and work in partnership wherever possible. This year we sponsored Ian Wallace to attend the C&K Regional Conferences in Cairns and Rockhampton and we also sponsored the

KITE Theatre group to participate in ECA's Under Eights Week. Just recently, the three organisations partnered to host a seminar by Dr Paula Barrett. It is important that we present a united front on the major issues affecting early childhood professionals.

I would like to thank four of our Life Members - Yvonne Davis (journal packing and posting), Gail Halliwell (Coordinating Committee member and Web Weaver Coordinator), Noeleen Christensen (Conference assistant and Graduation Pack collation and posting) and last but not least, our new Life Member Pam Fulmer, for her assistance at the Conference. These people are all great assets to the Association and justly deserve their Life Membership.

Over the last three years we have been fortunate to have had administrative support from Lorelei and David Broadbent and their team at Agenda Management. Unfortunately for us, they are moving on to bigger and better ventures at a national level and will no longer be able to provide their services to ECTA in 2007. However, we have just signed an agreement with Sandra and Barry Kenman from Edserve to provide ECTA with a similar range of administrative support. I am confident that Edserve will provide ECTA members with professional and quality service.

However, this secretariat change does mean a change to most of our contact details (see inserted flyer for new postal address and phone numbers) although the ECTA website and email addresses will remain the same. Consequently, we will be redesigning most of our stationary, so keep your eyes out for our new look brochures, bookmarks, stickers etc. in 2007.

The outcomes of the AGM discussion by Patricia Connell *Where to from here with Prep Year professional development?* will be used to inform our annual Strategic Planning meeting on Saturday 9 December. At this meeting we bring together all members of the various ECTA Sub-Committees to discuss ECTA's future directions and activities for 2007. Obviously, with the introduction of Prep in 2007, we regard this as

one of our main professional learning foci, while remembering that ECTA does not only represent Prep teachers but many other Early Childhood professionals from all sectors. This meeting will be held at the Australian Dental Association of Queensland (ADAQ) and I would like to thank Lyn Hunt (Immediate Past President) and the staff of ADAQ for their continuing support in allowing ECTA to meet in this very well equipped and welcoming venue, free of charge.

The AGM this year will see significant changes to the ECTA Coordinating Committee as we try to implement our succession plan and encourage new and younger members. Various Committee position descriptions have been developed this year by our Secretary Gary Davey and have been placed on the website to give prospective Committee members an idea of what each role entails. I would like to thank all of the Coordinating Committee members (Kim Walters, Gary Davey, Shae Conomos, Lyn Hunt, Gail Halliwell, Lynne Moore, Bronwyn MacGregor and Ingrid Nicholson) for their support and contributions to the management of ECTA over 2006. I will be stepping down as President but will remain on the committee as Immediate Past President and Conference Co-Convenor. I have enjoyed my twelve years as either President or Vice President of ECTA and have seen the Association grow from strength to strength while facing some significant challenges. I wish Kim Walters and the incoming committee further success and growth.

Thank you



Toni Michael

## ***From the Editorial Panel***



Welcome to our final journal for 2006. We hope that you have enjoyed reading the many articles and stories written and shared by your colleagues in early childhood. In this edition, we once again feature a range of articles from the 2006 ECTA

conference held in Brisbane in June. Ian Lillico provides some useful advice for both teachers and parents about children's behaviour. Di Nailon and Allana Cartmill-Milne share a story about professional portfolios while Terry Wally shares her school's experiences in exploring curriculum through the numeracy block and Suzie Davies-Splitter provides some insight into the importance of music in the early childhood program.

Charlotte Bowley and Jenny Clarke explore contemporary approaches to planning, evaluating and documenting the early childhood program; while Gillian Schroeder examines sexuality in the early years. Finally, Jill Burgess, in International perspectives, evaluates student's responses to New Zealand's National Diploma in Teaching (Early Childhood Education Pasifika).

This edition also features the final instalment of our State Preschool series. This time Debbie Gahan remembers the period 1972-2006 through children's memories of their experiences in Queensland's Preschools - a fitting farewell as we near the end of 2006 and the last remaining weeks of state preschools in Queensland.

Once again our teacher stories provide insight into the reality and diversity of roles within our profession. In this edition, Carleen de Jong from Freshwater State Preschool and Jasmine Richards from Doomadgee State School, both recipients of sponsorships to attend the 2006

conference, share their experiences as teachers in regional and remote Queensland. While Marilyn Beale shares the C&K Gundoo Mirra Community Kindergarten Under eight's 'Murri Kids in the Park'.

As always our ECTA regional groups have been busy co-ordinating professional learning for their members with Hervey Bay, Fitzroy and Gladstone providing news from their regions.

Finally, I would like to make special mention of both Pam Fulmer our 2006 Life membership recipient and Lindy Austin outgoing member of the EYC Editorial panel and long time member of the ECTA co-ordinating committee. Lindy will be leaving Australia shortly to return home to New Zealand. We thank her for her enthusiasm for ECTA and know that with Lindy in New Zealand we will be exploring ways to bring you news of Early Childhood from the land of the long white cloud.

As this journal goes to print the ECTA co-ordinating committee are beginning forward planning for 2007. Just as we are thinking ahead, perhaps you too could consider how the EYC journal might assist in promoting your service or project by submitting an article to share with others. We welcome all contributions for consideration by the editorial panel, particularly those real stories that reflect the diversity and breadth of the early childhood profession. Whether you work with babies, toddlers, preschoolers, school age children; or in support services for families of young children or in adult education programs for those working in early childhood services, we would be interested to know your story. We look forward to hearing from you.

In the meantime, we wish all of our readers a very peaceful Christmas and restful New Year and look forward to the changes and challenges that 2007 will no doubt bring.

Lynne Moore on behalf of the Editorial team.

## ***Life membership recipient 2006***

***Pam Fulmer***

After graduating from Sydney Kindergarten Teachers College, I started my teaching career at a double unit Community Kindergarten in the Sydney suburb of Bexley. This was a great centre for a new graduate as the parents were very supportive and enthusiastically involved in the running of the centre. I stayed at the centre for six years.

I moved to Brisbane following my marriage and took up the position of Director at a C&K centre at Chelmer. This was a new challenge for me and while many things were the same in this double unit as the centre I had come from there were also many new regulations, ideas and approaches to get to know. I stayed at this centre for four years.

I had a two and a half years break for travelling and family. However, I was starting to miss teaching and, half way through the year, I started at another C&K centre at Herston and remained there for the next 16 years. This was my first experience at working in a single unit centre and at first it felt strange and isolated being the only teacher at the centre. I began attending regional teachers meetings and getting to know the teachers in my area and appreciated this new contact.

After a few years at this centre I changed to a smaller and closer regional network and it was at these meetings that I met Carole Wild and my association with ECTA began. I joined the Conference Committee with quite a bit of trepidation as I felt I had very little to offer and I don't think I did offer anything in the first two years. As time went on I slowly became more involved and it was during this period that I became aware that the Executive Committee was looking for a treasurer.

I was unable to attend the AGM. However, I had made the comment to Carole that, if



things were desperate, I would take on the position. Needless to say it was mine.

Soon after I took on this role, ECTA and QUT had a joint venture with the Science Kit projects and things really started to get very busy. I stayed on both committees for a few years. However, being on both committees and working was proving a little difficult and I resigned as Treasurer. I

became Conference Convenor a few years later after a process of attrition and at first wondered how I would be able to follow the great work done by my predecessors. However, I was not alone as I was part of a great committee and that made things so much easier.

I have thoroughly enjoyed (well mostly) my time "at ECTA" and I value the strong friendships that have evolved and the challenges that have arisen when putting together professional development opportunities. I am continually amazed and proud of what ECTA has done, and is doing, as it needs to be remembered that everyone working on these committees is a volunteer and is in the workforce.

I recommend to everyone to get involved in organising professional development opportunities either at a regional level or for a wider audience. ECTA is always looking for more committee members and, with new technology (e.g. email), distance need not be an issue. So come on – "give it a go". I thought I had nothing to offer and found out that everyone has something to offer.

To Toni and her Committee I would like to extend my appreciation on receiving my Life Membership. To say I am overwhelmed and honoured is an understatement.

## State Preschool Education 1972-2006: Children's Memories of Preschool

### Debbie Gahan – School of Early Childhood QUT



Debbie Gahan graduated from BKTC in 1975 and taught in a range of Kindergarten, Preschool and Child Care settings in Qld and the ACT. She has been a lecturer in the School of Early Childhood at QUT (formerly BCAE) for 21 years, teaching primarily in the areas of kindergarten/ preschool curriculum and practices, family studies and the history of early childhood education in Australia. Debbie was president of the Early Childhood Teachers Association for eight years in the 1990s, and maintains strong links with practitioners in the early childhood field in Queensland. Since 1995, Debbie has been a Moderator in the National Child Care Accreditation Scheme. She was also, until its recent closure, the academic coordinator of the Gerald Ashby Family Centre on the campus of QUT, Kelvin Grove.

Debbie currently works with Sue Thomas at Kelvin Grove Junior College Prep one day per week to keep in touch with young children and parents and have first-hand experience of the new Early Years Curriculum in Queensland. This also allows her to liaise more effectively with QUT Early Childhood students who come to observe at Kelvin Grove Prep. She is the author of the book *Debutantes to the Ball: Chiselhurst Preschool & Kindergarten: 60 Years of History and Recollections* published in 2002. Her recently completed doctoral thesis explored childhood and teacher memories of kindergarten in Queensland from 40-50 years ago.

Preschool has been an important part of the lives of thousands of children and parents throughout Queensland over the three decades since it began in 1972. The local state preschool has been a fixture in metropolitan and rural communities across the state, and perhaps it was taken for granted that it would always be there - alongside the local state school. As Preschool continues to serve children and families in its final year of operation, it is fitting to consider its impact on those who became part of a preschool community - particularly those who attended as children. This reflection on Preschool Education in Queensland (following earlier articles by Gail Halliwell and Rosemary Perry) provides an opportunity to recount some memories of preschool from those who were at the heart of each centre - the children. While it is only possible to capture a smattering of these childhood stories, they provide a fascinating window into what was important, and therefore memorable, about the experience of preschool for some children. They also highlight what lasts in the memory and can be reconstructed and relived twenty or so years later. It is also timely to consider how these childhood perspectives may help to inform approaches taken in Prep as it replaces Preschool in 2007.

#### Remember

What *do* people remember when they think back to their childhood years at preschool? Why do some

memories seem more immediate and powerful than others? My doctoral thesis - an historical study which examined childhood memories of Queensland kindergartens from 40-50 years ago - certainly attests to the power of certain childhood experiences. As I documented childhood recollections and perspectives on life at kindergarten, several themes emerged across decades and settings. It is clear, for example, that children's senses are highly attuned to the environments that surround them as children. Sensory memories - smell, sights and sounds of environments - are among the most resilient and evocative.

Current neuroscience research confirms and helps to explain this. Rushton (2001), for example, notes that *As children interact with their learning environment...they assimilate large amounts of information through their senses* (p.71). In my study, many people could describe in detail the indoor, and even more particularly the outdoor environments, of their kindergarten from decades earlier - and were remarkably accurate in their recall. Strong emotional responses also coloured their recollections of play episodes, games with friends, routines and the fairness or unfairness displayed by adults in response to particular situations. This is again not surprising as contemporary brain research indicates that *all information [children take in] is sent*



# Teacher Stories

to the amygdale in the lower brain, which sorts it for emotional significance (Rushton, 2001, p.71).

Childhood memories of preschool from the 1970s, 80s, 90s, display this same awareness of and emotional responses to the environment, to play activities and to the roles played by teachers. Here are just a few snapshots of preschool life from a variety of Queensland centres and from a variety of childhood memories and viewpoints:

## Environments

Nick remembered most vividly: *Sliding down a slippery tarpaulin set up by my preschool teacher, Mr S. He would attach one end to the sandpit and one to the fence at the top of the grassy hill in the preschool playground and have the hose running down the tarp for us to slide down. Shrieks of laughter and racing back up to do it again. There was also a "pool" up the back of the preschool which was basically a depression in the grass. It had been concreted and filled in with small rocks. Mr. S would fill it up with water and we would play in it. It was very slippery and in hindsight, very uncomfortable on our feet, but I remember having a lot of fun there on hot days. I think this and sliding down the slippery tarp were my two favorite activities at preschool. We would always eat lunch and morning tea out in the sun on the grass also which I really enjoyed*

Alex: *I remember there was an old tree stump in the playground. It looked frightening and there was a story that it was haunted.*

Cecelia: *I remember having fun playing in the rainforest garden at preschool.*

Thomas also remembered the rainforest at preschool and the sense of adventure that children felt when they went into that area of the playground. A camp-out and possum-spotting night at preschool was a highlight.

Kyle: *The trikes that we could ride around outside and the great big sandpit. There was a kind of circular track in the playground and we loved to go like mad and race each other around the track, although we weren't supposed to. There was a real feeling of freedom. I remember lots of us happily playing in the sandpit, digging holes and making cakes and castles...*

Emma: *The tyre swing at preschool and the fact that it required the cooperative effort of friends working together to push it.*

## Rituals

Chris: *We would always eat lunch and morning tea out in the sun on the grass. I loved that.*

Laura remembered getting the beds out for rest time each day as an independent and enjoyable activity for children and the sense of security she felt in having her own bunny sheets on her bed at preschool (also recalled by numbers of people in my historical study).

Emma recalled getting out the mats for morning tea and having your own little mat that defined your personal space at morning tea.

## Novel Events

Nicholas: *The preschool teacher held a miniature "Olympics" where we had running races, hurdle races (the hurdles were large toilet roles stuck together and held up with sticky-tape), egg races etc.*

Cecelia: *I remember having sports days, where we would have potato sack races, three legged races and egg and spoon races.*

Caitlin remembered she was fascinated by ... the hidden places in the preschool, the places where only the adults were allowed to go, like the teacher's office, and the dark secret area upstairs.

There is evidence that children experience strong feelings about things that may seem trivial to us as adults. For example, Jonathon recalled twenty years later: *We each had a "locker" at preschool where we could put our bags at the beginning of the day. Each locker had a picture on it to identify whose locker it was. I had the 'chair' picture on my locker, and I remember being somewhat disappointed with the lack of manliness of this.*

## Children's memories of play and the opportunities they had to try out ideas and to imagine.

As Sam said: *I remember playing with blocks and building castles. The blocks were very large, from memory (about 20-30 cm in length, big for a preschooler!) but they allowed you to try out ideas and gain a lot of satisfaction in creating structures. There was a very large PVC mat that had the outline of a road on it. There were pictures of buildings, zebra crossings, schools, hospitals. The main drawcard of this was that we would get matchbox cars and "drive" them around the map stopping at various locations to drop someone at hospital or take the kids to school or fill up with petrol.*

Lindsay: *I remember playing rock and roll concerts at preschool. Mr S would set up large blocks to make a stage and put on a rock music tape for us to sing and dance to. We would use a block for a microphone ...*

Alex: *I have happy memories of building things like spaceships out of the big and little wooden boxes with my preschool friend Phillipe. I also remember*



# Teacher Stories

sitting in a circle in the morning and talking about all sorts of things.

Cecelia: *I liked playing doctors and nurses in home corner. I remember painting with our fingers and having quiet time, where we would have to set up our beds. I also remember Miss T playing the piano for us.*

## Concerns and Frustrations

Catherine: *We had to play a repetition game everyday before we could break for the toilet and morning tea. The teacher would clap some blocks together in a pattern, and then we had to go around the circle and repeat it by clapping. Once you got it right, you were allowed to go. If you got it wrong, you had to wait for it to come around to your turn again. I always got it wrong! I really did not enjoy that game and I don't think it did much for my self esteem either.*

Emily: *I dreaded nap time during the day, because I never, never wanted to take a nap. I wasn't punished for that, but if you didn't want to nap, you had to be very quiet and I wasn't big on that either!*

(Rest time, I might add, has been the bane of many children's lives at kindergarten/preschool, if memories are anything to go by!)

## What messages are there for us in these memories?

Embedded in these memories are interests, concerns and emotions that, to me, speak about what is important to children across eras and contexts - but what do we do about this? Some clues may be gained from insightful writers on early childhood. The terms they use may differ, but their perspectives and purposes are remarkably similar. They point to the need for early childhood teachers to:

- Develop "child-sense" as well as "teacher-sense" through listening to children, take their thoughts seriously, creating environments with children and responding to their interests and ideas. (Kennedy & Surman, 2006)
- Ensure that children's "main subjects" of interest, imagination and concern become a significant part of a playful early childhood curriculum (Paley, 1996).
- Remember that what appears trivial & forgettable to adults ("Little Trials of Childhood" as Frances Waksler calls them) can often become a key childhood memory.

As Vivian Paley (1996) suggests: *We have to accept that children have a lot more in common with each*

*other than they have with us as teachers ... but unless we really listen to and observe children, a lot remains secret and their main subjects of imagination, interest and concern may not get into the curriculum* (p. 63). Kennedy & Surman (2006) similarly discuss the idea of a "Pedagogy of Relationships" which involves really listening to the ideas and viewpoints of each child and helping children to listen to each others' ideas and viewpoints so that they can hear and potentially incorporate new perspectives into their learning. It is interesting to reflect that this was also a tenet of the Event-Based Philosophy which had such an impact on teachers' thinking about curriculum in many state preschools from the 1980s (as noted also by Rosemary Perry in her earlier article on Queensland Preschools in the Spring 2006 edition of this journal). Finally, it is important to remember that, as Lillian Katz (1995/96, p.72) asserts: ... *the important ultimate effects of a program depend primarily on how it is viewed from below; that is how the program is subjectively experienced by each child. This bottom-up perspective ... requires answers to the central question "What does it feel like to be a child in this environment?"*

What did it feel like to you? Do you have a memory of preschool or kindergarten, as a child, parent, teacher or aide? If so, I would be delighted to incorporate your recollections into a more extensive paper on memories of experiences in Australian early childhood settings.

Please email me at <d.gahan@qut.edu.au>.

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## ***Murri kids in the park***

***Marilyn Beale***

This year C&K Gundoo Mirra Community Kindergarten hosted its first “Murri Kids in the Park” for Under Eights week. It was a particular challenge this year, coordinating a big event like this, as we are team of three staff only. We decided to involve as many other community groups as well to ensure a great event for children and to promote our wonderful kindergarten to the local community.

YMCA Family Day Care Play Group, the Murri School and Lifeline’s Inclusion Support Agency, prepared and brought an experience to the park. QLD Indigenous Health brought ‘healthy eating’ to the forefront of people’s minds with samples of healthy home made foods to demonstrate easy to make healthy eating ideas. Southbank TAFE Child Studies students assisted with setting up, facilitating and clearing up the experiences and C&K Acacia Ridge Community Kindergarten assisted with collecting resources.

As this event had not been held before, we only managed to involve a few mums and a dad in the preparation of the materials and setting up for the event. We were fortunate to have Derrick Gibson come and play the didgeridoo on the day with the children.

The event was very popular with parents and grandparents with almost a one-to-one ratio of adults to children for the excursion to the park next door. The grounds were packed with people and full of art and craft experiences and the sounds of different cultures. African

***The grounds were packed with people and full of art and craft experiences and the sounds of different cultures.***

***The overwhelming feedback is that parents and grandparents would like to hold the event annually and will be willing to participate more to ensure its success in the future. We just need to keep spreading the word and providing culturally appropriate encouragement to people who are not sure about their role in their child’s education outside of the home.***

drummer, Tunde Solanke with his drums and chanting, didgeridoos and children playing and dancing filled the air with happy sounds. Face painter and Koori, Aunty Dawn came and painted the children’s faces with Indigenous designs until Spider Man and butterflies ‘took over’. Activities also included palm frond weaving with Nerrie Simba from PNG.

It was wonderful to involve the Murri School Prep Year and Grade Ones in the event. We now have a working relationship with the Murri School Prep Year staff and this is a significant achievement. C&K Amaroo and C&K Kulila also brought an activity and attended the event - they had a wonderful time. It was good to see parents from local childcare centres and family day care attend and enjoy the event. Despite the many African families in the area and the promotion we carried out amongst them, we did not see any of them attend our event.

Farm animals were the big hit with children who spent many minutes patting and feeding the animals.

The event had been promoted to local State Preschools, kindergartens, Special Schools, childcare centres, the whole of C&K and the local community, the Neighbourhood Centre and QLD Indigenous Health Centres in the lead-up to the event.

Later in the week, following the event, staff of C&K Gundoo Mirra held an afternoon tea in a local park and street where many of the parents and children come from, to say thank you to the families who came and helped to make it a successful event. The picnic afternoon tea was a time of socialisation, sharing of food together and sharing ideas and impressions of the event. I reckon this would be a great way to hold parent and parenting meetings in future. The response was tremendous and the vibes positive. We just want to get the dads involved too.

We discovered that families had wondered why they were preparing so much material for the event and the father playing the didgeridoo had been overawed when he saw how many people from the local community had come along. They had thought that it was an event for the local Kindergarten children only. They were able to see the value of their participation to make a wonderful day and experience for their children and for their community. The overwhelming feedback is that parents and grandparents would like to hold the event annually and will be willing to participate more to ensure its success in the future. We just need to keep spreading the word and providing culturally appropriate encouragement to people who are not sure about their role in their child's education outside of the home.

On reflection I noticed this event actively supports the notion that play is the best medium for a child's learning and that parents and adults have an integral part to play in their child's development. I noticed that interactions between child and adult could have been richer rather than allowing children to amuse themselves in experiences whilst adults stood

on watching and socialising with each other. I also noticed that parents of different cultures seemed to congregate in separate locations with their children when not involved.

Our goals for next year, and for other children's events, are to widen the culturally appropriate marketing of the children's event to be inclusive to all families in our area; to demonstrate, through role modeling and encouraging parents and extended families, ways that parents can simply and easily get involved in their children's play; and to foster learning through language and interaction. This is a critical component of brain development.

Empowering parents and extended family to be the child's foremost educators and nurturers, and showing them that they can be a critical source of support to these sorts of events for the benefit of their children, community and kindergarten, is something we will strive for in an ongoing way. We will continue to promote the rights and lives of children from birth to eight years through rich, culturally inclusive experiences which draw families and wider community into the team.

***Empowering parents and extended family to be the child's foremost educators and nurturers and showing them that they can be a critical source of support to these sorts of events for the benefit of their children, community and kindergarten, is something we will strive for in an ongoing way.***

## Carleen de Jong

### *Reflections of the 2006 Annual conference of the Early Childhood Teachers' Association*



Carleen de Jong from Freshwater State Preschool has been involved in Early Childhood education in many and varied facets for 37 years, on and off. Her journey to finally settling in Cairns in 1979 was adventurous and challenging - from Victoria to Western

Australia to Northern Territory, where she set up the first preschool on Melville Island, part of the Bathurst Island group. On meeting her future husband and marrying, and after three years on the Island community, which as a new graduate was a very rich and memorable learning curve, Carleen relocated to Darwin. In Darwin she taught full time for three years, then proceeded to run play groups and do relief teaching after the birth of her sons. A move to Cairns came after Cyclone Tracey descended upon the family in Christmas 1974. Arrival in Cairns saw her



*Understanding of numeracy and literacy, negotiating turn taking, identifying and sequencing of shopping items for trolley.*

become involved with parent groups, advising on the setting up of a preschool for the children's ward at Cairns Base Hospital and, most importantly, the role of mum to two very active boys.



*Children role-play to make of meaning of their world - labelling office equipment and name tags.*

When her eldest was ready to start preschool, she was approached to become involved in Day Care Centres and effective early childhood programs. At the same time she undertook relief teaching for state, private and C&K centres for a number of years. She was offered a full time position when the boys started school. In 1984 Carleen moved to Townsville and also gave birth to a daughter. Returning to Cairns, she took up full time teaching at Gordonvale until 1990 when she transferred to Freshwater where she is currently teaching.

The last 35 years has seen three children grow into confident adults with university degrees and jobs of their choice. Two are married now, and Carleen feels her role as a parent to date has been fulfilled and rewarding. The new challenge she faces is one of support to the Prep facilitators for the region and the phasing in of Prep.

#### *My thoughts about the conference*

The opportunity to attend the annual ECTA conference was one which I jumped at with enthusiasm as I was heading to Brisbane for holidays to catch up with friends and family. The hardest decision was which sessions to choose - hence a process of elimination, finally deciding on *Habits of Mind*, *Numeracy Block in the Early Years*, and catching the lunch time offers of Welcome to Music along with the fabulous displays of equipment available at the conference.

# Teacher Stories



Children creating and acting out real life situation, using numeracy and literacy.

The key note address by Dr Sue Bredekamp was extremely thought-provoking as well as reinforcing the fundamental pedagogies and culture of the early phase of education with the continual emphasis on the whole child and play.

My choice of the *Habits of Mind* workshop with Dr Phillip Moulds and Michelle Ragen further challenged me to make connections between Costa and Hallick's *16 Habits of Mind* and the early years curriculum guidelines concerning how we as teachers can empower children to challenge, question, risk take, show compassion, problem solve, accept failure and become confident decision makers on their own destiny through play. As an early childhood teacher observing young children in their play as they learn to negotiate and cooperate, create and imagine, problem solve, discuss ideas, investigate, role-play, use literacy and numeracy skills, make plans and carry them out (as the photos show), this session reinforced my philosophies and values to continue to challenge and provoke children's thinking within their environment.



Children showing awareness of money required when purchasing items indicating or showing mathematical understanding, thinking and language skills.

Lunch time saw me head off for some light entertainment and an energy boost by attending the *'I'm not stressed, I always look like this'* with Susie Davis- Splitter and Phil Splitter. What fun this was for all those who attended.

Lunch over, and feeling relaxed, I headed off to the *Numeracy Block in the Early Years* with Terry Wally. What a wonderful session to finish with. Terry makes maths fun and challenging at the same time for those children in her class. Terry gave us practical and user-friendly ideas which can be adapted to any age level with an excellent

format to use as a guide when planning or including numeracy blocks within our own settings. I found myself thinking how I can involve parents, peers, or buddies from other grades to come and participate in a maths activity. Perhaps my next father night will have maths as well as science activities to challenge dads and children alike.



Child created skipping rope by linking chains brings in imagination, mathematical thinking through estimations to create a tool we can use for skipping (we used this outside for jumping over).

The culmination of the day was the wine and cheese where one was able to chat and see new and old faces again. What a wonderful closure to the

conference. Congratulations to all the enthusiastic workers who put the conference together. I came away feeling challenged, excited and rewarded. Best of all was a compliment by a parent from my early days at Freshwater. This parent, Bev, told a friend 'I must find Carleen. She was one who put me on the right track with my children when I was a new mum'. What greater compliment could a teacher have Thank you, Bev. We enjoyed talking about our families, our children's achievements and where they are now.

Bev's compliment brought to mind a reading from ECTA journal Autumn 2006. Dr Michael Nagel was writing about early brain development, stating 'That education is not a race' (Elkind 1987). Children develop and learn at different rates and learning experiences should be developmentally appropriate - if child is not ready why place unnecessary expectations on them?

## Jasmine Richards

*Prep teacher - Doomadgee State School*



In my first few weeks of university, one of my tutors lent me a copy of ECTA's Journal, *Educating Young Children*. Inside that particular journal was an advertisement for the ECTA annual conference. On further discussion with my tutor about the conference I decided that I must attend this conference some time soon as it sounded like a most rewarding opportunity, personally and professionally. However, living over a thousand kilometres away from Brisbane and having the expense of putting myself through university, didn't allow for my desire to attend the conference. So, I told myself that as soon as I was teaching full time I would attend the conference. That was in 2002 and I finally have been able to attend this year thanks to ECTA and their regional and remote area sponsorship.

At the conference I listened enthusiastically to Sue Bredekamp's keynote address, followed by her Masterclass and learned a great deal. I gained better understanding about my own practice (learning and teaching) and about child development. The discussion about curriculum was highly beneficial and I was able to go back to my school and further this topic with colleagues.

At the first break I ran into some teachers from Mornington Island which is north of Doomadgee. This was a pleasant surprise as I had someone to talk to that could relate to my

current teaching situation. Also during the break I made the most of the Education Expo where I thoroughly enjoyed being able to talk to the people at each stand and view all the education displays and actually view products in real life (usually I'm trying to guess the size or suitability from catalogue pages). During the second break I went to the Prep discussion and got up to date on some pressing issues. My final Masterclass was called '*Culturally Inclusive Practices*' with Marilyn Casey. This class was highly beneficial for me as it gave me the chance to talk with likeminded people and people with similar experiences to my current teaching situation.

I gained a better understanding of cultural inclusiveness from this class. We were asked to record the top five things we valued most in life and were then asked to cut one of those things off the list. This was a difficult task, but we were then asked to cut another value from the list and this was near impossible. This exercise made me aware of the fact that, as teachers, we at times ask children to drop their values and things they hold important in order to conform to the classroom culture that we help create. This made me re-evaluate everything that I do in my classroom. It made me think about the questions I was asking myself when I reflected on my practice and on the questions I was asking myself when planning learning experiences or scaffolding the children's play. In order for me to be culturally inclusive I needed to understand the values that the children and their families held dear.

I had decided last year that I needed to have more interaction with parents and the community through the school and this year I had worked harder at building stronger relationships, an idea that was reaffirmed in this Masterclass: building relationships is the key when working with another culture (Casey, M., *Culturally Inclusive Practices Masterclass notes*, ECTA Annual Conference, 2006). Because I have worked hard on building and maintaining

these relationships I now am able to ask my parents and carers what they value most and gain some honest and open feedback from them. This would have been harder to do prior to the time spent building up these relationships as I was an outsider to the town and to the indigenous culture.

Teaching in an Aboriginal community has been challenging but more than anything it has been rewarding and I have a strong admiration for my students and their families. Attending the

ECTA conference has been one of the best professional development opportunities I have had (and I have had quite a few over these last 18 months thanks to my Principal). I would like to acknowledge ECTA for giving me the opportunity to attend the conference as living so remotely means considerable costs for any travel and their sponsorship assisted with this. I would also like to acknowledge ECTA for the wonderful resources, ideas, support and keeping us all up to date in the education world.

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## ***Lindy Austin - Early childhood educator***

Lindy Austin has played an active role in education for nearly forty years and has worked in the early childhood, primary, secondary, special education, vocational and tertiary sectors. Lindy has worked in New Zealand where she held educational positions such as teacher, advisor, principal, deputy principal and educational manager. She was an ANZAC Fellow in 1985 which enabled her to study as a fulltime time student at Brisbane Advanced College of Education. It was during this year that Lindy and her partner Noel "fell into" Hervey Bay. They returned to New Zealand, resigned from their jobs, sold everything and relocated to Hervey Bay.

On relocation to Queensland in 1994, Lindy was a childcare tutor at the Wide Bay TAFE. She taught there for eight years. While working at TAFE Lindy was introduced to the regional group of Early Childhood Teachers Association. As a new person to the Bay, ECTA provided Lindy with many professional development and networking opportunities with other early childhood educators in a variety of Hervey Bay centres and schools.

Lindy joined University of Southern Queensland - Wide Bay Campus in 2002 as a fulltime lecturer in early childhood education. Her



interest in ECTA continued and, during the next four years, Lindy held the treasurer position in the ECTA executive for two years, was a member of the editorial committee for the journal and continued as President of the regional ECTA group.

Currently Lindy is completing her Doctor of Teaching through Charles Darwin University. Her special interests are reflective practices, community of learners and transformative learning - especially in relation to early childhood education.

Additionally, she has worked extensively in the Asian Pacific Basin.

After twelve years in Hervey Bay, Lindy is returning to New Zealand where she has taken up a position as a lecturer (early childhood) at the Manukau Institute of Technology. This Institute is in South Auckland. Apart from the challenge of her new senior lecturing position Lindy's grandchildren are a big draw. Partner Noel is selling the house and seeking out a future suitable retirement locality in Queensland.

Lindy has enjoyed her twelve years of diverse early childhood opportunities (especially the ECTA link), which have been available to her while residing in Hervey bay.

## ***Nutrition workshop***

### ***Hervey Bay Regional Centre***



Recently, a Nutrition Workshop was organised jointly by the regional Early Childhood Teachers Association and the staff of the Koala Kindy at the Fraser Coast Anglican College. In total 29 early childhood educators attended from the Hervey Bay

and Maryborough areas. There were participants from the following organisations: childcare, After School Care, preschools, kindergartens and university pre-service teachers. In fact, there were two participants from a school in Shanghai.

Susie Bassingthwaite, our Community Nutritionist, facilitated this workshop. Susie's address covered topics such as suitable foods for young children in early childhood centres, meal preparation, and the growing global



concerns about childhood obesity. Susie provided some excellent handouts for the

participants. Lindy Austin performed her last duty as the Regional President of ECTA and thanked Susie for her informative workshop. Unfortunately, Lindy's mind had already moved on to her new position in New Zealand and she forgot to get the thank you gift. Susie received this a few days later.

Leonie Mitchell, the Director of the Koala Kindy (FCAC) invited all participants to view this new early childhood learning centre which commenced at the beginning of Term Three. Additionally, Leonie provided afternoon tea which consisted of very healthy food.

## ***Fitzroy Regional Branch Parent Workshop***

### ***with Ian Wallace***

Ian delivered an excellent presentation to a group of about thirty people who were predominantly parents, with a smattering of teachers and a set of grandparents who were fostering their deceased son's two very young children. These were just a few who accessed it through the media advertising we purchased. We did expect to attract many more parents but believe that because we wanted to pitch it to all parents, not just ADD interested families, we may have brought that about.

Ian was very positive in his acknowledgement of parents' efforts in handling difficult behaviour. Besides reassuring us that parenting is a complex task, he also said that the world is changing so fast it makes it even harder for us

to face the challenges. Fathers are in a particularly difficult situation considering what they can and cannot do as parents in this era.

He reminded us a number of times that we are ***NOT OUR CHILD'S BEST FRIEND*** but need to remember to ***be THE PARENT and set CONSISTENT LIMITS***. It is important to teach our children the consequences of their actions. In setting the boundaries, they need to know that there are choices as in ... "If you draw on that chair ... then you will have to sit quietly over there for a while." Ian spent one whole hour answering questions and that meant many families went away with much to think about and try in their parenting.

He suggested parents try to give children a positive statement first, then the negative. For example: "It is best to walk inside. Running isn't safe play. He reminded us that children say "NO" because we taught them to!!!

Ian stated his belief that boys are definitely 'wired' differently to girls and need to 'run off their energy after school before homework. His belief is that we do need to keep the homework issue in perspective and not destroy a close relationship with the child over it.

He talked about what he calls the 'Seesaw' when you deal out the limits to your child and then later try 'catch' them doing something well so you can praise and acknowledge that action. He talked about 'time out' but said it should not be too long - a minute per year of age. He suggested the use of a baker's timer for

this. One frightening point he made was that if we '*give in for peace ... then later it will mean war!*'

Ian was adamant that we look at our child's strengths and build on those to help self esteem grow. Such sound advice was well worth being reminded of and the people went away with much praise for his practical help that was delivered in a relaxed and entertaining way.

Saturday's keynote address and workshop were well attended. We felt that Ian was ideal for both situations and well worth organising as a presenter. Thank you to ECTA for the generous funding that we felt provided much needed professional development and parent support - all in 24 hours!

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## ***Welcome to the digital world!***

***Liz Fallon - President, ECTA Gladstone Regional Branch***

Over the past three years my teacher aide and I have been experimenting with the limited technologies available to us at school.

One thing that I inherited when I joined the centre was a very old (but workable) digital camera.

With our preschool budget shrinking every year, I knew that digital was the way to go. We wanted to document children's learning, I wanted them to have some sort of lasting memories - not just the mind ones - but the ones that they can look back on over the years to come and say "Remember when ..."

I knew I wanted to promote the value of what children were doing to parents (and any one else who would listen) but I also knew this had to be done in a subtle way.

So I muddled on. I tried several different versions and even managed to persuade the school to buy us a new digital camera. I had seen Kim Walters' books and sat in on her Video link-up but the truth was I just didn't know where to start or when to do it. Then I saw her mentoring program advertised. What an opportunity to have some hands-on with the guru herself.

I consider myself very lucky that I had the opportunity to sit with Kim and discuss what my needs were, to work through these needs and have her set me up. She taught me the skills I needed to move closer to achieving my goal of spreading the word of the great things my preschoolers do. I was now able to document their learning in a personal and valuable way to the children and their parents (as well as me).

I was doubly lucky. I had my mentoring session on Friday afternoon (maybe not my freshest moment) but, wearing my other hat as ECTA - Gladstone Regional Branch President, I had booked Kim to present a workshop on Saturday morning.

Our digital workshop was a lovely morning. In how many other professions would 30 people

pay to come along and spend their Saturday (after 5 days at work with 25+ children; administrators on their back; committees and parents chewing their ear) at a workshop? This shows what a truly remarkable and caring group early childhood educators are. Some of these ladies travelled for up to two hours to come.

Kim was simply inspirational. You could feel the ideas spinning around the room. Attending the day after my mentoring session allowed me to confirm some of the ideas and steps presented to me.

From an organisational point of view, having a sliding scale of workshop costs encouraged more than one person from a school or centre to attend. This, in turn, gave people the opportunity to have someone else with whom they could discuss and work through new knowledge. In my case gave us a united front to approach Administration for some more resourcing in this area (no luck - but we are not giving up).

The Coffee Xpress man arrived at morning tea. Yes, he took a little longer to make everyone's coffees and, yes, he was a little more expensive - but all those who attended deserved a something a little more special for giving up their Saturday than just an 'instant' in a foam cup. This was truly appreciated by all who attended. (By the way, I am not a coffee drinker but I know how much others enjoy theirs.)

The feedback from the morning has been exceptional. Kim, we all learnt something - but it was also practical and we have all taken away things to try and do straightaway in our classrooms.

We have had clusters of friends getting together after school to enjoy some more refreshments and teach each other what we have learnt and achieved over the past weeks from your workshop.

Kim, you will be pleased to know that whilst I haven't done as much as I would have liked (I

# Partnerships

want it all and I want it now!) I have been taking those smaller steps and holding my teacher aide's hand along the way.

I have set up two more photo stories on the computer about our recent visit from Qld Fire & Rescue and our Lost Teddy. I have been working on the template for the photos and stories for the children's folios and I have been working on the children's individual digital folios.



I have been working closely with two of my teaching peers who attended the workshop, sharing ideas and tips and taking the small steps with my teacher aide to drag her into the technological world.

My preschoolers are in love with their photo stories on the computer. They re-read them all the time. Their parents are amazed and my

teacher aide is bewildered at how apt they are at manipulating the computer to access this information.

To anyone who has not attended one of Kim's sessions, do yourself a favour and seek one out. As one of our teachers said, "This is my third workshop with Kim and my head's still spinning with new stuff!"

Thank you ECTA for assisting regional groups and individuals to access great early childhood professional development. Your support of the mentoring program, financial support for conference attendance and the Videolinq Workshops are allowing many of us outside of the metropolitan area to recapture the enthusiasm that professional development brings us.

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3 YEARS	9.93
5 YEARS	7.77
10 YEARS	9.34
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## ***Teachers as parents and parents as teachers of young children***

***Ian Lillico***



Ian Lillico (father of three sons) is the former principal of City Beach High School in WA (recently retired) and consultant in boys' education. He has done action research in gender throughout Australia and New Zealand from 1992 and in the Northern Hemisphere during his Churchill Fellowship in 2000. He has been with the education department of WA for 31 years and has held the positions of teacher, Head of department, Deputy Principal and Principal. Ian is widely known for his expertise in the area of boys' education and is a publicist, recognised speaker and advocate in the area of boys' education throughout Australia. He was awarded a Churchill Fellowship for the year 2000 to further boys' education in Europe, The United Kingdom and North America. He is recognised as a leader in the field of boys' education worldwide and provides seminars and professional

development to teachers, parents, parenting and sporting groups and all kinds of organisations around Australia and overseas.

In 2004, Ian was made a National Fellow of The Australian Council for Educational Leaders (ACEL). In 2005 Ian was appointed as The ACEL National Travelling Scholar for 2005. He is an advisor to the NSW Department of Education and Training in the areas of Gender Equity, Middle Schooling and Boys' Education. Ian is a keynote presenter for the Australasian Boys' Education Network (ABEN) and a consultant for the "Success for Boys" program.

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In this article I want to examine the needs and behaviour of young children in the Post-Birth, Toddler and Early Childhood stages. The information is relevant to teachers of young children, parents, guardians and all involved in their lives at these ages. Teachers are welcome to share this information with parents and make this article available to parents and guardians. I have been involved with educating children for 31 years and spend a lot of time in preschool centres, kindergartens and primary schools as well as communicating with parents every day in my parenting seminars and through my website - [www.boysforward.com](http://www.boysforward.com).

The period from birth to age eight is arguably the most important time to bond with children. Babies need cuddles, love and the sound of our voices – from Mum, Dad and everyone involved in their lives. There is a need to engage in activities that are relaxing including an emphasis on going to parks, lakes, the seaside and places where we can commune with nature. Latest brain imaging has found a link between calm children and very early calm and

serenity in parent's lives and in their early experiences at kindy and preschool. Music is particularly important pre birth and right through early life experiences for the infant.

Babies crave human touch and very young children who are denied this human need may become delinquent as the human need for touch is paramount. No amount of appropriate touch and nurturing can have any harmful effects on young children and early ideas of toughening up young boys have been totally disproved and not linked to any type of dependency behaviour or perceived weakness in boys. Babies without appropriate human touch will often suffer life-long repercussions, including a propensity for violence, if this is also absent in their later development.

Behaviours at this age are focused on meeting baby's primitive needs for food, shelter, touch and toileting and should not be misunderstood as the baby being naughty, trying to manipulate us or deliberately trying to make our lives difficult. We can expect a gradual reduction in baby's need for continual



# Feature Articles

reassurance and a gradual increase in independence in some basic tasks.

The ensuing “toddler” stage is not an easy one as we try to establish routines and independence, while also trying to keep them close to us. Toddlers will fall and hurt themselves and no amount of caution on our part will ensure complete safety from the occasional fall or minor accident. Human children are fairly resilient and we have to gradually let them establish some independence in daily chores like eating, washing and toileting. Again, behaviours centre around their basic needs rather than any intent on making our lives difficult.

Many of the tantrums that we see from toddlers are a result of their frustrations in not getting their little bodies to do what they want them to do - be it opening a door, climbing over a wall or being able to reach a favourite toy. Some boys, in particular, develop an amazing love and connection with their toys and limited possessions. When another toddler or older sibling mistreats their teddy or breaks their favourite pencil they become very upset as they don't have many possessions (mortgages etc.) and what they do have they become very attached to.

This is the time at home that early routine and predictability need to be established and times set aside - particularly just before bed or bath time to talk about events of the day, read to them and spend time with them. We should expect that behaviours and gains in all areas will not be linear but will comprise of ups and downs. Make time to listen and encourage them to speak for themselves whenever possible. Shy children often develop their shyness as their parents, guardians and teachers speak for them too often. Keep your explanations to their many questions short and simple and help them explore and identify with their new found world. Telling preschoolers stories from our own childhood helps them identify their place in the world and also assists their bonding with parents and other adults in their lives.

Offer preschoolers choices in their clothing, foods and activities and expect them to take care of some of their possessions. Early time and resource management are essential if we are to instill these ideas in adolescence. Reading to young children – particularly fantasy – helps them deal with the harsh realities of life later and aids in their emotional intelligence. When difficulties arise in later life, youngsters can often retreat into fantasy to get over things. Children not raised with fairy stories and fantasy often have trouble surviving major traumas.

Early Primary School is often termed the golden era of childhood. It is a time when boys and girls are beginning to spread their wings, test their independence and start to assert themselves in the home and at school. Making time to listen to them with full attention is vital and they should see us talking, negotiating, laughing, crying and discussing world events using our emotions and feelings.

We need to try very hard to catch them doing something good and praise them for it while ignoring the little things they do wrongly. Don't be too quick to help them with daily tasks and, instead of jumping in and solving their problems for them, continue to listen to them and help them to problem solve. At this stage of their lives we need to let them know that the negative things they see on the media are perpetrated by a minority of people and that most people in the world are kind, loving, moral people. If children are not optimistic about the future at this age, they want to stay children forever and not grow into adults and take responsibility. They need to see adults having fun and enjoying life so they don't associate adulthood with seriousness.

Behaviour at this age needs to be modified through praise not punishment. Punishment will contain behaviour, but not change it. Rules should emphasize positive behaviour. We need to praise kids for keeping the rules rather than punishing them for breaking the rules. Let's all work together to raise children in our society – “It takes a village to raise a child”

## Professional Portfolios

### *Di Nailon - School of Early Childhood, QUT and Allana Cartmill-Milne Upper Coomera State College*



Di Nailon teaches leadership and management in the School of Early Childhood at QUT. Working with students in their final year of study has led to her interest in the creation of professional portfolios that help graduates to land the jobs they want in their chosen field. It is this background over several years of tightening opportunities for graduates that provides fodder for the workshop.

It is more important than ever that early childhood practitioners present their “best selves” to potential employers and the wider community. Professional portfolios that provide formative and summative synopses of a teacher’s growing skills and understandings are one means of doing this.



Portfolios capture what early childhood professionals do and who they are as educators of young children. Try putting your portfolio together and you will be captivated, surprised and impressed by what you see as it takes shape. What follows are a series of conversations and illuminations between Di and Allana, as we worked out how best to prepare a sample teaching portfolio to use at the ECTA Portfolios Workshop. The substantive illuminations we share here formed the basis of the content and conduct of the workshop. From here in, Di tells the tale.

After being invited to facilitate the Portfolios Workshop for ECTA I decided to make the whole thing more meaningful by collaborating with a practising teacher. Enter Allana, a recent graduate who had shared her Education Queensland (EQ) rating interview experience and her graduating (exit) portfolio with final year students. I believed Allana’s background and current situation would make a perfect

case study for the workshop. Not only was Allana’s graduate portfolio integral to her preparation for her final University field placement, interview and subsequent S1 rating, she later adapted it for a second interview to gain the preschool teaching position she currently holds. Allana now has a change of goal for her career. That is, she wants to teach in the Preparatory Year of schooling.

To sell Allana on the idea of re-creating her professional portfolio for the ECTA workshop I hinted at the possibility that this might be a prudent move right now. “There are no guarantees in your situation,” I said. “You may be required to provide evidence to show that what you have been doing to date will inform how you teach the Prep curriculum.”

“So where do we start?” she replied with a smile, guessing I might be right.

“In your teaching files,” I indicated, as I read the criteria for portfolio preparation in the Campbell, Cignetti, Melenzyer, Nettles and Wyman (2001) publication on the topic. “Your files contain ongoing evidence and artefacts that constitute what these authors call a Working Portfolio. Files on children, evidence of their learning, your curriculum planning and record keeping, and your work with parents are all useful teacher portfolio artefacts. Your Working Portfolio began when you started teaching in this classroom,” I added.

“Now, what have you kept copies of?” I asked, knowing that the reflective practitioner was



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alive and well in Allana's professional psyche and teaching life. Coffee chats and emails kept me up to date with Allana's quest for continuous improvement.

"My records are in lots of places," said Allana.

"Fine," I answered. "It seems that's common practice for setting up Working Portfolios, because they provide evidence of your progressive development as a teacher. In your situation you are best advised to regularly and selectively cull so that you keep samples that relate to EQ's teacher standards, and specific curriculum initiatives or priorities."

"I've kept a journal of reflective comments about my planning and assessment strategies, and the project development that I work on with the children. Does that count?" asked Allana.

"That, and the sequences of pictures you took of the children problem-solving and building on their ideas as they played," I added. I could see that Allana's enthusiasm was growing as she began listing all the records she had accumulated.

"OK," she said. "I will sort through what I have, see what shows my growth as a teacher over the past two years, and re-organise my filing system."

Allana added later that her Individual Development Plan (IDP) meeting was recently conducted with her Junior School supervisor. "He wanted to talk with me about my performance to date and my future plans. He used EQ's teacher standards to frame the IDP session," she said. "The portfolio process would have helped me get my ideas together, and focus on what I can do, and what I want to build on, rather than feeling like I haven't achieved much."

"True," I said, "better not to hide your light." I thumbed through the text by Bullock and Hawk (2001). "It says here that portfolios have different purposes. From your Working Portfolio you can create a Process, Product or Showcase Portfolio." I realised that portfolio development was becoming clearer to me too. "Process portfolios show your development of skills and knowledge over time. Your reflections

in the Process Portfolio illustrate your successes, along with strategies for improving on what challenges you. Your IDP portfolio would be an example of a Process Portfolio, because you have a working relationship with the portfolio's audience, can share the highs and lows in confidence, and signal growth opportunities."

"Product Portfolios," I went on, "focus on collecting evidence that meets pre-determined criteria over a short period of time. Your evidence is compared with evidence supplied by other teachers."

"Is that something like the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System in child care?" asked Allana.

"Yes, or the portfolios that teachers prepare for moderating rich tasks, or outcomes from the Year Two net" I suggested. "Product Portfolios may focus on a school's goals for the year, or on a whole of school project, or as part of a regional initiative."

"I can see the need for Product Portfolios," said Allana. "If I am required to record how I undertake school initiatives in the future, I can add this evidence to my Working Portfolio for use elsewhere."

"Working smarter already," I surmised.

"Isn't that what you taught us," she winked. Then she added, "Are Showcase Portfolios like the ones we created to take to our job interviews?"

"That's right," I said. "When you were finishing your studies you were trying to show off your best work to meet EQ's or other organisations' teacher selection criteria. In addition you were expected to include your resume, teaching philosophy, field experience reports, referees, and attendance at professional development opportunities."

"However, things have changed for you now," I suggested. "Your immediate goal is to teach in the Preparatory Year at your school so you have to create a more limited Showcase Portfolio."

"Do I showcase the best examples of the learning and teaching that occurred in my classroom, and link the evidence to the Prep curriculum in the reflections that I write under

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each artefact?" inquired Allana.

"Yes, that way you will show you are keen to teach the Preparatory Year, especially if you include other evidence such as related workshop attendances, and ideas for planning a Prep curriculum and managing the learning environment. You can use excerpts from your preschool reflective journal to build on some of the learning strategies that your four year olds currently use."

"Hmmm," Allana began, "I think I know what I will bring to the ECTA workshop as portfolio examples to share, and get my future in order at the same time. Don't worry. As always, I will

make sure full names do not appear and photographs either have written approvals or faces do not appear."

"Thanks," I said with satisfaction, sensing that each generation of early childhood professionals deserves the opportunity to showcase their skills in order to secure their dreams.

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Figure 1: Possible Artefacts to collect and use in your professional teaching portfolio (adapted from Campbell et al., 2001)

<p>Anecdotal records</p> <p>Article summaries or critiques with reflections on how you used the ideas</p> <p>Assessments</p> <p>Awards and certificates</p> <p>Bulletin board ideas</p> <p>Case studies</p> <p>Classroom code of behaviour philosophy and strategies</p> <p>Community resource contacts</p> <p>Computer programs</p> <p>Cooperative learning strategies</p> <p>Curriculum plans</p> <p>Essays (excerpts) and their applications</p> <p>Evaluations</p> <p>Field trip plans</p> <p>Floor plans</p> <p>Goal statements</p> <p>Individualised plans</p>	<p>Interviews with students, teachers, allied professionals, parents</p> <p>Journals</p> <p>Lesson plans</p> <p>Letters to parents</p> <p>Management and organisation strategies</p> <p>Multi-media competencies</p> <p>Meetings and workshop logs and notes</p> <p>Observation reports from supervisors</p> <p>Peer critiques</p> <p>Philosophy statement</p> <p>Photographs</p> <p>Portfolios (student/child)</p> <p>Position papers</p> <p>Professional development plans</p> <p>Professional organisations and committees' membership list</p>	<p>Professional reading list</p> <p>Projects with children, adults or organisation oriented</p> <p>References</p> <p>Research papers and/or research in action</p> <p>Schedules</p> <p>Self-assessment instruments</p> <p>Student (child) contracts</p> <p>Transcripts (experiential)</p> <p>Unit plans</p> <p>Videos of learning and teaching excerpts</p> <p>Volunteer experience descriptions</p> <p>Allied work experience descriptions</p>
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## Considerations for the implementation of the Numeracy Block

Terry Wally

Our school has been involved in curriculum reform for a number of years. As part of this reform, we have been examining ways of delivering the curriculum to help our teachers develop best practice. Our first foray into change was the development of a literacy block. We developed a block approach to teaching of literacy skills, loosely organized using Freebody and Luke's four resources model. This approach was successful in helping children attain better literacy skills, particularly in comprehension. Based on the success of the literacy block as a pedagogical structure, and because of the growing concern about maths in our school, a few of our teachers decided to investigate this mode of teaching for mathematics.

### Effective teachers of mathematics

We realized that, as the key agent in classroom practice, the teacher's role is vital in planning for effective teaching and learning possibilities. Therefore, we needed to explore the elements of an effective teacher of mathematics. We found two pieces of research that helped to inform our practice – *the Early Numeracy Research Project* (Clarke, Cheeseman, Gervasoni, Gronn, Horne, McDonough, Montgomery, Roche, Sullivan, Clarke, Rowley 2001) and the *Effective Teachers of Numeracy* (Askew, Brown, Johnson, Rhodes, William 2003). These two pieces of research were specifically aimed at collecting data on best practice in the teaching of mathematics. The research confirmed the importance of a teacher's beliefs as an important foundation for the implementation of any curriculum program, particularly mathematics. The research also shed light on some of the characteristics of an effective teacher. The research found an effective teacher:

- has a comprehensive, in-depth knowledge of mathematical concepts
- uses a range of materials/representations/contexts for same concept

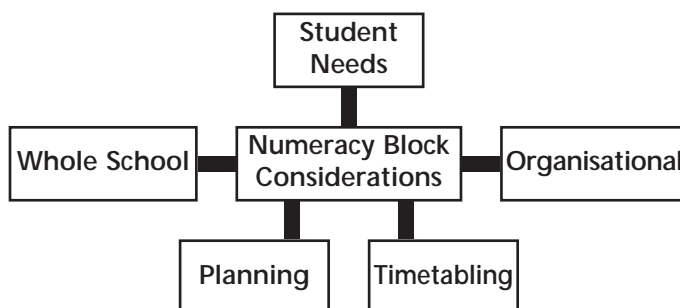
- engages and focuses students mathematical thinking through an introductory, whole group activity
- uses teachable moments as they occur
- structures purposeful tasks that enable different possibilities
- collects data through observation and listening
- believes mathematical experiences can be enjoyable.

We believe that the block approach, which we had used successfully in our literacy program, could help us to embrace and develop many of the characteristics of effective teachers of mathematics, if implemented appropriately.

### A block approach - a change in thinking

What exactly do we mean by a 'block approach'? It means a dedication of time and planning specifically for the teaching and learning of mathematics, which we do already. However, a block approach also requires a change in thinking on many levels including organisational (school), planning (teachers in partnership) and implementation (students/teachers aides/parents).

Organisational changes are vital in the successful implementation of Numeracy Block. Without continuing support from the administration of the school a block approach to teaching and learning is very difficult. Support from the administration needs to include the specific allocation of time, resources (human and physical), planning, parental education and money.



## Planning for Numeracy Block

Giving thoughtful consideration to the activities to be included in Numeracy Block is another factor. We formed a team, which consisted of the two Year Two teachers and the learning support teacher, to examine planning considerations. We looked to the Victorian model to inform our practice. Victoria has implemented a block approach to teaching mathematics and used The Early Numeracy Project (Clarke et al 2001) to guide implementation with excellent results. The Victorian model uses a whole-part-whole approach with a focus on one mathematical concept per session and open-ended activities to consolidate learning. Using this model as a guide, as well as a variety of resources, we looked at our own situation and considered our planning. We decided to have one whole group focus activity per week with six other activities through which the children rotate. The whole group activity introduces the topic for the week and establishes language and any basics needed for the specific topic. Three of the rotating activities are planned on the same topic but in different contexts. One activity is an investigation to support the main focus for the week. The other two activities are hands-on applications of the main topic and number facts consolidation which includes games or computer. The following diagram is an overview of our planning considerations each week.

Other components of our program, sitting alongside the Numeracy Block but at different times, are daily number sense activities and weekly consolidation games. Once planning of

activities is considered we turn our attention to the implementation of Numeracy Block.

## Implementation

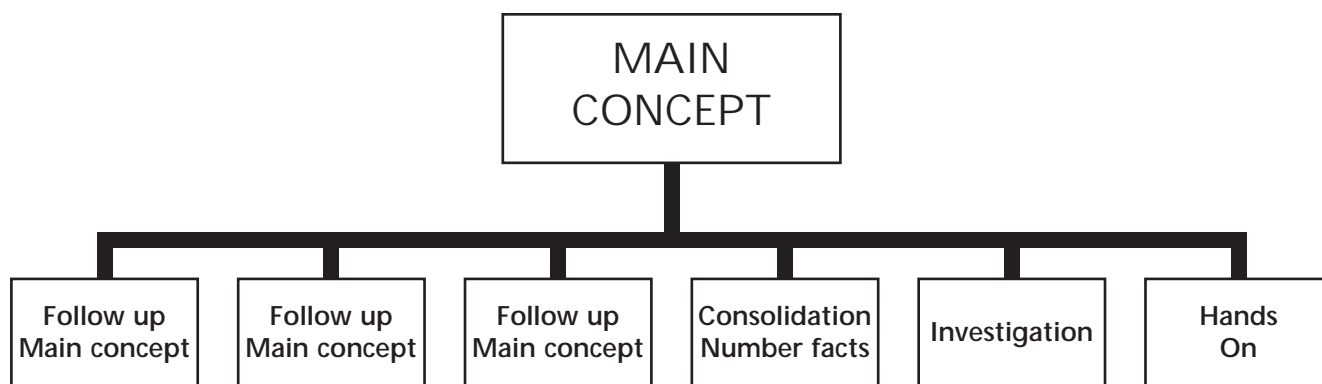
Several issues needed to be considered in the implementation of Numeracy Block. Firstly, the children must have the skills to work independently. Because of the type of activities that are used in Numeracy Block, the children's understanding and compliance with behaviour expectations is vital. Secondly, clear understanding of how to read a timetable independently, and the system of rotation used, are other key elements in the success of any block approach to teaching. Thirdly, the organisation of the children's personal resources is an issue. We use a plastic A3 sleeve where the children store all of the materials they will need for Numeracy Block.

Another consideration is the organisation and compiling of the resources and materials needed for the activities. This can be a big job. Last year the teacher's aide organised the materials for the week. This year the teachers take turns. This shared responsibility in the planning and the practical elements of Numeracy Block are the main reasons our Numeracy Block has worked so smoothly.

## Benefits

As a result of the implementation of the Numeracy Block, we have noticed the following outcomes:

- Planning for maths is more comprehensive. The team has a consistent approach and we can readily track student learning.



- Working with the students in small groups allows the teachers to respond to the individual needs of the students quickly
- The activities themselves are varied and the students' interest is maintained.
- Auxiliary skills are being learned just from the rotational and organisational aspects of the Block. Skills include persistence, staying focussed on a task, seeking help in ways other than approaching the teacher, reading simple timetables, organising themselves and understanding movement patterns.
- Deeper conceptual understanding of topics is possible as the variety of activities allows an in-depth focus on concepts over a series of rotations.
- Catering for individuals in terms of academic needs as well as interests, through the practical nature of the small groups.
- Changing planned activities on the spot to suit the understandings of the students you have in a particular group is made possible due to the small group structure.
- As the students are working in a small group, the teacher gets to know what individual students know and don't know, due to the closer regular interaction.
- Improved teacher practice, particularly the organisation of long term planning for the coverage of maths learning outcomes. We know what the students know and therefore what we need to focus on next.

The results of our experimentation with Numeracy Block have been very positive. We, as teachers, have been able to demonstrate some of the characteristics of effective teaching. Numeracy Block, as a way of delivering mathematics, has also allowed our teachers to respond to the needs of students in the relaxed and supported environment of the small group. The focused consideration in planning has produced varied and enjoyable activities which foster a love of mathematics.

All of this served to create a working model within our school and beyond for other teachers to use for implementing this practice. Future considerations for our group will be to include a student reflection tool in each rotation of Numeracy Block and to look at and incorporate effective assessment tools. The final word on Numeracy Block, however, should go to the children. In response to a recent survey question about what was their favourite subject in school, 98% of the Year Two children answered with a resounding "Maths".

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***We, as teachers, have been able to demonstrate some of the characteristics of effective teaching. Numeracy Block, as a way of delivering mathematics, has also allowed our teachers to respond to the needs of students in the relaxed and supported environment of the small group. The focused consideration in planning has produced varied and enjoyable activities which foster a love of mathematics.***

## ***Learning in the key of music***

***Susie Davies-Splitter***



Susie is a music and movement educator, Orff practitioner, jazz musician, composer and president of the Victorian Orff Schulwerk Association.

She has lectured and conducted professional development workshops throughout Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, USA, as well as the Orff Institute in Salzburg, Austria.

Together with her partner Phil Splitter, she has developed the popular "Welcome to Music" Series of CDs, books, musicals and choral range for teachers and children of all ages.

They regularly present shows, family music workshops, artist in schools programs, professional development for teachers, performances and their "Musikernote" presentations at conferences.

Susie's vision is to spread the word around that singing, moving, dancing, playing and creating music is good for the heart, for the soul, the body and the mind and that all people can benefit from and learn to love music. <[www.welcometomusic.net](http://www.welcometomusic.net)>

An involvement in a music program helps to educate the whole individual intellectually, physically, socially, emotionally and creatively. An "Orff" based approach can inspire children to sing, move, dance, listen, create, play instruments and love music. Have them jumping for joy with material that makes learning interesting and fun.

The child's early fascination and love for music and movement can be channelled into a life-long enthusiasm through an involvement in an enjoyable and active music program!

Music can be fun, easy and accessible for all. Music is unique and can enable children to feel and understand the music cognitively through rhythmic work on body and instruments, physically and kinaesthetically through movement, emotionally through self expression, and through one's sensibilities – that of the aural, visual and tactile. This holistic style of teaching allows children to experience the music through their body, mind and spirit. A simple movement, vocal or rhythmic trigger can recall the material years later.

### ***Why is music important?***

Howard Gardner (1983), Harvard University researcher, with others took on the task of defining the human intellect. They examined across disciplines and cultures and finally

identified seven distinct and different ways of knowing and communicating about the world (intelligences) which are "wired in" to the brain.

The intelligences are listed below and defined by Goodkin (2002) in *Sound Ideas*, particularly in relation to music.

1. Musical/rhythmic – the ability to hear, imitate, transform and create the musical elements of beat, rhythm, pitch, melody, timbre, dynamics and tempo
2. Visual/spatial – the capacity to view the visual world accurately; to perceive the beauty in shapes and form; to recreate imagery; to orient oneself in space and estimate intervals in time and space. Part of music making is decoding musical symbols, recreating a graphic score or moving and dancing.
3. Bodily/kinaesthetic – the capacity to perceive and imitate the 'dance' in all motion; to carry and shift weight; to see meaning in gesture; to handle objects skilfully and to know the world through touch. The kinaesthetic aspect of music and the arts (dance, mime and acting) is one of the qualities that separates it from academic subjects.
4. Verbal/linguistic – the capacity to hear the 'music' of language; to hear, imitate,

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transform and create meaning, syntax, form and verbal expression through imagery, story and ideas. Music programs can incorporate the use of speech, rhymes, poetry and singing.

5. Logical/mathematical – the capacity to perceive the beauty of numbers; transform and create patterns and relationships; to perceive cause and effect, to draw inferences, develop theories and prove hypotheses. Music is made up of logical patterns, sequences and relationships.
6. Interpersonal – capacity to perceive, react to and empathise with feelings; to recognise and remember people; to work with and for the group; to respond to relationships.
7. Intrapersonal – the capacity to build a sense of self; to develop self control; to be self



aware and strive for self improvement.

Music contributes strongly to the personal intelligences by the development of emotional and social skills through group singing, dancing, playing and creating.

A complete education must include a development of all intelligences. Gardner states that each child has a right to have each of these intelligences developed equally in every school day and failure to provide this education amounts to educational malpractice.

Music and the arts can develop all the intelligences and every area of learning side by side.

## **Music enhances social skills and self esteem**

William E LaMothe, Chairman of the Board/Chief Executive Officer of Kellogg Company, said ... *An education enriched with participation in lively arts encourages students to*

*reach for the best within themselves. The self esteem they develop from this experience builds the confidence to reach for the best in our society. Appreciation of music and related arts bridges the gaps among societies and offers young people valuable lessons in cooperation and sensitivity to others.*

## **Music develops physical skills**

Through movement and dance, physical skills are developed such as gross and fine motor coordination, flexibility, balance, body awareness, locomotion, spatial awareness and health and fitness.

## **Music raises intelligence**

Through Gardner's seven intelligences – see above.

## **Music enhances emotional development**

*Music education is fundamental to the child's creative, intellectual and emotional development. That there is a strong link between the study of music and the enhancement of cognition, aesthetic sensibility and creativity has been demonstrated. In addition, a music education has been shown to have inestimable value in contributing to the personal, cultural and social growth of the child, engaging the individual's mind, body, and sensibilities simultaneously. Music should have a place as an essential subject in the curriculum of every school. - (Lierse 1997)*

Daniel Goleman (1996) describes another intelligence – emotional intelligence (EQ).

He believed that we leave the emotional education of our children to chance, rather than educating the whole child by bringing together heart and mind. This form of education would emphasise self awareness, self control and empathy and the skills of listening, resolving conflicts and cooperating – all skills that can be taught through music.

## **Music enhances creativity and expression**

Goodkin (2004), Whitcomb (2003) and Judah-Lauder (2001) all speak about the great benefits of creative expression and the feelings of freedom that it brings.

Music touches on more areas of study than any other subject in the curriculum.



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Doug Goodkin (2002), American music educator, says *Music is a science, mathematical, a foreign language, history, physical education, and most of all it is art. Physical Education lacks the intellectual dimension, maths the aesthetic, art lacks the social, language lacks the physical etc. Only music would develop all four side by side!*

If we hear, feel, think and do - we will remember and understand.

Carl Rogers, psychologist, said, *Learning which involves the whole person of the learner, feelings as well as intellect, is the most lasting and pervasive.*

Some of you may remember the days when music was only for the elite and gifted few. Many of us were asked to mime the words at the back of the choir or slapped over the knuckles for "mucking around" on our instrument instead of practicing. These days, with the right experience, all children can enjoy, develop skills and learn to love music.

### ***When can music be introduced?***

Children begin to learn at a very young age. The foundations for a successful lifetime are built during these young formative years (between birth and eight years) and therefore the earlier children can be involved in music activities, the better. During this time, the brain grows at its fastest rate. By beginning music education at a young age the child has more chance of being meaningfully involved with music in later life as a listener, performer and a creator.

### ***How can music be introduced?***

Through a fun, easy, integrated and holistic approach that all educators can use regardless of whether they have a musical background or not. Singing songs, playing games, moving, dancing, playing and making instruments and opportunities for creative input. All of these elements combine to enhance children's learning and development.

### ***About the approach***

This approach is called the "Orff Schulwerk" and was founded by Carl Orff, a German composer and music educator who lived from 1895 -1982, and colleague Gunild Keetman (1904 - 1991). It is a general artistic education rather than a method of music instruction. It is "Music for

Children", designed for ALL children, a unique music learning approach. Each child contributes according to his/her ability. *No other music education approach that I'm aware of offers a comparable opportunity for children and adults to participate in an ensemble experience accessible to all without extensive training.* (Goodkin 1993)

Orff Schulwerk is based on things children naturally like to do such as sing, chant rhymes, dance, clap, etc. These instincts are directed into learning music by hearing and making music first, then reading and writing it later. This is the same way we all learn our language.

The ideas are centred on the fundamental unity of music including speech, singing, movement and instruments which are integrated to teach the elements of music.

An Orff approach helps to educate the whole individual intellectually, physically, socially, emotionally and creatively through active music making, individual input and group improvisation.

### ***What music can we teach in an Early childhood setting?***

For the last four years, I have visited a preschool centre in Melbourne for one term each year. At this centre, I teach music to four groups of four year olds for thirty minutes at a time. We always begin with an action song that includes clapping, patting and tapping to the beat as well as singing. This is a good centring activity and is followed by a short speech rhyme such as a finger play. A greeting activity follows and then 'hello' is sung to each child by a puppet. A couple of singing games follow about a clown, teddy etc. and then we dance. An instrumental activity follows where everyone plays, (a relaxation song if time) and then the puppet sings goodbye.

In each session there are rituals, repetition and incremental progress. As well as developing musical skills, children develop skills in many other areas – see below.

### ***My musical aims are to encourage children to***

- enjoy and have fun with music.
- acquire a repertoire of rhymes, songs, musical games and dances
- sing, say, move, dance and play



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- play instruments
- improvise – using creative imagination and free expression
- develop a sense of beat (The steady pulse in music shown physically by tapping feet, etc.)
- develop rhythm (The duration of sounds. A specific rhythm is a pattern e.g. a series of words.)
- discriminate between high and low sounds (Pitch)
- discriminate between loud and soft (Dynamics)
- discriminate between fast and slow (Tempo).

Other skill areas that can be developed.

### ***Musical activities promote:***

- social interaction between children, their peers and adults
- concentration and attention skills
- improved coordination
- confidence and self esteem
- body awareness and image
- communication skills and verbal development
- understanding of a variety of concepts
- expression of feelings
- listening skills

### ***What you can do***

- You do not have to be a good singer, have a musical background, play an instrument or have a special musical skill or ability to impart a love of music or to participate and enjoy these musical activities.
- All you need is motivation and enthusiasm – have fun and enjoy!
- Show your children that you personally enjoy music by singing, dancing, listening, playing and creating your own music. Share this enthusiasm and partake in active music – making and creating together.
- Foster a positive environment where ALL children experience success without the demand for technical ability.
- Be creative and imaginative and help your children to express themselves through this medium.
- Try a music and movement session in

different places such as outdoors.

- Link these music and movement activities to other areas of your program or curriculum so that learning can take place in the key of music.
- Adapt the material by simplifying, extending, or substituting ideas according to the age and ability of the child/ren.
- Be a member of relevant music associations in your area – see below.
- Be prepared to attend an occasional music in-service so that you will continue to receive new and exciting ideas on music making for children. Children “catch” the sheer joy of music by being exposed to positive role models around them. Involving children in music-making is not hard work. In fact it can be very enjoyable. HAVE FUN! Goodkin, (2006) says when something is fun, we are motivated to learn and motivation is the key to accomplishment!

### ***Where can you go to learn more?***

VOSA (the Victorian Orff Schulwerk Association) has links to Orff Associations in other States, as well as an Early Childhood Resource Centre; information about Orff Schulwerk and various events, including an Early Childhood Conference of Performing Arts (ECCPA), that is held in May/June for two days in Melbourne each year.

Go to <[www.vosa.org](http://www.vosa.org)> and join your local State organisation.

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## ***Ensuring quality care through planning and evaluation***

***Charlotte Bowley and Jennifer Clarke***

The program implemented in the early childhood service will reflect the high quality education and care standards attained by families and staff. It is what the children will experience on a daily basis. The process is ongoing and circular and includes the elements of philosophy, goals, developmental areas, observation records, aims, objectives, individual and group plans which are appropriate to the children's needs, and evaluation.

A centre's philosophy is a written statement of values and beliefs that are important to management, staff and families. It is a statement that incorporates each centre's special conditions and focus. It should underpin all the decisions made by management and staff, including goal-setting. It provides a framework for reviewing the centre's operations.

The philosophy should take account of current knowledge of early childhood development, theories about how children learn; the centre's position on issues such as equity and social justice; and the various social and cultural values of the community. While a statement of philosophy can be brief, it is far more than a mission or business statement because it sets out the centre's values and beliefs. (NCAC, 2001)

The centre philosophy, broad goals, policies and programs should be linked. Unless there is a strong link between these areas they would be superficial at best and irrelevant at worst. Linking the areas provides a positive framework from which staff can work. These links should also extend to the child's progress records. Once evaluation of the child's individual plan takes place, the process begins again and the areas can be evaluated for their relevance according to what has occurred in the child's progress records. Philosophies, policies, goals and programs may then be reformulated according to these findings.

The program should be based on the children's needs and interests, which are determined by

the observations and records, kept on individual children and groups attending the centre.

The documentation or records you gather are analysed/interpreted to give you knowledge about the child. They will highlight:

- behaviour
- language/communication
- social interactions
- preferences in play
- problem solving abilities
- emotional development
- areas to be strengthened.

This information can then be used to develop appropriate experiences.

Written records should be in a positive tone where competencies are the focus. However, deficiencies need to be noted so that staff are alerted to any problems and plan for them or gain outside assistance as required.

Information gathered on each child must take a variety of forms. Not all methods will suit the situation or your needs. Having only anecdotal observations will not provide a complete and true picture of a child's progress.

Children learn in different contexts. Some children can perform a task or show they have learnt a concept in one context but, when observed in a different context, show the skill is not yet mastered. Often when children particularly enjoy an activity, they excel in learning a concept, yet this may not transfer to an area enjoyed less. Sometimes children may be able to show they have mastered a concept yet may not be able to speak about it.

Documentation that can be collected for analysis is:

- recorded speech
- video
- computer printouts

- photographs
- written observations of different types (anecdotal, running records, time/event samples, sociograms, checklists, work samples, diary/reflective journals)
- scribing what children tell staff
- family information offered or gathered
- input from other staff and professionals
- conferencing with children.

Staff should look at the pros and cons of all observation techniques.

On enrolment, a record for each child is set up, regardless of the child's attendance pattern. These records need to be maintained regularly. Records will be more extensive for children who attend full time.

The ways in which records can be kept are wide and varying. Individual staff need to find a method to suit the needs of the children in their group, their budget in setting up the records and staff's personal preferences. It is difficult to maintain records with a system that feels uncomfortable.

Involving families in the record keeping process makes them feel valued as the primary caregivers. They also feel part of their child's learning and progress. The partnership between families and staff benefit both parties, which in turn, benefits the child while in the care of centre staff.

Staff members should have knowledge of child development that should be regularly updated by researching journals and other literature, undertaking formal study, using student teachers, attending in-service training (conferences, seminars or workshops) and researching the internet.

It is important to remember a good program is designed to maximize the development of all developmental areas and not just one or two. It concentrates on the development of the whole child.

Therefore, when planning experiences, staff should remember that children learn best from their own experiences and that their role is to 'draw the learning out of the child'; and out of

everyday experiences. Part of the staff members' role, and the strategies they employ when offering experiences to children, is to actively participate and encourage them to explore, think, feel, ask, develop and not just to tell.

This means that, for staff to be able to provide appropriate and meaningful experiences, the environment must be structured to meet the children's developmental needs and be safe, clean and appealing to encourage play and exploration.

You will find, as with gathering, recording and documenting information on children, there are many planning formats.

Some staff may use traditional formats, others will tell an ongoing story for each child through a portfolio approach, whilst others will use planning webs to map out a subject or interest, resources and strategies needed. No matter what method you use to document your planning, it must be a method that you not only feel comfortable with but one that has meaning to families and meets regulatory requirements.

The program should:

- show links to information you have gathered on individual children, small groups and the whole group (observations/documentation)
- be developmentally appropriate
- be meaningful to the children
- be open ended
- include the strategies you will use
- include any alterations made
- be evaluated and reflected on
- reflect learning back to staff
- be able to revisit experiences
- have a history of what has occurred
- advocate for early childhood education
- provide families with insight into their child's day.

It is important to remember that there still must be a justification for what you are planning and



# Feature Articles

this links not only to the centre's philosophy and broad goals but also to individual children's development, interests and cultural identity.

Content of the program includes such areas as:

- children's interests and their special competencies
- family input
- inclusion of all children
- all developmental areas (physical, social, emotional, linguistic and cognitive)
- a variety of learning experiences (music/movement, arts, language and literature, maths, dramatic play, technology, science, cultural awareness, the environment, equity, outdoor play etc)
- fostering particular skills and behaviours

(creativity, curiosity, problem-solving, decision making, self help etc).

As well as observing and planning experiences for each child, staff need to note spontaneous activities initiated by the child. This will give insights into the child's abilities and preferences of which staff may otherwise not be aware. These child-initiated activities will give staff invaluable ideas for future learning opportunities and experiences. These spontaneous experiences also offer opportunities for staff to scaffold the children's learning and introduce new resources. By extending the activity in this way, it may lead to a group project or conversation that will lead the child or group on a journey of discovery relating to a particular interest. This, in turn, will further develop a range of existing skills, knowledge and abilities and may introduce new ones.

An example of planning using photos and child initiated ideas is given in this extract from Fleet, Patterson and Robertson (2006 - Chapter 16).

### *The Scenario*

An educator had captured a superb photo of a child blowing a 'fairy' (seed pod with wings) in the air. He was working hard over a long time at making sure it didn't reach the ground. The photo captured a child intent on what he was doing. The educator knew something special was happening, but was not sure how to proceed with this moment. We then speculated on what the consequences for teaching could be.

### *Focusing on teaching strategies*

The teacher might get into discussion with another teacher about how they could lead this on to other things. They would brainstorm and come up with many ideas. For example, over the next few days they could get out the bubble blowing, straws, the vacuum cleaner, wind socks, pin wheels and so on. These are ideas based around 'activities' which seem at first glance to relate to the child's observed interest, but which serve to place the teacher and teaching at the centre of curriculum implementation.

### *The second way forward focuses in on the learner and learning*

On the other hand, we might invite the child and one or two others who are interested, to print off the photo together. We hang it on the wall at the children's level, put a tape recorder or video camera nearby, and move in to record and listen as the children respond to the photo. Once the conversations are flowing freely, other avenues to pursue the interests that develop will bubble up. Ideas to move forward are created together. The teachers would take a few minutes to reflect together on this experience, adding new thinking to their growing understanding about the learning taking place. This becomes the first Learning Story. Tomorrow gives an opportunity to revisit this experience, share the conversations children were having and to link this into ongoing Learning Stories that could develop over many weeks (Clemens, 2004).

Documentation should be displayed on the walls, at children's eye level, to make children's learning visible. These documents act as a memory for children and a method of accountability for staff.

The evaluation process is an integral part of the centre's program. It enables all parties – the staff, families and children, to determine the effectiveness of planning, and to see if it meets the established goals and objectives. Effective evaluation provides information and justification for change, as well as increasing the standard of care provided. If evaluation is to be effective, cooperation and understanding is essential. Evaluation is not intended to highlight weaknesses of a particular person or method in a derogatory manner, but rather to highlight achievements or make changes when necessary. Ideally, the insights gained from evaluation will help develop and improve staff practices, and enhance the learning for the children in care.

Evaluation can take many forms, and the secret of effective evaluation is to find the method that best suits you. There is no point having a large evaluation sheet to be filled out everyday if you do not have the time and resources to complete it, as it will become a chore, and eventually may lead to evaluation not occurring in any form. Discuss with other staff members in your centre the best method that will allow all staff members to have an opportunity to evaluate, in a simple yet effective form.

As well as evaluating the overall program, you can reflect during and at the end of a particular experience, activity or project.

Part of the evaluation process should be to plan for time to sit and talk to children about their thoughts, feelings and ideas. Small groups would be the preferred way to accomplish this. To assist these conversations you may look over photos that have been collected as part of your observation/documentation process, read through the comments you have written, or the narrative for display. (This may have been what children were saying during the experience/project or your comments on how the children were engaged and what they were learning/developing.) It may be comments the children have written or dictated. This will prompt the children to talk over the experience and will lead to further planning ideas. It may

also be the basis for some web planning in which older children can participate.

The position of teachers is recognised as complex – with the teacher as moral agent and critical thinker; no longer a transmitter of knowledge but, with children, a collaborator, researcher and knowledgeable 'other' in the educational endeavour. ...what is pedagogical documentation? Maybe if we describe what we think it is not, things may become clearer. It is not purely display of either children's or teacher's work, but at times has elements of display. It is not simply a document, but often resides on paper, disk, and book. It is not a running record of events which unfold, but can take that form and role during the course of the experience. It is not a checklist or planning format, but there will be times when such organisational elements are used to propel the experience forward. It is embedded in the actions, learning, research and collaboration among a group of children and an educator. (Fleet, Patterson, Robertson, 2006)

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## ***Why sexuality education in the early years?***

***By Gillian Schroeder***

Sexuality education is a critical component of every child's developing sense of self and the world around them. Providing age-appropriate, comprehensive sexuality education is a responsibility shared by educators of young children and parents and carers.

There are a number of key factors supporting comprehensive sexuality education in the early years curriculum. These include child protection issues, curriculum support for sexuality education and a child's right to be supported to develop a healthy sexuality. Early childhood educators can work cooperatively with parents and educators to promote healthy attitudes and understandings in children and help children develop the skills to communicate confidently about their bodies.

Sexuality education in the early years curriculum is critical. Children receive sexual messages and information every day, in the playground and in advertising, on television and in music. Honest, factual information from trusted adults can help to counter this and provide a balanced viewpoint for children.

Sexuality education is also an important tool for child protection. Learning self-protection skills involves learning about self esteem, assertiveness, body awareness, understanding feelings and relationships, different types of touch, identifying the rules about touch and knowing what to do if rules about touch are broken. For example, a Family Planning Queensland (FPQ) factsheet: *'Feel Safe - promoting self-protection'* talks positively about different types of touch and the 'No, Go Tell' strategy children can use to get help and be safe any time they need to.

There is also a protective factor when children are able to talk accurately about their bodies. Simply knowing the names and functions of public and private body parts, knowing which

body parts are public and private and understanding that a child's body belongs to that child, are skills with protective influences for children. These skills provide children with the ability to describe, clearly and accurately, situations where they need the help of a trusted adult (in a way that adults are able to understand). Research by Sanderson (2004) and Richardson, Higgins and Bromfield (2005) suggests that young children are capable of learning and retaining basic concepts and skills related to self-protection skills. Children who have participated in prevention programs are also more likely to disclose abuse than children who have not participated in prevention programs (Sanderson, 2004). Encouraging children to make early disclosures about incidents may prevent their exposure to further incidents and the threat of disclosure from a child may act as a deterrent to some offenders (Sanderson, 2004).

On the other hand, ignorance about the names of body parts, rules about public and private body parts, and rules about touch, does not protect a child from the risk of abuse. In fact, research shows that perpetrators target children from families where sexuality is not discussed, using the child's lack of knowledge and lack of vocabulary to talk accurately about their bodies to their advantage (Queensland Crime Commission and Queensland Police Service, 2000). These are compelling reasons for all early childhood educators to address these skills and understandings within the curriculum.

There are also very strong reasons for incorporating sexuality education in the early years curriculum from a curriculum quality perspective. *The Early Years Curriculum Guidelines* support early childhood educators to provide an environment for children that encourages development of effective

communication skills, creativity, active learning, problem solving, social adjustment and participation (Queensland Studies Authority, 2006). Developing these skills and approaches in children helps develop their potential to participate in their education and as members of society. With the increased focus on Prep by educators, parents and carers and the community broadly, it is an ideal time to focus on planning to deliver the best possible curriculum to young children.

Within the *Early Years Curriculum Guidelines* there are a number of areas that include or make reference to topics that are covered within a sexuality education program. The early learning areas - social and personal learning; health and physical learning; language learning and communication; early mathematical learning; and active learning processes; provide a framework for early childhood educators that supports them to develop in children the skills and attributes for successful learning and to link in with the Years 1 - 10 key learning areas (Queensland Studies Authority, 2006).

Within the early learning area of social and personal learning, there are focuses on social learning (sustaining relationships), social learning (understanding diversity) and personal learning. Within the focus area of personal learning, the learning statement affirms that children build a positive sense of self through "developing a sense of personal identity as a capable learner" and "acting with increasing independence and responsibility towards learning and personal organisation" (Queensland Studies Authority, 2006: 48). Suggestions for planning in the *Early Years Curriculum Guidelines* include children exploring their own and others' feelings, needs and ideas; expressing their feelings, needs and ideas with consideration for the same in others; and exploring ways to respond to the feelings and needs of others (Queensland Studies Authority, 2006). Exploring feelings - identifying, naming and responding to them, is an important component of supporting children's emotional development, which can

help them to form healthy relationships now and in the future. These themes are key topics to address in sexuality education programs.

Communication skills support children to communicate their feelings and needs confidently, ask for help, form healthy relationships with their peers and manage the social, emotional, cognitive and physical changes that occur as they grow, particularly during puberty (Ray & Jolly, 2002). The area of social and personal learning: social learning (understanding diversity) also suggests that teachers plan for learning in which children identify and explore diverse roles in families, home, school and other settings (Queensland Studies Authority, 2006). This is an opportunity for teachers to support children to explore the diverse make-up of families, and gender roles and stereotypes - all important topics to address in a sexuality education program.

One of the three focus areas of the early learning area of health and physical learning is 'making healthy choices'. Within this focus, there are a number of suggestions for planning that can help teachers to address sexuality education. Planning suggestions in the *Early Years Curriculum Guidelines* include children:

- learning about their bodies, systems and functions, and everyday actions to promote their health;
- discussing parts and systems of the body and how they function to assist in the maintenance of health and well-being;
- identifying and discussing safety in real-life situations, and
- making choices, with support, in real-life situations to maintain their own and others' safety (Queensland Studies Authority, 2006).

Sexuality education is also about supporting children to develop a healthy sexuality. It's not just about teaching self-protection skills, or teaching the biology of puberty and reproduction. Sexuality education aims to provide a sound foundation for the

development of healthy sexual identity. It does this by providing age appropriate information to encourage an acceptance of self and others, empower children and young people to deal with exploitative situations, enhance relationships, and encourage young people to choose to be sexually healthy.

Overseas experience and research has demonstrated that comprehensive sexuality education is correlated with positive sexual health outcomes for young people (Weaver, Smith & Kippax, 2005). No studies have demonstrated that sexuality education leads to earlier onset of sexual activity (Baldo, Aggleton & Slutkin, 1993; Williams & Davidson, 2004). Further, research demonstrates a clear correlation between comprehensive sexuality education and positive sexual health outcomes for young people such as increased use of contraception and adoption of safe sex practices and delayed onset of sexual activity (Baldo, Aggleton & Slutkin, 1993; Weaver, Smith & Kippax, 2005).

An example of the significant benefits of sexuality education is the Netherlands, a country with one of the most comprehensive sexuality education programs, (typically integrated into various subject areas) beginning in preschool and continuing through middle and senior schooling, (Williams & Davidson, 2004). The Netherlands has one of the lowest pregnancy rates and highest rates of contraceptive use among young people in the world (Weaver, Smith & Kippax, 2005).

Educators have a responsibility and commitment to provide the best education possible to the children who come into their care. However, this can challenge educators both professionally and personally. Sexuality education is no different to other topics in this regard. Despite this challenge that sexuality education presents to some educators, there are compelling reasons to address sexuality education within the early years. They are: to promote the development of self-protection skills in children, to address curriculum

requirements and to promote the development of healthy sexuality in children.

Sexuality education needs to be addressed by educators to support children to develop to their full potential and make healthy, informed decisions in line with their values and beliefs. FPQ supports educators to plan and implement sexuality education programs with resources, consultation services and training. FPQ advocates for all children's rights to sexuality education. It is too important to overlook.

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# International Perspectives

## ***A journey in cultural democracy: directions and milestones***

**Jill Burgess** *M Ed, B A, Dip Tch(ECE), Dip TCH (Primary), Dip SLT (Second Language Teaching)*



A New Zealander of Scottish and Danish descent, Jill Burgess has been working in the field of early childhood teacher education since 1999. She has had a long-time interest in bicultural practice and cultural democracy in New Zealand early childhood settings.

Jill has worked in settings across the education spectrum, and in the early childhood field in New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and New South Wales. In 2003 she was asked by Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/NZ Childcare Association, to become the principal writer of a team of Pasifika early childhood educators, who first scoped and then developed a programme for the National Diploma in Teaching (ECE, Pasifika;

Level 7). Jill currently holds the position of programme leader, as well as being a member of the Pasifika lecturing team sited in Waitakere, West Auckland.

*Talofa lava, Malo e lelei, Taloha ni, Fakalofa  
lahi latu, Kia orana, Leana, Mauri, Talofa,*

*Ni sa Bula Vinaka Tena koutou katoa*

### **Greetings from New Zealand**

As this article goes to press, students in the inaugural class in a programme for the National Diploma in Teaching (Early Childhood Education, Pasifika) are just completing their second year of study. They are currently on their second practicum. This diploma has a special focus on working with Pasifika children. Pasifika children in New Zealand come from Cook Island, Fijian, Kiribati, Niuean, Samoan, Solomon Island, Tokelauan, Tongan, and Tuvaluan communities.

This teacher education programme is delivered by Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/New Zealand Childcare Association, a national association of child care centres which both advocates for early childhood education (centre support, professional development, annual early childhood conference), and delivers a three year field-based level Seven Diploma in Teaching (ECE) at 16 teaching bases throughout New Zealand. It is one of two institutions – the other is Auckland University of Technology, who delivers a pre-service programme – to have taken up the challenge to develop and deliver a programme for this national diploma. This article tells a little of the story of that challenge which for me, as principal writer in a multicultural Pasifika writing and teaching team, continues to be a wonderful journey in cultural democracy.

The Association's launch of the field-based

programme delivering the National Diploma in Teaching (Early Childhood Education, Pasifika) in October 2004 at West Auckland's Waitakere teaching base, was a milestone in a journey that, for me, began with the drive (an earlier part of the journey) of Pasifika early education communities to have a leading voice in the prescription for a universally valued and comprehensive qualification that served the educators of Pasifika children. Pasifika early education communities consulted for the diploma include Cook Island, Fijian, Niuean, Samoan, Tokelauan, Tongan, and Tuvaluan communities.

The journey's direction was strongly influenced by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority who had identified and structured the content, who would moderate its implementation, and whose logo will be included on the diploma. The qualification would also foster qualities and attributes identified and structured by the New Zealand Teachers Council, to be responsible for teacher registration.

<http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/nqfdocs/quals/doc/0983.doc>

<http://www.teacherscouncil.govt.nz/registration/renew/dimensions.stm>

In 2005, Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/New Zealand Childcare Association launched this diploma at a second Auckland site, in response to a need for trained Pasifika staff identified in that area. Plans are in progress to deliver the diploma in Christchurch from January 2007.

The development and delivery of Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/New Zealand Childcare

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Association's National Diploma in Teaching (ECE, Pasifika) programme has drawn strongly on sociocultural theories, with particular reference to situated learning, critical pedagogy and culture theory. Students enrolled in the programme are required to work in early childhood centres for a minimum of 15 hours

per week. Students usually work as paid rostered staff, although volunteering in a licensed centre may occur. Students may work in one of a range of Pacific Island Language Centres - Cook Island, Niuean, Samoan, Tokelauan, Tongan, Tuvaluan, or may represent other Pasifika ethnicities - Fijian, Kiribati, Solomon Island,. They attend tutorial classes for one and a half days per week. Many of the assessment tasks link theory and practice. The primacy of culture in their centres provides a context for shared meaning-making that is likely both to empower the community and to reinforce the student's praxis.

Field-based teacher education programmes are situated within a framework of cooperative education. While the key aim of cooperative education at the tertiary level is for students to apply and integrate theoretical concepts to the work environment (Rainsbury, Hodges, Burchell & Lay, 2002), there are, in cooperative education generally and in field-based early childhood teacher education in particular, clear benefits for employers and for educational institutions, as well as for students  
<<http://www.nzace.ac.nz/cbenefit.htm>, 2006>  
The National Diploma in Teaching (ECE, Pasifika) fits the characteristics of cooperative education. It is work-based – the learning is in context, and the student spends an appropriate period of time in the work environment. It is structured, with academic classroom assessment and supervision of centre practice. It is productive, ('real work'), and it is relevant to the student's area of study.  
<<http://www.nzace.ac.nz/coop.htm>>

Because of the location of the National Diploma

in Teaching (ECE, Pasifika) in a specific, field-based, educational context, critical pedagogy has been a key theoretical perspective informing its development and delivery. Critical pedagogy derives from Giroux who described it as a focus on "the production of knowledge and identities within the specificity of educational contexts and the broader institutional locations in which they are located" (Giroux, 1991, cited in Robinson and Diaz, 1999, p. 34). Critical pedagogy foregrounds concepts of empowerment and the centrality of culture. Empowerment is a principle of New Zealand's early childhood curriculum, Te Whariki, and culture is central to that document's socio-cultural framework (Ministry of Education, 1996).



*Meleseini Tu'itupou:  
Tongan Fine Mat  
Framework*

The sociocultural theory of Lev Vygotsky (Bodrova & Leong, 1996) suggests that children who develop strong cultural capital have mastered the cultural tools that enable them to become capable and competent members of the cultural group. Similarly the primacy of culture can be seen at all levels of Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework, also influential in current discourse (Ministry of Education, 1996). Every culture is understood in relation to a particular time and place.



*Tiana Toru: Palm Tree  
Philosophy*

Culture theory in New Zealand grew from the work of writers such as Metge (1990, 1995), Salmond (1975) and Schwimmer, who in 1970 said that "it is not always realised to what extent culture determines the perception of an 'experience'" (p. 76).

Every culture is based on specific beliefs and



# International Perspectives

values that are expressed through cultural tools, which include symbols (language, music, art, crafts, dance, legends, food) and social structures (division of labour, education, social welfare, law and order, health, spirituality). Social structures also include relationships that are expressed through social organisation, kinship and protocols (Metge, 1995). The basic assumption of cultural theory, therefore, is that culture is both of central importance to the individual and a predetermining factor in the progress society makes (Deiner and Suh, 2000).

In a discourse that has attempted to take note of the importance of culture to individuals the notion of cultural democracy (Kymlicka, 1995; Young, 2000) has been recently constructed and theorised. Whilst viewing culture as a political construct, cultural democracy includes an understanding of culture as a key component of the script for identity development, and theorises a place for the notion of cultural difference within the democratic ideal of justice. Thaman K.H. (1996) articulated the assumptions of cultural democracy that the sociocultural system of the learner's home and community is influential in producing unique and preferred modes of communication and that an individual can remain identified with the home culture's values and lifestyle while being familiar with those of another. This view of culture underpins the curriculum experienced by students in this programme.

Many students enrolling in the National Diploma in Teaching (ECE, Pasifika) programme delivered by Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/New Zealand Childcare Association are fluent speakers of a variety of Pasifika languages and are working in centres that have a strong focus on cultural maintenance, including first language maintenance. The programme aims to foster use of this language throughout, while ensuring students have the opportunity to develop their understanding and use of English to the level required by the New Zealand Teachers Council. Addressing the question of language in a way that is both fair for the students and supportive of their attempts to meet the required standards, has been an aspect of the process of cultural democracy, the conditions for which were articulated by Antonia Darder (1991). Of prime importance was the construction of a multicultural curriculum to

ensure the relevance of the programme to each student. A programme with which students can identify offers a context for shared meaning-making that is likely both to empower the students and support the communities.

So ... as challenges are met, the students are being empowered, the communities supported, the association strengthened ... and the journey continues ...

**Malo lava      Kia ora**

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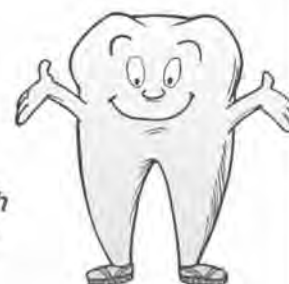
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(07) 3131 6826.

### *Happy Teeth:*

- was developed by early childhood specialists and oral health professionals, especially for early childhood settings
- is fun to use and easily incorporated into the daily routine of your facility
- involves parents to ensure that good habits are reinforced both at home with the family and at child care
- aligns with the National Childcare Accreditation Council's Principle Standards relating to hygiene practices, food handling and the control of infectious diseases.

The *Happy Teeth* resource kit is available free of charge to Queensland child care facilities. It includes:

- resource manual of information, activities, fact sheets and helpful contacts
- CD of songs and rhymes that help children learn about healthy food and brushing teeth
- DVD for parent viewing on ways to help children develop good oral health habits from birth
- newsletter articles
- posters and stickers ('how to brush' and 'hand washing').



## Title: Brain storms! Superior stories for superior kids

Editor: Vivienne Nicholl-Hatton

ISBN: 1875 622 640

Written by Australian children aged 9-12

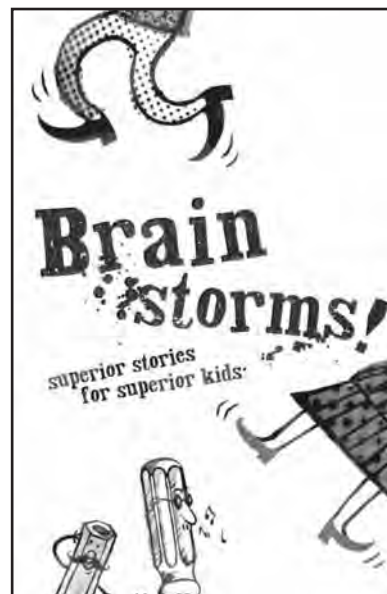
RRP: \$29.00

Primary English Teachers Association 2006

Reviewed by: Bronwyn Thomas and her son Andrew

*Brain storms! Superior stories for superior kids* is a collection of stories written by Australian children aged 9 - 12 years. The stories contained in this book were chosen from zone, state and territory winners in the Nestle Write Around Australia creative writing program and provide a wide range of narrative styles as well as a range of content. The stories were thoroughly enjoyed by my nine year old son, Andrew. Because the stories are written by Aussie children, the topics are relevant to the lives of our children. As they are all short stories (approx. 500 words) they make a quick and enjoyable read and would be a wonderful stimulus for aspiring writers in Primary School classrooms.

Andrew's comments: I loved all the stories in the book and it would be difficult to choose one favourite. The words used by the children in the stories gave me good mental pictures. I would rate this book 9.8/10.



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## Title: Funny Face

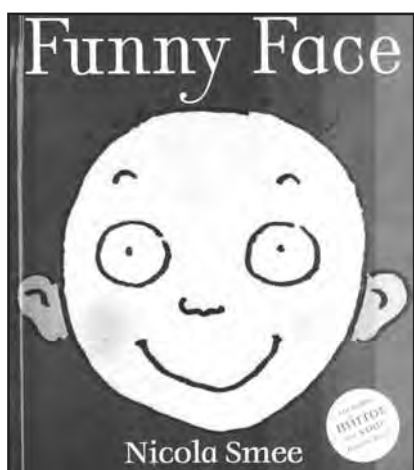
Author - Nicola Smee

ISBN: 1582 347 107

Bloomsbury USA 2006

RRP: \$14.95

Reviewed by: Bronwyn McGregor



From infants and toddlers right through to the preschool and early primary years, exploring emotions and the sharing of feelings through facial expressions is a familiar topic of discussion in many early childhood settings. For this reason *Funny Face* is a worthwhile addition to any early childhood teacher's collection of children's books and teaching resources. This little cardboard book is more than just a book of happy, cross and frightened faces – it has a story to tell, and creatures to find! The fresh-faced cartoon character in the book relates his feelings as he takes a walk in the woods and confronts a bear and its cubs. As each page turns, a new face can be made that tells the story of how the boy is feeling. The clear illustrations depict a range of 'easy to make' faces, while the story helps children relate to a situation that may make them sad or worried or cross. Once the story fades and the faces are made, you can add a new dimension to its telling by having the children search through the story pages for

little creatures that have been cleverly included in the illustrations. Although some may not like the reference to a 'naughty' face, most teachers will find this book an excellent resource for small group sharing or a one-to-one story reading. The durable hard cardboard and bonus 'mirror' for making funny faces add to the value of this simple yet entertaining story book.

## Title: Beyond the Reading Wars: A balanced approach to helping children learn to read.

Edited by Robyn Ewing

RRP: \$32.00 (\$22.00 PETA members)

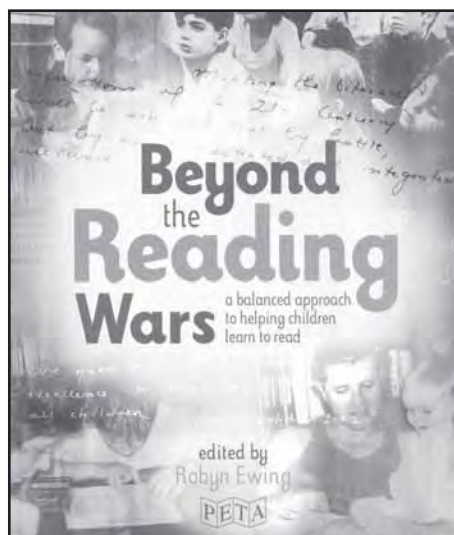
Published by: PETA (Primary English Teaching Association)

ISBN: 1875 622 667

Reviewed by: Beryl Exley (PhD), QUT

As the public debate surrounding the teaching of literacy escalates to unprecedented heights, mis/conceptions about what counts as literacy and effective pedagogies for teaching have created much angst. The publicity surrounding the 'Teaching of Reading: Report and Recommendations' (DEST, 2005, <<http://www.dest.gov.au/nitl/report.htm>>) that emanated from the National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy and the plethora of political mis/commentary have left parents asking if those involved in education share a common definition of literacy and what constitutes effective instruction and valid assessment <[http://www.dest.gov.au/nitl/submission\\_index.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/nitl/submission_index.htm)>. Masses of educators are expressing their disquiet about the misalignment of the reports' recommendations and current systems imperatives and locally generated school literacy plans <[http://www.dest.gov.au/nitl/submission\\_index.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/nitl/submission_index.htm)>. More so now than any other time, teachers have to have at the ready a philosophically sound and clearly articulated knowledge of what new literacies are, how to teach individual children to read, and validation of both.

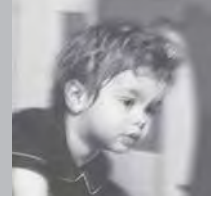
In the publication, 'Beyond the Reading Wars: A balanced approach to helping children learn to read', edited by Robyn Ewing (PETA, 2006), Derrick Armstrong (Chapter One), Jo-Anne Reid (Chapter Two) and Brian Cambourne (Chapter Three), bring together discussions of these important debates. Later chapters describe and theorise teachers' classroom practice, thus re-instating the high levels of professionalism of many early years literacy teachers in Australia. Particular attention is given to the skill of the teacher in developing authentic and connected curricula, and matching pedagogic practice to



individual student needs to ensure the simultaneous development of foundational and higher level literacy outcomes. As most of the examples draw on learning experiences of pre-readers and beginning readers, this publication should be of much interest to those working to promote literacy outcomes for young children. Jan Callow and Margery Hertzberg (Chapter Four), and Clive McArthur and Kim Self (Chapter Five) present scenarios that focus on the contexts of listening, talking, viewing and writing. The practicalities of different models of pre-reading and beginning reading pedagogy is spelt out in

Robyn Wild's (Chapter Five) focus on modelled, shared, guided and independent reading. The importance of oracy as a foundation for high levels of literacy outcomes is underscored by Sue Bremmer and Paul Dufficy (Chapter Six). Suggestions for activities for early years children, especially those for whom English is a Second Language, are also provided. The importance of ICT literacies (Jan Turbill, Chapter Eight), a grammar for visual literacy (Alyson Simpson, Chapter Ten) and practices of process drama (Robyn Ewing, Chapter Eleven) are included. Processes for operationalising authentic reading assessment and its articulation with statewide testing are clarified by Ann Daly (Chapter Seven).

In conclusion, this book provides a compelling argument as to why teachers need to be well versed in current definitions of literacy and the importance of an integrated and multi-method approach to the teaching of literacy. I commend it to teachers searching for an abridged version of the current debates in literacy education and an overview of philosophically sound strategies for early years literacy education. It is available through the Primary English Teaching Association (PETA): <[http://www.peta.edu.au/Catalogue/Publications/books/page\\_\\_1589.aspx](http://www.peta.edu.au/Catalogue/Publications/books/page__1589.aspx)>.



## DATE CLAIMER

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## Guidelines for contributors

The ECTA journal committee welcomes all contributions and ideas for possible inclusion in the journal. These guidelines should help you to prepare your contribution.

### Style

In order to maintain a uniformity of approach within the journal, the *Macquarie Dictionary* and the *Style manual for authors, editors and printers* (6th edn) are preferred as the bases for reference. Australian spelling is used in preference to American.

- All numbers up to twelve should be written as words; figures are used for numbers 13 upwards (e.g. one, eleven, 18, 200). Exceptions are where numbers appear in a table, list or refer to a measure (e.g. Anne was seven years old when she walked 5 kilometres to school).
- Examples of dates and times: 15 February 2006, 1900s.  
If very few numbers are included in the article: She left at ten o'clock. If precision is required: She left at 7.25 am in order to catch the seven-forty train.
- Money is usually written as numerals (e.g. 20c or \$0.15, \$120 and \$88.15) but words may be used in approximations such as 'he made millions of dollars'.
- Titles should be in italics e.g. *The Australian* rather than 'The Australian'.

### Language

Your submission should be written in a style that is jargon-free, easy to read and without the assumption that your audience has any prior knowledge of your topic. If you use an acronym, include the full reference the first time e.g. Early Childhood Teachers Association (ECTA).

Avoid stereotypical, sexist, ageist or racist language. An internet search for 'The Language of Disability' will assist you in this specific area (e.g. 'uses a wheelchair' instead of 'wheelchair bound').

### Specific terminology

We are presently compiling a standardised list of frequently used terms.

Examples are:

- day care (rather than daycare or day-care)
- child care (rather than childcare or child-care)
- preschool (rather than pre-school)
- the Preparatory Year or Prep (rather than prep)
- Year One, Year Two/Three (words rather than numbers)
- 'the staff members are' (instead of the awkward singular noun 'the staff is . .')
- programme (rather than program, unless the latter is correct in the specific context)
- five-year-olds (i.e. age with hyphens)

The journal committee reserves the right to undertake some minimal editing or rewriting in order to maintain conformity of 'house style'. If an article is provisionally accepted, but fairly major changes are required, we will contact you to discuss this.

### Referencing

Ensure you include references where relevant. The preferred ECTA Journal style is that used in the *Style Manual*.

Example from a book: O'Hagan M 2001, *Early Years Practitioner*, 4th edn, Harcourt: London.

Example from a journal: Bredekamp S (2006), 'Staying true to our principles', *Educating Young Children*, Vol 12 No. 2, Spring 2006, Australia.

Direct quotations within your article should be in italics and referenced with name of author and the source.

### Length of contribution (maximum)

• Feature Article: 1200 words • Book review: 300 words • Regular article: 650 words

### Form of submission

Your contribution should be submitted via email to [info@ecta.org.au](mailto:info@ecta.org.au)

Photographs may be submitted digitally – minimum three megapixels on the highest resolution. Art works should be scanned. Photographs require a release agreement. A hard copy should also be included. Author release forms must be signed and a hard copy forwarded to ECTA GPO Box 3254 Brisbane 4001.

Where original artwork or material has been submitted it will be returned at the contributor's request. All contributors will be sent a copy of the journal.

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