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From the President

Kim Walters - ECTA President

Hopefully, for most of our members working with children across the state, the new enrolments have settled in and you have been able to establish routines and relationships with the children, parents and staff. For many, you may have a new teaching partner and are working at establishing your individual roles within this close relationship. For some, you may be working with several other part-time teachers and/or aides.



believe, is only possible when a specialist full time aide is available.

In my discussions with teachers across the state, I am hearing that not having a specialised teacher aide is impacting on all aspects of the program. The impact on how teachers are able to support the special needs children in their class is of particular concern and needs to be addressed as quickly as possible.

I have recently been approached by several newspapers and National Nine News seeking feedback from our members. Having early childhood in the news, I believe, is a powerful tool to promote the value of early childhood education and care and to improve the quality of early childhood programs offered to children. Obviously, with the introduction of Prep classrooms across the state, the focus of these media reports has been Prep. Aide time continues to be the major issue discussed.

I sometimes wonder if anyone outside the early childhood classroom truly understands the impact a highly experienced, well trained, dedicated teacher aide has on the quality of the program offered to children. Over the past 25 years of teaching I have had the great privilege to work with aides of exceptional integrity, ability and passion for early childhood. Each brought to the program their own unique qualities and skills. As a team we interacted with children, made plans for future possibilities, followed up on incidental learning experiences and shared reflections of the program, individuals and group. This sharing enabled the program we offered to be shaped by the children, parents and ourselves so that it provided the best quality possible. This level of teamwork and quality, I

No early childhood teacher wants to see full-time aides funded by the lowering of aide time for other teachers. We have seen P&Cs taking the initiative and funding full time aides and parents contributing directly to funding aide time. In other schools, routines have been established for the slow integration of the Prep children into the school mainstream. Prep precincts have been established for eating and break times; staggered starts and parental interviews were carried out to help establish relationships; staggered finish times over the first five weeks supported tired children; specialist sessions are being placed in the afternoons when no aide is available; special support from guidance officers during first term is helping teachers with the identification and support of special needs children. These are only a few examples of the initiatives being provided at a school level.

ECTA hopes to highlight those schools making good choices around Prep so that others will be encouraged to follow their lead. If you are working in a primary school that has made good choices around the implementation of prep, I encourage you to invite your principal to submit an article for publication on our website or in *Educating Young Children*. The Prep Implementation Branch will distribute links to

these articles published on our website via their principle E-News update.

Our state conference is set once again to be an outstanding success with a huge selection of 27 practical workshops that are guaranteed to suit our members who work in all the various sectors of early childhood.

The conference committee, headed by Robbie Leikvold and Toni Michael, has done an outstanding job donating enormous energies and time. The committee members' work is carried out voluntarily. I would like to extend a huge thank you to them from the State Coordinating Committee and on behalf of all that attend the conference. The planning systems and final quality of the conference has been finetuned by the committee over many years with many committee members having been involved in the conference for well over ten years. Each year they learn more and adapt the program accordingly and the conference just gets better and better.

This year we will continue to spread our conference articles out over all the journals so make sure you pay your membership fees before March next year to guarantee you will receive all journal and DVD copies.

This year we were able to offer three ECTA members financial support to attend the conference:

- Meredith Scales, Emu Park State School
- Tracey Francis, St Finbarr's Quilpie
- Wendy Manners, Catholic Education Services Cairns.

Our website committee has several new members and they have settled in well in their various roles. Thank you to Gail Halliwell who works tirelessly on the website development and coordinating the specific roles of the web weaver committee members. Our website is now a professional communication tool which will continue to expand and improve as we step fully into the digital world of the 21st century.

From the Editorial Panel

Lynne Moore -



As I sit at my computer writing these words I can't help but reflect on my life as an early childhood professional. I use the word life because to me it is much more than work. Somewhere deep inside me there is a special something that I share with all of you - I

can't actually find the words to describe it, but I know you will know what I mean because you too have felt it, each time you have attended the annual ECTA conference in Brisbane:

- the selflessness of the conference organising committee members who, at dawn, are

making final arrangements before the formalities of the welcoming address

- the togetherness of huddling as one in that giant auditorium on a cold winter's morning
- the passion and inspiration (and sometimes tears) that well, as we listen to the presenters
- the wealth of early childhood knowledge and wisdom that we each contribute to the one place at the one time
- the commitment to learning that brings 600 educators together on the first day of the school holidays!
- the shared laughter and friendship, and
- the tacit knowledge that we come together in the best interests of children.

I hope that you will enjoy revisiting the 2007 ECTA conference experience in this edition of *Educating Young Children*.

ECTA 2007 Conference

A photo diary of the 2007 ECTA conference

Bronwyn MacGregor



From early in the morning, the conference committee members were ready to greet the delegates.



Once again, around 600 delegates huddled together on a cold winter's morning.



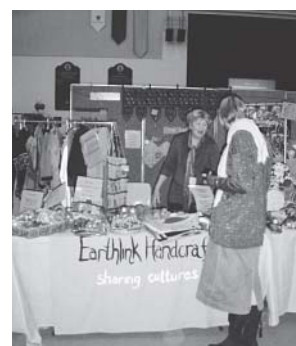
ECTA Vice President, Gary Davey, welcomed the crowd, and acknowledged the growing number of male delegates attending the conference.



The ECTA stand was packed with journals for sale ... and Shae was ready and waiting to register new ECTA members.



The trade displays were as colourful as ever, and there were plenty of bargains to be had.



ECTA 2007 Conference



Kim Walters, ECTA President, was pleased to honour Mark Cooper with the ECTA Life Member award. Mark has been an active member of ECTA for 19 years.



Robyn Moore ... an inspiring orator ... and a talented communicator ... what better way to start the day?



Workshops got underway without a hitch, thanks to our excellent venue - John Paul College, Daisy Hill.



As always, the food warmed us up and kept everyone mingling ...

...and there were plenty of lunchtime antics at the Clinton Woodvine "Circus Challenge"



Some last minute shopping before it all ended ...



and some wine and cheese to celebrate another successful conference!

ECTA Life member for 2007

Mark Cooper



In 1973, twenty-one teachers employed in the first state preschool centres to open in Queensland, formed the State Preschool Teachers' Association. These teachers were scattered throughout Queensland and knew that their major professional

need was to share their experiences in order to improve their ability to manage troubling events and incidents.

In 1976 the name was changed to ECTA, reflecting membership recognition that an Association was needed that would serve the professional needs of teachers working in all sectors offering educational programs for children from birth to eight years of age.

In 1998, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of this Association, the first life memberships were awarded. The awards are made 'as an appreciation of contributions and dedication to the field'. This year, at the annual ECTA conference for 2007, the ECTA life membership award was presented to Mark Cooper. Mark joined ECTA as a first year teacher 24 years ago and has played a key role in the state coordinating committee, journal committee and conference committee for longer than nearly everyone presently involved.

Mark graduated in 1982 and began teaching in 1983 where it has been reported he 'swanned around on the beach' whilst teaching at Sarina Preschool for six months. Enough of the good

life though, and Mark was soon transferred to Tieri - a mining town in central QLD. In Tieri Mark opened the town's preschool in the old pub which in fact was a donga (sleeping quarters for miners). Resources were scarce but Mark came through his first year inspection with flying colours - the children drawing with coloured chalk on the cement floor of the old beer garden showed Mark's creative use of materials and equipment. The Department eventually built a new preschool, opened by Flo Bjelke-Petersen, but Mark's partner, Kim was transferred to Blackwater so the couple moved from one mining town to another and they stayed in Blackwater for two years.

In 1986, Mark was once again transferred to Ferny Grove Preschool and in September of that year Mark and Kim were married. Mark and Kim now have two beautiful daughters.

After Ferny Grove Preschool, Mark was transferred to Murarrie Preschool where the high quality of the programme he offered, and the way he involved parents, led to a role as educational consultant for the Department of Education, based at the Mount Gravatt Early Childhood Resource Centre. In this role, Mark worked with preschool/Year one, two and three teachers encouraging them to share philosophies on how children learn and develop, classroom management and matching curriculum to development and sectors. This team also worked with school administrators to develop P-3 philosophies in order to develop policies for the lower school.

After approximately three years as a consultant, it was back to working with children, parents and the associated primary school at Whites Hill until 1996 when Mark was seconded to Central Office as an Acting Senior Policy Officer, Early Childhood.



Teacher Profile

This was the first of many positions in which Mark has worked since this move into Central Office at Education Queensland. He is currently the Acting Principal Policy Officer in the Strategic Implementation Branch and, as Early Childhood teachers, we must always appreciate that we have such a knowledgeable, committed and philosophically sound voice to speak for us.

Mark's varied career and his understanding of the workings of all sectors – schools and administration – has made him a valued and active member of the ECTA State Coordinating Committee from 1989 until 2000 and he has, over the years, taken responsibility for a range of committee positions.

As the ECTA State Regional Group Coordinator, Mark kept members all over Queensland in touch with trends, events and new developments while encouraging regional groups to share their own ideas and solutions to problems which are specific to country areas via networking, workshops and seminars.

During his time with ECTA, Mark also spent three years on the Editorial Panel of the *Educating Young Children* journal. From 1997 to 1999 he avidly canvassed for suitable articles, selected contributions and decided on possible future themes. Mark was well able to manage the stressful nature of this position, especially when deadlines had to be met. Over the years Mark has also been a journal contributor, writing articles about practical ideas to be used in the classroom and others that explore new innovations such as the introduction of the Prep Year.

The ECTA Conference Committee were also pleased to have Mark aboard from 2000 until last year, helping to organise workshops, trade displays, negotiating venues/catering and assisting on selecting guest speakers. There are many demands on the Conference Committee leading up to a conference as this event has not only a high professional standard to

maintain but is the major money-spinner for ECTA. Over the years Mark has run ECTA conference workshops – one with his wife Kim where they used their combined expertise and understandings to explore how teachers can make links in literacy between Preschool and Year One.

2007 sees the circle begin again with Mark once again on the State Coordinating Committee. He continues, as he has for the past 19 years, to represent ECTA at various meetings and forums.

Those on the ECTA committees with whom Mark has worked have described him in the following ways:

a most effective 'doer' who considers no job, beneath, below or unworthy of him

a man with a kind thoughtful manner who always gives you his full attention and makes you feel that he is very interested in what you are saying (and he is)

a most unbelievable, behind-the-scenes 'mover and shaker'

a tireless worker, a professional leader and a supportive and dependable friend to all the teachers, colleagues, children and parents with whom he has worked over the years.

a tall man but he is also a great man – a great teacher, facilitator, early childhood advocate, mentor, advisor, husband and father.

With his wide knowledge of all things regarding EC he has contributed to the success and relevancy of the ECTA we have today. One can only commend Mark on his ability and integrity to be an ECTA member supporting practising teachers with such dedication.

Every early childhood teacher in Queensland, nay, every teacher in Queensland, says, 'Thank you!'

2007 conference support for regional and remote members

Each year ECTA sponsors the attendance of regional and remote members to the conference held in Brisbane. If you would like further information about sponsorship please visit website at www.ecta.org.au

Please meet our 2007 conference sponsorship recipients:



Wendy Manners, Early Years Education Officer – Catholic Education Services – Cairns

Wendy has been involved in Early Childhood Education for the most part of her 18 year career. She has worked in primary and infant classes at

schools in both New South Wales and Queensland and has undertaken international teaching posts in Canada (1994), England (2000) and most recently the United States (2001 until 2003). She has also worked as the Director of an Early Learning Centre.

In 1996, in search of sunshine and warm weather, together with her husband David, she moved from Orange in Central Western NSW to Far North Queensland, where she took up the position of Teaching Principal in a small country school on the Atherton Tablelands.

For the past year and a half, Wendy has been working part-time as the Early Years Education Officer at Catholic Education Services – Diocese of Cairns, as well as part-time Junior School A.P.R.E. at St Andrew's Catholic College in the Redlynch Valley. Along with other Prep Facilitators State wide, Wendy has been responsible for the local implementation and Professional Development of Administrators, Teachers, School Officers and Parents with the Early Years Curriculum Guidelines.

Holding a particular interest in developing teaching programs which extend students' abilities and tap into each child's strengths,

while developing strong family connections, Wendy finds her work in the field of Early Childhood Education has been both rewarding and, at times, entertaining! She sees herself happily staying involved in the Early Childhood field for many years to come.



Meredith Scales, Teacher – Emu Park State School

Looking for a change of career in the mid-1980's, Meredith began a Diploma of Teaching, specialising in Early Childhood, in 1987 at BCAE (Carseldine campus), graduating in 1989. Fantastic

experiences in community kindergartens and preschools reminded her of her love of young children, the importance of play and a desire to be involved in early childhood. She was appointed to Tingalpa State School in Brisbane 17 years ago, where she stayed for four and half years in various year levels before taking up a position as Acting Teacher-in-Charge at Rochedale South Preschool. This was the beginning of her association with ECTA.

At this time Meredith was completing her Bachelor of Education at Griffith University – Mt Gravatt Campus. From Rochedale South it was off to the 'bush', or an approximation of it, at Blackbutt Preschool where she was Teacher-in-Charge for two years. Later, there came a move up the road to Nanango, where she taught Year One for a number of years before returning to teacher in Preschool. For Meredith, a stint at Reading Recovery reinforced the importance of early literacy experiences. Finally, she attended an ECTA conference. She remains passionate about the importance of play and early literacy experiences and continues to enjoy all the elements of early childhood right up to Year Three. She hopes to have a Prep class next year, following her sea change to the Yeppoon area in 2007.

Teacher Stories

Democracy in action - How school meetings can unlock children's voices, resolve conflicts and create child-centred social learning

Mathilda Element

Mathilda Element teaches a multi-age early years (P-3) class at Pine Community School, a small, parent-run democratic school in the leafy bush land of Arana Hills. Last year, she attended the 12th International Democratic Education Conference, along with 300 representatives from democratic schools in over 15 countries.

It's ten past nine on a Thursday morning at Pine Community School, and already the weekly school meeting is well underway.

Chloe, aged five, is clamouring for the attention of this week's appointed chairperson, Lachlan, aged ten. She is thrown the 'talking frog', and states her 'issue' – swings. This week, the secretary is Natasha, aged six, a beginning writer who is helped by close friend Jessie, aged eight, to add the item to the agenda (using words, symbols and pictures). As the meeting unfolds, many topics are discussed: bike safety reminders, changing outdoor game rules to ideas for end of term excursion. Finally, Chloe's topic is reached.



Children at school meeting

Often the younger children find it hard to distinguish between 'news' and 'issues'. As the early years teacher, part of my job is to scaffold this process. We talk about issues as 'problems, ideas, things you would like to fix or change'. I use gentle reminders at meeting time e.g. 'Is this news or an issue?' The physical

set-up of the room is different news. We still sit in a circle, but on chairs instead of the floor. Meetings are conducted officially, according to a familiar process that accords them status and respect. Most importantly, older children patiently model and support their younger peers. Still, it takes time. So this week, I was filled with pride and deep pedagogical satisfaction when Chloe spoke.

'My issue is the swings. The big kids keep putting them up too high and when I want to swing, I can't reach.'

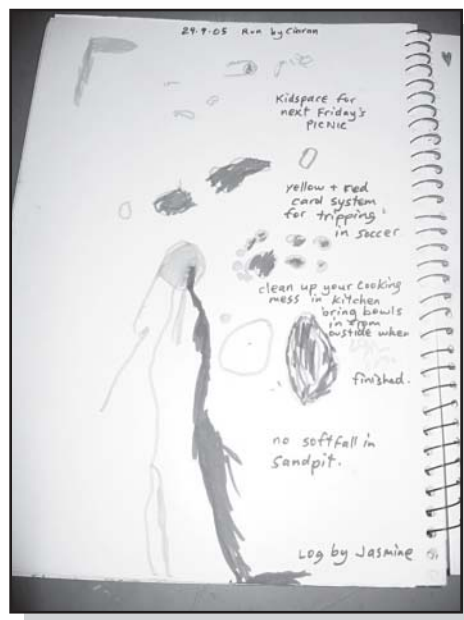
This was a watershed moment for Chloe, like the first time a child speaks or learns to read. Only this time, the voice she was tapping into was her democratic voice. She was raising issues that mattered to her in a friendly forum, and discussing and resolving them with her peers. The culture of a democratic school is one that values children's voices, teaching them that they have the right to be heard, as well as the



Pine Community School



Sample from minutes book



Sample from minutes book 2

responsibility to listen. Like many child-centred learning environments, there is the expectation that children's concerns be taken seriously.

This issue was a prime example. Over the next five minutes, other children had the chance to add their perspectives. Some things that may seem trivial end up being like a Pandora's Box, opening up undercurrents of feelings, potential tensions and needs. In meetings, children are taught to be careful with their speech - to talk calmly, articulate their feelings using 'I' language, be respectful and never use children's names in meeting. (This way, issues are discussed neutrally and no-one feels accused). A whole-school curriculum that focuses on conflict resolution, negotiation and problem-solving skills is connected to this.

As a teacher, my curriculum and pedagogy supports the democratic schooling approach. The 'spirit' of democracy pervades all our activities. Not only do we have symbols of democracy (such as school, class and parent meetings), but also big decisions from unit planning to hiring staff are collaborative

processes. At meetings, anyone can raise an issue – parents, admin, children, teachers, but all must follow the same process. It may seem a big undertaking, but actually starts on the smallest level – a shift in thinking 'What am I going to do?' to 'What are we going to do?' Teaching using democratic processes is time-consuming, but achieves brilliant results in the long-term as children feel empowered and responsible for their own learning and social behaviour.

In case you were wondering, the swing issue was resolved quite swiftly. Once the 'big kids' had a chance to state their case, everyone realised there was no deliberate malice intended. The children decided to make a sign, reminding the big kids to lower the swings after they had finished. They voted, passed the motion and nominated a team to carry it out. They decided to re-visit the issue in a few weeks to ensure Chloe's concerns had been addressed. The teachers helped to ensure this process went smoothly. In short, just another day's work at a democratic school!

Surviving a maze of change

April Schipke, Prep Teacher, Edge Hill Cairns

Edge Hill State School introduced a phase-in Preparatory year in 2006. I was the teacher of a straight Preparatory class with an assistant for 20 hours per week.

As I began this learning journey I felt excited because I was reminded of event based learning and the principles of Reggio Emilia. I had a feeling of uncertainty of how this could be achieved while meeting the expectations of the Early Years Curriculum Guidelines and my school. I became overwhelmed with talk and displays of collaborative planning, documentation, learning stories and digital portfolios!

How did I get through this maze of change?

As I made changes to my program I continually reflected on

- My beliefs about young children and learning
- Ways to scaffold the children's learning
- Collaborative planning.

This began on a small scale. A group of children were lining up small blocks and rolling cylinder blocks. After a discussion with the children, I discovered it was a bowling game. I explained that I liked the idea but I was concerned about their safety. So the questions were posed:

- What happens when you go bowling?
- What else could we use for a bowling game?
- How could we make the game?

With this small group we fostered exploratory discussion and displayed our ideas through a planning web. We revisited our planning web and added ideas as the play developed. Adult-initiated ideas were introduced by posing problems for the children to solve.

We proceeded to make signs, bowling balls, pins and lanes. Many learning areas were developed through these discussions: copying numerals, counting pins, sorting the bowling balls by size, copying children's names for turn taking, and problem solving what materials were needed to make the props and how to make them. Part of our learning journey was an excursion to the local bowling alley and the children were integral in the planning of this.

I felt it was important to communicate with the school community about the learning taking place in this play based curriculum. Our daily, collaborative, butchers paper planning was part of the children's contributions to their daily play and was displayed outside the room each day. This planning, a daily photo slide show, planning webs and monthly newsletters, provided opportunities to communicate the links between the Early Years Curriculum and the role of the children and adults in co-constructing their learning environment. The partnership between the school and the parents developed as these links were realised and parents offered their ideas, resources, skills and support.

There were day-to-day challenges of implementing the Early Years Curriculum Guidelines: increased workload, less aide time, no toilets in the room and the purposeful involvement of the children in the school community. Each time I faced these issues or others I reflected using these questions:

- What do I want to achieve?
- Why am I doing this?
- Who is this for?
- How am I going to achieve this?

Changes made were gradual with very positive outcomes for the children:

- "Real" ownership of their learning and environment
- Confidence to take risks
- Using problem-solving strategies
- Communicating and planning in group situations
- Using skills such as cutting, early writing behaviours etc. in a meaningful play context.

With the support of my Assistant (Judy Abercromby), family, colleagues and school administrators, I found my way through this maze of change. It is important to take risks, reflect on the changes and celebrate achievements, no matter how small. I have begun teaching another Preparatory year with new challenges and am building upon what I achieved last year. We need to believe in our philosophy and gain confidence to gather support from all involved in this rich learning environment, to try new ideas and share the outcomes of this play-based curriculum with our learning community.

The power of the word

Robyn Moore



For 30 years, Robyn Moore has been changing peoples' perception through "the power of the word" as an educator, in advertising, syndicated radio comedy, animation series and now as a speaker at National and International Conferences. She is passionate about increasing access to human potential and opening pathways to 100% participation in life through "breakthrough" communication!

Robyn is the National Patron of the Make-A-Wish Foundation, an Australia Day Ambassador for the Australia Day Council and is Australia's most in-demand female speaker. She has a unique relationship with words and weaves together humour, powerful stories and life-altering distinctions to create experiential presentations which, she promises, will create greater access to "well-being", resilience, passion, balance, results and satisfaction for participants...both professionally and personally.

Robyn shares these salient words from her keynote presentaion:

- If we can sell millions of dollars in a 30 second commercial ... we can enrich or destroy a child's life in 30 seconds or less.
- 'Engaging' speaking creates 'engaged' listening in a child ... in this sacred and privileged encounter, we get to grow children!
- Keep every child's/parent's/colleague's name 'safe in your mouth'.
- You have 30 seconds or less to inspire people about the work you do ... don't rip them (or you) off!
- Evoke emotional responses in your speaking.
- Be a sponge for 'Crikey Moments' in your life. Collect childrens' Crikey Moments (what they say and do) and share with their parents. The parents don't want to miss these magical steps in their child's life. These stories can transform a 'bad day at work' ... and grow good parents because of your good role-modelling.
- 'Living with Urgency before the Emergency' allows us to be present to the sadness and joy in life ... and be empowered in each situation.
- If we are free enough to do comedy like 'How Green Was My Cactus' ... we are free enough to grow a generation of children into their magnificence.
- The word 'Teach' means to impart information ... the word 'Educate' means to grow, raise up, maintain, lead. Embrace being an EDUCATOR.
- Ask yourself 'Am I a leader who is courageous enough to stand up for children who are not being nurtured and protected?'
- When Political Correctness gets in the way of 'the greater good' ... bad things happen to our children and in our society.
- Put the right words into any particular second ... and the future can be EXTRAORDINARY (and unrecognisable)!
- Everyday, appreciate and acknowledge your colleagues' contribution and achievements.
- Words can sell products and sell us back to ourselves ... every second we are the author of who we are going to BE as HUMAN BEINGS!
- Laughter can only happen NOW! If you have lost laughter, it means you are upset about the past ... or dreading the future.
- The words RESPECT and SORRY can transform the behaviour of difficult people.
- Don't give cynics your passion, vision, enthusiasm ... they're yours!
- When you take the front-door key out of your pocket at home ... ask 'Who's coming home?' Tired and ? You are the author of the second empowering word! Give yourself



Feature Articles

back to the people you love, by being self-determining. This is really behaving like a mature adult.

- Leadership is not conditional ... you can't do 50%/50%. Leadership is unconditional ... 100% or nothing! Choose to eat the MEAL and not the MENU!
- The four thieves of laughter are: Cynicism, Resignation, Anger and Procrastination.
- Everyday you get to 'make yourself up'.
- If little people or BIG people don't talk, stop talking, get loud and violent, or speak nonsense ... it might mean they DON'T FEEL HEARD! This is the perfect time to begin again ... and create 'listening agreements.' Never say anything unless you know you are building a powerful future in this conversation.
- Listen with EARS/EYES/HEART.
- The four thieves will steal the best of your humanity.
- The thieves for children are Waiting, Hard, Angry and Mean. The acronym is WHAM! Talk them through the distinctions so they can see what the thieves steal from them ...

then they have a say in growing their character into a BIG character.

- Always share your PEAK experiences as an educator at the end of the day (or in staff meetings). This also grows people and reminds people why they chose this vocation. Sometimes the circumstances will cover peoples' passion with plaque. Your stories help 'dust the plaque away'!
- Declare when things are tough ... how can you shift them if no one can see them?
- Which one empowering word will you be today? Write the word on your name-tag (i.e. Passionate Betty, Listening John, Understanding Suzie) Get the children to practise being self-determining too. Write a powerful word on their name tag so they are reminded of who they can BE on this day ... Friendly, kind, creative, helpful, courageous etc. Children respond beautifully to this exercise and take responsibility for being their word if you support them in their 'BIGNESS!'

ECTA 2007 Video conferenced workshops

ECTA has now held two very successful videoconferenced workshops for 2007. The first one held in March 'Rethinking Attachment 0 - 8s' with Dr Sharne Rolfe, was attended by over 250 people in various TAFE and QLD Health sites across the state. As this session was conducted in partnership with QLD Health, there were participants from a variety of professions e.g. speech pathologists, psychologists, occupational therapists, as well as early childhood professionals. The feedback from this session was very positive. Although many people commented on the content, the majority of the comments related to the great opportunity for networking with these allied health professionals and vice versa.

The latest videoconferenced workshop 'Early Literacy – Making A Splash' was supported by the

School of Early Childhood at QUT and by the Under Eight's Week Committee of Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Qld Branch in support of Under Eight's Week. This session was attended by nearly 150 participants in 16 sites across Queensland from as far north as Mossman to as far west as Charleville. Once more the session received some very positive feedback and it was very encouraging to see that we again had some psychologists and speech pathologists attend.

ECTA would not be able to offer these FREE sessions of professional learning without the support of TAFE Queensland and, in particular, the Children's Services section of TAFE Open Learning (TOL). We hope you will make the most of the opportunity to participate. Check the ECTA website for details of the next session.

Feature Articles

For Beauty, for culture, for memory, for storytelling: Building learning communities through pedagogical documentation

Stefania Giamminuti



Stefania is an Early Childhood teacher from Rome, Italy. She is currently a full-time PhD student, in receipt of a University Postgraduate Award, in the Graduate School of Education, The University of Western Australia. A recipient of the prestigious Creswick Foundation Fellowship for 2006, Stefania has recently returned from a unique six-month research internship in the municipal infant-toddler centres and pre-schools of the city of Reggio Emilia, Italy.

In Reggio Emilia, Stefania investigated research questions in dialogue with educators, children, and families. She observed how culture is created and learning communities are built through processes of pedagogical documentation. She is currently researching in dialogue with educators, children, and families at Bold Park Community School in Perth, Western Australia.



'What is a place?'

*'A place is a city where I
saw the birds, where
there are fake lion statues.'*

*(Teacher and Sara, 3.9
years old: Dialogues with
Places Exhibition, Reggio
Emilia, Italy, 2006)*

*Sara thinks of home when
she thinks of place: the
small city of Reggio Emilia,*

*in northern Italy, was my home for six
months in 2006 while I researched and
experienced daily life in Arcobaleno
Infant-Toddler Centre and Neruda
Preschool.*



*The 'Reggio Emilia Educational Project' is
strongly embedded in the cultural context
of this small Italian city, in its history of
participatory democracy and civic
community Putnam, 1993, cited in
Edwards et al. 1998a. The Reggio Emilia
'pedagogy of relationships and listening'
(Rinaldi 2001a) is based on an image of
the young child as a social being from
birth; a competent, intelligent child who*



Feature Articles

learns in relationship with others. Loris Malaguzzi, the educational theorist and founder of the Reggio Emilia approach, used to say 'your image of the child is where teaching begins':

It's necessary that we believe that the child is very intelligent, that the child is strong and beautiful and has very ambitious desires and requests. This is the image of the child that we need to hold. Those who have the image of the child as fragile, incomplete, weak, made of glass, gain something from this belief only for themselves. We don't need that as an image of children. Instead of always giving children protection, we need to give them the recognition of their rights and of their strengths (Malaguzzi 1994).

Pedagogical documentation, as practiced in the municipal infant-toddler centres and preschools of Reggio Emilia makes learning processes visible (Giudici et al. 2001). Documentation is: 'visible listening' (Rinaldi 2001a, p.83); a 'construction of traces' (Rinaldi 2001a, p.83); a 'social construction and an interpretation' (Dahlberg 1999a, p.32). It 'offers a research orientation, creates cultural artefacts, and serves as a collective memory' (Krechevsky 2001, p.259). Pedagogical documentation is a process of: listening to children; observing and recording their learning processes through notes, images, audio and video recordings; interpreting learning processes collegially; making the learning visible to the community. Documentation informs your practice, your future observations, and your future planning and evaluation, allowing you to be a reflective teacher and learner. Pedagogical documentation makes visible a strong image of the child, and an image of the teacher as researcher, learning and constructing knowledge with children:

Our job is to learn why we are teachers. It means keeping a distance from an overriding sense of balance, from that which has already been decided or is considered to be certain. It means staying close to the interweaving of objects and thoughts, of doing and reflecting, theory and practice, emotions and knowledge (Rinaldi 2006).

Documenting allows you to reflect on why and how you are a teacher; it allows you to view children from a perspective of uncertainty so that you can approach your teaching as the 'curiosity to understand' (Vecchi 2001), staying close to 'the interweaving of objects and thoughts, of doing and reflecting, theory and practice, emotions and knowledge'.

The Reggio Emilia Educational Project is not a model: the pedagogy views teaching, learning and development as cultural endeavours which are rooted in a historical and cultural context. The Reggio Emilia Educational Project is a provocation, a challenge for us to look upon our own cultural environments, our own assumptions, our own contexts; to develop our own educational projects, inspired by the continually evolving experience of a small town in northern Italy.

Reggio [serves] as a mirror in which we see ourselves and our traditions in a more conscious way' (Dahlberg, cited in Mardell 2001, p. 281).

In Arcobaleno and Neruda, I observed rich daily life with a focus on processes of documentation, to understand how documenting children's learning can support us in building relationships, constructing our schools as communities of learners within the wider community. I see documentation as that attitude and tool which can allow us to look through the Reggio Emilia mirror and see ourselves, to 'construct the meaning of school' (Rinaldi 2001a) for us in our own contexts, inspired by the work of the educators in Reggio Emilia.

Documenting begins with holding a 'valuing perspective' as they say in Reggio Emilia: 'an attitude that does not allow you to take anything for granted' (Mara, atelierista, Neruda Preschool). A valuing perspective is an attitude which allows you to see the extraordinary in the ordinary of daily life and to document it for the beauty, the culture, the memory, the narrative that it holds for you, your children and your families.

One day in May, during a conversation with the six-year-old children at Neruda preschool, their

teachers and I asked them: Why do we document? Why do we have panels on the walls? Chiara replied: 'For beauty'. So we asked them: 'what would Neruda preschool be like if there were none of the things that you do on the walls?' 'It would be ugly.' (Chiara, 5.9 years); 'You wouldn't understand anything.' (Alessia, 5.10 years); 'We wouldn't say the things that we said.' (Federico, 6.2 years). In reflecting on the meaning of documentation, the children realise that there is a connection, a relationship, between beauty and thought, between aesthetics and understanding. If there was no documentation on the walls the school would be ugly and we wouldn't understand anything. Reggio Emilia educators view beauty and aesthetics as a 'sensitivity to the structures that connect' (Bateson, cited in Vecchi 2006). Beauty lies in the relationships, in the connections.

In considering provocations from Reggio Emilia, we engage in the challenging endeavour of reflecting on our own cultural context and assumptions. Culture is a thread, a link, a relationship. Like aesthetics culture is 'sensitivity to the structures that connect'.

Culture is the way in which we relate to each other, it is a way of sharing meanings, but it depends on the fact that these meanings are constructed together in the same environment. [Authors translation from the Italian] (Bruner 1996d, p.17).

I asked a small group of parents of the four-year-old children at Neruda what meaning documentation has for them as families. Francesca replied: 'Documentation is culture.' Documentation is a way in which we relate to each other, sharing and constructing meanings together in the same environment. Observation, interpretation and documentation are processes through which we make meaning and, by making the documentation visible, we share meanings, experience, and values with the community, thus contributing to developing a new culture of childhood by sharing a strong image of the child and the teacher.

I believe that documentation is a substantial part of the goal that has always characterized our

experience: the search for meaning - to find the meaning of school, or rather, to construct the meaning of school, as a place that plays an active role in the children's search for meaning and our own search for meaning (and shared meanings) (Rinaldi 2001a, p.79).

When we asked the six-year-old children at Neruda why their teachers write notes and take photos all the time, they often replied 'as a memory'. We wished to understand this idea further, so we asked them: What is memory for? Federico reflected: 'To tell a story'.

This is Tommaso's story of the Ghost-Horse



Figure 1: *The Ghost-Horse* (Tommaso 2006)

... 'On top of his head he has a straight mane that goes all the way down his back; he needs it to keep the head and the bottom attached to his body. If he doesn't have it he dies. His legs are toothpicks, as long as sticks; his body is always fat and he always has hoofs. Otherwise he can't walk ... When he runs, all his muscles move, his mane waves, his legs bend and make a sound that is like the sound of drums ... His name is Ghost-Horse; he's male. I gave him that name because he likes death. He's a young horse, he's thirteen years old ... He always has to work; he always wants to go to school with his brother. He likes to have friends and jump obstacles.' (Tommaso 2006)

Tommaso's teachers listened, observed and documented his process of building a clay horse; they recorded his words and asked open questions about his work. For each child, they create 'a memory'. For Tommaso, this included images of his learning process; his words on the identity of his horse; his reflections on the challenges he encountered in the process of

building a clay horse; his drawings of horses; an image of the final product (the clay horse); and the clay horse itself.

So, at the end of the year Tommaso's mother brought home the ghost-horse (Figure 1) with the story; a story that holds within it the challenging process of building a clay horse and giving it life, a life which is related to Tommaso's own. How else would we have learned that the Ghost-horse needs his mane to keep his head attached to his body, that he makes the sound of drums, always has to work, and likes to go to school with his brother?

Documentation gives us a context for the process of learning: it gives us a story to share.

It is only in the narrative mode that one can construct an identity and find a place in one's culture (Bruner 1996a, p.42).

We come to know each other's minds, we develop 'intersubjectivity' (Bruner 1996a) through narrative, through the invention, telling and sharing of stories and, through intersubjectivity, we build communities of learners. Documentation is intersubjectivity; it is coming to know each other's minds; it is creating, believing in, and telling stories about learning, about adults and children learning in a community.

It is through an attitude of listening and observation, and through making documentation visible and share-able, that we can construct our schools as learning communities. In the words of the children, teachers, and parents of Reggio Emilia: for beauty, for culture, for memory, for storytelling, we listen, observe and document learning, to construct a new culture of childhood, a 'world of the possible' (Malaguzzi 1998a).

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Green is the new black:

Education for sustainable development in the early years

Robert Pratt and Natasha Moore

Robert is the Preschool teacher at Campus Kindergarten, University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia. He has worked in a variety of Early Childhood settings in Australia and overseas for over 15 years. Throughout his life Robert has enjoyed a love and appreciation for the environment. He feels fortunate that he has the opportunity to incorporate his passion for the environment with his work in Early Childhood Education. As key teacher with overall responsibility for the Environmental Education projects at Campus Kindergarten, Robert works collaboratively with children, teachers and the community to embed sustainability ideals, concepts and actions into everyday life.

Green is the new black!

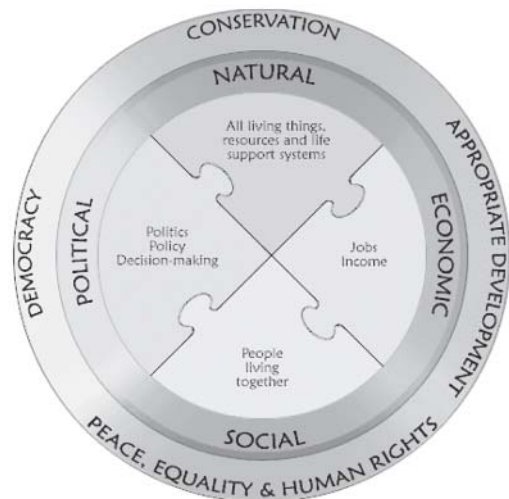
There is unquestionably a rising tide of awareness and interest with regards the state of the world's environment. The media is saturated with reports of global warming, pollution and associated health issues, deforestation, floods and drought; Al Gore's (2006) *An Inconvenient Truth* and the Stern Report (2006) out of the UK have both served to raise people's awareness. What does this mean for us as early childhood educators? As we enter the third year of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, it is timely that we ask ourselves – 'How do we 'ride this wave of interest' and capitalise on this unprecedented opportunity to engage children and families in life-changing educational experiences for the environment?' This paper serves to explore some possibilities and tells the story of one early childhood centre's approach to education for sustainable development.

Environmental Education, Education for Sustainability and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) are some of the terms used to describe teaching practices for the environment. In the interests of consistency, and in keeping with terminology used by the peak international body, the United Nations, the term Education for Sustainable Development has been used in this article. Similarly, definitions used to describe sustainability vary greatly. The definition below is most closely aligned with the authors' philosophy.

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Bruntland Report 1987, p.8).

What is Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)?

Diagram 1 describes a holistic approach to ESD. Four interdependent dimensions or systems of sustainability and their associated principles are identified:



Dimension of Sustainability ↔ Value Principle

Social Sustainability ↔ Peace and Equity

Ecological Sustainability ↔ Conservation

Economic Sustainability ↔ Appropriate Development

Political Sustainability ↔ Democracy

Diagram 1 (UNESCO, 2006)

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In addition to the abundance of environmental issues impacting on our lives, including species decline, deforestation, 'natural' disasters, climate change and pollution, a holistic approach to ESD must take into consideration the equally important concerns of social, economic and political sustainability (Fein 2004, pp.185-186).

From an early childhood education perspective, Education for Sustainable Development must also recognise that:

- children are less frequently engaged in nature
- children have a diminishing 'connectedness' with nature
- experiences with nature shape who we are and our attitudes, values and practices regarding the environment.

As Dighe (1993) in Davis, Rowntree, Gibson, Pratt & Eglington 2005 emphasises, 'One can hardly imagine a generation of persons with neither interest in nor knowledge of the outdoors making responsible decisions regarding the environment.'

As early childhood educators, we are in a position of great importance and responsibility with respect to sustainability education. Recognition of the early years as a critical time in a child's development, a period where the foundations for lifelong responsible living may be laid, offers us the opportunity to implement ESD principles in our programs that may truly change the world. The very nature of early childhood education, a child-focused and holistic approach to teaching, lends itself perfectly to the successful integration of ESD teaching practices in an early childhood program.

Campus Kindergarten's Approach

Background

Campus Kindergarten (CK) is located on the University of Queensland St. Lucia campus in

Brisbane. The centre operates jointly as a Crèche and Kindergarten Association of Queensland affiliated kindergarten and a long day care centre. CK is open from 8.00am-5.30pm Monday to Friday and caters to children from two and half years to five years. There are three rooms: Pre-Kindy – sixteen children per day, and two kindergarten rooms – each with twenty-two children per day. Children may attend five days (M-F), three days (M-W) or two days (Th-F).

CK Culture

Over the course of several years a strong culture based on the core principles of rights, respect, trust and responsibility has evolved at Campus Kindy (CK Prospectus, 2004). Central to all interactions these basic concepts of social justice are further defined by concepts such as: democracy, critical reflection, active listening, empowerment and active citizenship. Diagram 2 seeks to represent Campus Kindy culture and approach to early childhood education:

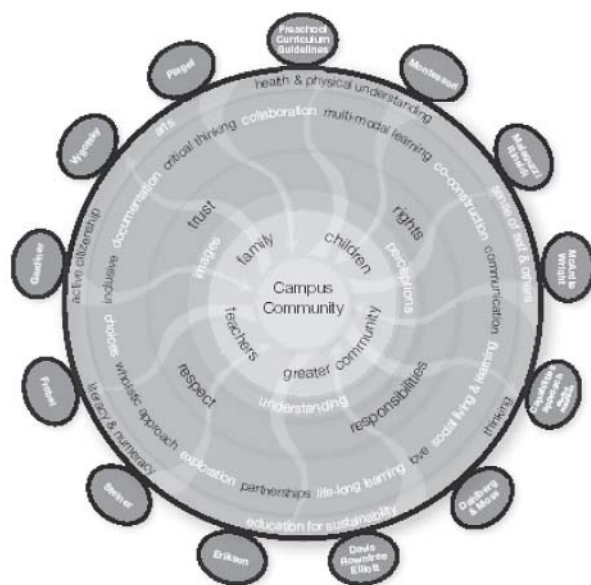


Diagram 2. Teachers' model of curriculum and culture, October 2004

At the core are the members of the CK community: the children, teachers, families and

the greater community. The community members' images, perceptions and understandings of one another, along with the core principles of rights, respect, trust and responsibility, and the approaches to teaching (fourth band from centre) influence all interactions and the development, content and implementation of the programs (fifth band). The teachings of the various theorists around the outside also permeate CK's culture.

This culture underpins all facets of Campus Kindy's operation and is clearly evident in the formulation and evolution of the centre's Sustainable Planet Project (SPP).

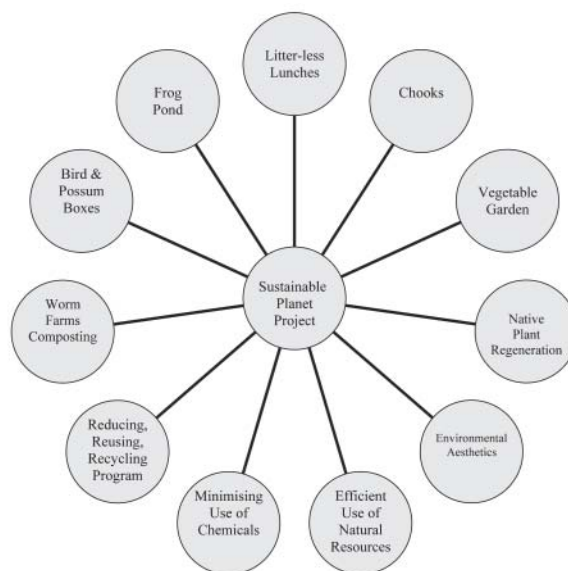
The Sustainable Planet Project

The title Sustainable Planet Project (SPP) is the term used to describe all elements of the CK curriculum pertaining to ESD and should not be considered as separate to the broader curriculum. Indeed the interconnected nature of its implementation could be considered an integral factor in the project's success.

The Sustainable Planet Project was born at a Campus Kindy staff professional development weekend in 1997. It was created to provide an opportunity for all members of the Campus community to contribute their own ideas, energy and interests, with the common goal of developing Campus Kindy's environmental education program. At the project's inception the teaching team developed their vision for the Sustainable Planet Project. It is our vision that:

Environmentally responsible practices become an integral part of our everyday lives. Simply 'what we do', not something we do because we think we should (Campus Kindy teachers, 1997).

As the Sustainable Planet Project evolved, the teachers, children and families began working on a number of projects. These have included:



All of these 'green' projects are integral components of the Sustainable Planet Project and have now become part of the everyday practices at Campus Kindy as envisaged at the project's inception. Each addresses ecological issues. They could be described as the 'tangible' elements of CK's approach to ESD.

However, as demonstrated in Diagram 1, a holistic approach to ESD must also consider the other three dimensions of sustainability: Social, Political and Economic. Elements such as democracy, equality, co-construction, critical reflection, immersion/connections, empowerment and active citizenship, all present in CK's culture, address some of the issues apparent in these dimensions of sustainability. These elements could be described as the 'intangible' elements of CK's approach to ESD. The following case study demonstrates some of these 'intangible' elements of CK's culture-in-action.

The Shopping Trolley Project

This project – outlined more fully in Davis et al (2005) – originated when the children arrived at the centre one morning to find a shopping trolley dumped in the playground, raising many questions about why and how it happened to be there. The preschoolers' initial brainstorming came up with the following ideas:

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Ryan: A burglar dressed up as a normal person, got the shopping trolley and took it to Campus Kindy.

Emily: He put it in there in the night and quickly ran away.

Teacher: Well what should we do about it?

John: Ring up.

Hamish: Take it back to the shop.

Fizza: Ring them and let them know.

("The Trolley" Documentation 2003)

The children were concerned not only about the morality of stealing, but also about the visual impact and damage that dumped trolleys and other rubbish have on the local environment. It was decided to write a letter to the 'Coles people', informing the store manager that their shopping trolley had been found and that there were more 'stolen' trolleys in the area. The children also listed ideas for stopping such behaviour as well as offering to return the trolley to the store.

They also wanted to write to 'the burglars' expressing their concerns about their behaviour.

Dear trolley stealers.
We are ^{the} Campus kindy preschoolers.
This morning we found a trolley
in our garden. We also saw
one in a tree and in the lake.
We feel worried & angry.
Stop stealing trolleys because
it is not the right thing to do.
You are crossing the law.
You are going to go to jail
or you will get punished by
the judge or prime minister.
From the Campus kindy
preschoolers.

Figure 1: Letter to the local newspaper (Campus Kindergarten preschoolers).

Not knowing their addresses, alternative ways of sending a letter were explored. In the end, a decision was made to write to the local newspaper in the hope that, with its local community readership, the burglars would read of their concerns.

Their story made front page news in this local newspaper, along with a photo story outlining the children's ethical and aesthetic concerns about stolen and dumped shopping trolleys. There was also editorial comment entitled 'Young teach us a worthwhile lesson', where the editor praised the children for their social responsibility.

With local attention adding momentum to the children's interest, a visit to the supermarket was then organised. During a tour of the car parks, the children identified that existing signs discouraging customers from taking shopping trolleys outside the shopping centre could only be read if customers actually utilised the car parks. However, the children had already determined that those who had 'borrowed' the trolleys were not car owners. Consequently, they suggested to the supermarket management that they (the children) make new signs which were then posted on the supermarket's main doors, targeting the 'shopping trolley thieves'.



Figure 2: Example of children's signage to the 'trolley thieves' (Alexander).

Although perhaps not a classically 'green' project with obvious ecological connections, this project does demonstrate how young children equipped with knowledge and skills and given the opportunity in a democratic classroom in which they feel valued and empowered, have the capacity to participate as active citizens. The processes involved and outcomes attained through this project potentially address all four dimensions of sustainability:

- Ecological: less pollution (i.e. discarded trolleys) in the local environment
- Social: collaboration and connections with local community
- Political: builds democracy, active citizenship
- Economic: the 'trolley stealers' stop stealing trolleys.

Conclusion

At the inception of the SPP, the teachers recognized the importance for children to be actively engaged in learning experiences that would promote the development of sound environmentally sustainable practices. They set about developing a number of projects that would teach the children about environmental issues and develop skills for improving the environment. These have been identified as the tangible elements of the SPP. However, over a period of time, through processes of critical reflection, professional development and research, the intangible elements of Campus Kindy culture were recognised as equally important for the success of the SPP. Elements such as social justice, democracy and active citizenship – present in the Campus Kindy

culture and enacted in the programs – have enabled the members of the Campus Kindy community to engage in a holistic approach to education for sustainable development. As early childhood educators, it is our responsibility to reflect upon our practices. This involves exploring possibilities in our programs for engaging children, not only in the tangible 'green' experiences, but also in investigating opportunities for creating the "new black" - a vision of ESD that creates cultures that empower children to work together for a healthy and sustainable planet – now and for future generations.

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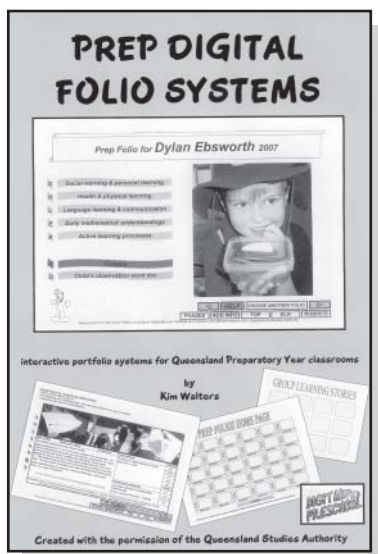
teachers recognized the importance for children to be actively engaged in learning experiences that would promote the development of sound environmentally sustainable practices

Prep digital folio systems

Kim Walters



Kim Walters has taught in early childhood settings for over 25 years, working with Kindergarten and Preschool children in C&K centres and in a Preparatory classroom. Kim has developed several resources to support early childhood professionals in Childcare and C&K centres to document children's learning using digital photography and Microsoft Word and PowerPoint. QSA gave Kim permission to create and modify the EYCG materials to produce a resource for Preparatory Year teachers. Her website www.digitalpreschool.com.au aims to provide advice and resources for EC professionals wishing to use digital photography to enhance learning and communication in their settings.



Early childhood professionals have always kept samples of children's work to validate judgements, reflect on the child's growth over time and plan future learning opportunities. Technology has given us an opportunity to create interactive,

stimulating, engaging records of children's growth. The e-folio or digital folio of the 21st century is capable more than ever before of painting a full picture of the processes of learning for each child in our classroom. Ease of storage and versatility, combined with no ongoing running costs, make the modern day folios a dynamic and valuable educational tool. Audio, video and still images give each child a voice to tell their own story of learning alongside peers, educators and parents as they choose and reflect on evidence gathered.

These multimedia story books traverse the limitations to communication generated when children and/or parents are illiterate, hearing impaired, non-English speaking or have English as a second language. Educators, for example,

can now capture and insert audio recordings of conversations with and/or between children in the child's home language.

Quality communication systems contribute to the educational success of children and contribute to the development of good relations between parents, children and staff (Hughes & MacNaughton, 2001).

The Early Years Curriculum Guidelines (EYCG) states:

The individual folio describes what a child has been learning ... The individual folio is co-constructed as an ongoing process between a teacher, a child, parents/carers and other partners. It becomes a dynamic record of examples of child's learning and development in the Preparatory Year. The folio should contain selected evidence that best reflects the child's understandings, capabilities and dispositions. The folio's contents will inform future planning and judgement-making for the early learning record (QSA, 2006).

The Prep Digital Folio Systems book and CD-ROM package available from www.digitalpreschool.com.au aims to give Queensland Preparatory teachers support in the processes of planning, interacting, monitoring and assessing and reflecting. The Prep Folio file contains slides for each of the Specific Focuses within each Early Learning Area (ELA) and a slide for the Early Learning Record (ELR). The Prep Folio file within the Prep Folio Systems folder has links to the child's Picture folder, a Phase Descriptors document and Rubrics and Help presentations. The 30 ready-to-go Prep Folios



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are linked together via a Home Page for ease of viewing. The Home Page also has links to 30 Individual Observations Word documents to record individual planning and observations, specialist report information etc. for each child and a Journal Word document for teacher reflections and group planning. These Word documents can be viewed or edited via the link on the Home Page.

The five Systems available on the CD provide a variety of opportunities for the child, families and carers, communities and other professionals to assess, view and collaborate on the creation of documentation of individual and group learning and assessment. Teachers will choose to use one or two of the Systems on the CD. The Learning Stories Only System can be used to showcase group projects or experiences in the classroom whilst the Prep Folio System is used for planning, monitoring and assessing.

Teachers build partnerships and positive relationships within the Preparatory Classroom through shared planning and documentation.

(Teachers) must discover ways to communicate and document the children's evolving experiences at school. They must prepare a steady flow of quality information targeted to parents but appreciated by children and teachers. This flow of documentation ... introduces parents to a quality of knowing that tangibly changes their expectations. (Parents) take a new and more inquisitive approach toward the whole school experience (Malaguzzi, 1993).

The various systems contained within the Prep Digital Folio Systems resource are more than assessment tools. They provide several folio systems useful as a reflective tool to demonstrate a child's development over time. The Learning Stories Only and Child Power Systems on the CD may be used by any classroom teacher as a communication tool, a reflective tool, a revisiting tool and a learning tool for children of all ages as these are not created specifically for the EYCG.

The various folio systems seek to provide a vehicle for teachers to organise artefacts that they record daily as they interact with and observe children individually and in groups. Teachers will collect a vast array of artefacts such as observational notes,

verbatim transcripts, audio and video recordings and still images of children and work samples. Multimedia artefacts capture the many languages expressed during movement and dance; outdoor adventures; negotiations, plans and constructions during project work or event-based play; the process of creating block buildings, paintings, drawings, clay, dough, collage or combinations of several mediums. These artefacts may be stored inside the group or individual child folders contained in each system.

Artefacts become evidence of learning when they are combined with a commentary or reflection. An image of a child using one-to-one correspondence whilst setting a table in the home corner or a child tapping heads during a game of Duck Duck Goose will show evidence for the Early Numeracy ELA. The teacher's commentary relating to one-to-one correspondence used, verbal counting heard, will tie the image to the ELA. The recorded commentary will allow teachers to make judgements related to the phase of learning reached by the child.

The commentary may include the time frame, date, learning context, learning or knowledge and/or skill level achieved, children and adults involved etc. It may be derived from an audio or video recording or transcribed interview with the child or children reflecting on their experience or the teacher may record the processes of learning she observed during the experience. The artefact and commentary may be used for future planning, monitoring and assessment and reflection. Storing and presenting artefacts in the folio system will allow teachers to share them with the child, class, family and specialist teachers in an organised manner and allow them to pass information on to future teachers.

You should not however include every picture taken or observational note written.

A haphazard collection of artefacts is difficult to manage and should be avoided.

The value of images may only become evident once you begin to create documentation. Routinely cull your collection if storage is an issue. Similarly, reduce the size of pictures inserted into the PowerPoint slides as this will dramatically reduce the storage required. Instructions for



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picture reduction are given in the Technical Help section of the Prep Digital Folios System book. Only keep pictures if you believe you may use them at a later date to create a resource or insert into a folio or if you intend to burn a CD-ROM for parents. If storage space is an issue, pictures of no further use should be removed from the hard drive each term and burnt to a CD for archival purposes as they can slow the computer down.

When taking pictures, teachers should be conscious of the image captured. Does it have the potential to become evidence? Can it be supported by reflections from the child and/or teacher? Does it capture the story of learning? A short sequence of images may at times better capture the process of learning. A single image of the final product gives an archive of products created or work samples. Teachers should be aware of the Specific Focus within each ELA and endeavour to capture images relating to each. Having several images to choose from will allow teachers to choose the image that best captures the child's learning or they may use several pictures to show the child in various contexts or to highlight the processes involved.

Teachers should record annotations as soon as possible after the event in either the Individual Observations or Journal Word documents with a reference to the number (name) of related pictures. Later, these can be used in the Prep Folios to substantiate a reflection or help tell the story of learning.

Interactions between teachers and children are enhanced when they collaboratively make decisions on Folio content. Children should be given the opportunity to capture images of things that are important to them. Children should also be given opportunities to add reflections about their work or experiences they were involved in. These can be stored as written transcripts or as audio or video recordings within the System. Audio and video recordings are especially valuable as they provide a vehicle for communication for children and parents who have English as a second language or are non-English speaking.

A portfolio tells a story. It is the story of knowing. Knowing about things ... Knowing oneself (Paulson, 2002).

Teachers may use the Learning Stories Only system on the CD, or Child Portfolios of the Child Power System, in the room to allow children to revisit experiences and encourage collaborative planning. They can make decisions together about what they will learn, how they will learn and how the learning can be assessed (EYCC, QSA, 2006). As children view the learning story of a current project or focus they may suggest ideas for future planning, reflect on the experience and make statements which can be recorded by the teacher and added to the child's Individual Observations Word document or the Learning Story itself. Children may suggest additional ways to capture the essence of the learning – for example, a particular picture or video already taken, or to be taken in the future, and added to the Learning Story. The digital displays give children opportunities to represent what they have learnt and provide a vehicle for the child's reflections. The displays also allow them to share their learning with peers, family and teachers and be a key player in the documentation process itself. Alternatively, the Learning Story can become a digital multimedia diary with pages being added either each day or at the end of the week to summarize the adventures of the group.

Teachers may use the Journal Word document as a diary to reflect on their practice and inform future negotiations of curriculum decisions around such things as routines and transitions and teacher-initiated focused learning. The Journal may also contain evaluations and reflections about incidental and spontaneous child and adult-initiated experiences. The QSA encourages teachers to record reflections.

Documenting reflections allows ideas, relationships, issues and possibilities to be explored, clarified and revisited. Reflection is an integral part of teaching, and is essential when adopting the roles of teacher as action researcher and lifelong learner (QSA, 2006).

Each file within each System can be used as is or customised to suit your particular needs. Detailed information is given in the Customising Your System section of the Prep Digital Folio System book for those wishing to make changes. Detailed information on using the various files is given in the Using Your ... and the Technical Help sections of the book.



Feature Articles

The Prep Digital Folio Systems book and CD package is available from Kim Walters via her Digital Preschool website <www.digitalpreschool.com.au> or via email on <info@digitalpreschool.com.au> or phone via 0418157270. Kim is also available for school or regional training.

Technical Tips for working with the PowerPoint-based folio

Inserting & Recording Audio from within PowerPoint

Attach a microphone to the computer and use the PowerPoint Recorder to embed an audio recording directly onto a slide.

1. Open the PowerPoint presentation.
2. Select the slide you wish to add an audio recording to.
3. Click Insert on the Main Menu.
4. Select Movie and Sound.
5. Select Record Sound.
6. The Record Sound dialog box will appear.
7. Press the red round Record button.
8. Speak into the microphone.
9. When finished press the blue square Stop button.
10. Press the blue arrow Play button to hear the recording.
11. Give the sound a name (optional).
12. Press OK to insert sound icon onto slide.
13. Drag the icon into position after the transcript and resize as required.

Filling an AutoShape or PowerPoint Table Cell with a Picture

Each slide in the Prep Folio has a table consisting of three table cells. You can fill each cell with a picture and then add text which will sit in front of the picture.

1. Click the edge of the AutoShape or into the Table Cell to select it.
2. Click the small black arrow to the right of the Fill icon on the Drawing toolbar.
3. Select Fill Effects.
4. Click onto the Picture tab and select Select Picture.
5. Locate your picture using the Look in drop

down list. (Click black arrow to open the list.)

6. Double click the pictures thumbnail twice quickly.
7. Select Lock Picture Aspect Ratio to stop the picture from being distorted by the shape of the AutoShape(Office 2002 2003).
8. Click OK to insert the picture.

Hyperlink to an existing file

When in Show mode of a PowerPoint presentation you can click an object that has a hyperlink set to it to open another file. You might use this other file to tell the full story of the group or an individuals' role in a project. You can hyperlink (open) any type of file. e.g. Word and Excel documents, another PowerPoint presentation or a movie. You can also hyperlink to a folder or specific picture.

1. Select the text, AutoShape or Picture you wish to Hyperlink from.
2. Open the Hyperlink Window using one of the following methods.
 - * Click the Hyperlink icon on the Standard toolbar or
 - * Click Insert on the Main Menu then select Hyperlink or
 - * Press CTRL+K.
3. The Insert Hyperlink dialog box will open.
4. Click Existing File or Web Page.
5. A list will appear of all files in the same folder that the PowerPoint Folio file is saved to.
6. Locate and select the file by double clicking its icon.

Note: Audio and/or movies should be saved in this folder to guarantee links will work if the folder is burnt or moved.

7. Save the changes.

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Child protection in Queensland

Karen Thorpe

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Many children who have been sexually abused continue to suffer further unnecessary trauma during criminal proceedings (Eastwood, Patton & Stacy, 1998). In an effort to minimise distress to children, the Queensland Government has endeavoured to make the system more child friendly. In March 2004, the Department of Child Safety (DChS) was officially launched in an effort to reform the child protection system (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2007). In addition, new processes were introduced during 2005 which allow children to provide evidence via videotapes so they do not have to be present in the court room. This article aims to simplify the complex legal process involved in substantiating claims of child sexual abuse, so that teachers practising in Queensland can support child victims and their non-abusive parents. A process flow chart that identifies the progression of actions that may occur as a result of child sexual assault allegations can be reviewed at Appendix A.

Child protection in Queensland is the joint responsibility of the Department of Child Safety (DChS) and the Queensland Police Service (QPS). Both organisations are governed by the Child Protection Act 1999 (Australian Institute of Health & Welfare, 2007). The core principles associated with this Act are:

- the welfare and best interests of the child are paramount
- the preferred way of ensuring a child's welfare is through support of the child's family
- intervention is not to exceed the level necessary to protect the child
- family participation in planning and decision making for children
- consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander agencies in decision making regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

- children and families have a right to information
- services are to be culturally appropriate
- coordination, consultation and collaboration with families, other professionals, agencies and the community
- accountability of the Department.

(Queensland Department of Child Safety, 2007)

Queensland and Western Australia are the only Australian states where there is no mandatory legislation for the reporting of suspected or disclosures of child abuse cases by the professionals whose work involves children. It is, however, compulsory in Queensland for teachers to report suspected or disclosed sexual abuse of a child younger than eighteen years of age, but only if the abuser is an employee of the school (Bromfield & Higgins, 2005). Best (2001) suggests that mandatory reporting is often not introduced because it may result in an increase in reports when there is already a lack of resources in child protection departments. In other words, we know that there are many more children being abused but governments do not provide the funds to investigate them. Between 2005 and 2006, a total of 25,687 notifications of child abuse were reported to Department of Child Safety (DChS) (cited by the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian, 2006, p. 13). DChS report that 13,184 cases were substantiated during this period. Each year, 50,000 Queensland children under the age of seventeen are sexually assaulted (Bravehearts, 2005).

Regardless of reporting requirements, if teachers suspect or are advised that a child is being sexually abused they have a duty of care (Briggs & Hawkins, 1997, p. 151) to report details to

either DChS or QPS. The informant's personal details will be kept confidential. However, the reporter may be contacted at a later date to provide a witness statement. If concerns are raised about individual safety (for example a teacher may be frightened of the alleged offender), QPS may engage a condition in accordance with the Bail Act, to prevent the offender interfering with potential witnesses. In addition, if the case was to proceed to court, the reporter may be declared a special witness under the provisions of the Evidence Act (Section 21) if they met the criteria and it was accepted by a magistrate or judge (Aquilina, 2007).

When telephoning QPS, it is recommended that the reporter asks to speak to a detective from the Child and Sexual Assault Investigation Unit or Task Force ARGOS (Loud and Clear Booklet, 2005). Once disclosure has occurred it is important to keep a detailed record of the alleged abuse (Briggs & Hawkins, 1997, p. 149). This is because of the possibility that the reporter may become a witness and the account may be used as evidence in future legal proceedings. Aquilina & Walter (2007) suggest reporters document exactly what has been disclosed and to resist further questioning of the child. This is to avoid discussions being classified as 'leading' and therefore dismissed by the defence team in any future legal proceedings.

Once a teacher has reported suspected child sexual abuse it is then classified as a 'notification'. DChS staff and QPS representatives will work together (Bravehearts, 2005) to ensure the safety of the child. Investigations will be planned to:

- identify individuals who will need to be involved (including Recognised Entities {RE} and Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect Team {SCAN})
- ensure that interviews and actions are conducted in the most appropriate sequence
- provide an appropriate timeframe for tasks to be completed (at the time research was gathered, there were no timeframes assigned

to guide the completion of investigations and assessments)

- discuss proposed actions.

(Bromfield & Higgins, 2005)

DChS personnel will define the report and determine the most appropriate level of response. All information in relation to the case is entered into DChS databases such as the Child Protection Information System, which are available to other child safety units across Queensland. It is at this stage that a DChS representative will check the relevant systems for any previous contact with the child, additional children in the family, the child's parents and their partners and any other household members (Bromfield & Higgins, 2005).

The child in question must be sighted and if deemed age appropriate, qualified staff members from DChS and QPS will interview the child in partnership. Other identified children living in the home must also be sighted (Bromfield & Higgins, 2005). A non-offending adult may accompany the child during the interview. The child's parent/s do not have to be notified of the interview if it is suspected that they may hinder investigations (Aquilina & Walter, 2007). If this is the case they will be notified by representatives from either DChS or QPS as soon as practicable after the interview has been conducted to advise why the child was questioned (Aquilina, 2007). In addition, a representative from Recognised Entities (RE) may also be invited to attend the interview, if the child is of Aboriginal or Torres Islander descent.

The interview is video recorded and is classified as the 's93A tape' in accordance with the Evidence Act 1977. The interview may be conducted within the school grounds or within a child-friendly interview room located within a QPS station such as QPS headquarters located on Roma Street in Brisbane. The meeting room in the Brisbane QPS headquarters has been set up to resemble a family lounge room with comfortable lounge chairs, curtains, coffee table etc. It also includes toys and a

blackboard. Briggs (2007) suggests that, during the interview, if children are reluctant to talk about the alleged abuse with strangers, it is possible that they will draw pictures of what happened, describing events as they draw.

It is extremely important that the interview is conducted professionally because, if sufficient evidence is gathered, it can prevent a child from having to attend a potential court proceeding. It is imperative that the interview is conducted in such a way that the evidence received meets legislative and judicial requirements and trauma to the child is minimised. To guarantee quality interviews, a joint training initiative has been developed by DChS and QPS termed Interviewing Children and Recording Evidence (ICARE). The Child Safety Co-ordination Unit of QPS delivers the training to QPS and DChS officers adopting the following framework:

- pre-planning
- opening
- strategies to bridge barriers
- ground rules, truth, lies and discussion
- free narrative (full disclosure, clarifying questions, validation, sufficient information and closure), or further rapport building, risk assessment, child safety, protective measures, closure and planning for further interview.

(Queensland Department of Child Safety, 1990)

It is important to note at this stage that reports may not be investigated further if the claims cannot be validated. The allegations are then classified as unsubstantiated. This does not necessarily mean that abuse did not occur, it may signify that, for a variety of reasons, the child is unable to talk about the abuse. It is unlikely that a teacher who reports allegations of mistreatment will be notified of the outcome of the assessment of risk (Bromfield & Higgins, 2005).

Once the interview has been completed a multi-disciplinary meeting is called to assess the risk of harm to the child (Aquilina & Walter, 2007).

This involves all parties present at the interview, with the exception of the child and adult support person. Appropriate options under the Child Protection Act 1999 will be implemented to ensure the child's rights to protection are exercised such as *Chapter 2: Protection of Children - Part 1, Children at Risk of Harm*.

If the risk of significant harm is identified and a non-abusive parent is either unwilling or unable to protect the child, an order may be taken out by QPS to protect the child. A Temporary Assessment Order (TAO) allows the child to be removed from the family for a period of three days. Court Assessment Orders (CAO) and/or Child Protection Orders (CPO) enable the child at risk to be placed into foster care (Aquilina & Walter, 2007). If a child is removed from the family home, it is advisable that parents/carers seek legal advice (Legal Aid Office, 2007). Sometimes, notification and assessment of risk occur outside the DChS working hours. If this is the case, QPS may work alone until a DChS officer is contactable the next business day and the child may be referred to the DChS after-hours service Crisis Care (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2005).

At this stage, a representative from Protect All Children Today (PACT) will work with child victims to ensure that they do not suffer additional trauma during the justice process (Eastwood, Patton & Stacy, 1998). The PACT representative will ensure that the child is aware of the processes involved from their perspective, until the possible conviction of the perpetrator. In the case that the child has to attend court the PACT representative may take the child to see the court room before proceedings commence to familiarise the child with the environment. The PACT representative will also be present with the child if there is a second and final 'Division 4a evidence interview' or if the matter is committed to the District Court (Aquilina & Walters, 2007).

To determine whether a crime has been committed, evidence must be gathered by QPS (Bravehearts, 2005). In addition to interviewing

the child, representatives from QPS will also interview the alleged offender, witnesses, take photos of injuries, and gather medical reports and deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) samples such as fingerprints. If significant evidence is gathered the accused offender may be charged and prosecuted, given bail and provided with a date to attend court. Should family members be concerned for the safety of the child in the case that bail is granted, they may request that it is a condition of bail that the accused does not come near the child (Loud and Clear Booklet, 2005). The offender should then seek legal representation (defence lawyers) for the upcoming court proceedings.

All criminal court matters commence in the Magistrates Court. The child will be represented by a police prosecutor or solicitors/barristers who are acting on behalf of the Office of the Director of Public Prosecution (ODPP/Crown). Legal representatives from both parties will state their case. According to statistics provided by Chief Judge Wolfe (2007), a child is rarely requested to give evidence in person at the Magistrates Court and, instead, the 's93A tape' (recording from the child's first interview) is usually heard. The Magistrate will then make a decision to either dismiss the case, if s/he does not believe there is sufficient evidence to proceed with prosecution, or commit the matter to trial through the District Court.

The Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) must present the indictment to the District Court within six months of the accused's committal from the Magistrates Court (Wolfe, 2007). The case is then presented to a Judge and twelve impartial members of the public known as the Jury. Once presented, the case will generally take up to six weeks until a child's video evidence is cross-examined (Wolfe, 2007). The child's evidence may be provided via video conference from the Affected Child and Vulnerable Witness Suite, so the child does not have to appear in the same room as the accused. Alternatively a second interview may be pre-recorded in accordance with Division 4A of the Evidence Act

and played during the trial (Wolfe, 2007), along with the 's93A' evidence which was recorded during the first interview with DChS and QPS.

The defence lawyers do not have to prove that their client is innocent. It is up to the police prosecutor or solicitors/barristers acting on behalf of the Crown to prove the alleged offender is guilty beyond reasonable doubt (Loud and Clear Booklet, 2005).

Once the case has been heard the judge will address the jury who will then make a decision regarding whether or not the defendant is guilty or not guilty (acquitted). If a jury cannot make a unanimous decision, a re-trial may be required. If the jury finds the defendant guilty, the Judge will hand down a sentence. If the offender is sentenced to jail, the non-abusing parent or carer (or child when they reach the age of eighteen) can request their contact details are placed on the Department of Corrective Services Concerned Persons Register. They will then be notified of such details as where the offender is located and when he/she will be released. If the Crown is dissatisfied with the outcome, the prosecution can appeal both the verdict and/or the length of the sentence through the Court of Appeal (Supreme Court). To estimate the number of child sexual offences that reached the Supreme Court, statistics can be analysed in relation to how many orders were made where pre-recordings had to take place in the District and Supreme Courts. During the period of 1st July 2006 to 8th March 2007 only two orders were made where pre-recordings had to take place in the Supreme Court as opposed to three hundred and thirty two orders in the District Court. If there is a re-trial, the child is not required to attend court and their original 's93A' and 'Division 4A' recordings are played for the new jury (Wolfe, 2007). If an appeal is requested, the child will not have to attend the Appeal Court (Loud and Clear Booklet, 2005).

Once legal proceedings have been finalised, or if the notification was not substantiated, it is recommended that both the child and non-

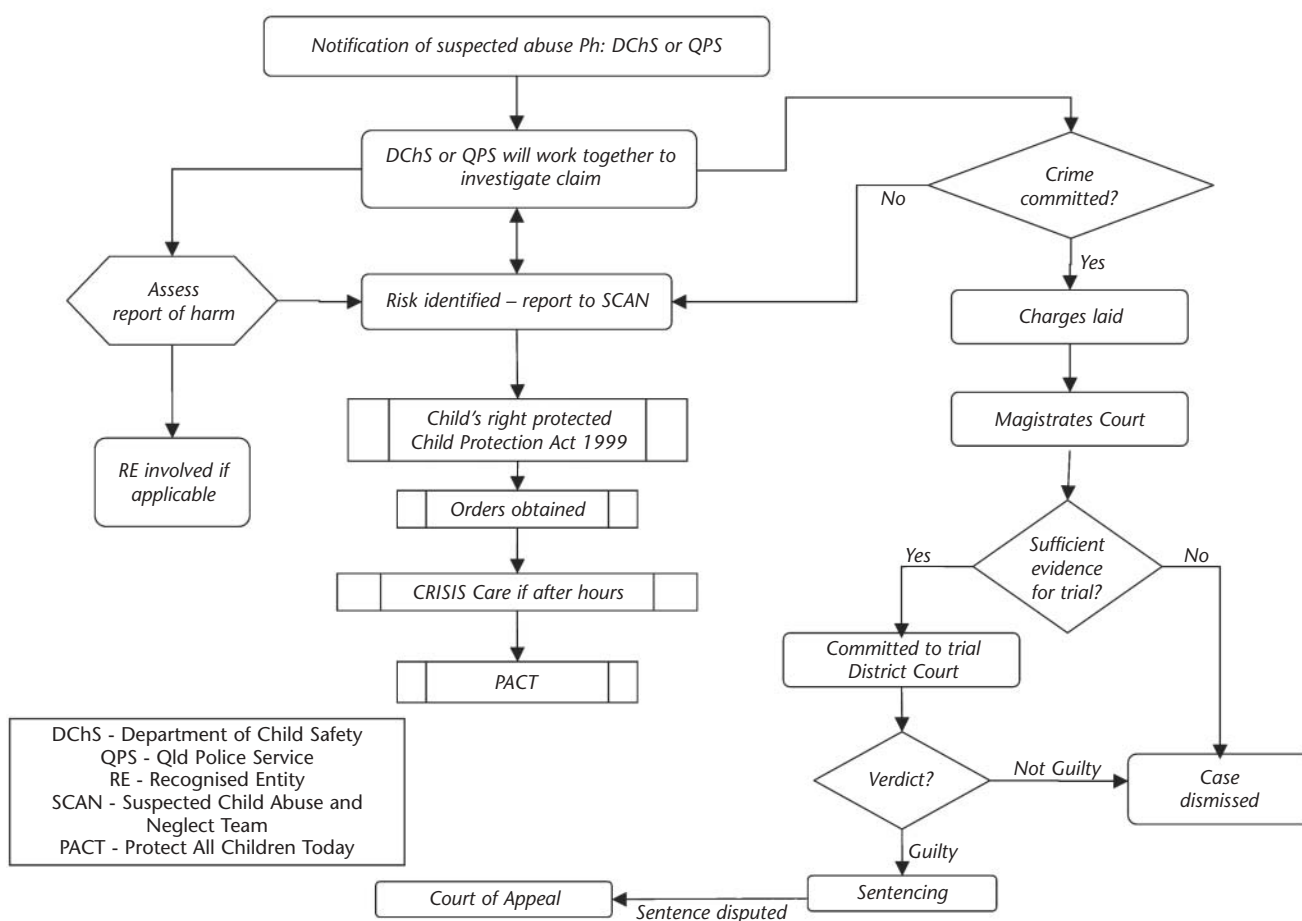
Feature Articles

offending family members seek support. It is of particular importance to note that the re-building of the relationship between child and the non-abusing parent/s is paramount to the recovery process. Perpetrators are skilled at manipulating the mother/child relationship and children are often led to believe that their mothers knew they were being abused (Morris, 2003).

Briggs & Hawkins (1997) noted that a child is significantly disadvantaged if there is a long delay from the reporting of alleged child sexual abuse to court proceedings. Apart from it being difficult for the family to pick up the pieces and

move on while a court case is pending, the child may not be able to recall inconsequential detail from the time of the abuse. In contrast, the offender may be advantaged because this allows the defence to present the child as an unreliable witness. Although processes are cumbersome, the Queensland government has been able to reduce the length of time from notification to verdict, thereby aiming to reduce the traumatic effect on children. In addition they have implemented procedures where (in most cases) children do not have to attend court and for this they are to be commended.

APPENDIX A - REPORTING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IN QLD



Feature Articles

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Classroom animals and little children

Beryl Roberts

It is a great thing to expose children to animals and share the delights of close observation of worms wriggling, newly hatched chickens, an aquarium of fish and tadpoles darting about the pond.

However when animals are brought into an educational environment where small unpredictable animals are exposed to inexperienced, highly excitable and often clumsy youngsters things can sometimes go horribly wrong.

There are a few things that you might need to keep in mind when animals are included in a childcare or a classroom situation.

When animals become part of the educational environment teachers, instructors and educators have a duty of care to these animals because there are legal requirements. Apart from that there is a need to demonstrate to youngsters best practice, respectful attitudes and safe procedures so that children can learn how to model caring behaviours towards animals.

Take particular care with egg hatching and chickens in an incubator in a classroom setting. This activity is a wonderful experience for youngsters. But for children it is purely observational. A teacher may hold a chick and children can touch the feathers gently but that is it. The chickens are to remain in the incubator and the holding areas for children to observe. There must be no handling of chicks by very young children.

Animals in educational institutions may require secure clean housing, warmth and ventilation as

well as being provided with food and clean water. They may need to be rehoused over weekends and during holiday times. What will happen to the water quality if the power goes off and the filter in the aquarium stops? There may come a time when the animal goes from the centre to another 'home' or it may need veterinary attention. These are just some considerations that need to be taken into account when animals come onto your site.

It is acceptable for animals to be in a classroom as an observational activity that highlights animal welfare measures. However, if students are to be involved in weighing, measuring or some type of 'experimental' activity that involves animals, then approval of an application describing and justifying the activity needs to be made to the Queensland Schools Animal Ethics Committee.

Please contact the Animal Ethics Officer for Queensland schools if you need any information about having animals as part of your educational institution.

Email: Beryl.Roberts@deta.qld.gov.au Phone: 07 3235 9966

There is information about animals in school settings, mainly for secondary requirements, on the Education Queensland website, search Animal Ethics.

<http://education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/area/science/animal-ethics.html>

Interactive science with the very young is fun!

Sharmila Nezovic, Queensland Museum, Southbank



Sharmila's background is as a contemporary artist, holding a Masters of Creative Arts degree from James Cook Uni, and also as a passionate community education facilitator with over 20 years experience. She has been successfully employed since 2001 by Queensland Museum, to research, develop and present exciting science, history and culture learning programmes especially for 4-8 year olds - by fusing the arts with science. She is also a mother of two teenage boys.

Science is all around us. It's in the food we eat, the clothes we wear, the buildings we live in, the toys we play with. It's always a thrill to open our eyes and minds by building on children's natural curiosity and by including some stimulating science content into our programming. The value of adding a science outlook to early years program planning, and finding some accessible ways to approach this area, is a creative activity for both children and adults. Interactive science can reach to deep levels of investigation. We're only limited by our levels of willingness to be explorers, both individually and collectively.

As adult facilitators of young children's learning, we continually aim to enrich the key components of their overall development in social, motor, language, number, and cognitive areas. Science supports all these areas, especially cognitive. Even with little or no background in science, we can foster enjoyable and significant experience through scientific inquiry and investigation, for the children in our care.

Science's multi-dimensional messages have traditionally been imparted via specialist teachers, science education officers, or media/science centres. These days, the good news is that approaches to science learning are more varied, more accessible to the layperson and easier to integrate. They may even be entertaining. The stigma of science as being remote or difficult and 'only for nerds or geniuses' is receding. With just an interest in having a go, we can open new worlds. There's plenty of opportunity for some cross-curriculum approaches too. The inclusion of singing and music, drama, literature, painting or clay modelling can reinforce the theme. And

that's where people like us can enjoy being fully resourceful.

Science experiences have special potential for building a sturdy sense of self-efficacy: the belief in our ability to cope with problems based on our own competence (Harlan & Rivkin 2004).

There are two standard arenas available to science teaching:

- incidental or spontaneous types of experience (improvised)
- planned (well-considered) science experiences.

Developing an informal science outlook

Always take advantage of spontaneous observation and study. Explore animals, plants, the weather, and so on. But, to extend this more fully, also include the operation of the laws of nature. For example, consider with your kids what happens when you let go of a swing. Or try to guess together how far your bubbles might fly. Wonder aloud at how your ice might change when left out of the fridge. Ask children questions (as I'm sure you already do) that encourage them to observe. Keep the questions open-ended, avoiding a standardised answer, and you'll be encouraging the 'young scientists' to think for themselves.

Develop a 'science corner'. This is a good idea but let it involve more than the usual 'nature' corner. It could allow for a variety of manufactured items as well as natural substances and materials. Include a display board. Attach found objects and interesting things from home as this takes observations and discussion into broader realms.

Feature Articles

Ways to facilitate planned learning experiences

Utilise integrated, planned experiences. Start with familiar topics and let them build momentum. Allow time for building and extending upon your spontaneous investigations together. These extensions can sometimes absorb adults and children alike, for up to whole terms at a time! The how and why of things may even extend into the community, thus enabling children to glean knowledge and information from people with a wide range of expertise.

The four different approaches to planned science education delivery are:

Discovery – where the laws of nature are waiting to be discovered; where learning arises from learners observing and manipulating their environment. Discovery will happen when the learner is at the right stage of intellectual development. Allow for personal learning to occur, through singular or play-based experiences, for example, if the children are provided with water, clay, paint, toys, to use freely.

Transmission – when the teacher tells the children about things to do with the world of living things. This means the knowledge is conveyed as a body of knowledge with 'right' answers - rather than as an ongoing search for improved answers. Learning is imparted by someone creditable and reliable, one who assumes authority with 'superior' knowledge to the children.

Process – where children carry out tasks of measuring, designing, hypothesising and observing - the doing of 'scientific method'. Here, learning these skills enables children to

develop problem-solving abilities. This is concrete learning and only as engaging as the leader's level of encouragement. The scope is linear and limited to single objectives.

Interactive – Where the children's questions can give direction to the rest of the topic! The teacher explores with them and, in so doing, becomes a role-model of investigating for them. The teacher can challenge children's ideas if they need clarification, but in a non-threatening way. There is opportunity for the senses to be entirely engaged. For example, the teacher would go beyond utilising role-play and enacting by asking children if they have considered the ideas of another child. The topic can be concluded with sharings or findings or comparisons with before and after views. In this way, science can be seen as both an individual and a collective activity, to make better sense of the world. This approach to learning uses present ideas and experiences to construct participants' own knowledge! It is a process which engenders inquiry rather than resistance. It is thoroughly engaging, creative and broad-ranging.

The interactive approach leads us naturally to realising 'socially constructed learning'. The 'scaffolded' early childhood science education approach means the teacher subtly leads the conceptual thinking, gradually increasing the link between everyday language and the grasping of the more technical concepts and parameters. But it's the children's interest that guides the direction. Through scaffolding, we can capitalise on their keen interests and extend into different areas of associated activity as well.

Science areas for exploration (and these will often overlap):

Living things	Matter & materials	Forces & energy	Earth & beyond
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Animals Plants Bacteria & viruses Fungi - e.g. mushrooms etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chemical processes e.g. cooking Making & composition of materials e.g. plastic bottles etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical phenomena e.g. Air Sound Water Light Magnetism Magnification Levers & ramps & pulleys (machines) etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weather Seasons Space Geography etc.

This could be with other, yet further-reaching science pathways to explore, even including art and craft activities, to reinforce the science learning, and of course, utilising the excitement of themed excursions or field trips.

THE UNIVERSE ACCORDING TO SCIENCE

Introducing science thinking is often just a matter of a change of our language and concepts delivery - of expressing the wonder of it all, in different terms. For instance, not knowing the answers beforehand, is no longer a deterrent, as interactive science enables us to embrace varied outcomes. An example of this would be in the use of 'pattern-seeking'. If children notice the spiral pattern inside a shell, they can draw and measure it, dance the pattern, build spirals and match them with other spirals in the environment.

Six top hints for a successful planned science presentation

to encourage highly fulfilling observations, reflections, reasoning and predictions:

1. Follow-through children's questions - let their interest lead the topics and theming.
2. Research the topic (solo beforehand, AND with the kids during) - so you extend your knowledge base to become a more informed guide/participant.
3. Simplify content - don't, like some scientists, get caught up in high-faluting terms and constructs.
4. Practice the science explanations first - for ease of flow in the links to understanding. This then proves how easy science is to grasp.
5. Really focus on appropriate word-images - children need concepts geared to their level.
6. Have fun - your experiment's delivery and science demonstrations should include enthusiasm, surprise, clarity and humour.

It is important to consider that science concepts stimulate exploration which can be more layered than just free-form play. And by allowing the growth of multiple contexts to emerge, the learning will automatically address the application of contemporary pedagogical theories (such as those presented by Gardner's Multiple Intelligences). A sense of industry can

initiate a profound sense of significance - it gets children and adults thinking together.

SUMMARY

We delight in children's fabulous personalities, their moods, tastes, fears, and desires. We watch their language and social skills grow daily. Our aim can be to encourage them to explore beyond random play or simply to focus on the mechanics of alphabets and counting. We should encourage their creative sense of wonder at the world around and help them flourish with a deepened sense of confidence in understanding more about it. We can engage them with age-appropriate scientific inquiry - it's so accessible. We are surrounded by science every day! We should recognise that scientific exploration encourages wonder and cognition and engage with both to incorporate dynamic, all-inclusive, interactive learning approaches.

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C&K at the 2007 World Forum on Early Care and Education

Lynne Moore - C&K College of Early Childhood

In May, I represented C&K at the World Forum on Early Care and Education in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The mission of the World Forum Foundation is to promote an ongoing global exchange of ideas on the delivery of quality services for young children in diverse settings. This mission is accomplished through convening gatherings of early childhood professionals around the world and by promoting the continuing exchange of ideas among participants. Along with more than 700 colleagues in early childhood from 83 countries around the world, I participated in a 4 day program in which delegates were encouraged to exchange ideas about the quality of services for children in diverse settings. Themes included nature education, peace building, curriculum, quality, teacher education, diversity, environments, early childhood education and care policy development, health and children's rights.

I presented two of the concurrent sessions – *Defining curriculum in Early Childhood - What, How and Why?* and *Paths to literacy: formal and natural routes to learning*, along with colleagues from South Africa, India and America. These sessions provided me with an opportunity to share C&K's approach to curriculum and learning in early childhood education and care services throughout Queensland. The conference is like no other that I have attended before. The organization is democratic and participative. Each session consists of three or four presenters who share their perspective of the topic and a moderator. Prior to the conference presenters communicate via email to discuss the format of their session. As in my case, you meet your co-presenters for the first time at the conference. At the presenter information session you are encouraged to speak from the heart. Each presenter is allocated 10 -15 minutes with the bulk of the session left to interaction from the delegates. Power point presentations are not permitted. As in the case of both of my presentations this led to rich discussion and dialogue. It is an experience that I am very grateful to have been given.



Lynne with co-presenters from India and South Africa - Defining Curriculum in Early Childhood: What, How and Why?



Lynne with co-presenters from America and participants from Malaysia, Canada, Australia and Singapore - Paths to Literacy: Formal and Natural Routes to Learning.

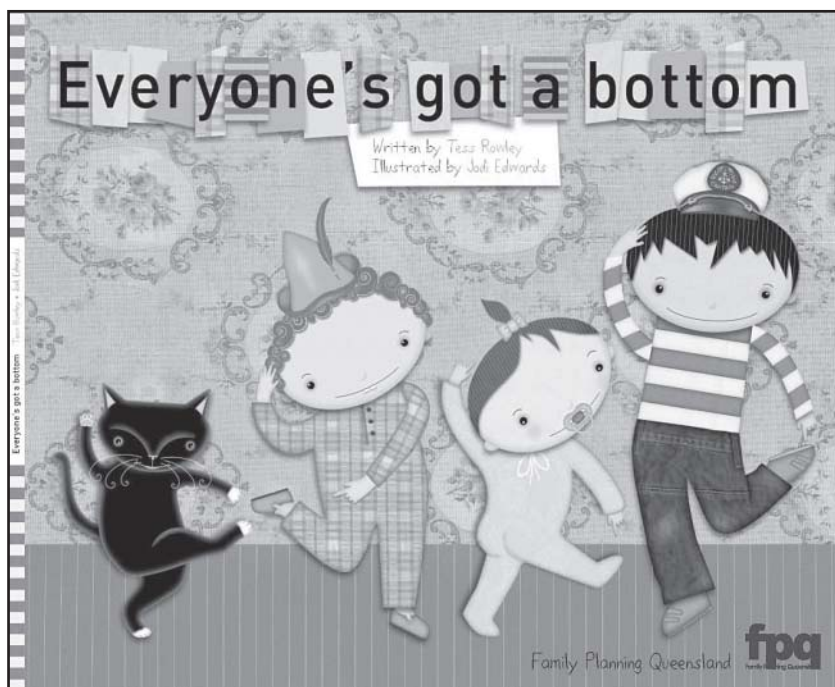
The World Forum Foundation supports a number of early childhood education and care projects throughout the world:

- African Early Childhood Coalition
- EC eTeaching
- Global Leaders for Young Children
- HIV/AIDS and its impact on Young Children
- JohnsonDiversey Children's Initiative
- Men in Early Childhood Education
- Multi-site Managers exchange
- Nature Education for Young Children
- Peace Building for Young Children
- Windows on the World of Early Care and Education
- Working Forum for Teacher Education
- World Forum Networking Project

If you would like to find out more about this global early childhood organization visit www.WorldForumFoundation.org

Press Release

Family Planning Queensland launches children's storybook



'Everyone's got a bottom is a story about a boy called Ben, and his brother and sister, learning and talking together about bodies. It is a tool for parents and carers to gently start a conversation with children about self protection. FPQ has been campaigning for early childhood sexuality education as a child protection measure for years and this beautifully illustrated children's storybook is an example of how to do it.'

'The book is based on sound research about child protection education. The children we focus-tested just think it's a great story, but one child protection expert who read it commented

that you can see the evidence of research in the story and the dialogue and in the whole approach.'

The development of *Everyone's got a bottom* was funded by the Gambling Community Benefit Fund. It went on sale on 3 April 2007.

'Family Planning Queensland has been flooded with calls and emails from the general public wanting to order the book and we anticipate that the first print run will be sold out within weeks of launching the book,' Ms Brennan said.

A reprint is now being planned.

For more information go to www.fpq.com.au

Family Planning Queensland (FPQ) launched its first illustrated children's book, *Everyone's got a bottom* this year.

Everyone's got a bottom provides an opportunity for parents to talk about self protection skills with young children under 8 years old.

This book is a collaboration between writer Tess Rowley, illustrator Jodi Edwards and FPQ educators. Emeritus Professor Freda Briggs, OA and child protection experts from C&K and QUT's School of Early Childhood contributed valuable insights. The authors also drew on the experience of FPQ educators who work with children every day through FPQ's education services.

'We all have bodies and we all want to keep them safe,' said FPQ project coordinator Holly Brennan.

Title: "Eats, Shoots & Leaves - Why, Commas Really DO Make a Difference"

Author: Lynne Truss
Published by: Profile Books

ISBN: 9781 861 978 165
RRP: \$24.95

Reviewed by: Kim McNamara, Head of Curriculum, Wellers Hill State School



"Eats, Shoots & Leaves - Why, Commas Really DO Make a Difference!" is a delightful picture book with a very important message. It highlights the difference that a comma makes to a piece of text by presenting the same piece of text with the comma in a different place. The reader is able to see clearly, through the help of the clever illustrations, how the placement of the comma makes a difference to the meaning of the sentence.

The final two pages present the examples from the book with a detailed explanation of why the comma made a difference in each example. This furthers it as a valuable teaching tool.

The Year 5 class I read this book to clearly enjoyed the book and the conversations which arose from each page demonstrated that the author had hit the mark. The students then showed further learning by making up their own examples. They enjoyed the humorous aspect of the book and its clear, concise message.

With punctuation and grammar being a focus for teachers (and the media!) this book makes an excellent teaching resource. It is easy to read and presents a powerful message.

Title: Freaks Ahoy

Written & Illustrated by: Leigh Hobbs
Published by: Allen & Unwin

ISBN: 9781 741 149 838
RRP: \$12.95

Reviewed by: Ros Heywood

About the author:

LEIGH HOBBS was born in Melbourne in 1953. Two of Leigh's picture books, *Old Tom's Holiday* and *Horrible Harriet* were short listed for the Children's Book Council of Australia Picture Book of the Year Awards in 2002 and 2003. His books have won every major Children's Choice Award in Australia. Leigh Hobbs was an art teacher for twenty-five years. He wants it known that some of the characters and incidents depicted in this book are fictitious.

About the book:

Leigh Hobbs' sketches and condensed words transport Miss Schnorkel and her class of Freaks to sea. Have they uncovered her secret? This book is the anarchic, hilarious sequel to *4F for Freaks*, also written by Hobbs. An easy, fast, fun book to read.



Title: Billy

Author: Kate De Goldi

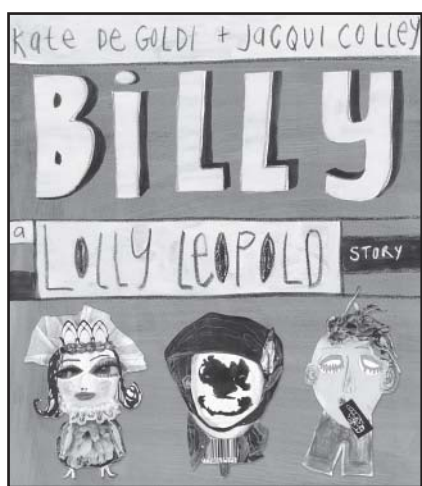
Illustrated by: Jacqui Colley

ISBN: 9781 741 148 923

Published by: Allen & Unwin

RRP: \$14.95

Reviewed by: Ros Heywood



About the author:

KATE DE GOLDI is an author of three novels for young adults. She is a regular personality and reviewer of children's books on national radio and teaches writing workshops throughout New Zealand. The idea for Clubs and Billy came from her own experiences in primary school.

About the illustrator:

JACQUI COLLEY is a painter who exhibits regularly and has work in private collections internationally. She is also a director of a graphic design and new media company.

About the book:

Billy's teacher, Ms Love "breaks the mould." Billy Button "breaks the mould." This story presents a video or camera shot into who Billy is.

We come to know and understand him- his "ingenuity", "passion and panache."

Using collage and words, this story beautifully captures the hope offered to Billy when he is understood and valued for who he is.

There is a lesson for us all in here!

Title: The Kid Whose Mum Kept Possums In Her Bra

Author: Dianne Wolfer

ISBN: 9781 921 064 319

Published by: Fremantle Arts Centre Press

RRP: \$12.95

Reviewed by: Isabella Ganko - aged 12 years

Plot: This story is about a young girl whose mother is a wildlife carer. One day Harmony's mother rescues a baby possum and says that it needs to be kept at body temperature, therefore she keeps the possum in her bra.

Harmony, who is about 9 years old, is very embarrassed that her mother does this. Harmony writes a list which she gives to her mother. The list outlines all the things Mon wants her mother to do to stop embarrassing her. For example, Do not go into town with animals in your bra.

In the end, Harmony's mother does try to do all the things on Mon's list but only for one day. Then she goes back to her normal self and Harmony decides she likes it that way.

Recommendation: I would recommend this book for children aged from 8-13. It is pretty funny and very good. I would rate it 8 stars out of 10.

