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early childhood years

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From the President

Kim Walters

As the year draws to a close I think we are all looking forward to the holiday season so that we can recharge our batteries. It has been a very long year for most ECTA colleagues as they have worked to come to terms with new framework and curriculum requirements.

My own journey through the Australian Curriculum Science, History and Maths and related C2C documents has been enhanced and enabled by the support I have received from early childhood colleagues within my school, within the ECTA regional group and also those from within the ECTA state coordinating committee and subcommittees I work with.

At a school level Prep staff meet socially for coffee each Friday afternoon. We reflect on the week that was and search for inspiration for the week that is to come. On a regional level my regional group, ECTA Cooloola, meet once a month for a social coffee and chat which is also combined with regional group discussions and PD planning.

My ECTA Cooloola Regional Group recently hosted a full day conference which saw my networking opportunities extend to 117 early childhood educators in the region who can't always make the monthly regional chats, along with educators from outside our region. It is professional development events such as this that really inspire and stimulate my enthusiasm for teaching. Being a part of a large gathering of dedicated early childhood educators who share my philosophy of teaching, to me, is the best recharge available.

I, like you I am sure, have been supported during these events by conversations which have provided empathy and solutions as struggles are shared and successes celebrated.

ECTA believes strongly that networking between colleagues is the most valuable of all professional development activities. Finding support with those who share similar issues and gaining insight into the issues of those from other sectors broaden and challenge our thinking. Together as early childhood professionals we share many similarities and commonalities. I encourage you all to seek out colleagues and form networks. If you would like to formalise these into an ECTA Group contact our ECTA Groups coordinator Libby Gaedtke via email at ectagroups@ecta.org.au.

As ECTA President I am dedicated to expanding ECTA's support for our regional groups so that colleagues across the state can have opportunities to network at a social level and, if they wish, at a major PD event in their local area.

The recent increase in the ECTA Group Professional Development Grant which has seen the grant increase from \$500 to \$1000 per year along with an additional \$500 available to help cover presenter travel costs will have an immediate impact on the quality of professional development and support ECTA groups are able to provide within their local area.

Cairns, Cooloola, Townsville, Logan and Hervey Bay groups have all sought financial support from ECTA this year which has allowed them to provide excellent professional development events in their area. Our newly reformed Mackay regional group is also planning to stage their first local event.

For those ECTA members working in remote areas or without local contact with early childhood colleagues our website secure area, journal, DVDs and videolink streamed recordings are available.

The ECTA State Coordinating committee is always keen to hear ideas on how we can further support our member colleagues. Please email me at anytime at president@ecta.org.au.

As you read this our AGM for 2012 will have been finalised and a new committee will be beginning their journey for another exciting year. We welcome the new members who have joined our state coordinating committee and subcommittees. Their presence and skills will add to the capacity of each committee. Being a member of an ECTA committee will inspire and stimulate you as a professional educator and expand your professional and personal networks. I wish all new and returning members a good year.

Please feel free to email journal@ecta.org.au, website@ecta.org.au, or conferenceconvenor@ecta.org.au

ecta.org.au if you would like to support one of our subcommittees.

It is with profound sadness that we say farewell to Mark Cooper who is not re-joining the state coordinating committee for 2013. It was my great pleasure to award Mark an ECTA Life Membership in 2007 for his dedication to ECTA. Mark has been a member of ECTA for the past 29 years. During this time he has held positions on the journal, conference and state coordinating committee. His commitment to ECTA along with his vast knowledge of early childhood at both a state, federal and practitioner level I believe is unsurpassed by any past or present committee member. Mark's contribution and support will be missed by us all.

I wish you all a wonderful holiday season and look forward to supporting you in 2013.



From the editorial panel

Lynne Moore

Through happiness and it's causes, an Art Show and a journey of sustainability to a conversation with men in early childhood, this issue bursts with the resilience and optimism of early childhood educators. Embracing change with gusto, our contributing authors navigate a way forward through a myriad of change. Leading by example, they share their personal journeys, knowledge and insights as they adapt and experiment with new vocabulary, new curriculum and legislative frameworks, new technologies and new approaches to teaching, learning and assessment.

Educating Young Children is proud to provide a forum for educators who work with young children birth to eight years. Many of our authors, media reviewers and partners are publishing for the first time. We acknowledge with appreciation their courage in stepping

up to share their voice. The editorial panel encourage all new and emerging authors. Your stories are important, especially in reaching readers in rural and remote regions who may have limited opportunity to network with others. If you would like to contribute please do not hesitate to contact journal@ecta.org.au for assistance if required.

In this issue we also welcome updates from the Office for Early Childhood Education and Care and Education Queensland in the Department of Education, Training and Employment. *Educating Young Children* will continue to keep readers informed through these valuable partnerships.

I do hope you enjoy reading our selection.

Lynne

The pursuit of happiness

Angela Drysdale

Educating Young Children's Angela Drysdale joined the best and brightest minds in philosophy, science, psychology, spirituality and the arts at the *Happiness and its causes conference* held in Sydney in 2012. Keynotes included world-renowned Tibetan Buddhist teacher, Sogyal Rinpoche; founder of positive psychology Dr Martin Seligman; acclaimed ethicist, philosopher and author, Peter Singer; pioneering researcher into successful ageing Ellen Langer; playwright and National Living Treasure, David Williamson and ground-breaking journalist, Ita Buttrose. This is Angela's story.

We all know the old adage that happiness is the key to a successful life. The pursuit of happiness has usually been the domain of psychologists. Recently, however this emotion has assumed increasing importance in both the economic and neuroscientific worlds:

these disciplines have distinct but intersecting interests – psychologists want to understand what people feel; economists want to know what people value and neuroscientists want to know how people's brains respond to rewards. (Gilbert, 2012 p 85)

This interest by three separate disciplines has given the topic of happiness such relevance that for the past seven years an annual conference has been conducted and dedicated to *happiness and its causes*. The conference is the world's leading forum examining the various causes and effects of a happy and meaningful life. I was fortunate to attend this conference this year as an ECTA representative and guest of the Vajrayana Institute.

The conference program was extensive, peppered with inspiring personal stories of struggles and triumphs, heart-warming reminiscences of childhood and the joys and heartache of parenthood.

It also addressed happiness in the context of psychology, economics and spirituality. It is these contexts I will address.

The psychology of happiness

Dr Martin Seligman, world-renowned founder of Positive Psychology unpacked his new theory of wellbeing and what constitutes a fulfilling life. His theory espouses that rather than simply experiencing positive emotions, wellbeing is defined as consisting of PERMA:

- P:** Positive Emotions – experiencing joy and pleasure.
- E:** Engagement (or flow) – being consciously involved in our activities.
- R:** Relationships – having enjoyable and supportive interactions with others.
- M:** Meaning – creating a purposeful narrative about our lives.
- A:** Accomplishments – completing our goals and following our core values.

In order for each of these five elements to be identified as contributing to wellbeing, Dr Seligman identified three characteristics which need to be present in each (2011 p 16):

1. It contributes to wellbeing.
2. It is pursued for its own sake, not merely to attain any of the other elements.
3. It is defined and measured independently of the other elements.

No one element defines wellbeing, but each contributes to it. The way we choose our course in life is to maximise all five of these elements. PERMA is teachable and Dr Seligman shared some activities to engage, in order to build your PERMA. A great starting point is to find your signature strength by completing the survey on www.authentic happiness.org.

Seligman suggests that once you have identified your strengths, use them in a new way at work, at home or in leisure. He even suggested using your strengths to tackle a task you dislike.

The key underlying message conveyed by Dr Seligman was the profound influence that positive relationships have on human wellbeing. This was supported by another speaker, leading international psychologist, Shelley Gable.

Shelley shared the results of her research which indicated that relationships are linked to physical health and wellbeing and that the strongest predictor of life satisfaction is the quality of close relationships. She believes a key contribution to creating flourishing relationships is how a person responds to another person.

Interestingly, Shelley postulates that it is how a person celebrates with others that can either build the relationship or undermine it.

She identifies four basic ways of responding but identifies that only one is the most effective in relationship building - active constructive responding (ACR). ACR is when a person responds to a person sharing a positive event by showing interest and positive genuine joy for the other person. Through such a response the relationship grows and strengthens.

Andrew O'Keefe in his presentation also focused on communication. He believes that it is in the first two seconds or the first seven words of a communication that impressions are made and conclusions drawn. Therefore he suggests at work think about the first seven words when proposing an idea, seeking to persuade, making a request, writing an email, starting a phone call, having an informal interaction, job interview and meeting. First impressions obviously do count.

Success at work is reflected in the research undertaken by Shawn Achor. In his article *Positive Intelligence*, Mr Anchor highlights his research based on the link between happiness and success in the workplace. He identifies

three ways individuals can cultivate their own sense of wellbeing and set themselves up to succeed. He makes links between happiness and performance. He believes that productivity, creativity and engagement improve when people work with a positive mind set.

Mr Achor dispels the belief that genetics and environment determine happiness. Whilst he accepts they have an impact, he identifies the three ways a person can improve their mind set as being:

1. Developing positive habits by training your brain or rewiring it to be positive.
2. Engaging positively with people in your social support network.
3. Dealing with stress in ways that give fuel to growth and increase your happiness and chances of success.

The spirituality of happiness

There were many speakers who addressed the aspect of spirituality of happiness. Author and interfaith minister, Stephanie Dowrick, made the link between happiness and kindness.

If you reflect on every moment of one's greatest happiness, the giving and receiving of kindness would be the foundation.

She believes that it is empathy and concern that drive kindness which are fundamental in connections with both the inner world and with others. In the absence of kindness, we suffer but in its presence we flourish. Dowrick states:

Our acts of kindness, good humour and gratitude, our moments of conscious restraint, our willingness to forgive, compromise and tolerate, our confident acceptance that sometimes our agenda will not prevail: these are all ways to express and develop the deepest levels of appreciation that are in our hearts. (2011, p42)

This concept was supported by Dr Martin Seligman who shared some exercises for creating happiness. Each of them was linked to an act of kindness:

The Gratitude Visit - start this exercise by closing your eyes and thinking of a person who is alive and has made an impact on your life. Write a testimonial about why. Visit the person and read it to them.

Interestingly, a study conducted by McCullough and Emmons noted that gratitude encouraged a positive cycle of reciprocal kindness among people since one act of gratitude encourages another.

Three Blessings - this exercise reverses the natural catastrophic bent of humans who think about what went wrong rather than thinking about what went well. Seligman suggests each day write down three things you are blessed with and identify why they are positive. He believes it will make you happier and that you will become addicted to the exercise. Writing it down enhances your sensory focus on the activity.

The economics of happiness

In the political world there is acknowledgement of the need for governments to create conditions that enable people to flourish. David Cameron, Prime Minister of England is behind a campaign to identify the 'GWB' (General Wellbeing) of his country. The data is being collected by telephone polls. England is also behind the creation of the global movement – *Action for Happiness*. This group has a simple but powerful message: I will try to create more happiness and less unhappiness in the world around me.

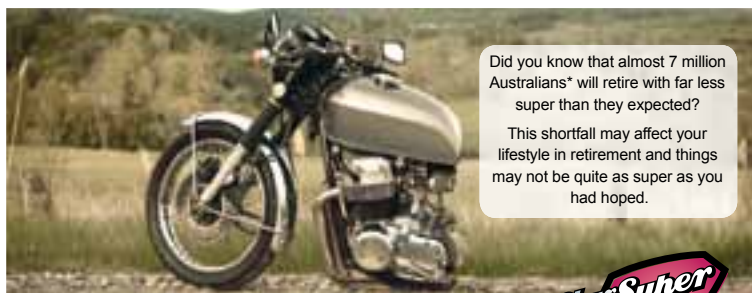
They have identified ten keys to a happier life:

1. Giving
2. Direction
3. Relating
4. Resilience
5. Exercising
6. Emotion
7. Appreciating
8. Acceptance
9. Trying Out
10. Meaning

The aim of the movement is to encourage people to create local action groups. You can go to www.actionforhappiness.org for more information.

In conclusion, what is evident from the literature and the speakers at this conference is that happiness affects all that we do. It impacts on the world economy, on how we function at work, our relationships with family, friends and colleagues. Most importantly it is formed in our core inner being and it is only you, who has the ability to pursue happiness and flourish.

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The Australian Curriculum in an Education Queensland Prep class

Anne Pearson



Anne has been teaching in Queensland since 1986. Her focus and strength is in the early years. After 4 years as a Demonstration Prep teacher for QUT at Kelvin Grove, Anne is now a permanent Prep teacher at the new Mango Hill State School. She is continuing her work with QUT as a prac supervisor and member of the Kelvin Grove Teacher Education Centre of Excellence. Anne is passionate about maintaining early years pedagogy and philosophy, and working with teachers (beginning and experienced) to develop and enhance the quality of teaching for students.

In 2011, I was privileged to be given twelve months to experiment and play with the *Australian Curriculum* before its introduction in Australian schools. This opportunity allowed me to immerse myself in the content of the curriculum and commence my journey to develop a pedagogical approach to the new curriculum.

As I approached the start of 2012, I felt I had begun to develop a sense of direction and a degree of confidence in maintaining my pedagogy as well as being able to 'raise the bar' and increase the goals of the Prep children in my class.

Working with the Australian Curriculum

To guide my planning and work with the *Australian Curriculum*, I have found it useful to reflect on the following wise words shared by Lesley Englert at a staff meeting at Kelvin Grove State College in June 2011:

- The *Australian Curriculum* has been designed to bring cohesion between all states, for all Australian children.
- It is to provide greater consistency and higher standards nationally.
- To set good foundations subject areas provide for different emphasis across the phases of learning e.g. greater emphasis on literacy and numeracy in the early years
- The *Australian Curriculum* tells us 'what' to teach not 'how' to teach.

- As Australians we have undersold what our children are capable of.
- The *Australian Curriculum* for 2012 defines the areas of Mathematics, English, History and Science (plus the general capabilities.) The *Early Years Curriculum Guideline* (EYCG) defines the rest. (Englert, May 2011)

In Education Queensland state schools, teachers have been provided with a detailed overview of one way to teach the content of the Australian Curriculum through the Curriculum to Classroom (C2C) project.

The intent of C2C is to support, not prescribe classroom practice.

As explained by Julie Grantham, Director-General:

Curriculum into the Classroom (C2C) materials have been created to reduce workload and duplication for teachers in schools as they develop their curriculum plans for the Australian Curriculum. It is important to remember C2C is not mandatory. There is no requirement for teachers to use every aspect of a sample lesson or every resource (16 February 2012).

Discoveries made during my journey

In continuing my learning journey implementing the Australian Curriculum, I have found the following skills as an early years teacher valid and relevant:

1. Kid watching

Early years teachers have always been skilled in the art of 'kid watching'. Observations give teachers an opportunity to create a comprehensive picture of the whole child. They provide an important source of information for discussion with parents, colleagues and children to develop insights into the processes children are involved in. (Arthur, 1996)



Total concentration.

2. Monitoring children's development

The need for data provides early years teachers with opportunities to show what they know about children's development. By using a variety of observation tools, we can respond more accurately to children's needs; differentiate and support the children to the best of our ability; and be accountable to parents and administration.



Planning with children.

3. Using knowledge of children's development

As early years teachers we know and understand how children learn and develop. We have studied Piaget, Vygotsky and Brofenbrenner, and we understand

the links between how children develop, how children learn and how the community can influence this process.

By using this knowledge to inform planning and to make judgments about using the *Australian Curriculum*, along with knowledge of the children in your class, a more in-depth curriculum with high expectations can be achieved.

In 1996 Arthur et al, stated that:

In their early years of school, children may look different because of their school uniforms. However, the ways in which they learn and develop are simply continuations from the preschool stage. The best school environment is one that effectively promotes continued growth and development, taking into account the interests and needs of the individual child, as well as providing many opportunities for active learning with a balance of child and adult initiation. Since children will spend so many years at school, it is vital that these years build on previous development, promoting positive attitudes to learning in all areas.



Hands on maths.

4. Documentation as assessment and advocacy

Documentation of children's work-in-progress is viewed as an important tool in the learning process for children, teachers and parents. By documenting and displaying children's project work, children are able to express, revisit, construct and reconstruct their feelings, ideas and understandings.

Pictures of children engaged in experiences; their words as they discuss what they are doing, feeling and thinking; and the children's

interpretation of experiences through the visual media, can be displayed as a graphic presentation of the dynamics of learning.

Teachers act as recorders or documenters for the children, helping them trace and revisit their words and actions and thereby making the learning visible. (Loh, 2006) Through presenting the children's learning in the form of documentation around the classroom and the school, opportunities for parents and staff to share understandings of what is happening in classrooms, and how the *Australian Curriculum* impacts on the children and teachers, can be provided.



Art show.



Artwork.

The way forward

Now that I have commenced implementing the *Australian Curriculum*, I need to plan for the next stage by continuing to make improvements and reflecting on my progress. I plan to do this by:

- Collecting data through pre-tests, post-tests, observations, anecdotal evidence and checklists.

- Linking planning and differentiation to the data collected.
- Continuing to develop and extend my knowledge of the *Australian Curriculum*.
- Reading and attending professional development relevant to the areas I have identified through reflection as needing improvement or greater understanding.
- Using the knowledge gained above to explicitly plan for each child's progress, and to carefully plan each unit of work, linking it to the children's interests, the community, and the *Australian Curriculum*.

To enhance my teaching and to achieve successful implementation of the *Australian Curriculum* for the children I plan to use the following:

1. Explicit teaching of the English skills necessary for children to learn to read and write.
2. A modified version of *The Project Approach* to increase the children's interest and intrinsic motivation to learn as expressed in the *Australian Curriculum*.
3. Negotiation with children to enhance *The Project Approach* (Katz, 2001).
4. Ample opportunity for children to explore their learning through play and inquiry-based activities in all areas of the curriculum.

This year, teachers in Queensland have endured a steep learning curve and faced many challenges. As we reflect on the year in review and plan for the year ahead, we need to remind ourselves of our successes and the incredible work we have always done to provide the best learning opportunities for the children in our classes.

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C&K QUT Kelvin Grove Children's Art Show

Nebula Wild

The conversation that inspired an Art Show

The original catalyst for a children's Art Show was a child's question. Our centre had been involved in a children's photography project which included learning about cameras, taking photos and recording children's voices. The final results were presented at an external exhibition. One of our kindergarten children, Lily – five years old – asked where the exhibition was and could we go there. I told her she could go with her parents. *'Will my friends and teachers be there?'* she asked. I explained that they wouldn't be. Lily decided then and there that she wanted an exhibition for her friends and family. We started discussing what this would look like and how we would do it and so the Children's Art Show was created, with its first exhibition held in 2011 at the centre.

From idea to exhibition

In 2012 we discussed extending the Art Show by holding it in a professional space rather than in the childcare centre. This allowed an authentic and professional focus, in line with exhibitions of adult artists.

There are many things to consider when planning an event that involves people from different parts of the community and that is held in a space outside the centre. We were fortunate to be able to make links with QUT Creative Industries which provided a professional space for the venue. This enabled the Art Show to run for a longer period of time and to be seen by more people. It also entailed additional organisation and considerations of privacy and ownership of art that raised questions about what would and could be seen of the children.

Preparation

The children, supported by their teachers, put a lot of time into creating the art works, including time for experimentation. We held a couple of fundraisers to pay for canvases and art materials, and to buy food which would be sold at the Art Show.

It is very helpful to form partnerships in the preparation stage – to find out who has skills that can assist you. We were lucky to have a family member who had experience in exhibiting art, and she worked with us in presenting our children's work. From her we learned that presenting art works professionally in a space designed for art is a skill in itself. We were also very fortunate to have the support of QUT Early Childhood students who donated their time and expertise leading up to and during the Art Show.

Other practicalities included organising food to be cooked and delivered, allocating jobs to ensure the exhibition ran smoothly and asking parents to sign release forms to ensure that we were covered in terms of public display and access to the children's art and images. This was essential to ensure we followed correct organisational protocols regarding confidentiality.

Arising from a discussion of who we wanted as our audience for the Art Show, we advertised and invited the wider community. C&K's *Kindy News* ran the story for us as we had people from outside our centre planning to attend, including Ann Farrell (Head of Early Childhood at QUT) and Anne Pearson from ECTA. Felicity McArdle an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education, Early Childhood at QUT agreed to open the show for us.



There are always things that crop up on the day, so making sure everything you can prepare and control is taken care of means you will have time to deal with unexpected challenges.

The children's voice

Children's ownership of the Art Show was consistently supported. On the day before the exhibition, an excursion to the venue was organised for the kindergarten children, with the assistance of the students from QUT and

volunteers. The children were encouraged to choose how they would like to hang their pieces on the wall. Along with ownership it was very important to ensure that the children's voice was also included at all times within the Art Show. For that we also filmed the kindergarten children discussing their artwork, this was then projected on a large screen at the Art Show.

The Art Show

The Art Show was an amazing success – a moment when you could feel and see the sense of accomplishment from the children



Art Show pieces by the Kindergarten Room.



and the educators. The room was full of the children's family members including siblings, parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts and well as community members. The excitement of the children was obvious. The feedback from families over the course of the night was immensely positive. They could see the effort that had gone into producing and presenting the children's art work.

Why an Art Show?

First and foremost having an Art Show for our centre was about responding to the ideas and needs of a child. It enabled a child's voice to be heard and respected. As well as the importance of arts in early childhood there are a number of other significant reasons to have an Art Show. Positive outcomes of the Art Show include:

- increasing the skills base of educators
- making valuable connections between organisations
- showcasing an early childhood perspective
- forming links with community
- enhancing relationships with families
- promotion of early childhood education and educators
- supporting education of students
- supporting professional development.

Making links to curriculum and the planning cycle

It was important to ensure that the Art Show had a connection with the children and the philosophy of early childhood education and that the reasons behind it could be articulated and documented. The Art Show was an enjoyable, social event but it was much more than that. The Art Show was a great way to integrate the National Curriculum and the C&K learning framework into an uplifting experience shared by children, their teachers and family.

The links with *Early Years Learning Framework* (EYLF) include:

- children are connected to and contribute to their world
- children are confident and involved learners.

The links with *Building waterfalls* (BW), the C&K framework include:



Fabiana and Edith.



Shijee, Monika and Jane.

- children use imagination and creativity to represent ideas and communicate understanding in real and imagined worlds
- children actively participate in and contribute to their own and others learning.

Having an Art Show or event which links with children's learning and extends to families and community, is of great benefit to a childcare centre. It is an effective way to engage with other stakeholders, form partnerships and draw others into the children's learning.

Men in early childhood

As early childhood educators we recognise that diversity contributes to the richness of our society. We strive to ensure that all children are presented with healthy and diverse messages about difference. Yet, in Australia, only about two per cent of males make up the early childhood profession.

According to Craig d'Arcy, facilitator of the Newcastle *Males in Early Childhood Network Group*,

men have something to offer which is different to what females offer young children. When men and women are working together in teams, children's experiences are enhanced (d'Arcy, 2008).

A diverse workforce, with men represented as well as women, is seen as being necessary to expand the quality of early childhood education for children and bring different viewpoints and ways of working to the profession. In this issue of *Educating Young Children* we share the views and experiences of men working in early childhood education.



Peter Demopoulos

Peter Demopoulos is a Project Officer for Queensland Council of Social Service: Indigenous Professional Support Unit Project (IPSU).

As an early childhood educator my contribution is ... long lasting. I recently have met and reconnected with a number of parents of children who were in my Preschool class over 20 years ago. The parents are always so keen to update on how their children are and what they have achieved since. It feels like time has stood still and we both look at the extra lines on our faces and realise that we have had and still continue to have something in common, the child. This is the greatest unexpected gift of being an early childhood educator - you will always be the preschool teacher or educator to that family and child. It is forever.

I am challenged by ... the continued lack of men as educators within all levels of the education system, and society's perception of the men who do work with children. The never-ending questions of 'What are you doing here?' and 'Why are you working with young children?' seem to be raised often. I

have been speaking about this issue and the long-term effects to our society at universities and forums for many years and will continue to encourage and break down the barriers at every opportunity I am provided with. I am also challenged by the lack of energy that I see in some educators. As educators we are in the business of selling learning. I really feel we need to be bursting out of our skins everyday when we are working with children.

And the opportunities are ... numerous. There are so many opportunities to contribute to the education and care of our children. As a male working in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, I feel it is vital that I support the early childhood educators to be the best that they can be and to provide a positive role model. What I have discovered working at Indigenous Professional Support Unit is that there are many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men working in children's services in remote communities. This is so progressive and pleasing to see and be part of. I am currently working on providing an opportunity to bring these men together for a Yarning Circle to discuss the issues they face and to build on future recruitment.

I would like to see ... early childhood services actively promoting the benefits of males working with young children and recruiting men when the opportunities present.

An experience or moment I remember ... was when I went to my local coffee shop to find a past student working there taking my

order. I thought to myself, I remember this guy but he won't remember me. Well, was I wrong? He looked up and said, 'I know you ... you were my preschool teacher.' I said, 'Yes.' He was so excited to see me, he yelled out to all of the staff and customers in the shop that here was his preschool teacher. I was really embarrassed and so very proud to be remembered. He is now on national TV (ABC3) and I get to sit with my three children and tell them about when he was a child at preschool. I suppose for me it is all about the legacy that we want to leave behind: building strong, independent and positive children is what it is all about.



Casey Ah Wing

Casey Ah Wing is an Assistant educator in the Kindy room at St Paul's Lutheran Child Care Centre in Mt Isa.

As an early childhood educator my

contribution is ... supporting children to see that you can be a 'big person' and still be silly and have fun whether it be me dressing up as a 'boy' princess, or being 'Mr Hippo' instead of being Mr Casey.

I am challenged by ... gender bias. All educators have to deal with it whether male or female.

And the opportunities are ... being able to provide children with opportunities to interact with a male who is not a part of their family and being a person they trust enough to be themselves.

I would like to see ... other males in childcare and to shift people's perception from it not being a 'manly' career to follow.

An experience or moment I remember ... I was sitting outside with a little girl in my lap talking about dolls and ponies. After several minutes we noticed her mother leaning on the

rail behind us. The child ran to her mum who asked if she had had fun. As they were leaving her Mum said 'Thankyou' to me.

That the mum trusted me and waited and did not interrupt shows me how valued we are.



Sean Love

Sean Love is an Assistant educator transitioning to Room Leader of a pre-Kindy room. He is currently studying a Diploma in Children's Services.

As an early childhood educator my contribution is ... working in a team to provide the best possible care – implementing a program that allows children to flourish and develop within their individual needs and capabilities. As a male, I feel that I bring a different perspective or approach to our room. I enjoy sports and physical activities and encourage the children to do the same.

I am challenged by ... keeping the children challenged and the program fresh and interesting. I like to have structure within a program that has room for flexibility. One of my weaknesses is being able to think on my feet and to be spontaneous. This is why a strong team is necessary to bounce ideas to and fro and among each other.

And the opportunities are ... career wise, in my opinion, quite limited. But in the role of assistant or group leader there are opportunities to see children develop over a period of time, to see how they grow physically, emotionally and intellectually. This is also a career that allows you to go anywhere, nationally or globally.

I would like to see ... more males in childcare both in the rooms and playground as well as in the staff room. For this to happen, I believe that the qualifications should become more challenging and, in return, the wages for staff should increase substantially.

An experience or moment I remember ... is the development of one of the children from my room. The child was challenged with shyness. This child formed a special bond with me and would initially only interact with me. But over a number of weeks and months there were clear and visible signs of progress. The child now plays with their peers and other staff members.



Luke Touhill

Luke Touhill is an Early Childhood Consultant.

As an early childhood educator my contribution is ...

Important (I hope!). I don't often consciously

think about being male in a female-dominated profession. I think you can second guess yourself too easily – I try to do what I think will work and what will be interesting and engaging. If someone else wants to label that as a 'male' approach then it doesn't really bother me – but I find it interesting that most of the inspiring teachers that I would look to are women – and what they do isn't labelled 'male'.

I am challenged by ... inflexibility and closed mindedness – if you can't think on your feet I'm not sure you should be in early childhood.

And the opportunities are ... to be involved with children's learning and thinking – to be amazed and surprised and delighted by the sheer unpredictability of what might happen on any given day. It's the thing I miss most about not being in a face-to-face teaching role at the moment.

I would like to see ... more opportunities for children to be creative and adventurous.

An experience or moment I remember ... in my first job I worked in the nursery. One of the older children used to go home, surround

herself with her dolls and play at being 'Luke with his babies' – it taught me that being a role model (for want of a better word) is complex. Why do we only ever seem to talk about males being good role models for boys?



Sameer Silwal

Sameer Silwal is an Assistant educator.

As an early childhood educator my contribution is ... having great passion for working with children.

I am challenged by ... a society that has grown

up influenced mainly by female carers. This sometimes requires a new male carer to prove themselves. While most female workmates have been positive and helped in my work, I must also state that there is still a margin of differentiation between males and females who work in this rewarding field.

And the opportunities are ... interacting and listening to children, sharing and exploring ideas in an environment where there is creativity and imagination. Professionally, working in a team and learning from different cultures, backgrounds and ideas is precious.

I would like to see ... a more positive view of society towards males working in child care. It would be great if men can find themselves at ease working in this area. Men have their own qualities to offer the children.

An experience or moment I remember ... is when I first started working in child care. During those days, I would sometimes analyse whether I should stay working in this field. One day I was looking sad, when a toddler came up, kissed me on the cheek, asked me not to be sad and sang a song to make me happy. This was amazing and redirected my confusion into bringing happiness to the children in our care. It was a great lesson for me.



Mark Young

Early Childhood Curriculum Advisor, C&K.

As an early childhood educator my contribution is

... to encourage and support educators to fulfil their potential, in

providing a play-based curriculum rich in opportunities for children to explore and learn.

I am challenged by ... some stereotypical perceptions of male educators and the fear that it represents for some people. It is not just from parents but from people working in the profession as well as service providers.

And the opportunities are ... to provide children with a strong and positive view of men as caring, supporting, educating and nurturing. For children who don't have a positive male role model in their lives, it provides a great opportunity to balance perspectives and viewpoints and give a message that men and women have important roles to play in the lives of children.

I would like to see ... a considered approach to providing opportunities for men to study and be employed in the early childhood profession. Stereotypical images of men in early childhood need to be changed to be a true reflection of the men involved in early childhood so that the positive aspects are promoted. The importance given to men working in primary and secondary school settings needs to be shared in the early childhood profession.

An experience or moment I remember ...

I was working with a preschool group when a new boy, who had been attending another preschool, was enrolled at the service. He never wanted to attend the other service and would scream and cry to not attend. When he started with me he wouldn't speak and was quite reserved and shy. By interacting with him using his love of cars and motorbikes I was able to get him to communicate. Within a

week he was wanting to attend and interacting with all of the children in the group. It was satisfying to see the enjoyment he had, being involved in the group, that he had been missing at the other service, as well as the relief that it gave both of his parents. Being a male educator may not have been the reason for his changes, but it certainly wasn't a hindrance.

References

D'Arcy, C, 2008, 'Blokes can do it as well' in *Every Child*, vol. 14 no. 1, pp. 10-11.

C&K Men in Early Childhood Network

The purpose of the C&K Men in Early Childhood Network is to:

- provide men working in early childhood settings the opportunity to discuss specific topics related to men
- develop an avenue for peer support
- consider ways to promote opportunities for men working in early childhood.



The network is open to men in any early childhood setting and field of work.

If you would like to participate, please email Mark Young at m.young@candk.asn.au for further information.

Our journey towards becoming a sustainable service

Joanne Sorensen



Joanne Sorensen is an early childhood teacher who has worked in a variety of teaching positions both in Australia and internationally, with various age ranges, since 1990. Joanne has worked for C&K for many years as a teacher and co-director and four years ago gained a position close to home at Arana Hills. Joanne's teaching and interactions have had a strong focus on sustainability and benefit risk experiences. She is a member of QECSN – the Queensland Early Childhood Sustainability Network. Joanne has also had the opportunity to visit Denmark on several occasions where she has been able to interact and learn from several Nature Kindergartens programs – a great source of inspiration for her.

C&K Arana Hills Community Kindergarten

C&K Arana Hills Community Kindergarten is a single unit, play-based, co-created teaching and learning environment that has been in operation for over 30 years! This service has run under C&K management since 2008.



My interactions began in 2008 when I started as co-director and, over the past four years, the staff, parents and children have directed an enormous amount of energy towards becoming a sustainable service – which influences and informs the direction of the curriculum and daily practices.



Mosaics added to our environment 2012.

We have participated in programs, gained grants, self-funded projects, sought knowledge, developed, transformed and built well-used and highly valued community assets such as indigenous planting, vegetable gardens, art installations, play equipment, water storage, a dry creek bed, solar power, native bees and a worm farm. Our thinking not only focused



The environment at Arana Hills.

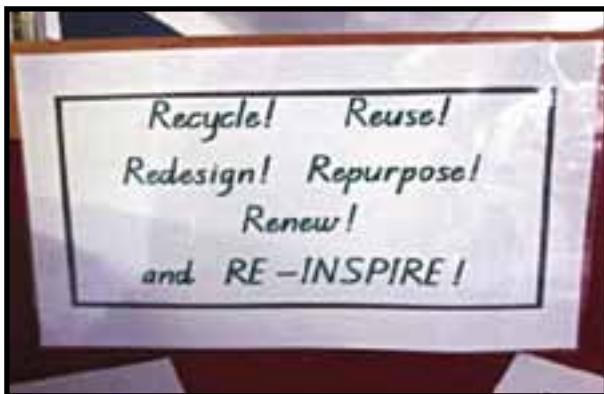
on the immediate groups of children we were teaching – it also considered the generations of children who will also use this space in the years to come.

Our co-created environment has now become a very special place to play, learn and connect with nature.

We recently hosted the QECSN – Queensland Early Childhood Sustainability Network Annual Conference Day – September 1st 2012 – and were very proud to share the redevelopment of all our play spaces.

At Arana Hills we have a strong ethos of sustainability throughout all our practices. There is a focused staff commitment adopting the philosophy of: Rethink, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle but also Redesign, Repurpose, Renew and RE-INSPIRE. These initiatives have become a daily part of the Pre-Prep program, with practices becoming internalised: a natural occurrence that is a part of our everyday thinking, talking and modelling.

The following is an ongoing project which we have been working on in collaboration



A strong ethos of sustainability.



Resource Ed Schools program



Funded by Moreton Bay Regional Council

Since October 2010

Our participation in this program aims to:

- Ensure all staff members are involved and engaged.
- Ensure we as a service are more aware and competent in our recycling practices.
- Identify areas where we can reduce and more effectively recycle our waste.
- Provide a meaningful hands-on approach for each child.
- Ensure that these practices will become internalised: an everyday part of the program.
- Ensure the outcomes of this project will influence and inform the direction of the curriculum and daily practices.
- Highlight a case study for the Council for future participation of pre-Prep settings.

with Mandy Botterell of the Moreton Regional Council called ResourceEd Schools. The Resource Ed Schools program is a FREE, interactive, environmental education program and we are the first Kindergarten to participate - as it is usually aimed at Primary and Secondary settings. Our interactions will then be highlighted in a case study for the council to formally include pre-Prep settings.

As part of this service, there are a range of experiences offered, such as incursions, excursions and action research, as well as 'train-the-trainer', ongoing liaison and guidance throughout.



As part of our program, we have had several incursion visits from 'Tony' who helped us have a virtual tour of the local Material Recovery facility, learning where recyclables go, how they are sorted and what they are turned into. We have examined packaging and looked at what we can recycle as well as learning the secret code on all items.

Tony also installed and helped us to learn all about a worm farm and a compost bin – supplied free as part of the program. Tony has revisited us to ensure we are able to appropriately maintain these items. As a result, we now apply the organic materials into our vegetable gardens and onto our plants on a regular basis. Alongside these incursions, we were also involved in the Schools Waste Minimisation Program. Several opportunities for training and facilitation were organized so that all staff members were able to collaborate and have a meaningful understanding.

Material Type	Number of items (Qty)	Total	Percentage of total items	Percentage of total weight	Description of items
Paper					
Plastic					
Cardboard					
Food Waste					
Other					
Total					

Recording the daily volume of waste.

Over a six-week period we collated the waste that we were creating, using many small plastic containers that separated out and categorized all the differing types, as well as a record sheet for the daily volume. A comprehensive waste audit report was then created by Mandy. This detailed report was then converted into a Waste Minimisation



Waste Audit 2011: We were all involved in measuring how much, and identifying what, waste we had collected.

Action plan and had many recommendations. Among them was to use the collected data to identify the need for, and plan for, the implementation of a centre-wide recycling and composting program and identify opportunities for further waste minimisation initiatives based on the data collected.

This table outlines just some of the identified aims that we have been working on for the past two years.

Waste Minimisation Program Action Plan C&K Arana Hills Kindergarten

(as identified from the Waste Audit report)

Centre Aims

- Assess waste stream to understand materials disposed and identify opportunities for waste minimisation across the centre.
- Outline and initiate centre-wide recycling collection and diversion programs, including co-mingled recyclables, paper/cardboard, and organic materials.
- Outline and initiate centre-wide material reuse and resource recovery initiatives, i.e. reuse of paper, collection of batteries/print cartridges for recycling.
- Outline and initiate centre-wide waste reduction initiatives, i.e. nude food lunch programs, purchasing policies.
- Generate a greater awareness of waste management options and waste avoidance behaviours within the centre and the wider community.
- Promote, encourage, reward and monitor community engagement in centre-wide waste minimisation initiatives.

All the teachers and children have been engaged and empowered to build upon their knowledge and enact sustainable practices and initiatives.

We have even supported many families to do more in their daily lives. We will continue to work with the council on this project and imbed these practices engaging all participants.

In the future, our participation will include a staff training day in Term Four, the purchase of (or have donated) a second tumbler for our compost and second worm farm for our garden needs, a visit from council to observe our interactions and practices and our case study will be presented to the local council for future participation of pre-Prep settings.



Outcomes of the program:

- Foundational behaviours have been put into place.
- Presentation points for waste have been created.
- As a result of waste streaming, practices have changed – we now have only one bin for the children to put their waste in and several recycled boxes.
- Our waste has reduced by a quarter.
- A second recycling bin has been organised due to our increased efforts to recycle.
- We now have a worm farm and compost bin that is used on a regular basis.
- We are aware of the 'Secret code' of recycling.

Implementing the Australian Curriculum in Prep classes in Queensland state schools

***Mark Campling – Assistant Director-General Education Queensland
Department of Education, Training and Employment***

The *Australian Curriculum*: English, Mathematics and Science (and History from 2013) identifies what Queensland students are now expected to know and do by the end of their Prep year. This is different to the developmentally-focused curriculum previously used in Prep which described student progress across phases of learning. Prep teachers continue to have high expectations that all students can achieve and perform, and have therefore set high expectations for their own practice with the implementation of the *Australian Curriculum*.

High quality Prep teaching is informed by contemporary research and by the critical decisions teachers make about student learning on a daily basis.

The five contexts for learning outlined in *Early Years Curriculum Guidelines* (EYCG) underpin curriculum delivery in the Prep year. These guidelines help teachers and schools to develop high quality early learning programs, and serve as a stepping stone to using the *Australian Curriculum*.

Teaching strategies in Prep

Differentiating teaching and learning in the Prep classroom requires a thorough knowledge of every student: their background knowledge and experiences as well as their interests, readiness and learning needs. Good teaching requires teachers to continually monitor student learning and use the evidence gathered to plan and implement curriculum, teaching strategies, learning experiences and assessments. Teaching and learning should engage young minds with multiple pathways and equitable access to appropriate curriculum, allowing students to enjoy success.

Teachers make decisions about 'how' they will implement teaching, learning and assessment. Explicit teaching provides students

with opportunities to observe modelled demonstrations through concise instruction. It also enables them to engage with curriculum content in a gradual and progressive way as they work towards independent application of knowledge, understanding and skills associated with the *Australian Curriculum*.

Opportunities for negotiated learning in the prep classroom remain important. Students should have opportunities to share in decision-making about their learning and to shape and contribute ideas about learning contexts, investigations and solving problems.

These opportunities should be appropriate, engaging and meaningful for early learners. As always, schools can decide how to manage time and the classroom setting when delivering the Prep curriculum.

Curriculum into the Classroom

Education Queensland's (EQ) package of electronic curriculum planning materials and resources — *Curriculum into the Classroom* (C2C) — has been developed to support state school teachers with the implementation of the Prep–10 *Australian Curriculum* for English, mathematics, science and History. C2C has been designed so teachers can shift focus from the 'what' — or curriculum planning — to the 'how' — that is, what teachers do in the classroom. This factor, according to research, makes the greatest difference to student achievement outcomes (Hattie, 2009).

The C2C materials model one approach to teaching the *Australian Curriculum* that can be adopted or adapted to meet student needs. The materials comprise three example tiers of planning at the whole-school, year and classroom levels



Photo by Josh Kelly.

including unit and lesson plans, assessment guides and digital resources. The materials have also been tailored for distance education students and to provide guidance for home tutors. Multilevel materials include P–7 conceptual maps with a scope and sequence of the *Australian Curriculum* content descriptions and elaborations, semester overviews and a spelling overview. Lesson overviews and resources are available for P–7, as well as the P–2, 3–4 and 5–7 year level junctures.

The C2C materials are being written by teachers for teachers. They are available through OneSchool — an integrated student, curriculum and learning management system that enables monitoring of student progress. The C2C materials are linked to an innovative range of digital tools, resources and eSpaces available through the department's eLearning platform — the Learning Place.

C2C in the prep classroom

Graduate Prep teacher, Kayla Moss from Loganholme State School, found C2C very helpful. She appreciated the importance of every teacher developing a deep knowledge of the *Australian Curriculum* and had engaged extensively with it at university. However, the C2C materials provided a practical, detailed model for planning and delivery in her classroom. Rather than working out where to begin planning with the *Australian Curriculum*, and how to ensure she covered the relevant content for her year level, the C2C materials gave Kayla a starting point. From here, she was then able to adapt the materials to her school context and the needs, interests and readiness of her students. Kayla believes that the flexibility of

the materials were key to making the C2C materials work for any particular class of students.

For example, in her classroom, Kayla first determines what her students know then uses that information, in conjunction with the C2C materials, to plan differentiated teaching and learning experiences.

The C2C lesson plans and resource materials have given other Prep teachers at Loganholme State School fresh ideas to discuss at their planning meetings each term. The team of four examine units that have been developed around the five contexts for learning. They adopt and adapt C2C to suit their students, incorporating it into their established assessment schedule by deciding what to change, re-order or best sequence to meet student needs. The flexible nature of the C2C materials supports staff as they sequence teaching and learning. It also gives teachers time to plan differentiation for student learning.

The C2C materials and resources are one aspect of the available support for the introduction of the *Australian Curriculum*. State-wide, teachers have access to a range of online information services and discussion lists. One such service is *Classroom Connections* — an online publication and web conferencing series that provides implementation advice and opportunities to discuss ideas with experts. Regionally, and in schools, professional development is being provided. Principals are encouraged to develop a school-wide collaborative learning environment and create space and time for teachers to talk about the changes. Collective capacity is being fostered at all levels giving teachers opportunities to learn from each other and share good practices.

Links and references

Hattie, J. 2009 *Visible Learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta analyses relating to achievement*, Routledge, New York.

Classroom Connections <https://classroomconnections.eq.edu.au/Pages/default.aspx>

Australian Curriculum <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/FoundationYear>

Early Years Curriculum Guidelines http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/downloads/early_middle/ey_cg_06.pdf

Assessment and rating: your questions answered

Office for Early Childhood Education and Care

More than 200 Queensland early childhood education and care services now know what the assessment and rating process is all about.

Services have reported that the experience was positive and provided the opportunity to discuss the many wonderful things occurring within their service. For some, the process provided a fresh perspective on how the service is operating and the final report included practical goals to work towards.

With the first assessments now complete, Queensland services are asking what the next step is in the process.

What overall rating can our service expect to receive?

The National Quality Standard (NQS) rating scale is:

- Excellent
- Exceeding National Quality Standard
- Meeting National Quality Standard
- Working Towards National Quality Standard
- Significant Improvement Required

Most services will be rated as *Exceeding*, *Meeting* or *Working Towards National Quality Standard*.

Services rated as *Exceeding National Quality Standard* may apply for a rating of *Excellent* from the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). The criteria for applying for a rating of *Excellent* is on the ACECQA website (www.acecqa.gov.au) and guidelines are currently being developed.

Services with ongoing compliance issues which impact on children's health, safety or wellbeing may be rated as *Significant Improvement Required*. The Department of Education, Training and Employment will work with these services to immediately address issues through monitoring and compliance activities.

What measures are in place to ensure services are assessed consistently?

Before assessing a service, authorised officers must successfully complete a national training program and reliability test. They are trained to assess services objectively and use nationally consistent procedures for assigning ratings.

In Queensland, the final reports and ratings determined by authorised officers are reviewed by an Early Childhood Manager or Team Leader before they are given to services. Ongoing training is provided to ensure authorised officers maintain their skill level, and each officer will complete annual testing to maintain consistency.

How are the results being evaluated to ensure they are fair and reliable?

A sample of all assessment reports and ratings from services visited throughout Australia between June and October this year are being reviewed by an independent organisation, the Australian Centre for Educational Research (ACER). This work is being overseen by a steering committee which includes representatives from each state and territory and ACECQA.

When will the ratings be published?

Ratings will not be published by ACECQA until the independent evaluation process is complete. Once an agreement is made on the validity of the ratings, ministers will consider the findings and decide on the publication of ratings.

Ratings provided to services may change as a result of this process and should be treated as a draft, pending the outcome of the evaluation.

If our rating has been lowered as a result of evaluation, can we appeal the decision?

If a service's rating is lowered during the national evaluation process this would be considered a re-rating by the Regulatory Authority and services would have 14 days from when they receive the notice of this outcome to apply for a review.

When do services need to display their rating and how should they be displayed?

All services are encouraged to display *Provisional – Not Yet Assessed Under the National Quality Framework* rating until they are assessed and rated. This rating will be in place for all services until the national evaluation process has been finalised and services are notified to display their new NQS rating. This is not expected to occur until 2013.

The Karumba experience

A unique model for providing experiential learning opportunities for early childhood professionals

Suzanne Fowler and Fay Edwards



Fay Edwards

Fay has over 26 years experience in early childhood education in various capacities across a range of settings, including lower primary, kindergarten, preschool, long day care, family day care and tertiary. Fay is passionate about the provision of quality care for all children. She has been responsible for the establishment and coordination of the PSCQ Staff Exchange Program providing a unique professional development experience for educators.

Suzanne Fowler

Suzanne began her professional career as a registered nurse and midwife and has worked extensively throughout Australia in various clinical settings including remote and indigenous health care. Eight years ago she embarked upon a career change and completed her four-year Bachelor of Learning Management (Major in Early Childhood) degree. For the past three years Suzanne has been working within the Vocational Education and Training sector as an early childhood educator at Sunshine Coast Institute of TAFE.



Suzanne's story

I am a teacher within Children's Services at Sunshine Coast TAFE who has just returned from Karumba where I was fortunate to be involved in a five-day Children's Services Professional Exchange Program. I believe this program, coordinated by Fay Edwards, offers a great opportunity for all present and future early childhood professionals. It provides an awareness and respect for the diversity of early childhood environments and establishes an essential link between urban and rural communities. I will be sharing my experience with my students, teaching peers and early childhood educators currently working within the industry on the Sunshine Coast. Congratulations, Karumba Children's Centre and PSCQ, I look forward to my next remote exchange program.

The Professional Support Coordinator Queensland Staff Exchange Program

The concept of Professional Support Coordinator Queensland (PSCQ) Staff Exchange Program was originally established in 2008 in Northern Queensland to provide professional development opportunities for early childhood educators. This unique program, which is available to all eligible children's services under PSCQ guidelines, was

so successful in achieving positive outcomes from host services and participants, it was expanded in 2009 to include all regions in Queensland.

For the past two years PSCQ has worked collaboratively with Sunshine Coast TAFE to give experienced TAFE early childhood educators an opportunity to relieve in rural and remote services including Cloncurry, Longreach, Hamilton Island and Karumba.



Becoming a part of the Karumba Early Child Care environment.



Learning, listening, observing and creating.



Identifying, sharing and developing networks.

Through this arrangement:

- educators in rural and remote services are provided with an opportunity to access the Exchange Program
- rural and remote services are given direct access to experienced early childhood teachers
- valuable industry experience is provided to visiting TAFE teachers.

The program is based on an experiential learning model, such as that created by Kolb (1984). This fits well with the *Early Years Learning Framework* (EYLF) focus on reflective practice and continuous improvement.

For both participants and host services the Exchange Program provides:

- a professional development opportunity that is suited to individual needs
- enhanced motivation

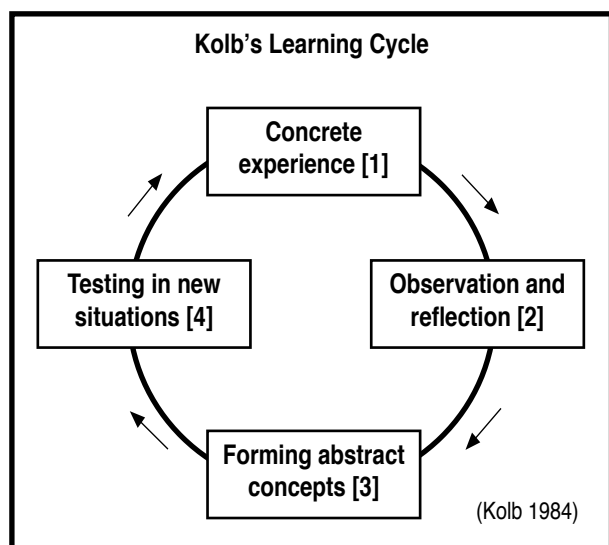
- exposure to alternative perspectives
- reflective practice through a firsthand experience
- peer mentoring, support and sharing of knowledge, skills and practices
- validation and clarification of best practices in a period of rapid change
- opportunity for the development of rural and urban professional networks
- retention of the workforce by allowing exploration of other sectors within children's services e.g. FDC, LDC, OSHC.

The Staff Exchange Program has far reaching benefits for all involved by providing educators across all children's services sectors with an opportunity to visit other services within Queensland. For participants and host services it offers a unique and valuable opportunity to engage in peer learning and acts as a vehicle to promote change and improve practice.

For more information about the Exchange Program go to: <http://www.workforce.org.au/initiatives/professional-support-coordinator-queensland/actions/staff-exchange-program.aspx>

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Cairns Regional ECTA conference

Moniek de Kievith

On Saturday 12 August 2012, the Cairns Regional ECTA Group organised a conference titled *Childhood – a journey or a race?* It focused on the social and emotional wellbeing of children and families in today's world. The conference, attended by approximately 80 delegates, took place at RydgesTradewinds on the Cairns Esplanade.

The day commenced with a very touching keynote presentation by Kerry Bird, a Senior Education Officer for Faith and Religious Education. Kerry is extremely passionate about personal, relational and spiritual wellbeing. Her keynote entitled *Life is not an emergency* was very inspirational and thought-provoking and reinforced the importance for us and for children to take time to breath and tune into what is really important. For many a tear was brought to the eye.

The day continued with a series of workshops split into three sessions. This was an opportunity to get some hands-on experience and knowledge from experts in the field of early childhood, including educators and health professionals. Vice-President of ECTA Sue Southey presented two workshops, one on the effective ways educators can build mathematical understandings whilst supporting child-initiated and creative play and the other *Rhythms of the Rainforest* revolving around music and how it supports the *Early Years Learning Framework* and the *Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline*.

Other workshops included:

- David O'Loughlin and Len Specht – *Gardening with children – growing food in a small or larger area and eating it!*
- Will Jones – *Those difficult conversations with parents about curriculum.*
- Lillian Miller and Antoinette Cole from Catholic Education Services, Indigenous Education – *Life is a journey – let's start early.*

- Trevor Fourmile – *Traditional storytelling.*
- Jane Brentnall – *Anxiety and children.*
- Carleen De Jong and Nyree Murphy – *Practical science activities - thinking, reasoning and working scientifically in your early childhood setting.*
- Sandra Bulger – *Finding the calm within.*
- Kylie Giordimaina – *Speech, oral language and phonological awareness.*
- Barb Powell, Occupational Therapist – *The Sensory Diet – how we can help our little marathon runners make it across the finishing line!*

In the afternoon there was a panel discussion on *Getting the Right Balance* with a cross-section of the community, including educators, administrators, therapists, professionals and families. All panel participants made some good points, sharing values and concerns for future generations of children, adults and communities, particularly in relation to problems arising from pressures on families to be competitive.

The conference closed with a very special treat by local author and teacher Anna Boucaut who read her story *The Faraway Seed* to the engaged audience who later had the opportunity to secure a personalised copy of the story by Anna herself.



Photo - From left - Lisa (ECTA Treasurer), Cairns Regional Group ECTA members - Lesley, Lynne, Moniek, Margaret, Chris, Trudi, Angela and Sue Southey (ECTA Vice President).

Everyday Outcomes: Working with the Early Years Learning Framework Learning Outcomes

Luke Touhill



Luke is an early childhood trainer and consultant with 20 years experience as a teacher, director, manager and trainer in a range of early childhood settings. For the past two years he has been delivering *Early Years Learning Framework* (EYLF) training throughout NSW on behalf of Early Childhood Australia (ECA), Children's Services Central, Community Child Care Co-op and CCSA. As a teacher, his interests include project-based learning as well as integrating 'real' experiences such as cooking, gardening and woodwork into early childhood programs. He also has a PhD from Macquarie University where his thesis investigated the design of children's services in Australia.

For many early childhood educators the *Early Years Learning Framework* is their first experience of mandated learning outcomes. This can be daunting – particularly if the outcomes are seen as being yet another imposition on our time. Yet the outcomes also have the potential to give a valuable sense of direction to what we do. Importantly, they focus our attention on long-term learning.

As early childhood educators we are typically very good at thinking about the short-term. We plan for this afternoon, tomorrow or next week – but rarely for longer periods. Partly this is because we recognise the importance of being responsive and flexible; partly it is because the children we work with are at a stage of life where they are growing and changing so quickly that long-term planning of anything specific is usually difficult, if not impossible.

Yet in taking a purely short-term approach we may be missing the opportunity to make a long-term difference to children's learning.

The big picture

This is where the outcomes give us pause to consider the bigger picture. None of the five outcomes will be achieved quickly or easily. None are going to be achieved as the result of a

The outcomes of the *Early Years Learning Framework*

- **Children have a strong sense of identity**
- **Children are connected with and contribute to their world**
- **Children have a strong sense of wellbeing**
- **Children are confident and involved learners**
- **Children are effective communicators**

single experience. Rather, all will be the product of many experiences over time. And even when an outcome has been achieved, or established, there is no guarantee that it will necessarily be maintained. For a child with a strong sense of identity at two there is nothing to say that they will always feel as confident and self-assured. Similarly, a child who communicates effectively at age one may not necessarily do so at age five.

The process of working with the outcomes is therefore an ongoing one. It is not a matter of simply helping children to reach them at a particular point and then imagining that we

have finished the job. Instead it is a process not only of helping children to reach them but also of helping to maintain and develop them into the future.

Thinking long-term

This process means that we need to take a complex and long term-approach to what we are doing. We can't point to our program and say 'We did identity last week, communication was this week and we're doing wellbeing on Friday.' We may well have done something related to identity last week, something related to communication this morning, and be planning something related to wellbeing for Friday. But, on their own, such experiences cannot be more than a step toward any of the outcomes. Without a range of experiences that will continue, extend and consolidate the relevant learning, such 'one-off' experiences are of only limited value.

Yet our approaches to planning and programming typically elevate such 'one-off' learning to being the focus of what we do. In fact, as the outcomes help us to realise, effective learning is rarely about 'one-offs'.

Effective learning tends to occur over time as children become familiar with ideas, concepts and learning materials and develop the skills needed to successfully use and/or apply them.

If we think of something as complex as learning to read, we instinctively realise that this is a process that takes time; that it is made up of many intermediate stages that bridge the gap between a non-reader and a reader; and, that acquiring, maintaining and developing reading skills, requires ongoing practice over considerable time. Teaching a child to read is never going to be about a single 'reading' experience; rather it is about many experiences that ultimately lead to successful reading. This doesn't mean that individual experiences are irrelevant but it does highlight the importance of these experiences linking to each other as part of a bigger process, rather than being seen as isolated 'one-offs'.



It's more than 'one-offs'

We would do well to see achievement of the EYLF's learning outcomes as a similar kind of process. Recognising this has significant implications for how we plan such learning.

If we attempt to individually plan for all of the different experiences that will go into achieving each outcome, we will quickly find ourselves overwhelmed. The temptation from this point of view, is therefore, to see the outcomes as just something else that needs to be done – an additional set of experiences on top of everything else that we are already doing. The outcomes, though, should not be separate from our everyday program. Rather, they should be the result of it.

Effective planning for the outcomes will embed them into our everyday practice rather than separating them out.

As an example, think of the sub-outcomes under Outcome Two. One talks about children developing an appreciation and respect for the environment as well as an understanding of sustainable environmental practices. Now we could easily plan a number of specific lessons or experiences to convey these messages. But to be effective how many would we need?

Alternatively, by simply introducing a recycling and composting system at meal times every child would have a daily experience of environmentalism and sustainability in action.

By using a routine that we can easily take for granted – the scraping of plates or emptying of lunch boxes at the end of a meal – and consciously making it a learning experience, we can ensure that every child not only participates in it but participates in it over and over again.

In this, way such an approach is likely to be far more successful than any individual learning experiences we might plan.

Everyday learning

Therefore, how we plan and program for the outcomes needs to consider all of the things we do that contribute to the achievement of each. Some of these will be the planned experiences or activities that appear on our programs but many, such as the recycling example above, will not fit so easily into a planning format. Instead, they will be about the interactions



and relationships we have with children or the ways that the routine and structure of the day supports the development of the kind of dispositions for learning and character traits that are inherent in the outcomes.

We know that learning happens most effectively when it is repeated. As the EYLF notes, '*connections and continuity between learning experiences ... make learning more meaningful*' (p.33). We also know that each of the outcomes will be the product of many related learning experiences over time.

If we are able to effectively integrate learning and teaching strategies that will support the outcomes into our daily routines, then we will have a way to offer meaningful learning on an ongoing basis without the need to plan every detail of the day.

This doesn't mean we discard our planning formats, or imagine that all learning can occur in this way. But it gives us another way to think about 'planning'; a way that frees us from feeling the need to plan and document each of the hundreds of experiences that will contribute to each outcome.

The very everyday-ness of routines makes them extremely valuable learning experiences if that is how we choose to see them.

Not only is such learning likely to be more effective than a single 'one-off' experience but, in terms of planning, it is something that can be planned and documented once rather than having to be constantly redone. We can treat such experiences more like a policy or procedure – something that we think about and plan once, but then implement over and over again. In doing so we can help to ensure that we are planning effectively for long-term learning and for the meaningful achievement of the learning outcomes.

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Intentional teaching: What happens between vision, intent and reality?

Leanne Hunter



Leanne Hunter is co-director at Mitchelton Pre-Schooling Centre and, with Lisa Sonter, is a founding member of *Consultants at Play*. She is a recipient of Community Merit Award (National Excellence in Teaching Awards) for Leadership and Innovation in Early Childhood Teaching Methods. In 2011 Leanne worked with a team at QSA developing and presenting material to support the *Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline*.

Like the word 'play', intentional teaching immediately signals a personal image, dependent on individual knowledge and past experience. Intentional teaching is a very broad concept. However, *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* contends that 'intentional teaching is deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful' (AGDEEWR 2009:150). This statement provides us with a foundational viewpoint from which to explore personal and professional understandings.

Bothering to be intentional

Teaching deliberately, purposefully and thoughtfully takes considered action and time. It implies and requires both professional and personal commitment. In order to prompt and clarify thinking about intentional teaching, the word 'bother' may be helpful.

Intentional teaching is not just about my interactions but my intentions across all decision-making areas including my relationships, curriculum, administrative responsibilities, professional action and advocacy. It is huge and slightly overwhelming! In order to make sense of this I have chosen to use the word bother. What I bother about really sums up my intentions. (Hunter & Sonter 2012: 57)

More specifically, in our daily practice we bother to think about:

- the physical environment: the places and spaces on offer
- the atmosphere for learning or the climate we establish which includes children's agency to act on their ideas
- time: balancing the routine parts of the day with affording children sustained time to work on their ideas in order to feel fulfilled in their exploration and investigation; and
- the resources children can access as well as the skills, knowledge and support they may require to effectively utilise these.

Do we act with intent or just react? What messages are children gaining from our responses? Our responses are powerful, as our words and actions inform children and influence their words, actions and behaviours. By being mindful, considered and respectful, we can positively influence each child's willingness to explore, to experiment, and to 'have a go'. Consider the learning possibilities that we open for children by selecting the most appropriate ways to interact and to extend their thinking and conceptual development in both planned and emerging experiences.

Listening with your eyes

Before considering our responses to children we need to listen. Jane Bourne (QSA conference

2011) reminds us that listening deeply to children means we close our mouths, our hands are behind backs or away, not madly writing or distracting. She suggests that we think of the Play School song *Sing a Rainbow* (Listen with your eyes, listen with your ears). Listening involves looking as well.

I believe our responses are informed by three factors: our knowledge of each child, our pedagogical knowledge and understandings and our personal perspective and mindset.

It takes time to get to know children: their thoughts, feelings and ways of learning. It takes time also to build our pedagogical knowledge: to determine, based on current research, what knowledge, skills and dispositions we believe children need to be successful learners now and in the future. Advocating strongly for authenticity in the learning experiences we afford children, Stonehouse and Gonzalez-Mena (2004: 178) argue that:

... authenticity is more about how and why you do something with children rather than what you do. That is, almost any topic or experience can be a wonderful learning experience for children – it all depends on two things: whether it comes out of something they have demonstrated interest in or something the adult has good reason to believe they would be interested in; and how the experience or opportunity is offered to children; that is it offered in ways that make sense and capture their interest?

Changing your mindset

Our responses to children are also informed by our personal perspectives and mind-sets.

Carol Dwek (online) describes mindset as:

being fixed or growth. In a fixed mindset, people believe their basic qualities, like their intelligence or talent, are simply fixed traits. People with a growth mindset have a love of learning, can see possibilities and are resilient.

By taking a step back to self-assess the ways we view new information and change, we build self-awareness.

Intentional teaching involves looking, listening and interacting with children to see if what children are learning is what we intended. What we intend may be very different to what children learn. What we say may be very different to what others hear. What we assume may be different to what is happening.

We may hold an assumption about children's learning. We may presume that because an experience holds potential for exploring a particular content area or disposition, that learning actually occurs. What we intend may not result. The learning could, however, be just as relevant or more so. It could also be equally in conflict to the intention or atmosphere of learning.

Sharing your decisions

Our intention may be to support the myriad of learning possibilities incorporating multiple viewpoints and perspectives. We might consider that we share decisions about the curriculum with children and families. Yet our actual practice may look very different through the eyes of others.

If we don't take the time to ask and listen to find out perceptions from children, co-workers, parents and other stake-holders, we risk making assumptions.

Our future conversations and actions may be based on inaccurate assumptions which could muddy the water for future decision-making.

It takes time to intentionally consider how we share information and explain why we do what we do and to highlight learning possibilities for children. Making connections with all parents and other stakeholders can be tough. Geography, personalities, interest and time sometimes create barriers. However, re-framing concerns and communication challenges as opportunities for

relationship building encourages great lateral thinking, patience and effort.

Finding the balance

Documentation is another aspect of our practice which requires active consideration. Do we make assumptions about what parents and other stakeholders think and feel when viewing our documentation? There is tension between documenting the moment and being in the moment. Sometimes a brief comment to a parent about their child's learning holds as much value as a documentation panel. In any teachable moment, finding a balance between responding, assessing and documenting requires intent.

There is intentionality in our decision-making for all aspects of teaching. We could easily be overwhelmed by the enormity of the responsibility. However, it is equally important to take the time to see what we have achieved. If we believe, on reflection, that our response in a particular situation could have been better, considering it as a learning experience for us indicates a growth mind-set. We will have other opportunities!

Intentionally looking for the positives in challenging situations and finding the child in ourselves helps us to appreciate the myriad moments of joy. Find the balance! That's the art of teaching.

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Documenting children's learning journeys: Finding the balance

Sue Southey



Sue is co-director at Springwood Community Kindergarten. In 2010/11 Sue was seconded to the Office of Early Childhood Education and Care to provide professional support for teachers working with the Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline. In 2009 she was a State and Territory recipient of the ASG NEiTA award. Sue is a sessional lecturer and tutor at Gold Coast campus of Griffith University, and is Vice President of Early Childhood Teachers' Association.

Working in the current climate

Early childhood educators, particularly those in before school services have experienced major change during the last couple of years. Educators are struggling to adapt to new learning frameworks, new regulatory systems, new Central Governing Bodies, new funding schemes and changing work conditions. It is not surprising therefore, that early childhood educators and, in particular, community kindergarten teachers are stressed. One of their concerns is ensuring that their documentation will meet the requirements of the National Quality Standard (NQS)(Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority, 2011). Over a number of years a culture has evolved in community kindergartens in which teachers are doing more and more documentation, particularly in the form of large portfolios, to share children's learning journeys with parents. As teaching contact hours increase, teachers report that they are struggling to maintain the balance between work commitments and home time. The *Practical strategies for documenting children's learning journeys* workshop, held at the 2012 ECTA conference, was an attempt to open up discussion and to challenge some existing practices around documentation. The majority of participants in the workshop were teachers in kindergarten settings. Therefore, the response



Examples of individual kindergarten children's portfolios.



outlined below for the most part, represents the experience of kindergarten teachers. These concerns may not be as prevalent in the more general early childhood community. They are, however, for this group, very real concerns, so much so that several of them indicated that they are planning to leave teaching, or reduce their working hours to part time. Almost all participants suggested they are struggling to maintain an appropriate work-life balance.

What is the purpose of documentation?

Documentation serves many purposes. Parents are usually considered to be the primary audience.

Documentation allows teachers to articulate children's progress, help parents understand what is being taught, identify barriers to children's learning and provide evidence for shared decision making.

Parents, however, are not the only audience. Documentation is also a tool for children, for other professionals (team members and allied services), for supervisors and assessors and also as a self-reflection tool for teachers.

The purpose and audience for documentation varies and this causes dilemmas about what, when, where and how much documentation is required. For example, documentation that depicts children as learners in the classroom and allows them to reflect on their projects may consist of mainly photos with limited text. When used for parents, this documentation needs to provide additional information about the context and purpose of the learning activities so that the parents can make judgements about their child's progress. A supervisor or assessor will want to see an evidence trail that connects planning, learning outcomes, possibilities for learning and evidence of assessment. Teachers themselves may have many reasons to document, including to demonstrate their capabilities, validate their teaching practice, reflect on group and individual learning or combat fear about meeting NQF standards! It is any wonder, therefore, that teachers are overwhelmed by the task of documenting children's learning journeys.

How much time are teachers spending on this task?

During the workshop, educators were asked to identify amounts of time usually spent on a range of contact and non-contact teaching tasks. Whilst this can be difficult to quantify on the spot, the workshop participants estimated that they are working between 8.8 and 12.75 hours for each teaching day, with an average for the group of about 10.6 hours. Educators estimated that they are allocating over an hour each day to documentation and about half an hour for planning. Teachers reported that issues such as tiredness, meeting family responsibilities and lack of time in a teaching day meant that many of them complete planning and documenting tasks at home and, for part-time educators, on their non-working days.

If we assume that about one hour of each teaching day is allocated for documentation, educators will have about four and half hours of documentation time for each child per year or 68 minutes per term. Careful consideration, therefore, needs to be given to what is documented and how this is achieved.

What needs to fit into documentation time?

There are two processes that work together to create effective documentation. The first, gathering data, occurs within teaching time and may be done by a range of team members. This includes observations such as anecdotes, running records, jottings, data from tracking sheets, photos, audio and video capture, as well as artefacts or work samples. Time outside the programme, however, is needed to collate and organise this data to make it useful.

The second process requires more time and thought. Judgements need to be made about what evidence will be used and how it will be presented. This is where considerations about the target audience come into play. Many teachers have been criticised in the past for overusing photographs to document children's learning. In response, many teachers are now using Learning Stories (Carr, 2001), or a version of Learning Stories. Typically these Learning Stories include photos, long narratives, connections to the curriculum and possibilities for learning. They are rich in information about

Group 1 2012 Tracking Sheet

<u>Elli</u>					
<u>Emily</u>					
<u>Ethan</u>					
<u>Cooper</u>					
<u>Emily</u>					
<u>Grace</u>					
<u>Hayden</u>					
<u>Jordan</u>					
<u>Joe</u>					
<u>Jordan</u>					
<u>Joshua</u>					
<u>Kan</u>					
<u>Kobi</u>					
<u>Kyran</u>					
<u>Liam</u>					
<u>Marley</u>					
<u>Nagisa</u>					
<u>Preston</u>					
<u>Ronan</u>					
<u>Shurti</u>					
<u>Sophie</u>					
<u>Tyla</u>					

Collecting data through tracking sheets.

the child, the context in which the experience occurs, the participation of the observer, and the evidence of the child's knowledge, skills and dispositions. The challenge, however, is that they are time intensive and often require about 40 minutes to document carefully. With just over one hour of documentation time per child per term, it is unrealistic to use Learning Stories as a standard method of documentation. So other methods for documenting children's learning journeys need to be considered.

Know what you are looking for

Understanding the curriculum and, in particular, having a sound knowledge of the learning

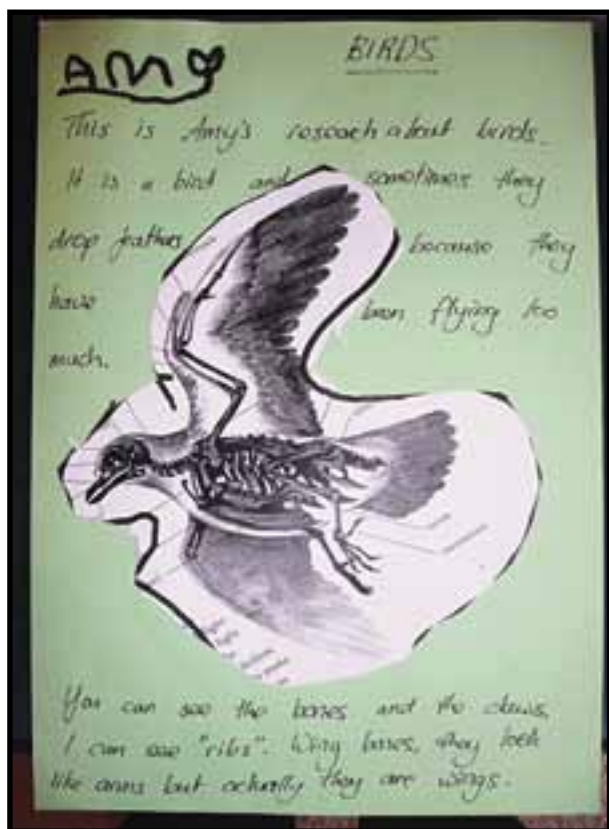
outcomes helps educators understand what they should be noticing and working toward. Within each of the learning outcome areas, educators will be investigating children's knowledge and interests, their skills and dispositions to learning. Different kinds of evidence will be used to demonstrate children's progress in each of these aspects of learning and this, in turn, influences the type of documentation that communicates these aspects of learning more effectively.

Learning Stories therefore, whilst rich in information, are only one way of reporting on learning. Other methods may be less time-consuming and quicker to publish. The capturing of evidence and producing documentation can sometimes be done with children and within program time. For example, educators can capture children's thoughts and ideas directly onto portfolio pages, or they can assist children to create 'information boards'. Another example of less time-consuming documentation is to use photos or video with limited text to demonstrate children's skill development. Dispositions, however, require more detailed descriptions and context, particularly for parents who may not readily recognise the importance of aspects of learning such as perseverance, or creativity. So one aspect of using documentation time more effectively is to make strategic decisions about (i.e. plan) what data to collect, what to discard and which method to use to communicate learning.

Using technology more effectively

Current kindergarten teachers, many of whom were educated in a non-digital world, still

What are you assessing?	Evidence	Type of documentation
Knowledge & interests	Transcripts of conversations Drawings Artefacts (collage, buildings, constructions)	Jottings of children's ideas and comments Annotated photos Information boards
Skills	Checklists Tracking sheets Photos Video capture	Annotated photos Video



Example of an information board.

struggle to use technology confidently. The debate around using digital versus hand-written documentation is irrelevant. Both methods have their uses; handwritten documents can be created with children and placed directly on notice boards or in portfolios. Digital documentation allows educators to copy and



Amy working on her information board.

paste information from one document to another. Standard formats can be adapted by providing basic information about a learning experience and adding children's individual photos and responses. The use of digital technology also allows educators to share video and audio footage. Since these more accurately represent the child's response to a learning experience, less writing is required to explain the content's significance for the audience. For example a short video of a child dancing clearly demonstrates that child's engagement and joy in the activity and requires little explanation to accompany it.

Conclusion

Early childhood practitioners, particularly teachers in community kindergartens, currently struggle to find enough time to document children's learning journeys. They are time-poor and spend increasing amounts of home time to meet their professional responsibilities. Kindergartens represent a particular setting in which teachers often document alone and rarely share their documentation with other teachers and professionals. Educators need opportunities to collaborate so that they can learn efficient strategies and techniques. It would also enable them to question the purpose of documentation and meet requirements without burning out in the process.

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Developing a strong number foundation in young children

Bronwyn MacGregor – with number rhymes from Gwen Rayner: Butterfly Wings Parent Program



Bronwyn has been an infant, preschool and primary teacher, a tutor and consultant in early childhood education in NZ, a policy officer with Dept of Families, a trainer and workplace liaison officer with TAFE, a senior project officer with DSQ and worked for Queensland Health to collaboratively develop the Social and Emotional Early Development Strategy (SEEDS) with the Early Childhood Education and Care sector. Most recently, Bronwyn has worked as a Community Development Worker – Early Childhood for Queensland Health's Early Years Initiative based at Browns Plains. She now enjoys her work as Early Childhood Advisor with

C&K. This is the first of two articles by Bronwyn. Look out for Part Two in the next issue of *Educating Young Children*.

Can you remember a time when you enabled and encouraged children to play freely with found materials like sticks, stones, leaves, gum nuts or even with a quantity of small toys or objects like Matchbox cars, building blocks, spoons, bottle tops or pieces of Lego? Did you observe them exploring their properties by lining them up, forming patterns, grouping them in different ways, perhaps even counting them? As I was writing this article, I came upon this little line of bears my daughter had constructed and left on the floor of the play room where my computer is also located. It really confirmed for me that children constantly employ mathematical concepts – both simple and complex – as they engage in everyday experiences.



When children develop a strong understanding of number, their capacity to think mathematically increases. Therefore, as educators, we must know how to promote an early understanding of number concepts.

This article is intended to reconnect you with some of the simple ways educators can provide materials and experiences in order to promote mathematical learning around numbers.

In 1994 – 1995, Jennifer Young-Loveridge, Margaret Carr and Sally Peters conducted the *EMI – 4s and EMI – 5s Studies*, as part of

the Early Maths Improvement Project funded by the New Zealand Ministry of Education (Research & Statistics) with additional funding by the University of Waikato Research Committee and the Department of Education Studies. The documents

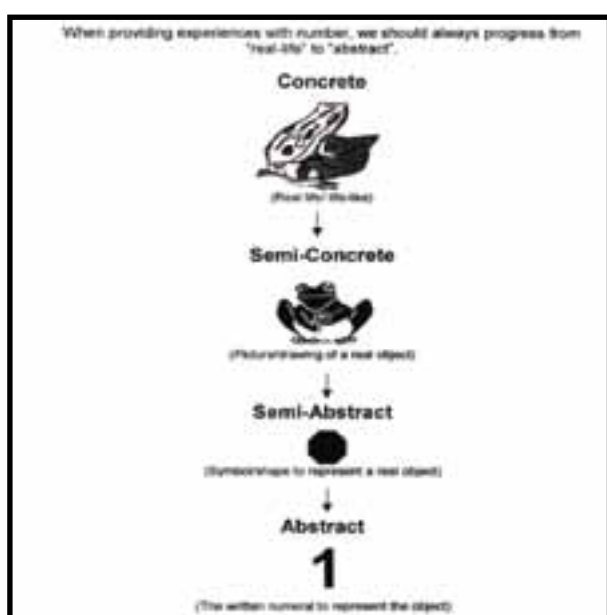
released around the study and its findings have forever influenced my knowledge and understanding about how to develop a strong number foundation in young children. I acknowledge this study as the basis for my workshop at the ECTA 2012 Conference and as the source of theoretical content for this article.

Intentionally progressing from concrete to abstract

As educators we know that children (and most adults) learn by moving from what is concrete (or 'real') to what is more abstract. Written numbers (or *numerals*) are abstract symbols, and mastering how to use and interpret numerals is a challenge for most children. Often, children can recognise or perhaps even write numerals. However, understanding the number or quantity represented by that numeral is a more complex skill. This process, therefore, needs to be carefully scaffolded by a 'responsive' adult, in an intentional way.

When very young children are faced with experiences that require endless rote counting or tracing over numerals, they are being expected to use abstract knowledge before they have had an opportunity to build their concrete understanding of number.

Knowing HOW children learn about numbers is an important skill for educators.



Progressing from concrete to abstract.

This allows them to provide the right materials, experiences and level of adult support to bring each child to a new level of numeracy or number development.

So, what does this mean in practice when we are providing experiences to support children's understanding of number? The answer is as easy as 1, 2, 3...4.

1. **Concrete** – Begin with something that is real or has come from something the child has really done. For example, Chris went camping and brought back eight black tadpoles. Count the tadpoles, watch the tadpoles turn into frogs, take photos of the tadpole and frogs for later use.
2. **Semi-concrete** – Once you have released the frogs, you can use the photos of the frogs to sort, put in a line, group, count, or as props in a rhyme about the five (or eight) little speckled frogs.
3. **Semi-abstract** – you might use your fingers one day to represent the five little frogs as you sing that song, or you might make a log and use some rocks in the sandpit.
4. **Abstract** – you begin to use written numerals or symbols to represent the frogs as you sing the rhyme.

There are many number rhymes that are an excellent place to begin as a concrete number experience for very young children (particularly babies). Gwen Rayner and Lisa Hingst from the Butterfly Wings Child Parent Program use a range of number rhymes in their programs and they have kindly put together a range to complement this article. You can access them via the Butterfly Wings website www.butterflywings.com.au By offering very young children some one-on-one or small group movement, rhyme, singing and music based on number concepts, you can surround them with 'the language of number' from as early as possible. Always remember the two simple rules that apply:

Simple number concepts should be very well understood and then built upon. A strong number concept should be developed, before trying to develop an understanding of place value and other properties of number.

Kids learn through play

Ronit Baras



Ronit is an author, educator, life coach, journalist and a justice of the peace with over 25 years of experience in education. She specialises in emotional intelligence and has worked around the world developing a number of educational programs to enhance academic, social and emotional excellence. Ronit owned an early childhood centre in Israel, was the education director of an early childhood centre in Singapore and she is currently conducting programs as the *Be Happy in LIFE* coach for children, parents and teachers to promote success, health and wellbeing.

For children, life is a playground. Children love playing. From babies holding toys and manipulating them clumsily, to school children, who play sophisticated games that require thinking, planning and manipulating, kids just love games. In fact, games are a source of calm and comfort for most and they stimulate the mind and body using the 'fun incentive'.

Education in early childhood is very important in building the foundation for happy learning. The early impression children have of learning determines their attitude towards acquiring new knowledge later on in life. Researchers discovered that pre-teen children who called their learning activities 'play' were more successful, happier in school and more socially content at the end of adolescence than those who considered their learning activities 'work'.

Children play games for many purposes. For example, games can be used to improve social skills. During games, children must negotiate, share, relate and connect with others. This

helps develop understanding, compassion, empathy, acceptance and trust and, later on, allows healthy intimacy.

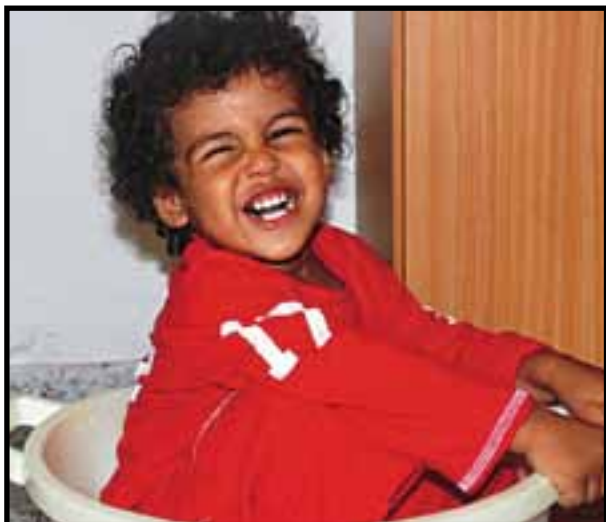
Games can be used to pass time, relax and feel calm. The repetition helps children 'predict' the future and gives them a sense of stability.

The 'fun' of the games triggers the release of chemicals that heal loneliness, anger, anxiety and depression and the completion of the game helps develop a sense of achievement.

Games can be used to learn. Games stimulate children's imagination and curiosity, improve memory and develop persistence, perseverance and creativity. They help develop new skills, experiment with trial and error, learn problem-solving techniques and strengthen existing skills. Games require learning rules, following them and taking advantage of them to suit the needs of the participant, which is a handy skill children require for success.

Above all, playing games is fun and enjoyable, which is one of the most motivating factors for learning in humans. Psychiatrist, researcher and writer Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi described play in his work *Flow, The Psychology of Optimal Experience* (1990) as a state of flow that requires just 'the right balance of challenge and opportunity'. If the game is too hard or too easy, it loses its sense of pleasure and fun. Maintaining a flow state





Playing games is fun and enjoyable.

while playing with others requires all the participants, regardless of age or ability, to feel challenged but not overwhelmed. Flow is a state where attention, motivation and the situation interact, resulting in a kind of productive harmony. When in 'flow', participants are involved, feel delight, gain clarity, confidence, feel at peace and are not conscious of the passing of time. Above all, they are highly motivated to keep trying.

Games and memory

Learning is the acquisition of knowledge and requires good memory. Memory is the process of collecting, sorting, retaining, storing and recalling experiences. There are different types of memory – short-term, medium-term and long-term.

Playing games can turn experiences stored in the short-term memory into long-term memory through focused attention, associated ideas and repetition.

Children in game-based learning environments have been shown to develop a positive attitude towards learning and to be more successful in their schooling. What seems to be an activity that focuses only on enjoyment, turns out to be a very efficient learning experience that remains registered in young children's minds as fun.

Reference

Csikszentmihalyi, M, 1990 *Flow, the Psychology of Optimal Experience*.

Success at the Garden of Eden

For children to be willing to keep playing the game, the game needs to be 'the right balance of challenge and opportunity' and they need to succeed. Success, together with a small and yet continuing challenge, is what sits at the heart of learning.



At the Garden of Eden program in Israel children as young as 18 months and as old as

four years spent their whole day 'playing' a set of familiar games that stretched their skills, knowledge and abilities in just the right balance. The games, developed over a two-year span, allowed parents to participate in the learning process without needing any teaching skills or special knowledge.

It was found that parents' participation in playing the games at home gave children more opportunities to practice and succeed. It allowed teachers to develop an individual program for each child, taking into consideration their age, abilities and interests and even the home structure and parents' skills and timetable. The use of games allowed each child to progress at his or her own speed and, within three months, most students had progressed an average of two years beyond the abilities expected at their age.

Playing games at home as well as at the centre planted the seed that 'homework' is fun and enjoyable. This developed the idea of 'homeplay', instead of what later on in their schooling would become 'horrible homework'. Children asked to take their games home to repeat the success they experienced. Instead of considering it a 'task', 'assignment' or 'test', it was an opportunity for them to experience success and show off their abilities to the people who mattered to them most.

With home play, students did not only do well in their learning but also exceeded expectations.

Contemporary resources for contemporary learners

**Maggie Garrard, Education Officer
Australian Children's Television Foundation**



Maggie is experienced in developing Victorian educational policy in the areas of curriculum, assessment and reporting. A former secondary drama teacher and primary classroom teacher, she has worked with teachers providing professional development, as well as developing resource materials for schools to use in the areas of contemporary 21st century learning and teaching and associated evidence-based assessment.

Maggie's role at the ACTF involves making connections with professional teacher associations and education authorities across Australia, promoting to schools, tertiary and pre-service educators the productions, programs and digital resources developed by the ACTF.

Imagine this: a nappy-clad baby uses computer technology effortlessly, but is utterly confused when confronted with a book. This is not a futuristic, doomsday prediction, but rather a popular YouTube clip, titled *A magazine is an iPad that does not work*. If you haven't already seen it, I recommend you watch it immediately. It is an eye-opening reminder that learning is constantly evolving, and teaching should be too.

Dubbed 'generation tech', 'generation now', and 'the internet generation', today's children will never know life without the internet. Most will never open an encyclopaedia. They play, shop, communicate, create and learn in profoundly different ways to any other generation that has gone before them.

The government has recognized the need for changes that reflect the needs of modern children and has introduced laptops and personal devices into classrooms. Yet, to provide equipment without the supporting teaching resources is like giving people cars without teaching them how to drive.

The advances in technology are about more than wiring and programming. It is a shift in learning models from authoritative, linear and passive, to active, collaborative and user-generated. It is how individuals understand themselves through different mediums and

the way text, images and video clips can be integrated into single documents.

If students are to understand and critically examine all the texts they consume, a more complex and multifaceted approach to literacy is needed.

The importance of screen and media literacy

In their paper, *Media and Young Children's Learning*, Kirkorian et al. state that through their research they found benefits associated with exposure to television that was high quality, age-appropriate, educational media for children beyond two years of age. What children also need to understand is that all texts, fiction and non-fiction, produced by the media embody 'points of view' about the world and position the reader/viewer to take a particular view of people and events. Whether these points of view are consciously intended or not, they manifest themselves through a variety of choices by the people who make them.

Children need to understand how media is constructed to survive the digital age. It is important for media/screen literacy to be addressed in early schooling.



New forms of digital literacy.



Literacy is changing, in the context of the new technologies, and teachers and parents should find ways to work productively with children to help them become critical users and producers of new digital texts. Teachers need frameworks for re-conceptualising literacy and curriculum to reflect digital screen and media literacies and provide a context in which children are able to reflect critically on issues of identity, youth culture, and the role of digital texts.

The Australian Children's Television Foundation (ACTF) is continually developing new teaching and learning resources that repurposes Australian children's television to support teachers with contemporary literacy education strategies. We believe that 21st century teaching resources should be multi-platform, accessible and interactive, offering multimedia components that can be delivered directly to students and be highly usable with interactive

white boards, laptops, tablets, online and other digital technologies. They should allow for both passive and active content with scope for students to adapt models for their own learning. The 2008 Australian Communication and Media Authority (ACMA) report found that patterns of electronic media and communications use change as children move from early childhood to teenage years but the one constant is television, with the same average participation of 94 per cent for children and young people across all age groups.

Information discovery and delivery is also changing and, with the introduction of and uptake of interactive white boards and laptop access, what teachers and students need is ease of access to free digital downloadable material that is aligned explicitly with the Australian Curriculum expectations. However, you can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink! While there is a proliferation of digital content websites that offer multiple delivery strategies, a common problem for teachers is still 'How do I authentically work with digital content, and how do I use Web 2 applications?' Teacher professional learning on the pedagogy of digital content is also needed to make these digital online content sites worthwhile.

The ACTF has sought different partners to progress the development of digital online



Information discovery.



Multimedia that supports learning.

and DVD-ROM resources that are uniquely Australian, use digital clip formats with suggested teaching activities, engage students with multimedia, support all disciplines and aligned directly with the topics and pedagogical frameworks for the Australian Curriculum and the *Early Years Learning Framework*. The ACTF also promotes digital authoring by students to synthesise and apply their knowledge and understanding into a 'new package' as a digital response. Students spend 80-90% of their research time online. Therefore a major consideration for this generation of students (and young teachers) is visual multimedia not only to engage with learning but also to entertain.

Look for ACTF developed resources to support the Australian curriculums with multimodal texts at www.actf.com.au/education

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Tablets (e.g. iPads and other handheld computer touch screen devices): to use or not to use?

Lyn Bower



Lyn has been involved in early childhood for over thirty years in learning contexts ranging from kindergarten to university. Lyn is the author of four of the Early Childhood Australia Learning from Home series, and co-author with Will Jones of another book in that series. Lyn also produced a number of videos while a lecturer at USQ. Since moving to Dalby, Lyn has undertaken a twelve-month teaching contract with a local kindergarten where she introduced the use of a handheld computer touch screen device. Lyn is continuing to work with children exploring the opportunities of this new technology.

Young children are exposed to more technology than ever before, and we cannot close our eyes or pretend that this will change. If fact it will only grow and will change the way we do everyday tasks, or the way we use appliances – just look at the capability of mobile phones, compared with what they were five years ago. Are we prepared for this? What should we do as teachers who believe play is important for children, or even that children should have limited access to computers or similar technology?

I have always been an educator keen to explore and try new experiences with children. Having said this you can imagine how excited I was when I first played with a tablet. My first thought was should I, or how could I use this with children. It was different from the computers we use with kindergarten and Prep children, and although I was hesitant I still had a burning desire to try it. Here was a piece of equipment that could play, store and record music and voice, take and store photos, use a wide variety of apps, access the internet, email and much more.

It seems only limited by your creativity and your knowledge or understanding of how it works, and what apps and utilities are available.

I searched the web for research or articles about using a tablet with preschool-aged children and found very little. The next question was how would I approach using a tablet with children when there was little information to base it on?

I came to the conclusion that over the years all equipment used with children would at one stage be new, maybe based on previous experiences, maybe not.

What did I have to lose to try this? Then it hit me. Why should I be hesitant when I encourage children to explore and be curious? Why should I be different, and that was all I needed.



Learning with a tablet.

Getting started

I did have concerns about the care of a tablet and if I could let go and allow the children to use a tablet unsupervised. I am still wrestling with that thought and it's probably the result of having borrowed the first tablet I used. I had no need to be concerned. I talked to the children about how we should use and care for a tablet. I was teaching the children about respect for equipment and responsibility, just like any other piece of equipment. This was another opportunity for intentional teaching. The children were keen to use a tablet and were very receptive to making sure their hands were clean, dry and that only fingers were used and that it was used in a 'safe' place.

Some of the children already had experience with their parent's mobile phone so moving to a tablet was only a matter of size, and an increase in size was appreciated. They were also familiar with some apps.

Although I shouldn't have been, I was surprised to see how easily the children used a tablet, almost intuitively.



Children use a tablet almost intuitively.

They approached a tablet just as they do any other equipment. They were experimental and had no fear or concern about breaking anything, doing something that might cause it not to work, or doing something that couldn't be undone. In short they were playing, problem-solving and exploring. Why then should we be hesitant?

Perhaps we are concerned with the amount of time children use modern media. Journal and research articles sometimes report that children might be watching too much television, or spending too much time sitting in front of a computer. This is often reported in newspapers, emphasising the negative. Should this be a concern? Yes, it should. However, it shouldn't be a reason for not using a tablet, or other media. It's just another opportunity for open discussion with colleagues, research and planning like any other piece of equipment.

One aspect that needs to be considered is that a tablet, although similar in some aspects, is not used in the same way as we use computers.

... For one thing, there's no intermediary between you and what you're trying to do on a regular computer ...



If you know how to point you know how to use a tablet.

If you know how to point, you know how to use a tablet, and that's the truly exciting thing about this device, it makes personal computing truly personal. (Asadi 2012, p 8)

Choosing the right apps

To make the most of your tablet you need to understand a little more about apps and the utilities that enhance its performance.

Apps vary in quality and price so you need to choose carefully. This is not always easy as there are over 200,000 apps available. You can only use an app after you have purchased it and for this reason it is important to carefully read the reviews for each app, or speak to colleagues, so the apps you purchase are appropriate and worthwhile. Interactive books are very popular and educationally rewarding. Some apps are very formal with worksheet type activities and not appropriate, but sometimes rate well due to their perceived educational content. Surprisingly there are art or drawing apps that provide the same creative opportunities as crayons, brushes

and pencils and paper. Again choose carefully as there are apps that read as though they offer creative opportunities when in fact they are very limited.

Researching with a tablet

A tablet can also be used as a research tool for the children if connected to the web via a sim card or Wi-Fi. However, you if you are using the web ensure you have the most secure filters and closely supervise at all times as you would with any computer connected to the web.

Recommendations

I recommend purchasing a tablet with 64 GB. You are not able to add memory to a tablet and I find it's much better to have spare memory rather than not enough.

Buy a protective cover for the back of your tablet and a screen cover to prevent scratches and oil and grease marks. I recommend purchasing a smart cover. They are easy to put on and take off but the advantage is that they put the tablet to sleep when the screen is covered.

Read the User Guide so you can fully understand the tablet's capability. It's easy to read and will help you appreciate the potential for learning.

Enjoy your tablet, it is a very powerful educational tool if you spend time learning about it and playing with it, just as you would let children play with it.

References

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Researching with a tablet.



**Mathilda
Element**

Another year of wonderful work for early childhood educators, and as we all head towards a well-deserved summer break, I would like to take an opportunity to thank the review team once again for their hard work and dedication to their profession. All the reviewers for ECTA are teachers working in various settings across the state, who give their time and their opinions to their peers and share their ideas, strategies and thoughts about the books they review. As a reader, I love hearing what happens next, beyond the telling of the tale – the children 'running to make box collage', making connections with other texts, or simply sharing favourite bits, new information and ideas. It invites me into those classrooms and centres, sharing a snippet of those teachers and children's relationships and learning lives – like a good book that opens the world up to the reader, so too have the quality of teacher reviews this year opened us all up to new worlds, new resources, new possibilities and new connections.

Thanks for letting us be a part of your thoughts and your ideas, and sharing your gorgeous children, classrooms and teaching with us. If you would like to join the review team for 2013, and receive free resources to review, please email me at mathilda@ecta.org.au.

Have a great holiday period and keep up the good work!

Title: **iTunes – iPod Touch – Application (APP) – iCan Write**

Creator: **Gary Leach - Fiendssoft**

Publisher: **Fiendssoft and Apple Inc.**

RRP: **\$1.99**

Age Appropriate: **3.5 - 5.5 years**

Focus: **Rotational Literacy Activities - Writing**

Reviewed by: **Rebecca Trimble-Roles**

The iCan Write iTunes Application (App) is available from the Apple iTunes Store. This App can be used for young children between the ages of 3.5 – 5.5 years. The Web address is <http://www.apple.com/au/itunes/>. Once one has downloaded iTunes, one can then enter the iTunes store and type the word 'iCan Write' into the search bar. The 'iCan Write' App will then appear. One can then purchase the App for \$1.99. This App can then be downloaded to a digital device (iPad, iPod Touch or iPhone). iCan Write encourages children to form letters and words whilst embedding the concept of recognising letters in a lower-case and upper-case form. iCan Write also enhances the acquisition of early literacy as it assists children in understanding familiar words and becoming beginning writers.

This interactive platform encourages physical manipulation of the iPod Touch screen to embed recognition and formation of the letters of the alphabet. The participants are catered for both in a visual and hands-on sense. As a means of documenting the children's learning, the 'iPod Touch' 'Screen Snap-Shots' can be included in the children's portfolios. The children can revisit and self-edit their efforts giving them a sense of ownership over the learning that takes place. This resource can be used with minimal adult intervention, adding to the children's sense of independence. The iPod Touch gives the children a further opportunity to develop their motor and literacy skills through physical exploration.



Title:	Finding out about Echidnas Peregrine Falcons Humpback Whales Dugongs
Author:	Greg Pyers
Illustrator:	Picture research by Robyn Formosa-Doyle
Published By:	Echidna Books, Melbourne
ISBN:	9781740704540 (hbk) Echidnas 9781740704526 (hbk) Peregrine Falcons 9781740704519 (hbk) Humpback Whales 9781740704533 (hbk) Dugongs
RRP:	\$29.95 each (hbk) \$14.95 (pbk)
Reviewed by:	Melindi Robertson (Director, Mt Gravatt Kindergarten, The Gowrie)

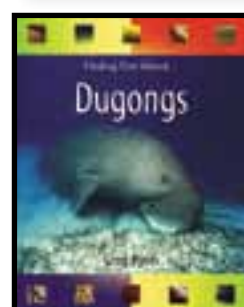
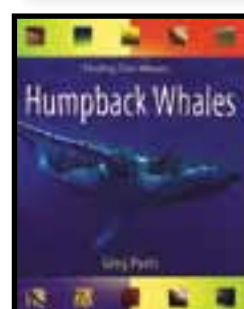
These four 'Finding out about' books are part of an Australian series, with twelve other titles available. Big Books are also available. These are very useful resource books (32pp) for both early and primary readers (children aged seven to ten years) and teachers.

Keeping the reader interested, information on each animal is presented in easy to read sections covering characteristics, habitat, diet, breeding, growth and development, conservation status and data from a specific researcher. Each page has two extra boxes titled *Facts* and *How do we know?* relating more interesting information. Valuable links to relevant websites, research and individual animal survey sites are available on each final page. The photos are in colour, attractive and interesting.

Greg Pyers is a widely-published author with extensive experience working with animals and his environmental literature for children reflects his experience and interest.

I used the Echidna reference book last term, after the children in my kindergarten class wanted to research echidnas – I found new facts myself! Only about 16 have ever been bred in captivity in Australia, but none of those have reproduced yet. Did you know early echidna milk is pinkish in colour?

These are excellent resource books for early childhood services and primary schools.



Title: Bunjil The Eagle
Author: Jaara Community with Liz Thompson
Published by: Pearson Australia
ISBN: 978-1-4425-4688-2

Title: The Moon and The Gecko Patjuka Wara Puna
Author: Paakantji Community with Liz Thompson
Published by: Pearson Australia
ISBN: 978-1-4425-4691-2
RRP: \$24.95 each
Reviewed by: Teenah Schneider

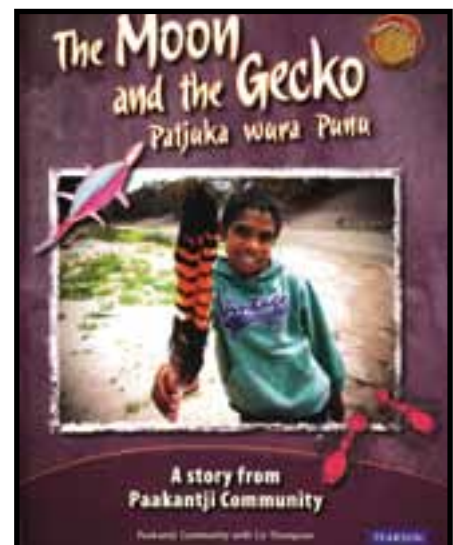
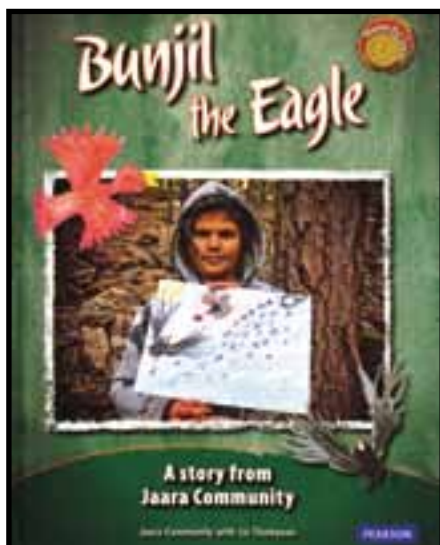
I really enjoyed seeing these two books for the first time. They form a part of a 14 book series called *Sharing our Stories*. Each book shares a traditional story from a different Indigenous community around Australia.

The presentation of these books is fantastic. There is background information about the community and the storyteller. A glossary along the bottom of the page helps students to make meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases (which are highlighted in the text). Artworks illustrating the stories are created by children and are quite impressive. The font is large and easy to read, the layout is engaging and easy to follow. Largely, the words used are familiar to lower primary word lists, so great for most readers.

When the story concludes, there is feedback from the children who worked with the authors. They share their ideas and understanding of the story. Community elders also share information and thoughts regarding the story told. In *The Moon and the Gecko*, the final pages share the story in Paakantji language.

My Year Two class enjoyed listening to the stories and then revisiting them independently. We had studied Indigenous stories earlier this year and these books invoked new enthusiasm and discussion.

If you can't tell ... I highly recommend!!!



Title: Wild Things: Giraffe on a sleepover

Author: Lisa Regan

Illustrator: Kelly Byrne

Published By: Bloomsbury Publishing PLC

ISBN: HB 978-1-4081-4246-2

HB 978-1-4081-5679-7

RRP: AU\$24.99

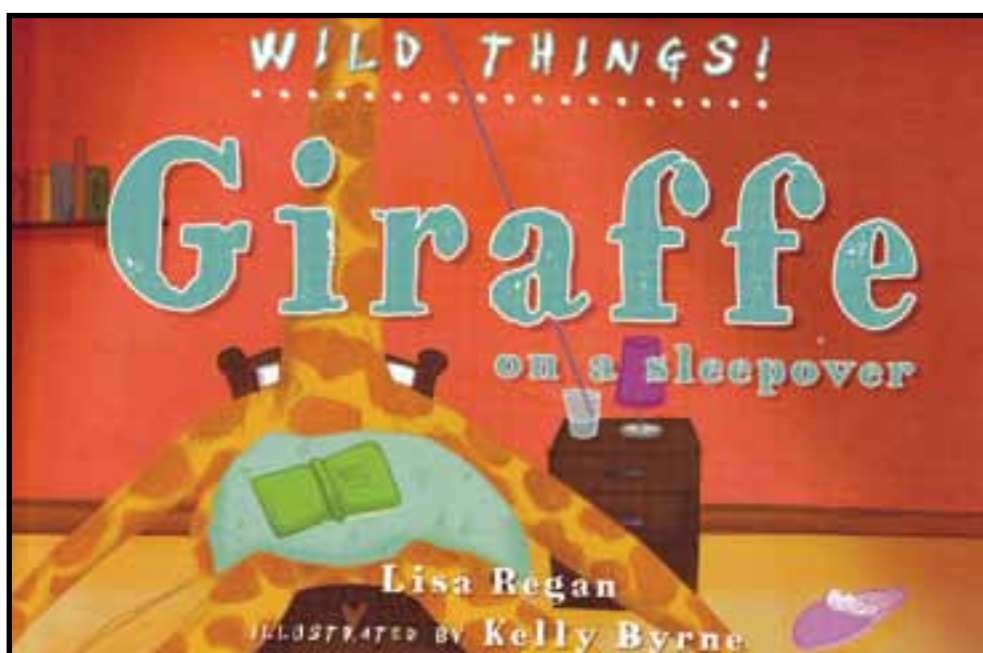
Reviewed by: Kim Mostyn

This book would appeal to children from Kindergarten to Year Two. It is a fiction book all about a giraffe at the door. The author presents both a fun story and information about giraffes in a child-interesting way. She relates facts about the giraffe as comparisons with facts about a child, for example, comparing the length of a giraffe's tongue with the length of a child's arm. Each page gives more information about a giraffe.

The text is large and clear. Illustrations align with the text on each page and are easy for children to follow. Both the text and the illustrations are humorous and invite children to engage in thinking and learning about giraffes.

I found this book to be funny and the children enjoyed it immensely. It promotes lots of conversations about how giraffes differ from people, as well as capturing the imagination to wonder what it would be like if a giraffe came to stay.

This is a wonderful book for children and early childhood educators.



Title: Crow and the Waterhole
Author: Ambelin Kwaymullina
Illustrator: Ambelin Kwaymullina
Year: 2007
Publisher: Fremantle Press
Pages: 32
ISBN: 9781 1921 696824
RRP: \$16.95 (paperback), \$26.95 (hardcover)
Reviewed By: Sandra Taylor

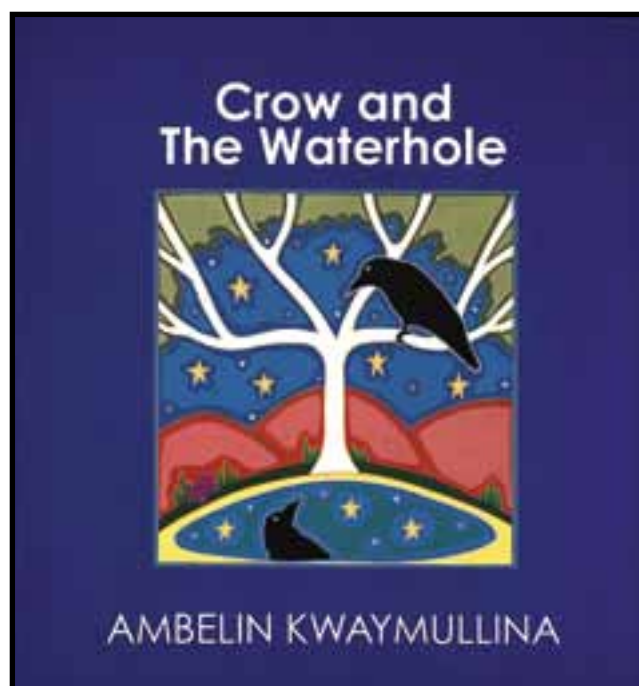
Ambelin Kwaymullina is a highly regarded Indigenous writer and artist, and the *Crow and the Waterhole* was her first published book. Previous editions of *Educating Young Children* have featured reviews of some of her other titles including *How Frogmouth Found her Home* and *Caterpillar and Butterfly*.

This vividly depicted fable of a crow's struggle to discover her own self-worth has been nominated for a number of literary awards, including making the shortlist for both the Children's Book Council of Australia Crichton Award 2008 and the Queensland Premier's Literary Awards 2008.

The story is about Crow, a kind-hearted but sad bird who can see the good in everyone except herself. She even believes her reflection in the waterhole is a more magnificent bird than she. She sets out one day to see if she can find her greatness and along the way saves a number of bush friends from terrible fates, enriching their lives with her positive attitude and helpful nature. At each stage of her journey she runs into that reflection, as crow-in-the-river, crow-in-the-pool and finally crow-in-the-puddle. It is not until Kookaburra shows her that it has been her all the time that Crow finally recognises that she is the crow that is brave, faithful, kind and wise. For the rest of her days she makes sure she taught this message to all the animals in the bush; "Your destiny lies within you. All you need to do it learn how to see it".

The book is aimed at the Kindergarten – Prep (4 – 5 years) audience with easy to comprehend language and beautiful and colourfully painted illustrations. These illustrations are particularly eye-catching due to their lack of black outlines; the bright colours claim the entire page and really make the sad black crow stand out as the central character of the story. The message behind the story is clearly conveyed, yet there is ample opportunity for the readers to discuss and analyse the different themes. I believe this book is well suited to extension via mapping and drama activities, not to mention art and craft.

Young readers will also have the added challenge of finding the cheeky little frog hiding on every page!

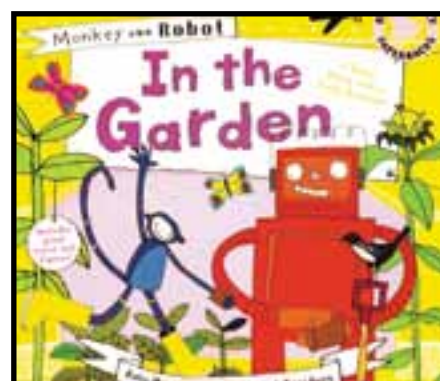
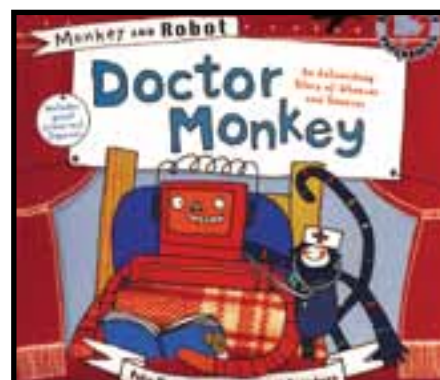
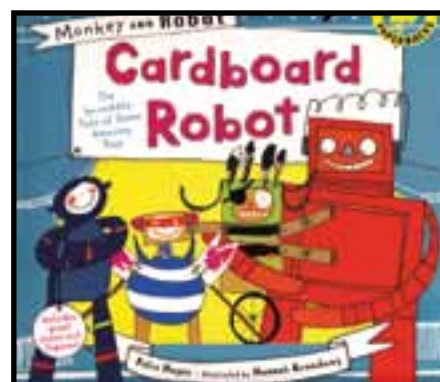


Title: **Monkey and Robot Series**
Cardboard Robot
Doctor Monkey
In the Garden

Author: **Felix Hayes**
Illustrator: **Hannah Broadway**
Published By: **Bloomsbury**
ISBN **9781408806555**
ISBN **9781408806548**
ISBN **9781408806579**
RRP: **\$14.99**
Reviewed by: **Christine Nolan**

Monkey and Robot have a few dozen new fans! This series of stories really connects with early learners. The two friends Monkey and Robot have a new adventure in each title. These stories are all about relationships with friends and they are something young children will identify with in their own experiences playing with friends. Both characters have very different personalities and their interactions ring true. Each of the books has a 'hands on' theme that my class found inspiring! After reading Cardboard Robot everyone was heading for the box collage! Then we read Doctor Monkey and home corner was suddenly transformed into a doctors' surgery. And when we read In the Garden ... out came the wheelbarrow, gum boots, rakes and spades and requests for packets of seeds ... The gardeners had arrived!

Each book also has a push-out page of cardboard characters ideal for finger puppets or felt board characters so the stories can be retold, acted out or making up new adventures for Monkey and Robot to enjoy! The final pages also give instructions on how to do what Monkey and Robot did. There is also a website (www.monkeyandrobot.co.uk) which was interesting but when we located the blog from there ... that was great inspiration for the teacher to see what other classes had made or done after reading these books. Suitable for ages three to six years. Certainly worth the five stars we gave it! We highly recommend the series.



Guidelines for writers

The EYC editorial panel welcomes articles and ideas for possible inclusion in the journal.

One of the journal's strengths is in the variety and individuality of contributions. These style guidelines should help you to prepare your contribution in the EYC 'style'.

Style

We like to maintain a uniformity of approach within the journal. Here are some examples of the preferred 'house' style.

- Use Australian spelling in preference to American.
- Write numbers up to twelve as words; figures are used for numbers 13 upwards. (For example: one, eleven, 18, 200.) Exceptions are where numbers appear in a table, list or refer to a measure. (For example: Anne was seven years old when she walked 5 kilometres to school.)
- Use the following examples to help you write dates and times:
15 February 2006, 1900s.
She left at 7.25 am in order to catch the seven-forty train.
- Usually, you would write amounts of money in numerals. (For example: 20c or \$0.20, \$120 and \$88.15.) Words may be used in approximations such as 'he made millions of dollars'.
- Use italics for titles. For example: *The Australian* rather than 'The Australian'.
- Aim for a style that is free of jargon or slang (unless this is relevant to your contribution).
- Don't assume that your audience has prior knowledge of your topic. For example, it is possible your readers will not be familiar with an acronym that you use every day. You should use the full reference the first time, followed by the acronym in brackets as shown here: Early Childhood Teachers' Association (ECTA).
- Advertorial should not be included.

Referencing

If your contribution concludes with a list of references, you should check these carefully as the editor may only pick obvious typographical errors. A search on Google usually brings up any reference you do not have to hand.

Maybe you need help with referencing. If so, you should find the *Style manual for authors, editors and printers* (6th edn) very helpful. The editor uses this manual and also the *Macquarie Dictionary*. This is the preferred style for the ECTA Journal.

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

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

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

Specific terminology

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

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

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

Length of contribution

- Article: 1200 words
- Book review: 300 words
- Regular article: 650 words

Form of submission

Your contribution should be submitted via email to info@ecta.org.au Photographs may be submitted digitally – minimum 3 megapixels on the highest resolution. Art works should be scanned. Photographs require a release agreement. A hard copy should also be included.

Author release forms must be signed and a hard copy forwarded to ECTA 20 Hilton Road, Gympie, Qld. 4570. Where original artwork or material has been submitted it will be returned at the contributor's request. All contributors will be sent a copy of the journal.

