



Educating Young Children

Learning and teaching in the
early childhood years

Volume 19

Number 2,
2013

Journal of the Early Childhood Teachers' Association Inc.

PUBLISHED BY

Early Childhood Teachers'
Association (ECTA Inc.)
20 Hilton Road,
Gympie, Qld. 4570

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ECTA Inc.
ISSN: 1323:823x

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DESIGN

Graphic Skills Pty Ltd

PRINTING

Cornerstone Press

The ECTA Coordinating Committee and the EYC Journal Editorial Panel wish to acknowledge the contributions of the children for the illustrations used for the journal cover and other ECTA printed material.

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Journal contributions

Articles and ideas for possible inclusion in the journal, following review by the editorial panel, are welcomed. See inside back cover for submission guidelines.

Advertising rates (GST inclusive)

	1 Issue	2 Issues	3 Issues
Full Page	\$451.00	\$407.00 per issue	\$363.00 per issue
Half Page	\$269.00	\$242.00 per issue	\$214.50 per issue
Quarter Page	\$181.50	\$148.50 per issue	\$121.00 per issue
Eighth Page	\$121.00	\$88.00 per issue	\$71.50 per issue

Inserts

\$200 for an insert to be included. Written notification of intent is required, as there is a limit on the number of inserts per issue.

Dates for contributions

No 1	Last week in January
No 2	Last week in May
No 3	Last week in September

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Registered teachers are advised to note the Queensland College of Teachers endorsed position on professional reading, accessing online resources and viewing video-streamed materials as contributing to their CPD requirements for renewal of teacher registration. The endorsed position can be viewed on the ECTA website www.ecta.org.au from the *Educating Young Children* link.

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Photographs

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From the President

Kim Walters

Welcome to the second edition of *Educating Young Children* for 2013.

At the recent ECTA Annual Conference it was with great pleasure that I awarded Robbie Leikvold ECTA Life Membership. Robbie is a passionate and dedicated member of ECTA. Since joining in the mid-1980s; Robbie has been a member of the Journal Committee and the Conference Committee, becoming co-convenor of the Conference Committee in 2004.



ECTA Life Member, Robbie Leikvold with ECTA President Kim Walters.

On behalf of all ECTA members I would like to congratulate Robbie and the Conference Committee on the success of the 2013 ECTA Annual Conference. It was very rewarding to read the multitude of glowing reviews from delegates thanking them for their tireless work. 62% of those evaluating rated the conference overall as excellent and a further 31% as very good, giving a total of 93%. Further to this, conference organisation was rated 75% as excellent and 21% as very good, totally 96%. 84% agreed that Maggie Dent was an excellent choice for the keynote and another 15% rated the keynote as very good, totalling 99% of all those participating in the evaluation process.

ECTA thanks everyone who took the time to fill in the online Conference Evaluation form. Your feedback is valued and acted upon. Congratulations to Theresa Drage who won a complimentary 2014 conference registration for submitting her evaluation online.

Theresa said,

This is one of the few conferences that I attend EVERY year (since I first attended!). The workshops are always worthwhile and the presenters are very professional. Additionally, it is an excellent networking (and shopping!) opportunity for everyone. It's my excuse to kick back my heels, listen to someone else do the teaching ... and find many excuses to spend some money on the students in my class. Oh - and the food's not bad.

The members of the Conference Committee are a very dedicated group of professionals who work together to make everything run smoothly on the day. If you would like to join the conference committee email conferenceconvenor@ecta.org.au.

ECTA Groups play vital role

ECTAs priority for many years has been supporting regional members and it is pleasing to see ECTA Groups organizing professional development and social events in their own local areas. This work has resulted in increased growth in those attending regional events. The new ECTA Group in Mackay has already provided several local events and is now embarking on the organisation of a local conference. We have also now successfully established an ECTA Group in Brisbane North and the Sunshine Coast Group is nearing finalization. Members on the Sunshine Coast can email sunshinecoastrg@ecta.org.au to help establish this group.

The Members Centre of our website has been revamped enabling links to the streamed recordings of Videolinks and conference notes and handouts. PDF copies of past journals are now only one click away. Remember you must be logged in before you are given access to documents in the Members Centre. You will also now find copies of past eNEWS in this section.

This year ECTA once again allocated funds to two office bearers from each ECTA Group to support their attendance at the ECTA Annual Conference and the ECTA Groups breakfast meeting on the Sunday following the conference. This year all regional groups were represented at the breakfast meeting. With many of our State Coordinating Committee, Conference Committee, Journal Committee and Website Committee members living outside of the Brisbane metropolitan area, ECTA also allocated funding for these regional members to attend the conference and other committee events throughout the year.

I would also like to thank the members of the State Coordinating, Web, Journal and ECTA Group Committees who supported the Conference Committee on the day.

As with previous years, several of the 35 master classes and workshops were booked out before registrations opened to non-members online. Members are reminded that it is vital that we have your correct email address, as all financial members receive a personal email containing a link to the conference website at least two weeks before registrations open to the public. You can update your own details by logging in to the website using your username and password. If you have forgotten either just email info@ecta.org.au or retrieve your password online by clicking Member Login.

This year ECTA member Jessica Nelson was awarded Remote and Rural Conference Support to attend the conference. Jessica graduated last year and is teaching year two at Holy Cross Catholic School in Trinity Park. She received a grant of \$500 to cover her expenses, in addition to having her conference registration refunded. Anyone living outside of 300 km from the conference venue is able to apply for this grant. I encourage all regional and remote individual members to apply next year.

To support regional ECTA Groups, ECTA will provide funding to facilitate a professional development event in their local area, showcasing either Maggie Dent or an ECTA Annual Conference speaker of their choice as the presenter.

I am pleased to include a copy of Maggie's keynote address with this journal.

ECTA continuously advocates for best practice in early childhood pedagogy representing members and colleagues in various submissions, committees, forums and meetings. Earlier this year, Lisa Cooper (ECTA Treasurer) and myself were fortunate to be invited to participate in the ABC Splash Lab in Sydney. This event brought together educators and technicians to develop new ideas for the ABC Splash website. We were able to significantly influence the discussions and place the early years of schooling into a key position of priority. The website provides interactive and engaging resources for teachers using the Australian Curriculum. Please visit the

website <http://splash.abc.net.au> and discover this no cost resource.

ECTA also recently made submissions to the draft Department of Education, Training and Employment Strategic Plan 2013-2017 and the Inquiry into the Education and Care Services Bill 2013 along with various media articles profiling Early Childhood issues.

I encourage you all to contact me on email kim@ecta.org.au to share your ideas, thoughts or concerns around early years agendas so that ECTA can continue to be a strong, informed and relevant voice for you and other members. Please keep me informed of any opportunities to advocate in your area.

Together as like-minded early childhood professionals we can strive to uphold our integrity and to continue to promote active enquiry based learning in the early years.

Finally, I would like to congratulate our State Coordinating Committee Treasurer Lisa Cooper on being awarded the ASG NEiTA National Award for Community Engagement. Lisa was nominated for the award by her P&C Association and school parents. Lisa is an advisory visiting teacher – early years and a behaviour support consultant in Hervey Bay. Lisa advocates strongly for play in the early

years and is able to facilitate real change in the learning environments provided by the teachers she mentors. She is a passionate and dedicated early childhood teacher who works tirelessly for ECTA and her local community to enhance outcomes for children and parents. When asked, 'What the single most important thing she, as a teacher, can do to connect with your students?' Lisa replied: 'Taking the time to listen and talk, connecting with each and every student every day.'

Kim



ECTA committee members Anne Pearson, Allison Borland and Kim Walters proudly share Lisa Cooper's crystal Apple and award with her.

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From the editorial panel

Lynne Moore

The Editorial Team is pleased to bring you this second edition of *Educating Young Children* for 2013. In this Issue we look both *forward* and *back* to celebrate the passion and resilience of early childhood educators as they embrace challenge and welcome innovation.

Looking *back*, the Year three children at St Margaret's investigate the topic *Old school days* to discover a world of elastics, hula hoops, bottled milk, ink nib pens and blotting paper. Sue Webster has collated a series of photos spanning eighty years to provoke thinking about change in approaches to young children's education and the environments we teach in; and graduates from Brisbane Kindergarten Teachers College will enjoy seeing the delightful *Graduates Remember* included in our Media reviews.

In *Conversations* seven early childhood educators ponder the most significant change in early childhood education for them. You will be inspired by their honesty and hopes as they reflect on the legislative, social and technological change transforming the early childhood landscape.

Looking *forward* the Queensland Children's Services Alliance welcomes the National Quality Framework and the opportunity it provides to raise the bar for quality educational programs. This together with the introduction of the National Curriculum and *Early Years Learning Framework* signify one of the most complex periods of change the profession has experienced.

Maggie Dent, the 2013 ECTA Conference keynote speaker, understands the dynamics of processing complex and progressive change. Her article *Really surviving teaching ...* is a must read in building resilience and coping skills. In their

article about reflection and transformational change, Marilyn Casley and Jennifer Cartmel outline steps to manage the change process while Steve Francis reveals seven secrets to motivating and engaging students.

There are challenges ahead. Narinda Sandry highlights the decreasing amounts of time children spend in natural settings, suggesting new ways to connect children with nature. Paul T Spearim inspires with his passion for reconciliation. For Stephen Gallen, a commitment to cultural competence emerges as a key principle and for Lisa Sonter the key to optimizing children's learning is taking the time to think carefully about the intent of the experiences we plan. Intentional teaching practices are risky, she suggests, but it is equally important for teachers to take risks with their learning.

Finally, we leave you with tips for a calm classroom from Helen Wilkie and another series of great media reviews from Mathilda and our team of reviewers. Good reason for being optimistic about a positive vision for early childhood education into the future.

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38th Early Childhood Teachers' Association Annual Conference

Lisa Cooper

The 2013 ECTA Conference was held on Saturday 22 June, 2013 at Sheldon College in Brisbane. Over 500 delegates from Southern, Central and Northern Queensland as well as interstate attended the conference.



During the ECTA President's welcome address Kim Walters surprised Robbie Leikvold with a certificate of Life Membership to ECTA.

COMMENT:

I was deeply honoured to be presented with an ECTA Life Membership Award at the conference. I have gained so much both personally and professionally through my long term involvement and engagement with ECTA and thank the committees for their support and shared vision for early childhood educators across all sectors in Queensland. I am proud to be an ECTA member. Thank you.

COMMENTS:

I really enjoyed Maggie Dent's message - remembering to focus on the children to be calm. Darcia Bauman

Keep track of real children in the real world! Helen Geroff

Keynote Brilliant! Not one bit boring, Maggie kept your attention all the time. Great relationship ideas provided. Janet



Keynote speaker Maggie Dent entertains the delegates.



Delegates were engaged with the keynote speaker

COMMENT:

Fiona, Susy, Toni and Luanne found Maggie Dent's presentation a very worthwhile experience that warranted them travelling all the way from Sydney. She is an absolute breath of fresh air when it comes to common sense practical solutions in today's chaotic world. Her sense of humour and personality kept us entertained and engaged for her entire presentation.



The ECTA stand at the conference.



Kim Walters (ECTA President) and Lisa Cooper (ECTA Treasurer) with MTA – conference platinum sponsors Janelle Atley, Lisa Davidson, Melissa Maddalena and Scott Young.

Connie Giorgi from ANZUK (Gold Sponsor) discusses with Kim Walters (ECTA President) different programs and solutions offered by them in the workforce.



Kim Walters (ECTA President) and Lisa Cooper (ECTA Treasurer) discuss products sold by conference supporting sponsors Paul Hart & Julie Telfer from HART Sport Supplies.



Office Max conference supporting sponsors Michelle Powell, Sue McVay, Glenn Adam and Geoff Keates chat about resources and service that they provide to the early years sector.



Global Kids Oz conference supporting sponsor JJ plays a 'walkabout' game with Kim Walters (ECTA President) and Lisa Cooper (ECTA Treasurer).



The view across the trade displays at the conference.



Enjoying the new science kit at the Educational Experience (morning tea sponsor) trade display.

COMMENT:
Really enjoyed

the kit Quadrilla – ‘The Roundabout’ – great application and learning for young children.
Michael McKeon

Chelsea Smithett, Donna Harvie, Rachel Bridge, Sheree Robinson, Chelsea Sweeney, Bev Schneider and Teresa Thornton from Toowoomba make the most of the networking opportunities at the conference.



Richard Coward from Ocean Life Education gives Allison Borland ECTA Committee member some ‘biting facts’ as he presents a prize for the delegates draw - a rare Grey Nurse shark tooth – an endangered species.

A group photo of the Bollywood experience which Fiona Ozana, Susy Kacanas, Toni Kartambis and Luanne Lobel all the way from Sydney found to be so much fun and a wonderful distraction and break from all the learning throughout the day!



The ECTA Conference Committee worked tirelessly over the last twelve months to plan a professional development opportunity which was enriching in current early childhood topics, informative and practical.

The conference provided a chance for professional networking across the state. Congratulations and once again thanks for a job well done.

Delegates came from afar:



Delegates from the Hervey Bay Regional Group reflect on a successful day with keynote speaker Maggie Dent at the wine and cheese event.



Morning tea time... delegates were treated to warm soup and sweet delights.

Delegates were able to attend a range of workshops at the conference.



Under construction: Building play as a tool for learning – was attended by Robyn Reeves... she participates with the practical activities under the careful eye of the presenter Sue Southey.

COMMENT:

I thought this was again relevant to my workplace, full of wonderful ideas that could be easily implemented. The presenter showed how she uses the strategies and resources in her centre with the children. Sharon Dent

Thank you to our sponsors:

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Seven secrets of motivating and engaging children – presented by Steve Francis.

COMMENT:

The best session ever. I realised that not only do I have a dream within the classroom but I also need to ensure I don't forget MY dreams while being there for all the children in the classroom. Steve Francis was so enthusiastic and motivating during his session it was a wonderful experience. Tania Salvati

Delegates get into the Sensory Processing and children's behaviour presentation by Jo Larcom and Robyn Sims.

COMMENTS:

Fantastic - many ideas and presenters worked well. Michelle Hallesy

Excellent - very practical and full of great information relevant for teaching in the early years. Fiona Guthrie



Karen Capper, Kathryn Barry and Paul Carrick discuss team and work dynamics with Steve Francis.

COMMENT:

Thank you for the great ideas and resources you shared with us to help strengthen and enhance the performance of the teams we are working with. Lisa Cooper

Melissa Gillard was very excited to win the MTA tent prize. Melissa believes, 'Children learn best when having fun with hands on opportunities.'

COMMENT:

At first I was in shock as I had not heard anyone say they were re-drawing the MTA tent prize and because I never usually win anything that big! Once I got over the shock I was excited about the possibilities to use the tent with my Prep children. Thank you to MTA for such a fabulous prize.



Conference presenters Steve Francis, Maggie Dent and Jeff Lince catch up with each other in the presenters lounge.

To conclude the day's events delegates gathered for the Wine and Cheese Prize draw.

Melissa Maddalena and Scott Young are all smiles as they hear delegates names get called out to win some of the great prizes that MTA, the conference platinum sponsors donated for the Wine and Cheese prize draw.



Delegates gather together for the QIEC Super sponsored wine and cheese prize draw event.



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Step Back in Time

Susan Forbes

In Year Three, students are provided with the opportunity to develop historical understandings through key concepts including continuity and change, cause and effect, perspectives, and empathy and significance. The students at St Margaret's Anglican Girls School have been investigating perspectives, continuity and change using the topic *Old School Days*. We focused on grandparent memories and compared classroom technology and experiences using 'then' and 'now' to help make comparisons. Holly, Ella, Kaitlyn, Ella and Mary asked their grandparents about what school was like for them. Can you spot the similarities to school today?

What games did you play at lunchtime?

If it rained at lunchtime, we sat on a wooden floor in the locker room and listened to chapters of Blinky Bill. On sunny days, we skipped with a long rope, played elastics and hopscotch or sat in the arbour and chatted. (Holly)

We did hopscotch, rounders and marbles. We also played skipping, hula hoops, quoits, Drop the Hanky and Simon Says. We liked to play Red Rover. (Ella)

We had Assembly first, then lined up and the teacher would let us in. (Kaitlyn)

What sort of bag did you use at school?

We used a little leather suitcase. (Kaitlyn)



Holly dressed up as an olden day student and read an old reader

We had a school case which I wore on my back. It had two straps. It was hard and had a lid that was lifted and placed back down again. It also had two buckles. (Ella)

What did you write with at school?

We used nib pens with an inkwell and foundation pens and slate boards in Year One. We used blotting paper for the nib pens. (Kate)

Nanna wrote on a slate board with a slate pencil and had a wet cloth to rub out mistakes. (Mary)

Up to Year Three we used exercise books and pencils. Then we had a foundation(sic) pen that we filled with ink. We got into big trouble if we spilled the ink on our wooden desks as it stained. (Holly)

What was your school routine?

I used to ride my push bike to school for two miles. After we got to school, we would sharpen our slate pencils on a stone and then salute the flag, have a parade and sing *God Save the Queen*. (Ella)

What were your desks like?

The desks were wooden and unpainted. They were long desks which could sit six children at each desk. As we got older, we had inkwells that fitted into a small hole in the desk. (Ella)

What did you get to eat at school?

Before school, we lined up and we had to drink little bottles of milk that had been sitting in the hot sun. We had Little Lunch and Big Lunch and could eat whatever our mothers packed us. We had tuckshop every Monday if we brought money. (Holly)

We got a quarter pint of milk out of glass bottles and it had thick cream on top. (Kaitlyn)



Writing with a slate pencil on a slate board

What was your teacher like?

Most were nuns and they were very kind but very strict. We had special lessons; one was called Etiquette what was about good manners and how to set a table for dinner etc. (Holly)

Mr John Hancock was our teacher and he was very strict and he had a cane. He only caned the boys because they misbehaved and were disobedient. The cane wasn't used very often and, when it was, it was recorded in a book. My Grampy said he once got the cane for something he didn't do. (Ella)

Gardening with children for fun and health – the essential gardening tool kit

Leonie Shanahan



Leonie is the author of *Eat Your Garden and Organic Gardening for Home and Schools*. She is also the presenter of the DVD *Edible School Gardens* and has been running the Edible School Garden program in schools since 2001. Leonie has a passion for health, especially for children through growing food.

People frequently ask me why I started the *Edible School Gardens* program. There are a couple of reasons that fundamentally evolve around ensuring good health and wellbeing for the younger generations. As a baby in a womb advances into its final stage of becoming a human, it has already developed toxic chemicals within its tiny body that are unable to escape.

To reduce the risk of future health problems for our children, it is essential to ensure that what they are consuming supports and nurtures their growing body, mind and brain.

Another significant motivation for establishing the *Edible School Gardens* program, was witnessing firsthand what students at my young daughter's school were eating. Their lunch boxes contained vibrant and appealing packaged food that was predominantly made in laboratories and manipulated to look and taste like food ... I was horrified.

Where was the fresh produce and real food necessary to support their growing bodies, minds, immunity and wellbeing? In that moment, it became my mission to go into schools and educate children about growing organic food and to let children experience food bursting with flavour and freshness. I had previously studied horticulture, permaculture and organics and was prepared to implement my knowledge into the program. That was over eleven years ago now and I since have

had the pleasure of implementing the *Edible School Gardens* program into over 20 schools and changing the eating habits of thousands of students. I have also organised *Permakids Workshops* for young children that involve hands-on, fun activities to instil, from the beginning, the necessity of having clean and healthy food.

I am extremely passionate about soils, not any soils, but soils bursting with life. My favourite soil is established in the 'no dig gardens', lots of layers of 'ingredients' to create a guaranteed suitable environment for worms and microbes.

Healthy soil = healthy food = healthy YOU.

Another great garden for young children is a 'tank' raised bed. This style ensures that small



feet and soil do not become one compacted companion and seedlings have a better chance of survival. Predominantly, it's about learning and experiencing the magic of growing healthy, nutritious food from seed, seedlings, plants and cuttings and watching how they grow and how long it takes – observing a bud blossom into a colourful flower, watching a flower turn into food, and eating food from our much-loved garden, food that is wholesome, healthy and fresh. Kids adore their garden. It's not a chore, it's a learning experience with fun attached to it.

The garden provides children a connection back to nature and health. The nourishing food feeds your heart, mind, body and spirit.

There are many different ways to engage children in the garden, such as the popular theme gardens; pizza, lolly, sensory, good bug gardens, edible flowers and even a natural First Aid garden.

Remember, when you first start growing from seeds, start with easy ones to guarantee success – such as radish, snow peas, sugar snap peas,

cherry tomatoes and nasturtiums. Children thrive from their natural connection with nature and exploration, so encourage them to make worm towers or have a worm farm in which they can place their edible scraps. Even these worms can become their pets!

Nothing is more rewarding than driving into a schoolyard and witnessing students eating the organic snow peas or scrumptious strawberries before school. Growing your own healthy food is so important. Growing food with children is crucial and provides them with the basic building blocks for a healthier and more fulfilled life and wellbeing. I encourage you to garden with children and look at a variety of ways to grow food, other than just a vegetable bed, to maximize the space available with, for example, pots. Before you know it, you will be ready to start your very own garden!

For more information contact:

e: Leonie@EdibleSchoolGardens.com.au

w: www.EdibleSchoolGardens.com.au

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Changing perspectives in early childhood education

Sylvia Murray



Sylvia Murray,
Director Wagner
Road Early
Childhood
Centre, Clayfield

The most significant change in early childhood for me ... I have worked in many areas and age groups of early childhood since 1994 and the most significant change has been the use of technology to report to families and store the information about children. Gone are the days where you take a photo and take the film to be developed, then sticky tape the photo to the child's observation a week later. Everything is more instant, even to the point where parents can access the information that is sent to them whilst their child is at the service and then give feedback to the teacher before the end of the day. This alone is challenging, to keep up to date with the change and also the training. Wagner Road has been very fortunate to be successful in accessing grants as they arise to enable us to work towards purchasing equipment. This allows us to move into this new era. As well, we have staff who are willing to embrace new techniques and skillsets.

In the future I would like to see ... that all educators of children in the early childhood industry have the opportunity to see the day where the remuneration and conditions are reflected in the level of training and responsibility that is placed upon them. If the industry wishes to have quality educators in the future, there is a need for this to be reflected in conditions and remuneration.

Greer Casey



Greer Casey,
Teacher at Wagner
Rd Kindergarten,
Clayfield

The most significant change in early childhood for me ... has been the recent, rapid increase in the use of new technologies. Our centre has taken a positive approach to this by firstly researching over a period of time what we felt would be of value to us. This has proven to be a new reporting system called 'kindy portal' whereby teachers email to parents observations of their children, plus what has been happening during the day. Initially, the thought of taking this on seemed extremely daunting. However, it has proven to be the most effective way of reporting children's learning that I have come across. The parents love it and they can answer the emails, thus leading to direct conversations between parents and teachers. Staff can also relate to each other via email in the journal section of this site.

The introduction of the new National Quality Standards has also been a major change. The implementation of these has been a significant ongoing learning process, at times quite daunting on top of our other responsibilities as teachers. However, we have worked through these as a team and with a very supportive committee and feel stronger for it. It has made us look in-depth at every part of our service.

In the future I would like to see ... As teachers I think we never stop learning, and it is necessary to always keep up with the present and to be open to change as we work in an environment that is continually evolving.

Nina Hutchison



Nina Hutchison, Additional Needs support person with C&K for nine years, and a full time staff member for the last two years.

The most significant change in early childhood education for me ... has been the introduction of a new curriculum format for Kindergartens. As a parent of a 20 year old who went through the C&K system 16 years ago, my observation had been one that was purely play-based with no extra pressure on children aged 3.5 yrs-5 yrs. What has evolved over this time is that Kindergarten children need to be able to become more prepared for their Prep environment much earlier than before. There is more emphasis on teaching them to write their own name and being able to paint in some kind of symbolic representation which is fine if the child is up to that. It is important to remember that (in most cases) this is the first time children are independent of their parents/carers. They have to learn to embrace new rules and processes which can be overwhelming for some.

In the future I would like to see ... a broader approach to sustainability practices among Kindergarten environments. It is vital we teach children about their world and how we can make a difference collaboratively. It is imperative that we don't lose sight of the need for children of this age group to experience an atmosphere of bringing things back to basics. Remember that for many, this is their first real moment of being totally

independent. When children transition into a formal school environment from the age of 4.5yrs, all of this and their innocence becomes more structured.

Wouldn't it be wonderful to go back in time and just be able to watch children play without having to document their every move.



Rebecca Trimble-Roles

Rebecca Trimble-Roles, Prep Teacher at Genesis Christian College Graduated twelve months ago.

The most significant change in early childhood education for me ... the use of ICTs in the classroom – iPads and IWB across all curriculum areas in an early childhood setting. The use of ICTs is becoming common place in the lives of early years students of today. The Australian Curriculum states that students need to develop ICT capability as they learn to effectively and appropriately access, create and communicate using ICTs to meet their learning needs.

Teachers are finding the need to equip themselves to effectively integrate a range of electronic devices like iPads and Interactive Whiteboards (IWB) as tools for learning in their classrooms.

In the future I would like to see ... teachers equipped to integrate literacy and numeracy learning effectively, whilst using a range of electronic devices. I truly believe 'the jobs of tomorrow are yet to be invented for the young children today'. As today's educators we

need to give young children the opportunity to become lifelong learners. Teachers, therefore, need to have the opportunity to engage and immerse themselves in the world of ICT, in order for the young children to reach their fullest potential.

Teenah Schneider



Teenah Schneider, has worked in early childhood care and education for more than 25 years and now runs her own Company, *Passionate Minds Pty Ltd*, committed to facilitating a

positive educational journey for every learner.

The most significant change in early childhood education for me ... is the move away from play-based learning.

The rhetoric about play being the way children make sense of the world around them is absolutely true.

During play, children embrace opportunities to engage in, self-care, community mobility, learning and social participation. Play facilitates the development and creation of cognitive structures. A child living with autism and sensory issues processes the world from a different perspective. Spitzer (2003) describes play for children with autism as

a set of directed actions connected by physical movements, materials, space, or purpose within a time period, in a way that is meaningful to the individual executing them.

In the future I would like to see ... more facilities and programs which support the value of play-based learning for children including children with autism.

Vital opportunities for children to practice social skills in ways that are meaningful to them as individuals and as members of a community; and opportunities for care and education professionals to develop skills which support the delivery of an authentic play-based curriculum.

Mathilda Element



Mathilda Element, has taught multi-age classes from Prep to Year Three for five years full-time. Currently, she provides curriculum and pedagogy support at Pine Community School on a part-time basis whilst on family leave,

mothering two gorgeous boys through their own early childhood experiences.

The most significant change in early childhood education for me ... there has been an ocean of change in the past eight years since I graduated – including the introduction of full-time Prep and now a move to a National Curriculum which, sadly I feel, doesn't support the developmental complexities of young children. We are seeing an increase in anxiety over academic standards in Prep, with a subsequent swing away from professionally-led, individualised experiences (such as those we see in fabulous, play-based classrooms) towards pre-packaged curriculum units that devalue the role of the professional teacher.

We are seeing children worried about 'failing' Prep, and the related self-esteem issues, including disengagement with learning, is a travesty that must be addressed.

In the future I would like to see ... a greater focus on the social and emotional wellbeing of primary school children, including recognition of their unique differences.

Teachers should be encouraged to plan for the individual needs, interests and passions of the children in their care, and the curriculum statements should support this, using the very best in research-driven practices.

We should return to valuing the planning cycle that begins with observing where children are at, planning accordingly, enacting high quality experiences and reflecting on what has occurred. This cycle supports depth of learning over the cluttered curriculum of too many statements, and allows individual teachers to manage their classroom to the best of their abilities, learning and growing together with their students.

We need to support our youngest school members to stay engaged with learning, by giving them the space to be excited, awed and inspired by the wonders of the world.

We need to think critically about any moves in education which take away from that central purpose – we need to put ‘love of learning’ front and centre on the agendas of our educational debates.



Beyond test scores and graded standards, we need our children to imagine, hope, dream, create, think, problem-solve, empathise and connect – with each other, with their teachers, and with their world.

Archana Sinh



Archana Sinh has been involved in teaching for over 20 years in primary and early childhood settings across India, PNG, Sydney and Brisbane. Until recently Archana

was providing a Kindergarten Program in a Long Day Care Centre.

The most significant change in early childhood education for me ... has been the change in which we can communicate as professionals largely supported by the EYLF PLP online forum. This has not only made networking and exchanging ideas easier but has bridged current changes in the early childhood sector for me. Having worked in a diverse range of centres, I have been faced with a range of documentation styles, with different States supporting different requirements and different centres drawing understandings from a vast range of conflicting ideologies.

I also believe that, for once, we have professional recognition at a national level and have a loosely collective identity in that manner.

So, if we feel that play, for example, is being pushed out or overly constructed, then at least we have a larger body to speak about it.

In the future I would like to see ... better working conditions in our work sector, streamlining the differences in understanding between policy and research to include practice.

How times have changed!

Sue Webster

Early childhood education has experienced massive transformations over the last 90 years. One area in particular that has changed is the learning environment.

These changes have occurred in the way children dress, sit in class, stand in the sun at parade, the equipment children play on and the way they are called to class – just to name a few.

Please take a moment to reflect on the following photographs and the change in our understanding of young children and thus our beliefs, attitudes and approaches to their education.



Left: The first two-teacher school and old school bell - 1930s Wells Hill State School. The school was established in what was then known as the Sandy Creek Area of Brisbane. First known as Weillers Hill, the school name was changed to Wells Hill circa 1950.



Above: Wells Hill State School class photo 1933



Left: 1970s school parade - Wells Hill State School



May Pole dance Wellers Hill State School



1957 Kindergarten children enjoying cups of tea at St Margaret's Anglican Girls School



St Margaret's Anglican Girls School Kindergarten class photo 1921



National Costume Day - Wellers Hill State School playground 1970s



Boys on the Wellers Hill State School play ground



1969 classroom at St Margaret's Anglican Girls School



St Margaret's Anglican Girls School 1928 - children playing outdoors

Child care alliance on the front foot with positive NQF messages

With the release of the first round of National Quality Framework (NQF) ratings, the Queensland Children's Services Alliance (QCSA) has prepared a communication plan to help ensure the positive story of the NQF is told.

The QCSA is an independent peak body representing education and care services and is a strong supporter of the NQF.

In 2012, media outlets ran stories quoting some politicians and service operators who criticised the implementation of the NQF and claimed it would lead to increased child care costs and reduced places.

As an independent and integrated alliance of organisations and agencies reflecting the diversity of children's services in Queensland, the QCSA has taken a strong lead in telling the positive side of the NQF story.

In Queensland, around 170 education and care services were rated in 2012, including QCSA members who reported positive experiences of their assessments.

The QCSA communication materials capture these positive experiences and far-reaching outcomes of the NQF and the assessment process. These materials will assist services and the public to understand the profound importance of the NQF for Australian children, families, educators and the broader community. Included in the QCSA Communications Plan are:

- case studies and media releases detailing positive experiences of the assessment process from across Queensland; and
- key messages on the NQF.

These materials are available at <http://www.workforce.org.au/latest-news/qcsacommsplan>

All child care services are encouraged to share these good news stories about the NQF. There is no breach of copyright if you use materials in their entirety or quote sections from them. If you have your own child care service newsletter, you are welcome to use or quote from the case

studies or media releases to help tell parents, carers and staff the good news story about the NQF. The QCSA hopes that some of this information will be helpful to services who may sometimes need to counter negative messages. Here is some of the positive story on the NQF that you and your service can help to tell:

Australian and overseas research consistently shows that children who participate in high quality child care enjoy and benefit from the experience and perform better in education and employment. They are less likely to drop out of school or make poor choices bringing them in contact with police, courts and health services. Child care today is not simply child-minding but an early learning platform for the rest of life. Investing in quality child care services pays direct benefits to your child and the nation.

The NQF raises the bar in child care services. Australia is moving towards a national school curriculum and early years learning is no less important.

Federal Government modelling shows the reforms will cost a few dollars a day per child which is mostly covered by rebates and assistance. There is a huge body of international research that shows every dollar invested in quality child care pays a dividend of \$7 to \$20 that doesn't have to be spent in welfare, jails and hospitals.

Here are quotes from positive reports QCSA members made about the NQF assessment process in 2012.

- Coordinator of Chinchilla and Districts Family Day Care Scheme, Mellanie Budden, says her NQF assessment went well. 'We support the NQF. It is a really positive thing for Family Day Care. It helps the educators to know they are working within the framework.'

- Karana Long Day Care Centre Director Trisha Dean says the NQF assessment affirmed that her service was doing well and pointed the way forward. 'While we were meeting all standards - our improvement plan has been updated to reflect areas of further development. We embrace new ways of doing things rather than getting stuck in the same old.'
- The Tiny Tartan Kindergarten at Springfield received a positive report. Head of College Tania Brewer said the assessment process was useful. 'It was exhaustive but extremely valuable,' said Tania. 'We are always looking at improving. In all seven of the quality areas we look for ways to improve. However, this process is not just looking at where you need to improve. It's an opportunity for a pat on the back where you are doing well.'
- Jane Bourne, CEO at The Gowrie, says: 'The Gowrie and staff welcome the NQF and the recognition by all governments of the importance of education in the early years.'
- Paul Amato, State Manager of Goodstart Early Learning, says the NQF is: '... an important step in raising the quality of early learning in Australia.' It is no surprise that so many child care operators are so positive about the NQF.

A 2011 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) report says children entering school with skills for life and learning have higher levels of social competence and academic achievement.

The report said almost one-quarter of Australian children were developmentally vulnerable and likely to have difficulty transitioning to school. The NQF directly addresses this by ensuring qualified educators — using quality educational programs — work with families to ensure children enter school with the skills for life and learning.

There's a big reward for getting the NQF right — happy, confident, capable children equipped for school and life. This year thousands of parents and carers around Queensland are choosing child care services for their children and in a couple of months, thanks to the NQF, they will have better information to help them choose the best service.

This is good news for children, families, and the nation. So let's continue to aim high and help tell the positive story about the importance of the NQF in 2013.

This article is written by the Queensland Children's Services Alliance. If you would like to contact the QCSA please email the Secretariat Christine Payne on cpayne@workforce.org.au



The Tiny Tartan Kindergarten is embracing the new National Quality Standards for child care services.

Preparing for a rating and assessment visit under the National Quality Framework

Bronwyn Thomas



Bronwyn has worked in the early childhood field for over 31 years. During her working life Bronwyn has undertaken various roles within a range of early childhood services as well as lecturing in the TAFE and University sectors. Bronwyn is currently an Early Childhood Officer in the Mt. Gravatt Regional Office of the Department of Education and Training. Bronwyn is passionate about young children and the provision of quality early childhood services.

The National Quality Framework (NQF) applies to most long day care, family day care, kindergarten, pre-prep and outside school hours care services in Australia. It aims to raise quality and drive continuous improvement in education and care services.

The new system addresses inconsistencies, gaps and overlaps in previous licensing and accreditation systems as well as providing clear expectations of quality as measured by common standards across the country. The NQF also provides mechanisms to support services on their quality improvement journey.

What does the rating and assessment process look like?

The rating and assessment process takes place over a period of approximately 20 weeks.

Authorised Officers from the Department of Education, Training and Employment assess and rate early childhood services in Queensland. They must pass rigorous national training and assessment before conducting assessments against the National Quality Standard (NQS) and related regulatory standards. This training was developed by the University of Melbourne and is standardised so that two people trained to use the NQS should see the same thing. This ensures that services receive the same unbiased assessment, regardless of their assessor.

Before the rating and assessment visit

Authorised officers recognise that each service is unique and that the elements, standards and

regulatory requirements will be met in different ways depending on the context of the service.

Before the assessment visit, the Authorised Officer will conduct a desktop review to inform the upcoming site visit. This includes reviewing your service's Quality Improvement Plan, compliance history and previous NCAC assessment history (if applicable). You will receive acknowledgement when your Authorised Officer has received your Quality Improvement Plan along with the date for the rating and assessment visit.

In working out a plan for the site visit, the authorised officer may contact you for further information about your service routines and the availability of educators for discussion. This will enable them to make the best use of time on the visit and allow them to observe and gather information to inform the assessment without impacting on the day-to-day operation of the service. Prior to the visit, the approved provider will need to advise the authorised officer of the key contact person who will be available during the visit. The service will also be advised about what to expect on the day of the visit.

The time allocated for the visit will be determined by the type and size of the service. This will be discussed with services when the visit date is advised.

During the rating and assessment visit

At the beginning of the visit the authorised officer will meet with the person(s) nominated

by the approved provider and introduce themselves. They will explain the assessment process, the plan for the visit and what happens at the completion of the visit. The authorised officer will also seek information in relation to any changes to the routine or staffing which varies from the information provided previously. The authorised officer will ask to undertake a brief tour of the service and to be introduced to all staff members. This enables the authorised officer to gain an overview of the service and its layout and to put staff members at ease.

Authorised officers will use the techniques of 'observe', 'discuss' and 'sight' to assess the service against the National Quality Standard and the National Regulations. As they gather evidence, Authorised Officers will write behavioural notes to inform their decision-making when allocating ratings. The *Guide to the National Quality Standard* provides valuable information for services about evidence that may be gathered for each of the standards.

The authorised officer will want to talk with the key contact person at designated times but it is not necessary for that person to accompany the authorised officer throughout the visit. The authorised officer will need to observe the day-to-day practice of the service and the presence of additional people could increase the level of stress for educators and children and may impede the authorised officer's ability to observe day-to-day practice.

The assessment visit is designed to be interactive and authorised officers may seek to clarify their observations with educators. This will only be done during normal routines if it doesn't disrupt practice. Otherwise, a specific time will be scheduled for discussion. This interaction provides approved providers and educators with the opportunity to demonstrate quality practice in their service and provides the information required for authorised officers to make informed decisions.

Throughout the visit, the authorised officer will be reviewing the observations and information sighted to determine that they have sufficient evidence on which to make a valid assessment. At the conclusion of the visit, the authorised officer will discuss any additional evidence required or any minor adjustments which your service can make prior to the assessment report

being finalised. The authorised officer is unable to provide an indication of your rating at this time as all observations and evidence gathered need to be reviewed to inform the rating process.

After the assessment and rating process

The authorised officer will consider all evidence gathered in relation to the service and will rate each standard, and each of the seven quality areas and then provide an overall rating for the service. Services will receive a draft assessment report and proposed ratings three weeks after the visit is completed. Services generally have ten working days to provide feedback on the report. Feedback on the report is considered by the Regulatory Authority and then the final report, including the finalised ratings, will be forwarded to the approved provider.

The final report and feedback given will provide valuable information to services to be used as a basis for their ongoing process of quality improvement. The focus under this new system should be to critically reflect on how our work will provide quality outcomes for Australian children.

It is important to remember that the NQS sets a new and higher national benchmark, and it is recognised that some services may need additional time to meet the NQS. However, there is a broad array of resources available to assist services, and Early Childhood Officers in the regional offices of the Department of Education, Training and Employment have a role in helping services to improve their practice over time.

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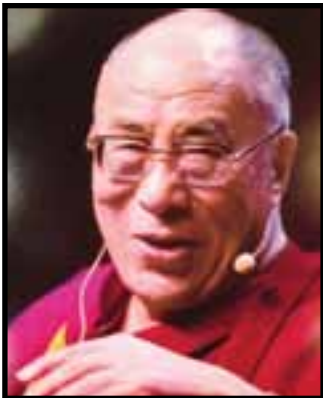
Young Minds Conference

Allison Borland



Allison Borland is an early childhood teacher, teacher trainer and mentor. She provides support and training in the integration of early childhood learning – Information, Communication and Technology in Education (ICT). Allison has worked, experienced and been part of the whole education process, firstly as a parent herself; then as a childcare teacher; primary classroom teacher and eLearning mentor.

She has a passion for technology integration and supporting how children learn and engage through a blended approach in 21st century.



I had the pleasure of representing ECTA at the *Young Minds* conference last month. The conference focus was *How Do We Grow a Good Person?* His Holiness the Dalai

Lama was present for Day One and in an opening interview with Simon Longstaff, addressed over 1700 people. It was a unique opportunity to witness. The interview was unplanned with questions and discussion changing the course of the conversation many times. Key messages centred on a concern for young people – ‘the people of the future’.

To capture this topic, over 100 young students, from five years to early twenties, joined the Dalai Lama on stage. He was so entertaining and engaged with the youths. It was a delight to see.

Changing mindsets

The pre-conference on the Sunday covered how mindsets are important for learning.

Professor Carol Dweck (USA), described two types of mindset – Fixed Mindset and Growth Mindset.

In a Fixed Mindset, people believe their basic qualities, like talent or intellect, are fixed traits.

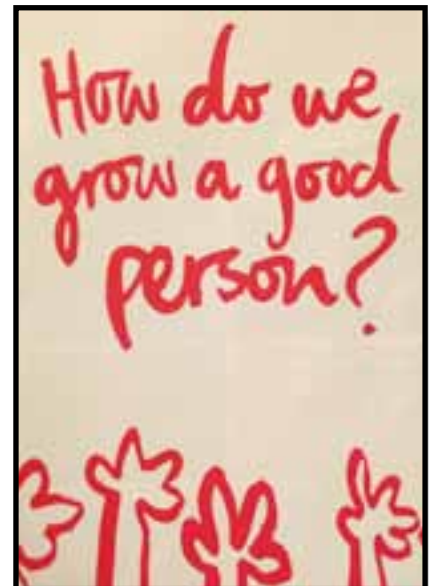
They spend more time on documenting their talent instead of developing themselves. They believe if they have the talent and ability, they are able to achieve without any effort or hard work!

In a Growth Mindset, you have to work for results to succeed. Things don't come easily. These people work on developing the skills to support their learning.

The point Professor Dweck makes is that with a growth mindset you have far greater ability to achieve great success through the effort you put in.

People are different in temperament, interests and aptitudes, but Professor Dweck firmly believes that from the research conducted, everyone can change and grow when it comes to learning new skills.

Her discussion on the role of praise in shaping mindsets, demonstrated how praise for intelligence can be harmful.



Parents should take away the fact that they are not giving their children a gift when they tell them how brilliant and talented they are, Dweck says. 'They are making them believe they are valued only for being intelligent, and it makes them not want to learn.'

For more information go to <http://abcnews.go.com/GMA/AmericanFamily/story?id=2877896&page=1#.Uc-EqpyqTcg>

Key points

- Teaching a growth mindset leads to motivation and productivity in the worlds of business, education and sports. This should be investigated more closely to help teachers understand the mindsets of children.
- Recognize the mindset that you and those around you hold. Understand fixed versus growth mindset approaches and learn to use language and feedback in a way that encourages a growth mindset in children. More information can be found at www.mindset.com
- As a teacher or parent, look carefully at the messages you use in responding to children and identify how best to support their learning.

Changing mindsets in young children

Professor Toni Noble explored the practical applications of Professor Dweck's concept of a growth mindset and outlined the core neuroscientific research that underpins it. Her website *BounceBack* has several articles that support resilience, thinking and study skills. Well worth a read!

http://www.bounceback.com.au/sites/default/files/Teaching%20Resilience%2C%20helping%20kids%20bounce%20back_0.pdf

Key points

- Children need support in facing personal courage, and in understanding that fear is relative.

- As teachers and parents we can give children the courage to achieve.
- Having high expectations of all children will support them to succeed.
- A success mindset involves: knowing strengths and expectations; using self knowledge to set realistic goals; and understanding that challenging goals require planning and effort to implement.
- A positive mindset, will enable children to face the challenges in their life.

These two sessions complemented each other, and provided great insight into adding these concepts into the classroom. I had the pleasure of meeting Toni Noble during the book-signing and morning tea break. She is a very passionate advocate on children in education.

Conference highlights

Over 40 leading thinkers shared their knowledge with educators, psychologists, healthcare, social and youth workers and parents. The speakers told incredible stories of courage, mental health battles and inspiring information that supported the conference topic *How Do We Grow a Good Person?*

Marc Prensky: *Brain gain: technology and the quest for digital wisdom*

Marc Prensky is a well-known author and educator in digital technologies. He has written several books but, in particular, *Teaching Digital Natives: Partnering for Real Learning* and most recently *Brain Gain: Technology and the Quest for Digital Wisdom*.



Allison Borland with Professor Toni Noble and Marc Prensky

In his short presentation, Marc discussed how technology is in the air that children breathe today! As young children only know this world it is up to us as teachers and parents to equip them for the future. He also stated that we underestimate young people and their ability to achieve, suggesting we aren't listening to them or engaging with them effectively in the delivery of technology.

I was fortunate enough to record an interview with Marc. To see the interview go to www.technologyineducation.com.au. He provides some great information and ideas about digital wisdom and technology integration.

'What our children need is a device and connection, that's it!, to enable them to teach each other, learn from each other and include open lines of communication with the teacher and parents.'

To see more information regarding Marc's new book visit <http://www.marcprensky.com/braingain/>. Further fun with games he has developed for K-12 area at <http://www.spreegames.com/>. Well worth viewing, for some great ideas to incorporate in the classroom.

Re-imagining childhood

Professor Carla Rinaldi (Reggio Children, Italy and the University of Modena) and Professor Deborah Harcourt of Goodstart Early Learning ran this workshop. Questions highlighted in this session were – 'How do we raise and educate our children from birth?', 'Where we are succeeding?' and 'Where we can do better?'

Carla asked the group to think about how we can help children to find the meaning of what they experience for themselves. She explained that creativity was within each of us from birth. Children are questioning the 'Why?' even when they cannot speak. The search for life is born within the child.

She showed the example of Laura and provided some beautiful images to describe learning and creativity.

The Story of Laura is a well-known diary that details a young child's growth and milestones during her time in an infant-toddler program in Reggio Emilia. Just amazing photos and available online <http://www.pademelonpress.com.au/reggio-emilia-related-books/diary-of-laura-the.html>

Carla shared the meaning of being 'competent' and how to look at all children as competent. Parents, schools and the community need to work together to advocate for all young children in their care. We need to start listening to children, making their learning visible and supporting the potentiality in every child. We, as educators, need to allow children to be creative, competent and thus, they will discover their own joy of learning. Further reading is available <http://childhoodeducationtips.com/reggio-emilia-schools-education-societyhere> and here <http://technologyineducation.com.au/reggio-emilia-schools/>

Summary

After four eventful days of extremely fulfilling sessions and workshops, the Young Minds Conference was worth every minute of professional development. As an endorsing body to the conference ECTA, joined a group of 28 other companies, academic partners and media sponsors to support this event for the future of young children. For further information go to www.youngminds.org.au and look at upcoming events planned for this year and the next.



Really surviving teaching: real resilience and passion

Maggie Dent



Maggie is an author, educator, and parenting and resilience specialist, with a particular interest in the early years and adolescence. Maggie is a passionate advocate for the healthy, commonsense raising of children in order to strengthen families and communities. She has a broad perspective and range of experience that shapes her work, a slightly irreverent sense of humour and a depth of knowledge based on modern research and ancient wisdom that she shares passionately in a commonsense way.

In humanistic psychology resilience refers to ‘an individual’s ability to thrive and fulfil potential despite or perhaps because of stressors or risk factors’.

— James Neill (2006)

More than ever before the teaching profession is experiencing complex change. Those in the early years are in the midst of the Early Years Learning Framework/National Quality Framework (EYLF/NQF) changes to ensure every child has the best possible start in life. Then there are the massive social and technological changes that are transforming the landscape of childhood and the very different parenting approaches that today’s children experience. Today’s children are more challenging and full of variety than previous generations.

The dynamics of processing complex and progressive change are very real. All change challenges our comfort zones.

It causes anxiety and fear. Rarely does a change in circumstances or experiences last very long. However, multiple changes multiply the effects of a single transitory event. The healthy resolution to change involves a re-working of beliefs, values and perceptions of the world and can take people many

months, sometimes years, to fully integrate. Often the sense of loss brings irrational grief and emotional instability. This can come from new curriculum, new forms of reporting or assessments, new leadership, new schools, different environments and then there are always new students.

Teachers are currently in a prolonged period of progressive change, which means that they cannot complete any level of change, before being swamped by another. This is a major cause of concern for staff health and wellbeing in the Western world.

The capacity to conquer the massive uncertainty and continual pressure to change, and to still enjoy this amazing profession, is what resilience is all about.

In my 2008 book, *Real Kids in an Unreal World*, I wrote of resilience:

Resilience refers to one’s ability to successfully manage one’s life and to successfully adapt to change and stressful events in healthy and constructive ways ... it is our survivability and ‘bounce-back-ability’ to the bumps and bruises of life.

Essentially, resilience is a balancing act between the stressors in your life, and the protective factors that counteract those stressors. This balancing act is complicated for teachers who have families, serious hobbies and sports, or who suffer any long-term illness.

The very nature of education, and especially schooling, is that it is organic and it ebbs and flows every day. Events happen in the communities outside schools that impact deeply at the grassroots of our relationships within the school. Human differences, dramas and crises occur not just daily, but sometimes minute-by-minute. No wonder teachers are dealing with stressful issues that they have no hope of being able to control. Knowing that the unexpected is often the normal will help you master the dance of being a teacher. Sometimes you will be in step with your colleagues, but not your students, and at other times it will be the parents' toes you may be stepping on – unintentionally of course.

So what helps build your resilience muscles and your coping skills so you can conquer this dance?

Step1: Develop positive friendships and relationships within your work environment.

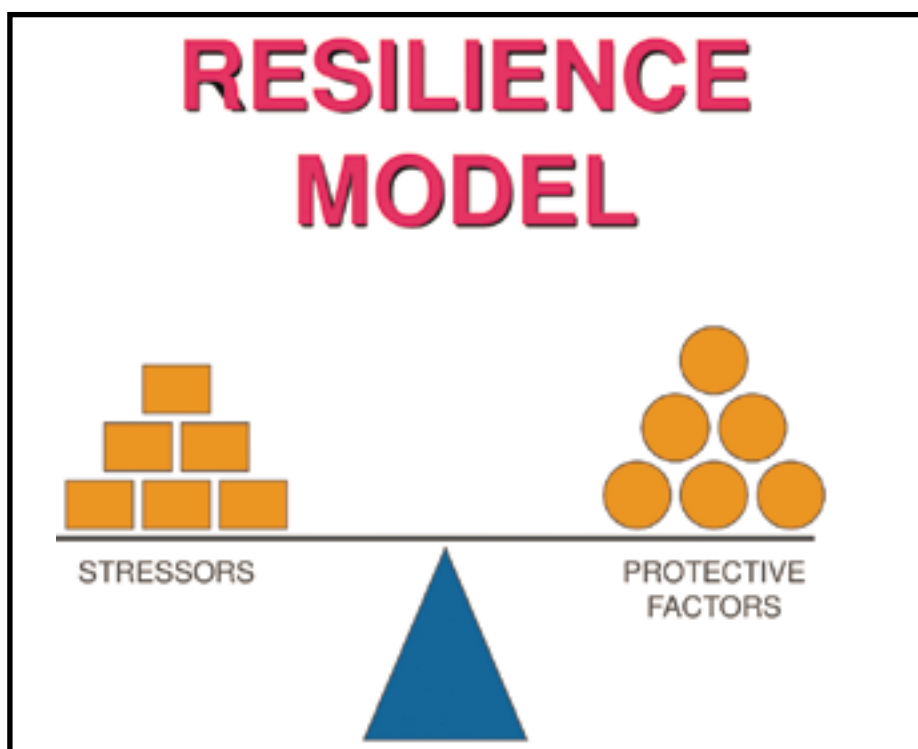
We all need allies in life and reciprocal life-affirming relationships in our work environments are enormously valuable in lifting our coping skills. This is really important in an environment of change, which makes everyone feel 'uneasy' or stressed. The work climate or culture is another factor that can help or hinder individual resilience.

Step 2: Humans can manage stressful times. However, research has shown that there is a 'tipping point' when things fall apart. This is called burnout. Many people ignore their warning signs and this is when burnout can suddenly knock you flat. Keep an eye on yourself for the warning signs that your body gives you when you are skating on thin ice. There are many signs that we sometimes ignore that show we are simply too stressed and tired for our own health and wellbeing. A few signs include:

- poor sleep patterns
- overeating or not eating
- short-temperedness and impatience
- memory loss and forgetfulness.

Identify what your three main warning signs are.

This is just a short list but when you notice your warning signs you need to then TAKE ACTION. This means you need to accept responsibility to take some steps to re-fill your cup, to take action to nurture yourself. The world will not go into a holding pattern if you step back to do this – it may only take a weekend in bed, a few small changes to your busy life and before you know it, you will bounce back. This can feel almost impossible for



Source: Dent, M (2008) *Real Kids in an Unreal World*, Pennington Publications: Murwillumbah.

many working with children in the early years because there are no relief staff available. Family day carers know how difficult this is for sure but it is critical.

Step 3: When you notice that your warning signs are present, it is time to take action. Resolving conflict and taking time to professionally reflect on the biggest stressors that are happening in your working world, and then taking some action, is the best way to avoid burnout. The second part is to re-fill your own cup – check out the list below and take some more action. This is improving the protective factors in your life that reduce the cortisol in the brain and to trigger ‘feel good endorphins’. Some examples are:

- spend time with a beloved pet
- get a massage or other form of professional nurturing
- catch up on sleep
- play favourite music
- spend weekend resting
- meditate.

Step 4: Physical care – Ensure you are eating well, and avoiding too much over-indulgence of any kind – eating well means as fresh as possible, rather than as much as possible! The body needs good fuel to keep energy levels up. Exercise does help reduce stress and it makes your brain work better (Medina, 2009). It also improves your moods.

Step 5: Build more strategies to manage stress. Learning calming techniques that soothe the vagus nerve in the brain is important and can be done with the children you teach. Other things that can help:

- maintain sense of humour
- positive reflective practice
- develop healthy detachment
- believe in the significance of teaching as a privilege not a chore.

Step 6: Ensure you have healthy boundaries.

Avoid allowing work to intrude too much at home and give yourself permission to have free nights during the week when work stays at work. This also means managing the ‘big change’ in small chunks. Many staff feel overwhelmed with too much that needs to be done. Taking the process one step at a time helps reduce the angst and stress levels.

Resilience means taking responsibility for one's own mental, emotional and physical wellbeing while investing enormous energy in delivering great education and care to today's interesting children.

Without a deep passion and commitment, and a healthy pattern of vigilance, even the best teachers can struggle to get out of bed some days.

Top five resilience tips

My final top tips for conquering the journey of being an educator long-term are:

- *Always keep some slack – avoid stretching yourself too thin*
- *Share the journey – never walk alone*
- *Fill your own cup – enjoy your life*
- *Lighten up – laughter lifts the spirit*
- *Keep a positive vision for a better way of being by laughing, loving and living well.*

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Reflection and transformational change

Marilyn Casley and Jennifer Cartmel



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Critical reflection features in the Australian Frameworks for Early Learning (*Being Belonging and Becoming*) and for School Age Care (*My Time Our Place*) as a guiding principle and practice in children's services. It is an important skill that educators require to effectively complete their role and associated responsibilities and respond to the National Quality Standard.

Reflection includes the ability to think backwards and forwards. It is an important strategy to help transform daily practices through 'thinking otherwise'. If educators are to be effective in supporting children's learning, development and wellbeing they need to be skilled at critical reflection both individually or as part of a staff team.

It is important to practice reflection as an individual – thinking to yourself about the way in which you do things and why within your workplace. It is also important to be reflective when you engage in conversations with other colleagues in your workplace and professional community (Casley & Cartmel, 2009). If critical reflection is undertaken on a regular basis it has the potential to strengthen and build self-confidence and the confidence of staff teams in children's services. This article will discuss the

transformational change that is possible through critical reflection.

Why change?

Transformational change is important in addressing complex challenges, solving complex problems and realising new opportunities. These circumstances characterise the work of educators in children's services. A cycle of reflection and action needs to take place for a group of educators to create knowledge and act together out of their individual and common experiences. For transformational change to occur, shared learning spaces are required to support individuals in sharing what each other knows. Together they can act as a 'whole' to co-create new opportunities and innovative ideas that address their most complex challenges (Scharmer 2009). Listening is the basis for this process, listening to oneself, to others and to what emerges from the group.

Educators are keen to ensure they demonstrate quality practices. A group of emerging and experienced educators joined together for some conversations about their practice. One participant said:

A variety of practitioners have come into the sector. They've come from a variety of backgrounds, a variety of pedagogical knowledge and understanding ... so it is important to have community scholarship because there's a lot of fragmentation so if we can bring that together in some way ... we are all working for the same thing and we all want to improve the scholarship of the field and improve practice in the field.

This educator was stating how important it was to share their tacit knowledge with each other in order to expand their knowledge and understandings. However, relying on their tacit knowledge alone, will not make them think about things differently. They need to share their ideas about what they have researched and read. Through critical reflection they can link existing ideas and understandings with new knowledge in a very supportive way.

A model for reflection

The Circles of Change Model of Reflection (Cartmel, Macfarlane & Casley, 2012; Macfarlane & Cartmel, 2012) is a four-step action-learning model which is fundamental to the process of critical reflection:

Step 1: Deconstruct or unpack – to describe what is happening;

Step 2: Confront – to approach personal, social and community issues head on by examining difficult, previously thought of as untouchable, topics;

Step 3: Theorise – to link professional knowledge to practice in the setting;

Step 4: Think otherwise (Foucault, 1984) – to think differently about what is presently happening and come up with other ways, or better ways of practicing.

Using this model of reflection can lead to understandings and actions that can change and improve practices to achieve a higher quality of education and care in children's services.

The Circles of Change model, when combined with the critical elements of self-awareness, building relationships and knowledge, has been very conducive in providing the space, time and context for critical reflection.

Self-awareness: it is important for educators to be conscious of why they do what they do. Educators should be aware of how their own beliefs and values influence their actions and practices in light of their understanding of theory and research.

Building relationships: reflective practice is more effective when it involves contact with others rather than doing it alone. By listening and talking to each other, educators will find the common ground and partnerships required to provide the best environments in which children can grow and develop.

Building knowledge: educators need to build their knowledge. They should be informed by contemporary theory, research and practice about children, children's services and the social and political context in which they operate.

Implementing this process will enable educators to examine possibilities, unconstrained by their own beliefs and value systems, and taken-for-granted understandings and ideas.

Critical reflection is an important high-level skill essential for educators who are striving for high quality practices in their workplaces.

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Nature deficit disorder

Narinda Sandry



Narinda has been an Early Years ambassador for 30 years. Her teaching experience has been in a variety of contexts including State Preschools, C & K centres, Prep and Primary settings. She has also taught for three years at Griffith University in the Bachelor of Education, Master of teaching and Graduate Diploma of Early Childhood courses. In recent years Narinda has been an Early Years writer on the C2C Science team—an Education Qld project developing support materials for the implementation of the Australian Curriculum. Narinda's passions are teaching exciting and accurate science and designing and developing high quality

curriculum materials. Narinda is also a keen science photographer and advocate for the natural environment.

I like to play indoors better 'cause that's where all the electrical outlets are.' (Louv, R., 2010)

Driving home past a housing development site in my area I noticed a new sign. 'Open spaces for healthy minds'. As an Early Years teacher, the sign struck a chord with me. Unbelievably, this marketing slogan was selling something that, in this vast country of ours, one would hope was free and readily available for all children. Sadly, and almost without us realizing, the opportunity for children to play in an open space is becoming scary, messy, unattractive and less likely. The result is being described as a new disorder ... nature deficit disorder (Louv, R., 2010).

Nature deficit disorder is about much more than just having time and places to play outside. It's about the type of places where this precious outdoor time is taking place.

The recognition that children are spending large amounts of time in digital and scheduled activities is quietly being shadowed by a much more subtle change—a decreasing amount of time in truly natural settings.

Depending on where you live, back yards are becoming smaller and more manicured. Every 'dirty and scary' insect seen is being eliminated usually with accompanying curses of fear and disgust. Families are time-poor, tired and over-stimulated so visits to truly natural settings are being replaced by visits to theme parks, the movies, shops or staying indoors where an enormous array of digital technologies allow us to pretend to have a farm, play a sport, or be a warrior in the wilds. Child care centres are replacing every centimetre of dirt and lawn with very attractive, undoubtedly safer artificial grass. Picked up from care, there's usually little time to go outside even if there was an outside. When entering school, parts of the school grounds that are natural or not mown are now out of bounds for fear of injury. People are suing when the footpaths make them fall and the sun burns them. We have indemnity forms for outdoor activities that often scare schools and organisations into non-involvement. Just for planting some seeds in a pot to watch them grow, there is a detailed form and many teachers feel it necessary to wrap students in gloves, masks, long sleeves and safety goggles. Not only does this instil a fear of nature into a child's mind (what is in that soil???) but gardening couldn't get much more uncomfortable than that. And do children get to feel the different types of soil, dig and squish it in their bare hands, hold the worm they find and feel it wriggle, caress the smooth bean seeds, smell the worm tea fertilizer or watch the

bee pollinating a flower with awe rather than absolute fear? They are disconnected from the real experience and the cotton wool cocoon gets thicker.



So why do children need to experience the natural world?

Australian researchers have reported

a relationship between lack of time spent outdoors and myopia (near-sightedness) among twelve-year-olds; and have revealed that the more vegetation around a school, the more highly children rate that environment as restorative. (Louv, R., 2010)

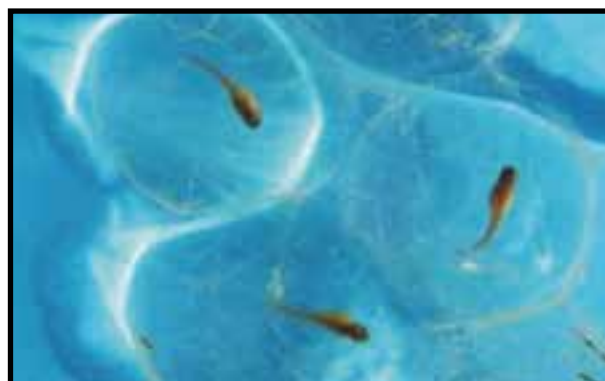
The issues of childhood obesity, depression and bullying are largely a direct outcome of our modern sedentary, digitally-focused, time-controlled lives. Many of these obviously complex issues are of course related to a person's inner contentment. Townsend explains that 'we gain life by looking at life' and 'if we see living things we don't feel as if we're living in a vacuum' (Townsend, M in Louv, R., 2010).

Little wonder that something as simple as the community garden concept is

proving to be a highly effective strategy in public high-rise housing estates, and that these gardens do not only promote physical activity and good nutrition principles but create a great sense of belonging, friendship and generosity amongst the gardeners and a sense of community. (Louv, R., 2010)

It is a well known fact that young children need to explore the world in a hands-on way.

The natural world is no different. They can't read about these things to 'experience' them nor can they know what it is like just by vicariously watching someone on television. Imagine what it would be like if you had never actually climbed a tree, played in mud, or picked cobbles pegs out of your socks. Could you ever really know what it was like if you hadn't experienced it firsthand? There are so many toys available these days and most of those toys do all the thinking and pretending



for kids. Are they losing the ability to invent their own games? When you play with the toys of nature, the game is yours to make. Sticks, mud, bugs, cubbies made from bushes, stones, rough surfaces, real smells, flowers, leaves, prickly things — enliven children's senses. Of course these things can pose dangers, but so can the digital world. Understanding and being aware of the dangers is in my mind a small challenge compared to the loss of these experiences.



A growing body of supporters believe that connection to the natural world also has broader social implications. Many humans have forgotten that our existence depends on the natural world. We have become so used to controlling everything and yet nature is the major inspiration for our art, our engineering and many of our sciences. To spend time in the natural world is regenerating. It provides for our food and the cleansing of our planet. If people do not spend time in truly natural settings they will become more and more desensitized until they will forget and no longer understand what it is they are missing and why it needs to be saved.

As with many things that are essential for children's learning and development, it is incumbent on teachers and educational researchers to be the flag-bearers. However, if you consider the top-down pressures of standardized literacy and numeracy testing, the increased focus on litigation and the growing expectations for teachers to teach just about everything (including manners), then the challenge of preventing nature-deficit disorder is pretty low on the priority list. Coupled with this is the likelihood that, as time goes by, the young people entering teacher training organisations will have a decreasing appreciation of the natural world since they themselves are victims of being cocooned. But if teachers today don't provide hands-on experiences with the natural world, which other group of people will have the opportunity to do so? Some parents may pass their environmental awareness onto their children but, as I have suggested above, parents now and of the future are themselves products of cocooning and may well be struggling to meet the demands of modern day parenting as it is. Environmental scientists battle to have their voices heard. Flag-bearers like David Attenborough and the late Steve Irwin have done much to bring the wonders of nature into our homes, but you still have to love nature to value their efforts.

Once you value the natural world, it is not difficult to gain a little understanding about how to deliver the biological sciences curriculum through hands-on rather than vicarious means.

The most important things are knowing where and what to look for and overcoming any personal anxieties that you may inadvertently pass on to students.

Buoyed by children's wonderful curiosity and enthusiasm, you will not only be enriching the lives of your students, but future generations as well. Indeed, you may be saving our planet.

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Seven Secrets to motivating and engaging students

Steve Francis



Steve understands the challenges and demands of working in education. Steve led a number of Queensland schools from a one-teacher school through to a large metropolitan school and an international school in Hong Kong. Steve works with over 100 education groups each year and is passionate about work-life satisfaction, keeping things simple and supporting those who work in education to reach their potential. Steve has written four books and is the creator of the Happy School program, designed to boost staff morale and reduce teacher stress, and the Gr8 People range of educational resources. Over 500 schools in all Australian states

subscribe to receive Steve's weekly articles.

Educators in the early years are absolute gurus at motivating and engaging their students, whether they realise it or not! I'd love to be able to bottle up those qualities and dispense them to some colleagues who teach in secondary schools. Perhaps that love of learning that is so evident in a four year-old could be revived in some fourteen year-olds!

In this article I'd like to remind, or make early educators cognisant, of the strategies that they do so well, but may take for granted. I am confident that I am 'preaching to the converted'. Many of you apply these strategies without even thinking. Recognising and naming the great strategies that are working, are the first steps in refining, embedding and then sharing these awesome traits.

1. They don't care how much you know until they know how much you care

Whilst I am certain that you have heard this saying before, I am also certain that it is true. Learning environments are about relationships. The better we can connect with our students, the better they will be able to learn. Making a connection by showing you care is vital!

Great early childhood educators are masters at this. They relate well to children, take time to

listen, show a genuine interest in each child and build rapport through caring.

How well do you know each of your students? Do you know their favourite toys, their siblings, their fears? Their likes and dislikes?

Some students are easier to get to know than others. We tend to get to know the confident, outgoing and boisterous ones quickly.

Are there other children who 'fly under your radar'? The quieter students take longer to get to know and are probably even more important to connect with.

Recently I reflected on the level of trust placed in us by parents. Most parents, when asked about what is most important to them, will say their children! For most parents, their children are more important than their house, their car and often, their partner. They are therefore demonstrating a massive trust in us, to not only look after the welfare of their children, but to nurture their learning and development. What a massive privilege and responsibility!

It is therefore vital that we not only make a connection with our students and show that we care, we must also reassure parents that the trust they have placed in us is justified and secure.

Making a connection with both the parents and the students at the beginning of the year

is essential and a skill that many early educators have absolutely mastered.

The vast majority of four-year-olds LOVE their teacher and treat the teacher's word as gospel (*'No Mum, that's not how Mrs Jones says we have to do it!'* can be confronting for some parents).

Students who feel their teacher knows and cares about them are predisposed to engaging in their learning.

2. Your attitude is contagious

Your energy level, enthusiasm and love for your work are contagious. Children quickly 'read' your demeanour. If you love learning, are passionate about teaching and full of life, your students will be too.

Teaching is inherently demanding but it is also very rewarding. Whilst there might be aspects of our work that frustrate us, our work is important. It makes a difference and can be very satisfying, especially when we reflect on the huge changes that we have seen as children learn and grow.

The bottom line is that teachers are actors. Whilst no one can be 100% positive and enthusiastic all of the time, it should never be an option for us to appear anything less than enthusiastic about teaching. The work we do is far too important. If you are 'just going through the motions', so will they.

It is important that you at least 'appear' to be enthusiastic. One of the most important decisions we make every day is our attitude. Attitudes are contagious. Is your attitude worth catching?

Are you still excited by helping students discover the world or are you ticking off objectives in a curriculum document? Do you love reading to children? Do you still notice the twinkle in their eyes as the 'penny drops' and they understand?

If your passion has dwindled they'll know. To rekindle that passion, change the self-talk that is going on inside your head and choose a positive attitude.

Research says it takes three weeks to change a habit. For the next three weeks, focus on being

positive, upbeat and enthusiastic. Fake it until you make it!

Your work IS important and DOES make a difference!

3. It's NOT about YOU, it's about them!

The most important indicator of an effective learning environment is what the students are doing, NOT what the teacher is doing. What the teacher does is important, and ultimately drives student engagement, but it is what the students are doing that REALLY matters. You can have great knowledge and expertise AND be a great presenter, but if you don't connect with students and they don't learn you're NOT a great teacher.

Student engagement is the precursor to student learning, the ultimate gauge of teacher effectiveness. Whenever students are not engaging in the learning experience, it is important that teachers consider what they can do to increase student engagement. Rather than looking 'out the window' and thinking 'what's wrong with them?', great teachers 'look in a mirror' and think 'what do I need to do differently?', to engage them.

Great teachers maximise student engagement through a process of reflection and continuous improvement. They focus on what the students ARE doing and adjust what they themselves are doing.

4. Start from where they are!

Children have an innate love of learning but can become bored easily and switch off if they aren't challenged. The best way to challenge students is to build from what they can already do and challenge them with the next step.

Programs and plans provide the guidance of what we need to teach students. They provide us with the 'destination'. However, where we start from will determine how engaged the students are. The students will come from many different starting points. Start from where THEY are!

5. High expectations become a self-fulfilling prophecy

Your expectations can dramatically affect the achievement of your students. Really believing

that your students CAN and WILL achieve makes a difference. Teachers can create better student results just by believing in them.

If a teacher is told that her students are bright, the teacher will be more supportive, teach more difficult material, allow more time to answer questions and provide more thoughtful and useful feedback to the students. In turn, the students receiving this attention will perform to this level. They actually score higher on educational tests, even if they are not 'bright', simply because the teacher believes in them.

This is even more significant with low expectations. If a teacher believes his students need additional support, he will be much less articulate, less likely to try to understand the students' point of view and lower their expectations about the quality of their work and how much they can achieve. Students in this environment will meet the lower expectations.

This uniquely human phenomenon is the Pygmalion Effect. The persistently held belief in another person becomes a reality. It is a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Once a belief is set in motion and a student is labeled a 'troublemaker,' 'lively' or 'non-academic', the chances are increased that your treatment of this student will, in effect, act out the self-fulfilling prophecy.

The converse is also true. By labeling a student as 'cooperative,' 'bright,' or a 'self-starter' you increase the chances that your treatment of him will convey these expectations and, in turn, contribute to the student living up to this expectation.

6. Maximise their time in the learning zone

The ideal environment for learning is when the child is engaged in tasks that are sufficiently challenging to be a little difficult, but not too challenging that they are insurmountable. It's a little like Goldilocks and the three beds – one was too soft, one was too hard but one was just right.

The Russian psychologist L.S. Vygotsky developed the concept of the zone of proximal development. Explained simply, this is the

range of performance within which a child can function if they have support.

Easy tasks that a child can perform independently, build their confidence and familiarity, so that they can become 'automated' but are not sufficiently challenged that they stretch the child. Tasks that are too difficult for the child without support are likely to lead to frustration and lowered self-esteem. The Learning Zone, or in Vygotsky terminology 'zone of proximal development' is the zone where true learning takes place. I believe that when true learning takes place, the student feels slightly uncomfortable. Their status quo is challenged as they move to a higher level of understanding and skill.

Maximising the amount of time students spend in the Learning Zone, undertaking activities that challenge them but don't frustrate them, is one of the keys to optimizing their learning. This is one of the keys to engaging and motivating students. The Learning Zone will be different for different students so it is imperative that we cater for individual differences.

One of the key factors that impact on student engagement is their attention span. As a beginning primary teacher, a mentor encouraged me to think of a child's attention span as one minute for each year of age (e.g. a five-year-old should be able to focus for five minutes and a ten-year-old for ten). Whilst this might be an urban myth, it challenged me to change the focus of an activity often and have children moving around the learning environment (e.g. ten minutes on the carpet for a story, then return to their desks for an activity for ten minutes and then rotating round an activity centre).

7. Make it meaningful (and wherever possible FUN!)

Students are more likely to engage in activities that are meaningful to them. Early educators are brilliant at making the learning environment relevant and interesting to the learner. Role-play, creating opportunities to explore the real world and being immersed in great stories through literature are just some of the strategies that early childhood educators use.

Ga Dhama-li -Ga winanga-y dhama-li -Dhi -Ga nginaayngu Gii
(To touch, to feel learning, from in your heart)

Indigenous culture demystified: Inspiring reconciliation through education

Paul T Spearim



Paul Spearim Winanga-li Gii (to know the heart) is a versatile, dynamic, and professional presenter and performer, as well as a doting grandfather and author. He is experienced in delivering culturally-appropriate sessions in early-childhood settings. A member of the Gamilaraay Nation, of north-west New South Wales and southern Queensland, Paul gained much of his early traditional knowledge from his mother, father, and extended Gamilaraay family. Paul's father was a fully initiated Elder of the Gamilaraay Nation. Paul's father's second language was English; his first being his native Indigenous dialect. Paul is in the

incredibly privileged and unique position of having also learnt his father's native tongue. He is now passing this priceless cultural heritage on to his extended family. Paul is passionate about sharing his knowledge of Indigenous culture with all children.

The traditional process of imparting Indigenous cultural knowledge is unique. It involves a number of elements, each of which is as important as the other. These ancient techniques were bestowed upon me by my parents and their ancestors.

My father was initiated in the early 1900s. His first language was Gamilaraay. He was one of the last fully initiated members and teachers of the Gamilaraay Nation. My father's and mother's great-grandparents were alive prior to 1788, and these traditional tools were part of their everyday life.

'Binangal Gayaa Wanangi' translated means, 'Throw the words from the Almighty Creator BUWADJARR'. This phrase encapsulates our entire existence as Gamilaraay people – in that how we understand our physical existence is by fully understanding our spirituality through learning these traditional techniques. The techniques are storytelling; language; song, music and dance; art; and traditional games.

Storytelling

Storytelling is always the first step. Our culture is one of oral tradition. We use storytelling to impart important cultural teachings, the main one being that everything within the Universe is connected to us. An example of a traditional story is how the kookaburra first began to laugh.

Language

In today's society, because we speak English, using traditional language gives us context to understand our traditional stories. For example, why Googoogagaa Maal Gaaga-li – translated means: why kookaburra first began to laugh.

Song, music and dance

Song, music and dance is another way that we learn things traditionally, and begin to incorporate a multi-sensory approach to teaching and learning. For example, in teaching why Googoogagaa Maal Gaaga-li, we mimic the actions, sounds, and movement of Googoogagaa and Thinawan (emu).

Art

Art includes traditional forms of painting and drawing and is about teaching our oral history through art. You would be familiar with ancient rock art. Other forms of traditional art include tree carvings, sand drawings, carved earth mounds, and painting our bodies.

We create colours for painting and drawing through the use of ochre (clays of many different colours), fire ash, mixing ochre with sand, and charcoal.

Ochre was even traded between nations to obtain colours not seen in particular areas. Gamilaraay people are well known as wood carvers. For example: Gamilaraay clap sticks and tree carvings. In the story of Googoogagaa we would paint what has been told to us in the story, and taught to us through the song, dance, and movement, to recreate the story in an art form.

Traditional games

Games are another way in which to reinforce the story in a culture that traditionally did not have written language. Games introduce another sensory experience to our learning and teaching. Through traditional games we interpret the stories, the song, the dance and so on. Using the story of Googoogagaa, children form two circles, an inner circle and an outer circle. Each child in one circle is Googoogagaa, and each child in the other circle is Thinawan. Using a ball made out of possum skin, the children in one circle begin to throw the ball to each other. When a child misses the catch, they all drop to the ground, and the child who missed stands up and mimics their animal, while the other children in the circle make the noise of that animal. Then it is the other circle's turn to start throwing the ball, and similarly when someone misses a catch they in turn mimic their animal, until they've all had a turn at throwing and catching. This also encompasses teaching about the family, the clan, and your connection to each other.

Old Gamil

The traditional methods of teaching our culture to Gamilaraay people spans from birth to physical death, and then OLD GAMIL. (You might know this as dreamtime, creation, or afterlife.)

As people age and mature, we teach the story in more depth to give a greater level of understanding that is appropriate to a person's age, maturity, and spiritual evolution in our culture.

OLD GAMIL to us means that when we sleep, we move in time, and we are a part of everything. When we wake up we come back to the physical plane and incorporate what we have learned. For example, if we wake up and hear Googoogagaa laughing, that is telling us to make a new friend today. Life in OLD GAMIL is not something that ever starts or finishes, it is eternal. OLD GAMIL and our cultural teachings are not a tool of control, but about inclusion and understanding that we are all a part of everything and that everything is a part of us.

Conclusion

To respectfully teach Indigenous culture in your own communities, it is critical to acknowledge that each element is integral to the process.

In order to do this you must include each element in your teaching. As Gamilaraay is but one of hundreds of nations within Australia, the most practical way to ensure you are being culturally respectful is to approach the Elders of the local Indigenous community, with any questions you may have.

Traditional ways of teaching Gamilaraay culture are so clever in their simplicity. This is why children are able to relate to, understand, and apply what they learn. From our ancient modes of Gamilaraay teaching, there is still so much relevance to how children learn today.

A third space – A framework for cultural competence

Stephen Gallen



Stephen has over 22 years experience within the early childhood field, including preschool and primary teaching, long day care, family day care and OSHC. He is very interested in pedagogical documentation, and how it can impact on the way teachers and children can spend time together. He currently works as an ECEC consultant and over the years has worked in delivering professional support for PSCQ, Gowrie and other organisations.

Within the context of the National Quality Framework, there is a widespread appreciation that a respect for diversity is not only a key principle that informs and underpins our work, but, as the *Early Years Learning Framework* suggests, a value, a stance and a way of being that must be embedded in our everyday practice. This is a way of being that involves both the personal and professional – dealing as it does with childrens' and families' identities, sense of belonging and wellbeing, and issues of equity, justice, inclusion and difference (2009, 13).

When we seriously engage with diversity, at some point we must acknowledge that this has to involve acknowledging and working with more than just diverse behaviours and appearances. As Barerra and Corso point out, it is also enmeshed with, and reciprocally

generates, diverse perspectives, values and ways of seeing, knowing and being (2002, 104-5). These differences are not always easy to reconcile or navigate.

It is in the light of this understanding, that cultural competence emerges as a key concept. For the sake of this discussion, cultural competence is defined as a cluster of skills, behaviours, approaches and ways of being that enable and facilitate respectful and reciprocal interactions across and between cultures (where cultures are more than just ethnic backgrounds, and are seen as ways of living).

A commitment to cultural competence makes certain demands of us. It asks that we not just respect a variety of behaviours, values and perspectives, but that we have the capacity to effectively and competently interact with respect and reciprocity across difference.

Difference does not just occur among families and children, it occurs among and between ourselves as well. Involving as it does, both the personal and professional, it is not enough as teachers, then, merely to want to respect diversity, nor to simply be reflexively aware of our own biases and stereotyping. It requires commitment and skills for those times when difference occurs in relation to our explicitly held beliefs, ideas, values and perspectives, as well as those implicit assumptions and 'biases'. The vignettes that appear in this article give some instances of this occurring. In response to such experiences, the question becomes, as Miriam Giugni asks in her valuable resource on *Inclusion through Relatedness*: 'How many

Rani has recently enrolled her four-year-old daughter into a kindergarten program. During an orientation visit she discovers that the children are encouraged to be independent and self-sufficient during meal times. For Rani, it is important that her daughter is spoon-fed by her carers, as this is how meal times occur at home. For the educators, an understanding that the National Quality Framework encourages children to take increasing responsibility for their health and wellbeing, intersects with their personal philosophy that children should be independent and autonomous. From this perspective, Rani's request that they feed her daughter becomes problematic.

Nena is enrolling her one-year-old daughter into a long day care setting. When she discovers that one of the educators is a male, she requests that her daughter is only to be toileted by female educators. When discussing her request with the centre director, Nena explains this is based on 'cultural grounds'.

diversities and differences are we open to?' (2010, 18). It is one thing to respect behaviours, values and perspectives that align with ours. It is another to respect those that differ. It is another thing again to respect those that appear to conflict with ours.

In 2013, a number of educators and other professionals came together across Queensland in a series of Professional Conversations to explore and discuss issues such as these. Many challenging and productive insights emerged through the process. A key one in this regard was that it is the skill and process-based nature of the 'cultural competence' concept that gives it its productive power. In other words, when we come to the actual lived reality of a respect for diversity in our practice, we must move beyond ways of thinking that centre on attitudes, dispositions and values and move towards practice frameworks: that is some practical tools to help us navigate through.

One particularly powerful framework is that of 'Skilled Dialogue' outlined in the thinking of Barerra and Corso. This framework locates reciprocity, respect and responsiveness as central to cultural competence and identifies specific strategies to realise these in practice (2002, 106-7). A central element is the idea of the Third Space – a metaphor that reminds us that the occurrence of conflict and difference can be re-imagined and re-contextualised when we are prepared to realise that our own positions, perspectives and values – no matter how dearly held – are always contingent and constructed (2002, 109). This moves us to consider issues of power and relationship in relation to our own practice.

The approach presented by Barerra and Corso (2002, 111) provides us with – a set of concepts and strategies that can be utilised in situations where we become professionally 'stuck' or 'caught', to move us beyond seemingly

irreconcilable difference and a 'them and us' mentality. The Skilled Dialogue framework offers the possibility of re-contextualising our situation using respect, reciprocity and responsiveness to take us to a space that is not 'our's' or 'their's' – a Third Space. It is a tool kit to enable us to be (or become) Culturally Competent.

I would like to acknowledge the thinking and discussions of the South Brisbane group of the PSC for Qld 2012 *Professional Conversations – Difference, Diversity, Cultural Competence*, which inform this article, along with the thinking of the *Professional Conversations* facilitators, in particular Felicity McArdle.

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Carmen and Danny have recently arrived from Singapore with their young family for Carmen's work. Their three-year-old has been attending Kindergarten for three months when they request a meeting with the teacher to discuss their concerns that he is not engaging in 'structured' academic and rote learning. When the teachers explain their play-based approach the parents remain sceptical and concerned, pointing out that in Singapore their son had previously experienced a very teacher-directed, intensive curriculum.

Risky business: Viewing intentional teaching as a risky endeavour

Lisa Sonter



Lisa Sonter teaches at Mitchelton Pre-Schooling Centre in Brisbane. Lisa and her business partner, Leanne Hunter, are well known for their presentations as well as their book "Progressing Play: Practicalities, intentions and possibilities in emerging co-constructed curriculum", which draws on their many years of teaching experience with young children. Lisa and Leanne share a deep interest in building and progressing respectful, collaborative partnerships with children and adults working across the early childhood sector.

Intentional teaching practices are risky! Do outcomes match our intentions? Do they have to? The assumptions and judgments we make each day inform children's and adults' sense of belonging, being and becoming. This article offers some perspectives about intentional teaching from practice in order to open discussion and bolster shared understandings of the significance and implications of teaching with intent.

Teaching with intent

Our early childhood environments offer enormous potential for young children. Dirt or digging patches, for example, afford opportunities for children to connect with natural and sensory experiences. One of the favourite games children love to play in the digging patch at our centre is making campfires.

Building a fire

However, in order to enjoy the benefits of a campfire, preparation is required. Just as we might collect and grade sticks suitable for the purpose of lighting a fire, we need to take time and think intentionally about what practices or understandings children require. Building a fire takes time and planning. If we want to capitalise on the benefits of mud or campfire play for children, then it is critical that we take time to consider our intentions. Do children have time to reap the benefits of play? The provision of a dirt patch in our outside environments may give the message to children and families that children are welcome to play, and that we value this natural connection. However our practices may be at odds. Are we constantly hurrying



children, or limiting play in the dirt because children may get too dirty, or stopping play because of time constraints of cleaning up? Taking time to model clean-up procedures, and co-construct practices with children to support the responsible use and clean-up of the dirt patch, reaps rewards. Hold high expectations of children, and trust them to take on these responsibilities.

Smoke signals

Once campfire play is initiated, it often involves children gathering sticks, threading leaves or paper for marshmallows, making mud stews or enacting camping games. A cursory glance in the direction of the play can offer an idea about the play, and possible learning outcomes and dispositions such as scientific understandings, cooperative play and social interactions. However, is this really happening? It is important to check the smoke signals. What are children learning? How do I know? Was this my intention? If not, what action is needed?

Risk of intent

Intentional teaching is risky. We need to know children as individuals and group members, and make judgements. Often, action is called for quickly and we make a decision to act on the spot without the luxury of reflective thinking time. Our decisions are based on our knowledge and understandings of children. If we are to make sound decisions, we need to know that our actions are based on the best available knowledge we have at hand. The significance of knowing children cannot be underestimated. Each day presents opportunities for us to connect with, and deepen our relationships with children. We can be challenged; these day-to-day actions are risky. Affording time to get to know children; listening and talking with them about their interests; engaging them in discussions about their learning; and revisiting their play or investigations with them at later times are valuable ways of building our knowledge to support pedagogical decisions.

Key to optimizing children's learning is taking time to carefully think about the intention of the experience and what expectations you hold for this. Sometimes 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, this learning actually occurs. What we intend may not result (Hunter & Sonter, 2012, p. 59).

Consider the outcomes of dirt or mud play. Do they match your intentions? Are children reaping the benefits or are they too concerned about getting clothes dirty? Is the play fair? Consider the outcomes of camp fire play. Do they match your intentions? Are children actually measuring and grading the sticks or hitting ants or lizards?

When children are playing, sometimes what's happening within the game is different to the educator's assumption. Similarly when children are engaged in specific experiences, sometimes what children actually learn is different to the educator's intention. It could however be just as relevant or more so. It could also be equally in conflict to the intention or atmosphere of learning (Hunter & Sonter, 2012, p. 60).

Intending risk

What deliberate obstacles or risks do we place in children's pathways? Intentionally creating experiences some may view as risky, requires us to clarify our reasons, be brave and act deliberately and pedagogically.

Taking time to weigh up the benefits of experiences, rather than closing these down because of an assumed risk is crucial if we are to support children's learning. Intentionally reflecting upon our personal view of risk is beneficial. How do we view risk? Do we consider a risk different to a hazard? Do we champion the benefit of risk? Undertaking a benefit-risk analysis, or re-framing dilemmas to consider benefits or other possibilities, may offer alternative actions.

Risking to learn

It is equally important for us as teachers to take risks with our learning. Risking to learn means that we need to look carefully and listen genuinely to what children are doing or saying.

Is there a match between what they are saying or thinking and the teacher's ideas? Take time to listen carefully, asking questions that allow children to give you the answers you don't know. Think through together how this might look and revisit this thinking, rather than adopting the 'right, you'll need ...' attitude. Balancing teacher and child input is critical. It can be a very simple idea but consider the complexity of skills used within this. Remember whose game or idea it is and champion the child.

If we are to acknowledge children's ideas we need to hear them. Children need adults to encourage, listen, observe and interact in play. They need to see that their ideas are valued. In co-constructed curriculum, children's and adults ideas are valued. If you see children as confident and competent, how does this influence your intentions?

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Visualisation relaxation – achieving a calm classroom

Helen Wilkie



Helen has 26 years working experience in early childhood educational settings. Initially, her main interest was in music and drama. In the last ten or so years in the classroom, she became interested in looking for ways to achieve a calm teaching environment. From those beginnings evolved her very successful *Tai Chi for Children* program. Looking to expand on that, Helen began to explore and experiment with visualisation relaxation – both individual and guided. She published her book *Tai Chi in Early Childhood – Tai Chi and visualisation relaxation in the classroom* in 2011.

The world we live in is becoming increasingly structured and stressful, with personal time usually the first thing to be sacrificed as we juggle home, family and employment demands. The time restraints this puts on us flow into our children's lives. Our need for organisation can result in more and more adult direction and less and less time for quiet reflection and freedom to just 'be'.

Without a balance of adult-directed and child-centred time, children's health, wellbeing and indeed development can be impaired by the resulting stress. In striving to give children the best educational opportunities, adults often fill their lives with extracurricular activities that, while having a place, can result in over-stimulation and over-tiredness leading to stress and anxiety. We can all benefit from quiet time together ... reading a book, listening to music and that almost obsolete pastime of just talking quietly together. My husband once questioned why we were driving our son to gym to pay for him to exercise instead of kicking the ball around in the back yard with him!

As educators, we have an opportunity to help create that balance needed by introducing some form of relaxation into our daily program. We can show by example that it is an important part of our daily lives. It is a way of returning to a state of calm for both ourselves and the children and helps to restore focus. Even stopping regularly to do some deep breathing can achieve wonders.

What is visualisation relaxation?

Visualisation relaxation is the ability to purposefully take ourselves out of a stressful situation to one of peace and calm – that is what sets it apart from daydreaming. By fostering this ability we can create feelings that can take us to a better place and induce a general feeling of wellbeing. In other words, we are deliberately distracting ourselves – we are using our imagination to help control our feelings by taking us to a place of peace and quiet reflection in times of stress and trauma.

Forms of visualisation

1. *Individual:* You can provide an atmosphere with soothing music, sounds of the ocean or sounds of nature. Commence with some deep breathing then offer suggestions for the relaxation visualisation. For example – What do you enjoy doing the most? ... Where is your favourite place? ... What is your favourite toy?

As a preparation with the younger children, you can introduce the concept of using their imagination by giving the child an object to hold. Give them time to see and examine it ... feel it ... then ask them to close their eyes and remember it while still feeling it. Now ask them to put the object down and use their 'imagination' to see and experience it in their head. You can help them remember by asking questions about the colour, shape or texture of the object.

2. *Guided:* Progressive relaxation is something we are most familiar with – the isolating and tensing/relaxing of our body parts. Sometimes



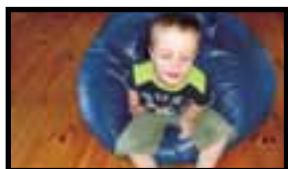
1. Archie seeing his teddy



2. Archie feeling his teddy



3. Archie remembering his teddy



4. Archie imagining his teddy

young children relate better to a description. An example: being an iceblock – freezing and melting. Another guided exercise could be to use recall of something shared; helping the children to remember a recent happy experience such as an excursion or a visit to your centre by the animal nursery.

3. *Visualisation stories*: These can be used to take the children to a happy place in their imagination. You can make them up as you go along – this can be an advantage when you need to tailor the length of the story to the particular group situation. You need to remember to give the children time to see in their heads what you are describing. I have also written many stories of varying lengths that can be read to the children about secret gardens they can return to, a ride on a cloud, a day at the beach, following our nose as it smells its way on an adventure. You are only limited by your own imagination and, once you get started, you will find much enjoyment and relaxation in writing simple stories and seeing how much the children enjoy them. When reading scripted stories you must be aware of speaking slowly and pausing to give the children time to see what you are describing in their heads. Remember also to choose an appropriate time to ensure there is no distraction such as outside activity.

Music can be used effectively to create a visualisation story. Soundtracks from movies are particularly helpful as there is no spoken word and the mood of the music keeps changing. You can interpret the music through your story. You either listen and prepare a story to the music or you can search out music that would be a suitable background to your already prepared story. If

you are really adventurous you could record sounds yourself. For example, if it was a beach story – sounds such as the ocean, motor boats, seagulls or children playing. Other examples would be water flowing, raindrops and birds.

4. *Reflection*: As a follow up to a visualisation session, you may like to join the children in sharing their own experience – what they saw, how they felt. Children usually love to tell others their stories but it must be purely voluntary. If it were to become a 'what have we learned' pressured situation it would completely destroy the purpose of the relaxation exercise. There is also an opportunity for artistic expression by providing simple art materials for the children to record their experiences.

How do we find the time ...?

You may feel that introducing relaxation exercises into your daily program is adding another task to an already busy curriculum. It can be achieved if you are committed and creative by using visualisation as a preparation for rest time; or using progressive relaxation to quieten and re-focus the children after stimulating activities such as outside play; or standing and doing some stretching and deep breathing to restore calm when things become a bit hectic in the daily classroom activities. I always found it was a good way to transition during the program. Don't forget the benefits to yourself also and it is a lovely way to reconnect with the children.

Remember: *A calm educator = calm children = focused listening = learning*

I firmly believe that relaxation is a life skill that is just as important as all the other skills children learn in our early childhood settings. We should be making a conscious effort to incorporate it into our daily programs both for ourselves and the children. It is not something that comes easily to adults so it will take time and a lot of encouragement and experimentation for the children to gradually acquire the skill of using imagination to control feelings. We should be showing by our example that we all have the right to quiet, reflective time each day to soothe our souls and find some inner peace. We are then helping our children to have the ability to cope with future traumas and emotional upheavals.

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Mathilda Element

Welcome to another edition of *Educating Young Children*, and

another great series of media reviews. As we explore changing perspectives in early childhood education in this issue, it is interesting to note the changes in this section of the journal over the past few years. Firstly, and poignantly, the name change reflected our desire for more diverse form of reviews (quality books, interesting websites and digital software, etc.), to support teachers in a digital age discover resources across media forms.

Secondly, in recent years we have grown from a small group of participants to a large team of reviewers across the state, working in various sectors and volunteering their time to share their opinions of the resources we send them. (If you would like to be added to this list of contacts, please email me at mathilda@ecta.org.au – new reviewers are always eagerly welcomed!) I believe our commitment to getting resources into teachers' hands has been strengthened considerably in the past few years and we continue to get excited by passing on the materials we are sent by publishers. We have also spent time reaching out to publishers, cementing these relationships which allow us to have resources to share.

Finally, I believe the quality of the reviews we are lucky to read goes from strength to strength with every edition. I am continually impressed by the stories of how teachers are using these books in their classrooms, and the addition of children's voice and opinions on the texts. It's a testament to the great child-centred pedagogy of early childhood educators. As Christine Nolan puts it so beautifully in one review 'Isn't it incredible where a book can lead you?'

Enjoy.

Title: BrainPop Jr. - Website

Creator:	BrainPOP
Publisher:	BrainPOP
RRP::	Free Trial or \$125 full one year access
Age Appropriate:	3+
Focus:	All Curriculum Areas
Reviewed:	Rebecca Trimble-Roles

The purpose of the 'BrainPop Jr' website is for children aged 3-8 years to develop positive dispositions towards learning. Through the adventures of Annie and Moby, BrainPop Jr addresses a wide range of age-appropriate topics across all areas of the curriculum. These include Science, SOSE, English, Mathematics, Technology, Health and Arts and Music. Designed specifically for early learners, BrainPop Jr is easy to navigate. The children are encouraged to explore and make connections with the interactive and hands-on activities of BrainPop Jr. This format is available in each curriculum area of the BrainPop website and allows for similar positive engagement opportunities. The website can be accessed through www.brainpopjr.com. The cost for an individual is \$125 each per year. Access to the BrainPop Jr website, after purchase, is via username and password.



The BrainPop website introduces concepts through engaging videos that visually and verbally embed understandings about specific content areas. The participant can then choose which area they wish to access. The characters in the video, Tim and Moby, are appealing to children and sustain their attention, as they are visually engaging. The length and presentation of the videos are age appropriate and easy for the children to access and understand. Self-assessment tools are provided for the children. They are able to print the quizzes out or answer online and access their results. The diverse range of activities on the BrainPop website caters for different types of learners and allows integration to take place across curriculum areas. It can also be implemented as part of a unit of work when combined with other learning opportunities.

Title: Programming with the Early Years Learning Framework

Author: Liana Capland and Samantha Dornau

Published By: Curriculum Kids

RRP: \$44.95 for the Book, \$22.95 for the accompanying CD

**Reviewed by: Teenah Schneider, Director
 Passionate Minds ~ Autism and Aspergers Support Centre**

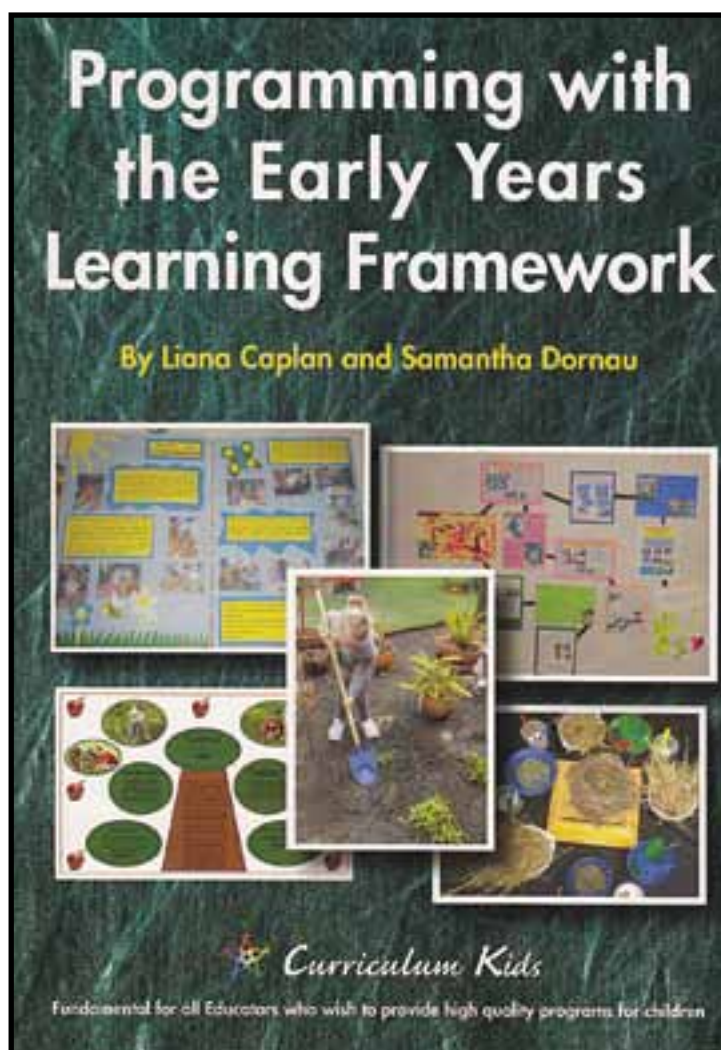
I was really excited as I took my first look at this book and CD resource combination, for so many reasons.

As an Early Childhood and Special Needs Educator it was a pleasure to see the focus on play-based learning and its successful implementation. The Practices and Principles of the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) are discussed at length demonstrating the relevance for developing appropriate practice.

The authors have included support to help create your personal philosophy through simple questions and examples. The reader is given clear definitions of five common program approaches: *Emergent Curriculum*; *Reggio-Emilia*; *Project Approach*; *Integrated Curriculum*; *Inclusive Curriculum*, and information to help consider if the particular program approach suits your personal philosophy. I love the picture examples and clear explanations for how to plan and document learning with such ease. Great ideas for program documentation and observations are also covered.

All of the examples connect: Identity; Community; Wellbeing; Learning and Communication to the program. The layout of the book is just so easy to read. The accompanying CD contains 25 templates with examples for use. This resource alone is fantastic.

This resource is valuable for all early childhood educators no matter how long you have been working with children. It refreshes ideas and creates new ones. Such a sensational resource, and I will definitely be using it with the Team at my learning centre. It is available from www.curriculumkids.com.au



Title: Yak Yuk
Author: Michelle Robinson
Illustrator: David Sim
Published by: Bloomsbury Publishers
ISBN: 9781408817032
RRP: \$14.99
Reviewed by: Tanya Dawson – Early Childhood Teacher

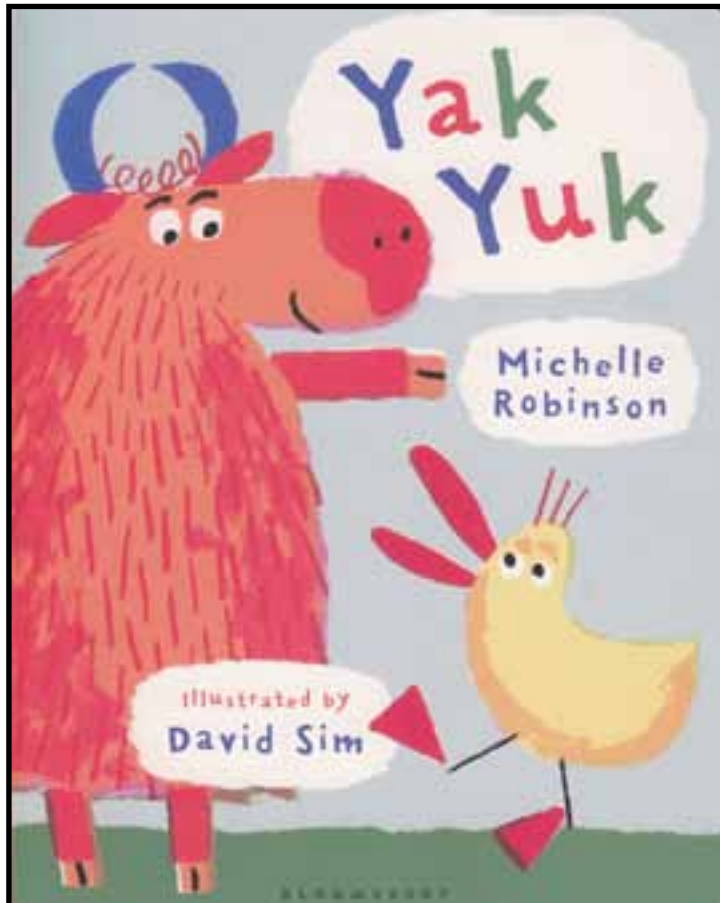
Yak Yuk is a humorous book that will entertain even the youngest of readers.

There are two characters in this story, Yak and Duck. When it begins to rain, Yak offers Duck a 'mac' (macintosh or raincoat). Duck refuses the 'mac' and continues to play in the rain and 'muck'. 'Yuk!' Duck eventually becomes stuck in the 'muck' and Yak returns to save the day.

This simple story line is told with few words. One word per page is all that is needed as the illustrations tell the rest of the story. This concept is fantastic for encouraging young children to really look at and engage with the pictures in order to truly understand the whole story.

Every word in *Yak Yuk* rhymes with either Yak or Yuk, making it even more enjoyable to the storyteller and reader. What a great introduction to rhyming words. Have fun and play around inventing words that rhyme. Older children may even be able use the idea of this book to create their own rhyming story.

Early readers will also enjoy this book's uncomplicated text, gaining confidence as they are able to easily recognise, sound out or simply remember each rhyming word.



Yak Yuk is recommended for children aged zero to five.

Available from major retail or online bookstores. For more information go to www.bloomsbury.com

(*Yak Yuk* is published simultaneously with *Bear Boar*, another book very similar).

Title: Press Here

Author: Herve Tullet

Published By: Chronicle Books

ISBN: 0811879542

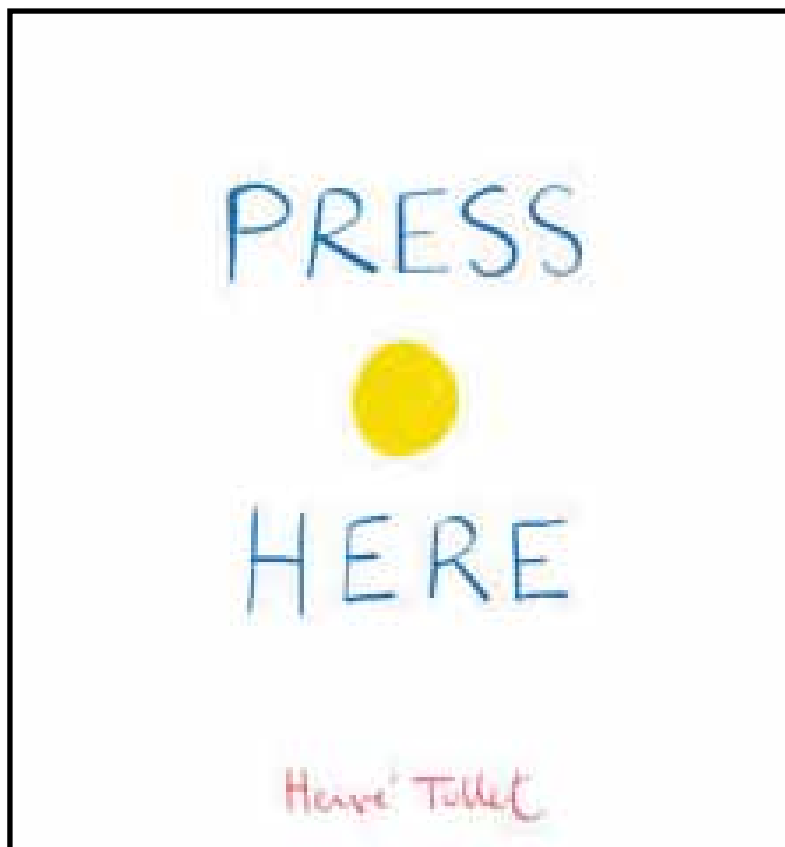
RRP: From \$10 to \$22 (depending on where you purchase)

**Reviewed by: Andrea Felgendrejeris
Director, Star of the Sea Catholic Child Care Centre**

Follow the instructions and children and adults alike will delight in the magic and suspense as Herve Tullet takes us on a journey of discovery as dots multiply, expand and change direction. The simple interaction between reader and book is wonderful and builds the suspense from beginning to end. Suitable for ages two and up, 'Press Here' will have you and the children giggling as you try to predict what will happen next.

The book is great for those special one-on-one moments or for use with a small group of children to develop those turn-taking skills.

'Press Here' is available for purchase from Amazon, Booktopia, Fishpond, and The Book Garden.



Title: Milo's Pet Egg

Author: Rebecca Elliott

Illustrator: Rebecca Elliott

Published By: Bloomsbury

ISBN: 978-1-4088-0200-7

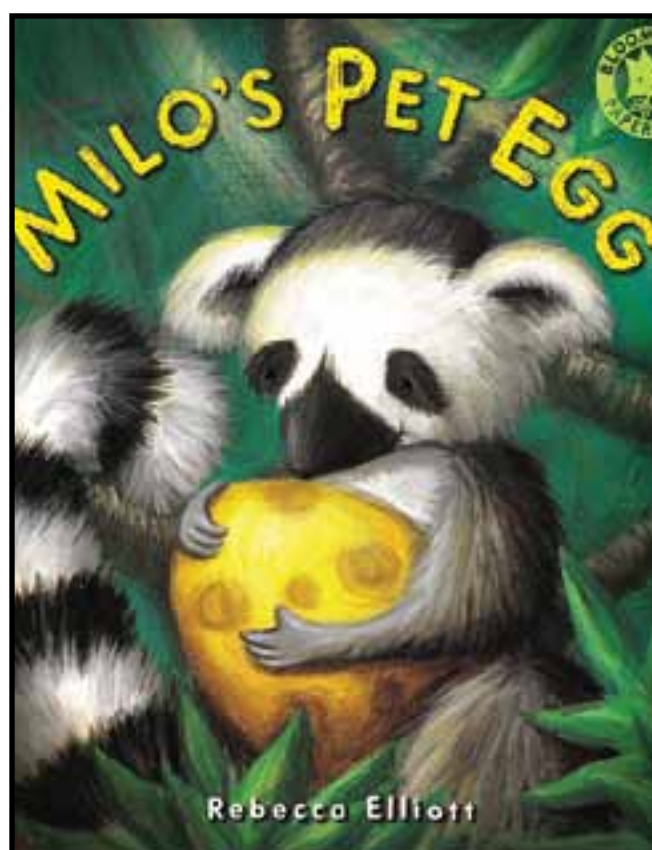
RRP: \$12.99

Reviewed by: Christine Nolan

Milo finds an abandoned egg and decides to make friends with it, naming it Snappy. They have lots of fun together teaching each other new things until one morning the egg is broken and Milo is heart broken. He has lost his best friend ... but he is in for a surprise!

In the lead-up to our Easter activities we dipped into Milo's Pet Egg. We had been investigating simple life cycles like the butterfly and so we were into where this egg might be leading us. The children very quickly picked up on the egg's name Snappy and the idea of a crocodile snaked its way through the listening group in hushed undertones ... everyone waiting to see if it was so. They were excited to have been correct! Our discussion focused on the character of Milo ... who/what was he? We revisited the simple and beautifully-painted illustrations and decided it wasn't Australia. We thought it might be Africa. One child thought Milo reminded her of the character King Julien from the movie *Madagascar* so maybe he was a lemur. 'Google it!!!!' said everyone and so we did and had an amazing journey into the life of lemurs and the island of Madagascar. Isn't it just incredible where a book can lead you?

This simple tale of fun and friendship would appeal to children aged two to seven. My five and six year olds thought it a very cute story and loved the variety of text placement interwoven with the action of the story. We rated it eight stars!



Title:	Archie
Author and Illustrator:	Domenica Mole Gordon
Published by:	Bloomsbury Publishing
ISBN:	9781408828625
RRP:	\$24.99
Reviewed by:	Kim Mostyn – Early Childhood Teacher

This is Domenica Mole Gordon's first picture book. There are very few words. In fact the only words are the sounds of actions in the story, such as, the phone ringing, the sewing machine being used or the sleeping dog.

All of the characters in the story are dogs who appear to take on human characteristics, such as walking on two legs, sewing, wearing clothing and talking on the telephone.

The illustrations tell the story which children love to interpret. A four- to five-year-old child enjoys telling the story simply by following the illustrations.

The illustrations are all a simple ink and watercolour combination and easily convey the character of the dog.

Archie is a delightful book which could stimulate discussion about the difference between dogs and people. Some dogs do wear clothes, but do dogs ring each other on the phone and place an order for clothes?



Title: **Graduates Remember – Living and Learning at the Brisbane Kindergarten Teachers College 1911-1981**

Author: **Deborah Gahan, Gail Halliwell, Margaret Moss and Denise Sherwood**

Published by: **Brisbane Kindergarten Teachers College Graduates and Friends, a Chapter of QUT Alumni, Brisbane**

RRP: **\$35.00**

Reviewed by: **Dr Keith Moore, Faculty of Education, QUT**

I thoroughly enjoyed reading *Graduates Remember – Living and Learning at the Brisbane Kindergarten Teachers College*. Written by Deborah Gahan, Gail Halliwell, Margaret Moss and Denise Sherwood, together with the recollections of more than one hundred staff and students, this book looks at the college, the social lives of the students, the curriculum and the students' development as teachers. Anecdotal reminiscences combine with thoughtful reflections and perceptive evaluations to reveal the college and its pivotal role in the training of young kindergarten teachers. As the authors comment in the first chapter; the former students' 'stories and that of the College can now be told with the wisdom of hindsight and with the breadth of knowledge, experience and humour'.

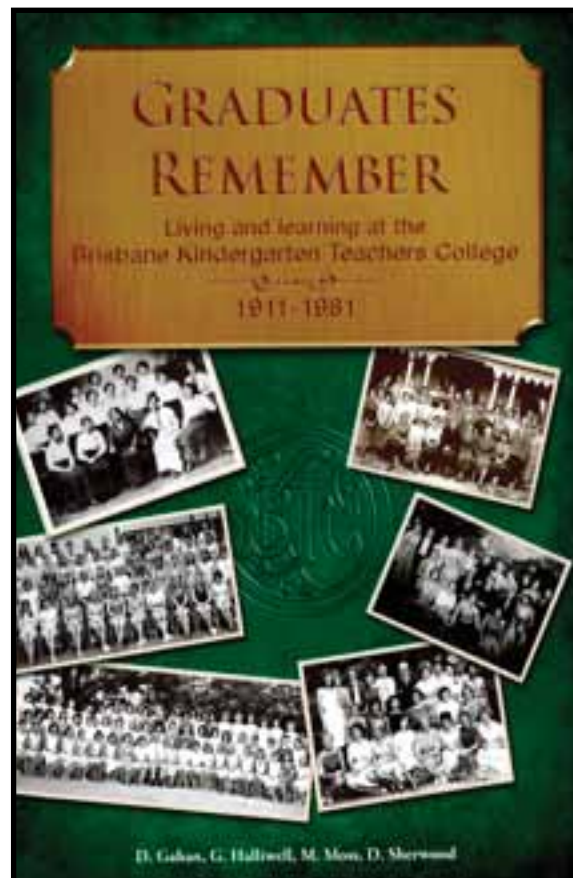
The many photographs, and the often-amusing reminiscences, make diving into the book here and there almost irresistible. The authors have divided the students' memories into sections that include accommodation, getting about in Brisbane, changes in fashion, friendships, traditions, community service, the practicum and the teaching resources used in the kindergartens.

The College course aim of 1945 is particularly worthy of reflection:

Our work calls for a knowledge of each individual child committed to our care if we are to be really successful in promoting the maximum development of that child which, of course, is our objective. This takes skill in teaching, foresight in program planning and maintenance of educational play equipment, sympathetic parent-teacher relations and above all a genuine attitude of service to others.

Wauna, a grand old building constructed in 1880 in Victoria Park Road, accommodated the college until 1964, then *Moorlands*, the Mayne family residence on Coronation Drive, became the college, while a new college was completed, again on Victoria Park Road at Kelvin Grove. This was the college's final location. But this book focuses on the students' experiences and the skills that they acquired for their future careers. It contains insightful messages, from both the authors and the former students, for today's kindergarten teachers and everyone with an interest in education or the social history of Brisbane. It is uplifting, thoughtfully written and of high quality both academically and visually. All involved deserve congratulations.

Without hesitation, I recommend this un-put-down-able book to you.



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.

