

ARECE 2008



16th Annual Conference of Australian Research in Early Childhood Education

22 & 23rd January, 2008

Conference Convenors

Marilyn Flear

and

the Peninsula Early Childhood Education Academic Team

Conference Organiser and Team Leader

Pippa Hawkins



Welcome

Welcome, all participants of the 16th Annual Australian Research in Early Childhood Education Conference (ARECE) 2008, to the Peninsula Campus of Monash University. This is our sixth year hosting the ARECE Conference at Monash University and, once again, we are very excited to have the opportunity to do so. The ARECE Conference reflects the growing strength and interest in the field of Early Childhood Education. This year we delighted to announce our merge with Child Forum Early Childhood Research Network. It is great to see delegates return to share updated and new projects and also to welcome many new delegates to the ARECE community. The research conference will be held every second year in New Zealand and alternate years in Melbourne.

We have an enthusiastic team of students involved in the Conference. A number of students have supported the ARECE conference over the past few years, by devoting their time to ensure the conference runs smoothly. Most of the student team study at the Peninsula Campus; some have just completed their first year, whilst others are heading into their final year and beyond. They are all very excited to be meeting the authors of books and materials and have the opportunity to listen in on the presenters! The students can be identified by their Monash T-shirts and nametags. Please feel free to approach a team member if you need assistance. Our aim is to make the ARECE Conference rewarding and successful for every delegate.

This year we are delighted to announce the support of two major sponsors: Pademelon Press and Lismore Communities for children.

Pademelon Press will hold 'The book garden' stall, displaying books in the Early Childhood field.

Lismore Communities for children has kindly offered sponsorship to local professionals in the Lismore and Murwillumbah area to attend the ARECE conference.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has been involved with planning and organising ARECE 2008; in particular the people whose advice and support has been invaluable: Amanda Banks, Vicki White, Marilyn Fleer, Joce Nuttall, Jill Robbins, Bronwyn Dethick and members of the Monash Peninsula Education academic team who have made various contributions to the conference.

On behalf of the ARECE community, it is my privilege to welcome you to our first joint ARECE conference.

Welcome to ARECE 2008.
Pippa Hawkins



CONFERENCE TIMETABLE

Tuesday, 22 January 2008

TIME	ROOM/EVENT				
8:15 am	Registration – Building A, Level 3 Foyer				
9:00–9:35	Conference opening – F1.01				
TIME/ROOM	A4.41 Professional Learning	A2.16	A3.50	A3.48	A3.49
9:40–10:20	Constance Lehman & Rachel Sutherland Kia Puawai: Giving Children the Best Start in Life/Research & Evaluation Strategy for New Zealand.	Jayne White A Bakhtinian home-coming: Operationalising dialogism in the context of a Wellington, NZ, early childhood education context.	Jill Robbins A Vygotskian analysis of young children's thinking.	Anne Schofield, Louise Keown and Margie Hohepa ESL@ECC: Supporting children with home languages other than English attending early childhood centres in New Zealand. Initial findings.	Andrew Day & Mary Sayers Building a strategic response to the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) in the Maribyrnong municipality.
10:25–11:05	Jess Mison-Smith Deconstructing Policy: How the Australian government problematises early childhood education and care.	Marilyn Fleer, Gloria Quiñones, & Mariane Hedegaard Children's development through participation in everyday activities across different institutions: Disjunction or alignment between childrearing practices and school pedagogy?	Lyn Wright Thinking about 'thinking' in early childhood. What, why, how, when and where?	Diana Masny Multiple Literacies: a lens for understanding how children acquire writing systems simultaneously.	Reesa Sorin Readiness for School – Educators' perceptions and The Australian Early Development Index.
11:05 –11:35	Morning Tea				
11:35–12:15	Berence Nyland The changing language of Early Childhood Education and care.	Melanie Wong Young Asian children in New Zealand – A case study of settlement experience of newly arrived children with Hong Kong heritage.	Amelia Church Commenting on cognition.	Alina Abraham Incorporating <i>Baby Signs</i> Programmes in Early Learning Practice.	Moska Mirkhil Effective Transitions to school: Perceptions of key stakeholders.



TIME	ROOM/EVENT				
TIME/ROOM	A4.41	A2.16	A3.50	A3.48	A3.49
12:20-1:00	Meripa Toso & Seiuli Luama Sauni The strengthened rope – O Le Maea Malosi What is distance learning from a Pasifika perspective?	Anthony Semann & Kerry Robinson 'No gay parents at kindy': Heterosexism, childhood innocence and a pedagogy of inclusion	Linda Knight How Collaborative Drawing Can Help to 'Make Sense' in Early Childhood Teaching and Learning.	Margaret Brown, Esther Care & Linda Byrnes The Young Learners' Project: Identifying personalised teaching strategies for early literacy in children in preschool and the first year of school.	Anne Petriwskyj Diversity, inclusion and transition to school.
1:00-2:00	Lunch				
2:00- 2:40	Andrea Nolan & Jenny Sim Exploring and enhancing levels of reflection in pre-service early childhood teachers.	Anna Targowska Reconceptualising children's racialised thinking: Implications for practice.	Chris Peers Rethinking Visual Arts in Early Childhood Education.	George Lewis, Kym Booth, Judy Croll, Michelle Davis, Linda Stock and Tracey Wise Early language and literacy as social practice: engaging families, children and preschool staff in an educationally disadvantaged Australian community.	June McLoughin and Bella Laidlaw Linking Schools and Early Years – a project case study.
2:45-3:35	David Lamb Experiences of Leisure Pre/Post- Early Parenthood?	Jeanette Rhedding-Jones et al., Muslims in preschools in Norway, England, Australia and new Zealand: religious difference and Islamic practice with children aged one to five.	Robert Brown Identifying and mapping engagement, learning and cultural citizenship for children undertaking artist-led workshops at ArtPlay.	Archana Sinh Literacy in early childhood Critical analysis of resource document Literacies, Communities and Under 5's.	Tara Fagan & Suzanne Manning Playcentre: Free play radicals?
3:35-4:05	Afternoon tea				
4:05-4:45	Deborah Wansbrough & Sue Cherrington Evaluating NZ early childhood education professional development: Access, barriers and effectiveness.	Sophie Alcock I caught your eye; I caught your teeth: Distributed playfulness connecting children.	Patricia Henry Adult talk to normally developing and speech delayed children in the preschool years.	Claire McLachlan & Alison Arrow "Phonological awareness: Can it be enhanced in the early childhood setting?"	June McLoughlin Why integrate services for young children and their families?



TIME	ROOM/EVENT				
TIME/ROOM	A4.41	A2.16	A3.50	A3.48	A3.49
4:50-5:30	Peggy Tan Professionalising the Early Childhood Education (ECE) workforce	Marilyn Fleer & Katie Ramsay A study of childhood and child development in Bangladesh and India: Moving beyond a Western individualistic research approach and towards a dialectical framework for community oriented enquiry	Sally Bodkin "Oh God, what am I going to do tomorrow?": How early childhood teachers really feel about contributing to music in their centres	Jan Deans, Robert Brown and Janet Scull The Young Learners Project: Mapping the beliefs, knowledge and practices of early childhood teachers in relation to literacy	Robyn Waller Braeview, Leanne Prior, Cathie Luke and Dot Rowett The business of brains – What's different about teaching and learning in an early years classroom and what difference does it make?
From 6pm	Social gathering held at Monash Early Learning Centre				



CONFERENCE TIMETABLE

Wednesday, 23 January 2008

TIME	ROOM/EVENT				
8:15 am	Registration – Building A, Level 3 Foyer				
TIME/ROOM	A4.41	A2.16	A3.50	A3.48	A3.49
9:00–9:40	<p>Linda Miller A Day in the Life of an Early Years Practitioner in England: exploring professional practice.</p>	<p>Indrani Talagala <i>“We do want our children to learn. But we do not know how to help them”</i> A study on what parents in disadvantaged communities in Sri Lanka need to know to help their children’s learning and development.</p>	<p>Deborah Geoghegan & Shirley O’Neill Early Childhood pre-service teacher educators’ use of metaphor to conceptualise learning, teaching and the classroom.</p>	<p>Rose Drury Young bilingual learners: a socio-cultural perspective.</p>	<p>Trina Hinkley, David Crawford, Jo Salmon, Kylie Hesketh & Tony Okely Influences on preschool children’s physical activity behaviours.</p>
9:40–10:20	<p>Helen Yost Teaching in Early Childhood Today. What’s it really like?</p>	<p>Laura Bennetts Kneebone Footprints in Time Following the developmental pathways of Australian Indigenous Children.</p>	<p>Pat Jewell Does the “images” early childhood staff and parents have of each other contribute or become a barrier to an equitable relationship developing?</p>	<p>Stig Brostrom Literacy competence based on fiction.</p>	<p>Peta Lucas & Jillian Adams Tooty Fruity Vegie in Preschools – A pilot program promoting healthy eating and physical activity in preschools on the North Coast of NSW.</p>
10:25- 11:05	<p>Alison Stephenson Looking in another way: Considering teachers’ roles from the children’s perspective.</p>	<p>Seiuli Luama Sauni Title: Ethical Dilemmas in a Pasifika Research: Samoan men in Early Childhood Education.</p>	<p>Joy Goodfellow & Sandie Wong The development of SDN’s curriculum framework: Bringing cohesion between theory, research and practice within an ecological context.</p>	<p>Berenice Nyland & Jill Ferris Researching children’s musical experiences: learning stories, affordances, activity theory and curriculum design.</p>	<p>Louise Farrell, Libby Hattersley & Peta Lucas Munch and Move: Developing a state-wide program to promote healthy eating and physical activity within early childhood services.</p>
11:05 - 11:35	Morning Tea				



TIME	ROOM/EVENT				
TIME/ROOM	A4.41	A2.16	A3.50	A3.48	A3.49
11:35–12:15	Tara Fagan Aspects of children's interactions in a mixed age setting.	Ali Foreman & Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan The political landscape of early childhood education in Indonesia.	Suzy Edwards, Amy Cutter-Mackenzie and Marilyn Fleer Investigating the environmental scientific concepts in children's play: how do children and teachers interpret play-based learning.	Brian Doig, Fay Naswari & Kay Mondon Stop! It's an octagon: Mathematics in context for pre-school learners.	
12:20-1:00	Suzanne Manning Can I do what I want to do? Individual agency amongst parents-as-educators.	Sandie Wong & Tamara Cumming Rewards and challenges of transdisciplinary play-based early childhood intervention: An evaluation of SDN's Family Resource Centre and PlayLinks programs.	Camilla Gordon Exploring Research in Early Childhood Astronomy Education to a Core Curriculum in Preschool Education.	Bronwyn Glass & Raelene Ellis You, me and ICT: Engaging children and their families in an inclusive early childhood programme.	Annaleise Riethmuller, Anthony Okely & Kim McKeen Physical activity in diverse early childhood settings: reporting formative research findings and recommendations.
1:00-2:00	Lunch				
2:00- 2:40	Cheryl McConnell & Gillian Postlewaight Participation in an online early childhood community: an inspiration and opportunity.	Hilary Monk The dynamics of intergenerational research into child-rearing practices: Grappling with methodological design issues.	Kayte Edwards The inside Story: Preliminary findings of early childhood practitioner's perceptions of teaching science in one setting.	Donna Morrow & Julie Mackey ICT in early childhood education: Perceptions, potential and reality.	Ann Vanschevenstee n, Virginia Alston & Greg Hamilton Development, implementation and evaluation of a holistic approach to improving the health and wellbeing of children/tamariki in Early Childhood Education Centres.
2:45-3:35	David Zyngier What educators believe and (why) does it matter? Doing Early Childhood Education with students "At Promise"	Avis Ridgway 'Santa's Buckle' Using a cultural-historical framework to show societal, personal and institutional influences on learning in an Australian early childhood community.	Wendy Jobling and Coral Campbell A snapshot of science education in pre-school settings.	Lisa Oldridge "Examining early childhood teacher perceptions of ICT: Do we all speak the same language?"	Margaret Sims The stress and child care project – where are we now?



TIME	ROOM/EVENT				
3:35-4:05	Afternoon tea				
TIME/ROOM	A4.41	A2.16	A3.50	A3.48	A3.49
4:05-4:45		Business Meeting			
6:30 for 7:00	Conference Dinner: Ginseng Restaurant 430 Nepean Hwy, Frankston				

GENERAL INFORMATION

Car Parking

The carpark outside the George Jenkins Theatre should be used for parking. Please make sure that you are in the BLUE PERMIT ZONE and NOT the metered parking spaces when you park your car. The Blue Permit Zone is free of charge.

Changes to the Program

If there are any changes made to the program a general announcement will be made. Updates will also be available at the Registration Desk. We recommend that all delegates keep up to date with program changes.

Conference Catering

The fantastic staff from *In Season* will be catering for our conference again this year. Meals will be served on Level 2, Building A.

Conference Dinner

The Conference dinner will be held on Wednesday 23rd January at Ginseng, 430 Nepean Hwy, Frankston - 6:30 p.m. for 7:00 p.m. commencement.

Conference Opening

The Conference will be opened at 9:00 a.m. in Building F, Level 1, Room F101 on Tuesday 22nd January.

General Meeting

A general meeting will be held on Wednesday 23rd January at 4:05 pm in Room A2.16. The purpose of this meeting is to share ideas on developing future Australian Research in Early Childhood Education Conferences, and to provide feedback on issues such as the venue, program and organising team. Please feel free to approach Pippa Hawkins with any ideas for discussion.

Journal

The 2008 Journal of Australian Research in Early Childhood Education has two (2) issues. Vol 15, Issue 1, 2008 will be available to purchase or collect from the journal desk at the conference. Issue 2, 2008 can be ordered at the conference and will be posted to you when it becomes available later in the year.

Meals

All morning teas, lunches and afternoon teas will be held in Building A, Level 2 Foyer. If you have special dietary requirements that you are not reflected on your registration form, please inform a member of our catering team on Level 2, or a student team member at the Registration Desk as soon as you arrive.



Presentations

All presentations will take place in the Education Building (Building A). Room numbers are outlined in the conference timetable and we will display signs to guide you to the allocated room. Please approach a member of the student team if you require directions.

Should you require any extra assistance for your presentation, for example, ICT support, please contact Pippa Hawkins or a member of the Monash student team as early as possible.

Registration Desk

The Registration Desk will be open for the duration of the Conference. The student team will be staffing the desk and are happy to assist if you have any queries.

Session Chairpersons

Chair persons for all sessions will be members of the Monash student or staff team. These members should already have some biographical information about you. If you have not submitted this information with your abstract, please organise a document for this purpose and hand it to Pippa Hawkins or the chairperson prior to the commencement of your presentation.

Social Gathering

The social gathering will be held on Tuesday at Monash Early Learning Centre from 6:00 pm.

Transport - Local

We are arranging transport between the conference venue and several hotels and motels in the Frankston area. Please ask for more details and register your name and accommodation details with a student team member at the registration desk. Seats are limited so please register early to avoid disappointment.

Alternatively, the Frankston Taxi telephone number is 9786 3322. Instructions for catching taxis are as follows: Please phone the taxi company and advise them you are at Monash University and will be waiting outside Education building A near Administration Building C. Proceed through the automatic glass doors opposite the Registration Desk that lead outside the building (not the internal automatic glass doors leading to Level 2) and wait at the edge of the small car park between Building C and the Library. The fare from the University to the local hotels and Frankston town centre should be approximately \$10. The registration desk will endeavour to organise a list should you wish to share a taxi with other participants staying at the same place.



CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

Incorporating *Baby Signs* Programmes in Early Learning Practice

Alina Abraham, Whitireia Community Polytechnic

The study represents a literature review exercise to showcase the benefits of applying *Baby Signs* (BS) programmes (Acredolo, and Goodwyn, 2002) in teaching young children. The research is contextualised to Aotearoa New Zealand pre-school education. In Aotearoa, *New Zealand Sign Language* (NZSL) is an official language and also a subject in the *New Zealand Curriculum*. “*How beneficial Baby Signs programmes would be to contribute to the foundations of a Sign Language teaching practice in Aotearoa New Zealand?*,” is a research question that phenomenology (Orleans, 1992), participant observation and phenomenological interviews (Marshall and Rossman, 1999) will respond to it, due to the “natural” attribute of both sign language systems, i.e., NZSL and BS.

Key terms: Sign language, baby signs and early learning.

I caught your eye; I caught your teeth: Distributed playfulness connecting children

Sophie Alcock, Victoria University of Wellington

This paper argues for a distributed view of mind, as expressed in young children’s playful communication. Mind includes consciousness, cognition and emotion expressed in words, thought, imagination, and feelings (Damasio, 1999; Salomon, 1993; Tomasello, 1999). Mind is viewed as situated and extending over context, so connected to the environment via artifacts which mediate communication. Artifacts include representational material and non-material tools, symbols, and semiotic signs (Wartofsky, 1979). Thus playful communication is mediated via words, sounds, gestures, gaze, posture, rhythm, and movement. Socio-cultural historical activity theory informs both the methodological paradigm of the research and the framework for data analysis (Cole, 1996; Engeström, 1999; Vygotsky, 1986, 1978; Wertsch, 1991, 1998). Distributed understandings of mind suggest that individual children in early childhood centres should be viewed as connected to each other and the environment. Such understandings have pedagogical implications for curriculum and assessment practices. In the context of this study, children’s relationships with others, their environment, and artifacts were central to understanding children’s playful communication.

Key terms: Distributed cognition and playworlds



“Oh God, what am I going to do tomorrow?”: How early childhood teachers really feel about contributing to music in their centres

Dr Sally Bodkin, Southern Institute of Technology, Invercargill

This paper uses an ethnomusicological approach and examines what being musical means for a group of early childhood teachers in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Research was carried out in twelve different early childhood centres throughout Aotearoa/New Zealand. Forty-five teachers from kindergartens, childcare centres, and language groups (two kōhanga reo and two a’oga amata) were interviewed and observed. Particular attention is paid to the influence of cultural concepts of music and musicality: on the way that music occurs within a cultural context and on the musical self-concepts that evolve.

This paper explores the way that the Western conceptualization of musicality existing amongst a talented few (Campbell, 1998; Small, 1998) has affected early childhood teachers and their ability to contribute to music in their centres. The results of the study show that Pākehā early childhood teachers have a significantly lower level of musical confidence than their Māori and Samoan counterparts. This paper deconstructs the concept of being musical, and provides a model for the formation of musical identity. It suggests that the musical professional development of teachers needs to focus on two levels: the practical and the personal.

Key terms: Music, musical identity and musicality

The Business of Boys and Brains – What’s different about Teaching and Learning in an early years boys class and what difference does it make?

Lead Presenter: Robyn Waller Braeview JPS

Co Presenters / Leanne Prior, Cathie Luke and Dot Rowett Braeview JPS

This research was undertaken during 2006 with the support of a deLissa Action Research Scholarship and explored effective practice related to boys’ education in single gender Junior Primary classes at Braeview School. We used a case study methodology around an inquiry question to explore particular factors impacting on teaching and learning such as gender based physiological brain differences, brain compatible learning, play, quality early childhood teaching and learning and boys’ education.. A comprehensive literature review was conducted including the works of Eric Jensen, Tina Bruce, Ian Lillico, William Pollack, Michael Gurian and Tim Hawkes. Documentation was made of the key points arising from the field of research in the areas of Boys’ Brains, Boys’ Education and Early Childhood Pedagogy and Play. The literature was reviewed to determine effective teaching and learning strategies for boys, and validated by student achievement data and perception data from students and their parents. Links were made to classroom practice, identifying the teaching strategies which have been found to be most effective in maximising the learning of boys in the boys’ classes. Findings are shared in terms of Relationships, Classroom Environment, Boys and Behaviour and Teaching.

This presentation is relevant to anyone who has an interest in research relating to the education of boys.

Key terms: Boys, brains and early childhood practice



Literacy competence based on fiction

Dr. Associate professor Stig Brostrom, The Danish University of Education Department of Curriculum Research

A survey carried through fall 2007 in 300 schools shows that Danish teachers read fiction aloud, they have dialogues with the children about the stories, and they organize drawing activities but seldom play activities.

Based on the hypothesis that fiction might be a useful tool towards the development of children's literacy competence, we construct an education approach, where reading of fiction are followed by literature dialogues (Chambers, 1994), children's own storytelling, drawing and play activities. This approach has been carried out in different educational settings with children between six and eight years (Broström, 2006). Analysis of data collected via observations, video recording and interviews with the children shows similar narrative patterns between storytelling, drawing and play (Bruner, 1996).

I will present the findings and based on a cultural historical approach (Vygotsky, 1978) I will discuss possibilities and problems using such an aesthetic and narrative approach.

Key terms: Reading, fiction and play

The Young Learners' Project: Identifying personalised teaching strategies for early literacy in children in preschool and the first year of school

Associate Professor Margaret Brown, Dr Esther Care & Dr Linda Byrnes, The University of Melbourne

Being literate is both an essential skill and a human right (UNESCO, 2006). Some students, however, struggle with literacy. *How* and *when* to redress these low levels is of pressing national importance (COAG, National Reform Agenda [communiqué, 14 July 2006]).

This four-year project identifies effective personalised teaching strategies for enhancing early literacy for preschool children and prep grade students.

The study employs an applied, mixed methods approach to:

1. Establish an initial Child Profile.
2. Develop a structured process through which teachers will identify the theoretical constructs underpinning their practices, and distinct literacy teaching strategies.
3. Develop a comprehensive early literacy scale.
4. Evaluate effective literacy teaching strategies in the context of individual children's differences.
5. Develop support materials for parents and teachers.

This is a work in progress.

Key terms: Personalised teaching strategies, early literacy and preschool and the first year of school.



Identifying and mapping engagement, learning and cultural citizenship for children undertaking artist-led workshops at ArtPlay.

Robert Brown, The University of Melbourne

ArtPlay is the first permanent home for children's art and play in Australia. It was established in 2003 by the City of Melbourne as a part of the artistic, creative and cultural development of Melbourne as a child-friendly city. Open to children aged 3-12 years the facility serves a broad community including, parents, carers, teachers and artists. Leading educationalist and social researchers (Catterall 2002, Deasy 2002, Brice Heath & Roach 1999, Costantoura 2001, Myers 2003) have identified the present as significant time in which to articulate the importance of the arts to active and creative engagement in the social and cultural life of the community. Institutions such as *ArtPlay* are emerging in response to this need though there has yet to be a significant and sustained research into processes and outcomes of such organisations. This paper reports on a three year research project (2007-2009) that has been specifically designed to identify, map and evidence the practices of *ArtPlay* in relation to engagement, learning and cultural citizenship. The main research question is: *What engages children in artist-led art and play programs and why?* The first stage of this study has mapped the multi-dimensional nature of *ArtPlay* and has begun to identify the complex interplay of factors that influence what children learn and how they learn at *ArtPlay* including; artist beliefs and pedagogies, parent/carer involvement, social interactions and the design of the learning environment.

This project is sponsored by the Australian Research Council, The City of Melbourne and The Australia Council for the Arts, and is designed and directed by the Artistic and Creative Education Program in the Faculty of Education at the University of Melbourne.

Key terms: Arts, Young Children, Artists, Families

Commenting on cognition

Dr Amelia Church, Faculty of Education University of Melbourne

Spontaneous comments made by four-year-old children provide evidence of cognitive development. In this paper, the method of conversation analysis (eg Schegloff, 2007) is used to demonstrate how preschool children are displaying their understanding not only of the prior talk, but also an understanding of abstract concepts (such as conditional imperatives). As this understanding is on display for both the participants and the analyst (Heritage, 2005), this paper makes an argument for microanalysis of children's conversations to locate the situated action of learning. In other words, these spontaneous comments provide a proof criterion for 'a profile of competencies, a profile that can be tracked developmentally' (Wootton, 2006:192).

Key terms: Peer interactions, cognitive development and conversation analysis.



Building a strategic response to the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) in the Maribyrnong municipality

Dr Andrew Day, Maribyrnong City Council & Mary Sayers, Centre for Community Child Health, Royal Children's Hospital

The Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) measures the health and development of populations of children at school entry and helps communities assess how well they are doing

in supporting young children and their families. By using the AEDI to map children's development it is possible to begin to identify and understand the influence of socio-economic and community factors on children's development (Goldfeld et al., 2006, Sayers et al. 2007)

Maribyrnong City Council contracted the Centre for Community Child Health to undertake the Maribyrnong AEDI Strategic Response Project in response to the 2005 AEDI results for the municipality.

An outcomes-based response to the AEDI was developed based on feedback from consultations with parents, schools and early years service providers, and on the research evidence about early childhood development and school readiness.

This presentation will focus on the findings from the Maribyrnong project and discuss how communities can develop strategies to work toward improving outcomes for children.

Key terms: AEDI, outcomes and children

The Young Learners Project: Mapping the beliefs, knowledge and practices of early childhood teachers in relation to literacy.

Jan Deans, Robert Brown and Janet Scull, The University of Melbourne

The significance of the role of the teacher in literacy attainment in the early years of school is commonly cited (Rowe et al, 2005) but there is a paucity of research that investigates the connections between educational setting, the home environment and the personal characteristics of the preschool child. There is a particular need to investigate the impact of interactive teaching styles on children's engagement and learning (Green, 2006, Fullen, Hill & Crevola, 2006). This presentation will introduce the 'Young Learners Project' which is a large scale longitudinal study that aims to identify factors including, the preschool program, home-life and personal characteristics, that are positively associated with high outcomes in literacy, both in the preschool year and first year of schooling. Emphasis will be placed on a critical review of the research design of one sub-study within the larger project that will be investigating teacher beliefs, knowledge and practices in relation to early literacy development in 4-5 year old children.

Key terms: Literacy, teacher reflection, early childhood



Young bilingual learners: a socio-cultural perspective

Dr Rose Drury, The Open University

This paper aims to present examples of the literacy practices of young bilingual children taking place at home and at school which are often invisible and excluded from studies of early literacy in the Early Years in the UK. My starting point is the belief in the remarkable skills of children living between and within different linguistic and cultural settings. Data from an ethnographic study of three four year-old children as they begin school in three English nursery classes reveals ways in which young bilinguals take an active role and syncretise their home and school learning. Secondly, the crucial role of cultural and linguistic mediators (teacher, Bilingual Teaching Assistant, sibling or peer) in early language and literacy learning is explored in relation to a new interpretation of 'scaffolding', 'guided participation' or 'synergy'. Finally, drawing on the work of Moll (1992) and others, the paper suggests the need for further research which can lead to new insights about early bilingualism.

Key terms: Bilingualism, socio-cultural and ethnography.

Stop! Its an octagon: Mathematics in context for preschool learners

Mr Brian Doig, Ms Fay Naswari & Ms Kay Mondon, Deakin University

Stimulated by Moll and Greenberg's (1990) idea of 'funds of knowledge', and the work of Carruthers and Worthington (2006), the authors explored, in interviews, the breadth of parents' views about mathematics and young children, what actions they took, and children's responses. Parents' responses ranged from educationally sophisticated through to no awareness of any possible child mathematics prior to formal schooling.

These home experiences of mathematics play a large part in the child's early learning of key mathematical concepts, the foundation for life-long mathematical knowledge and skills. Because of the critical nature of these early experiences, we believe that early childhood educators must assist parents to provide quality mathematical experiences. A first step is to provide simple examples for parents that use the home as a playground for number, shape, and measurement. In our presentation we will illustrate some of the ideas that were tried, and the responses of the children.

Key terms: Funds of knowledge, parents and mathematics.

The inside Story: Preliminary findings of early childhood practitioner's perceptions of teaching science in one setting.

Kayte Edwards, Victoria University, Wellington

Using a qualitative, case study method, this current New Zealand research project focuses on a teachers' perspective of early childhood science. What they see it as, how they 'teach' it and what they believe influences their teaching views and practices in this area. Past studies (Kallery & Psillos, 2001, Garbett & Yourn, 2002) have concluded that teachers' lack of specific content knowledge not only influences the way they teach but their confidence to teach it. Further research (Russo, 2003, Hedges, 2004) has revealed that while children develop scientific theories, teachers are not necessarily recognising and supporting children's further



scientific understandings. This presentation will share key research findings to date linking these to the existing body of knowledge in this area.

Key terms: Science, teachers perceptions and qualitative case study

Investigating the environmental scientific concepts in children's play: how do children and teachers interpret play-based learning

Dr Suzy Edwards, Dr Amy Cutter-Mackenzie and Prof Marilyn Flear, Monash University

This paper presents the findings of a small-scale pilot study about early childhood teachers' and children's perceptions of the environmental scientific concepts embedded in play-based experiences. The project employed environmental education as the content area of the investigation as it is grounded in children's and teacher's lived experiences and is therefore easily adapted to play-based pedagogies (Cutter-Mackenzie & Edwards, 2006).

The project was conducted across two pre-school sites from a local Victorian municipality. Data collection for the project was based on the implementation of a specific play experience designed by the teachers. This play experience was video taped which was then watched by both the children and teachers to ascertain their perceptions of the environmental scientific concepts embedded in the play-based experience.

The focus of the analysis was the degree of discrepancy and relationships between the pedagogy of play (i.e. what the teachers believed the children were acquiring through play) and young children's acquisition of conceptual knowledge (i.e. what the children thought the teacher wanted them to learn and what they actually learned).

Key terms: Play, Pedagogy and Environmental scientific concepts.

Aspects of children's interactions in a mixed age setting.

Tara Fagan, Playcentre / Victoria University of Wellington

This presentation will consider aspects of the social interactions that transpired for three children who attend Playcentre, a mixed-age early childhood setting in New Zealand. Using a qualitative multiple case study approach, these children (aged 1yr 6 mth, 3 yr 3mth and 4 yr 8 mth) were observed as they interacted in their Playcentre environment. The presentation will consider the some of the interactions that occurred with mixed-age peers as well as the interactions with peers of the same-age. Emerging data is suggesting that children use different access strategies to initiate play with others (Corsaro, 1985) with older children altering their approach depending on the age of the child. Data is also suggesting that older children take on a leadership role within the centre (Katz, Evangelou and Hartman, 1990). These findings will be discussed in terms of how it could benefit teachers of young children in every day practice.

Key terms social interactions, mixed-age and playcentre



Playcentre: Free play radicals?

Tara Fagan & Suzanne Manning, Victoria University of Wellington

Playcentre has been a unique early childhood service in Aotearoa/New Zealand for over 60 years, yet many parents in New Zealand do not know it exists and many people working in the early childhood sector have a lack of knowledge or misunderstanding about how it operates. Drawing on Playcentre texts (Densem and Chapman, 2000; Stover, 1997) and the authors' current involvement with Playcentre, this presentation will outline the beginnings of Playcentre and the concepts on which it was founded, such as family involvement where parents learn alongside their children, child-initiated play and mixed age sessions where children from birth to school-age interact together. It will show how Playcentres operate in today's early childhood environment, and will discuss the challenges facing Playcentre as it moves into the future. This presentation will set the context for the two authors' individual research studies, which are also being presented at this conference.

Key Terms: Playcentre and history.

Munch and Move: Developing a state-wide program to promote healthy eating and physical activity within early childhood services

Lead Presenter: Ms Louise Farrell, Ms Libby Hattersley, Ms Peta Lucas NSW Centre for Physical Activity and Health, University of Sydney

The early childhood sector has a well-established role in promoting healthy eating and activity habits (Gill *et al.* 2005). There is now an opportunity to develop this role further in order to contribute to childhood obesity prevention efforts (Pagnini *et al.* 2006). The success of recent demonstration projects promoting healthy eating and activity in childcare settings provides the basis for a statewide program in NSW (Zask & Adams 2007). As part of a formative research process, a series of structured interviews with key NSW stakeholders from the early childhood and health sectors has investigated how a large-scale, statewide program could be implemented. These consultations have identified differences in how initiatives are traditionally framed and conducted; however, importantly, both sectors have expressed a high level of commitment and enthusiasm for a coordinated approach leading to sustainable changes. These consultations have guided the development of Munch and Move, which will seek to build collaboration between the sectors at both state government and local levels.

Key terms: Childhood obesity prevention, large-scale intervention research and cross-sector collaboration

A study of childhood and child development in Bangladesh and India: Moving beyond a Western individualistic research approach and towards a dialectical framework for community oriented enquiry

Professor Marilyn Flear, Monash University and Katie Ramsay, Plan Australia

Vygotsky (1998) suggested that the dominant view of development as a naturally evolving process of 'ages and stages' positioned children who did not fit the approved developmental trajectory as 'diseases of development'. In this session we will discuss a study design which has been constructed with local community groups in order to build a new and ethical



approach to the study of development from an 'in-country' perspective. This dialectical approach to framing and undertaking research will be outlined (Vygotsky, 1998), drawing upon examples from a rural village near Dhaka, Bangladesh and an urban community on the outskirts of Delhi, India. The findings of this exploratory work on constructing ethical study designs suggest that predetermined steps, explanatory letters, consent forms and the like, focus on an *individualised* construction of research and do not allow researchers to work in culturally embedded ways which are *community* framed. The individualistic orientation to Western research enquiry is problematised in this session, and an alternative dialectical research approach recommended for some research communities.

Key terms: Child development, cultural history theory, transitions and cross cultural

Children's development through participation in everyday activities across different institutions: Disjunction or alignment between childrearing practices and school pedagogy?

Professor Marilyn Flear & Gloria Quiñones, Monash University, Australia; Mariane Hedegaard, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

This presentation seeks to provide a new conceptualisation of the construct of *child development*. The study reported in this session drew upon Vygotsky's (1998) theoretical work on child development - as the foundation for building a dialectical approach for the study of children in families, schools and kindergartens. Capturing and analysing the dynamic processes through which the ontogenesis of psychological functioning is enacted, occurred through an examination of the social situation for development for one child from one family. In this study, the child's participation across different institutions was analysed. The findings suggest that the transition between family and school represents a major crisis in the development of the child. The values, goals and motives for learning in the child's home were shown to be different to those espoused in the school. It was found that learning how to participate in 'schooling' was a central line of development for the focus child, and learning to read and write were peripheral. This study provides evidence in relation to understanding the child's development only when the family's perspective, the schools' perspective, and the dialectical relations between the child-family-school are considered. These ideas will be shared in this presentation.

Key terms: Child development, cultural history theory, transitions and cross cultural

The political landscape of early childhood education in Indonesia

**Mr Ali Foreman, Faculty of Education, Monash University, Australia
Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia**

Indonesia recently passed the first education bill that recognizes early childhood education (ECE). After the enactment of that bill, numerous policy documents, bylaws, curriculum standards and reviews were also published.

At first glance, there appear to be no problems in the Indonesia's ECE policy, however a critical look (Ball, 1994; Taylor *et al.* 1997) revealed a contrast. While advocating the importance of ECE; in fact it is marginalized in terms of budget and well-coordinated service and is competing amongst government bodies. Critical discourse analysis (Taylor, 2004; Paltridge, 2006) also found inter-document conflicts, and between them and the broader



sociocultural realities. Some of the publications promote a child-centred philosophy, others equip practitioners with highly instructive teaching modes. The act recognizes family's significance while some policy documents have no room for family. Along with government attempts to provide mass quality ECE recognition of these problems is a must for further ECE policymaking.

Key Terms: policy, early childhood and education

Early Childhood pre-service teacher educators' use of metaphor to conceptualise learning, teaching and the classroom

Ms Deborah Geoghegan & Dr Shirley O'Neill, University of Queensland

Pre-service early childhood teacher education programs continue to emphasise learning experiences that are inclusive, challenging to the learner and reflective of constructivist thinking and pedagogy. The programs expect to develop teachers who are highly competent in diverse and specialized areas. It would be expected by the end of four years of study and professional experience that early childhood pre-service teachers' have developed substantial confidence to begin their careers and would in turn have reasonable if not high levels of self-efficacy. The present research report provides preliminary results of fourth year pre-service teachers' conceptualization of their beliefs about learning and teaching through the construction of their personal metaphor. In addition students were presented with a four sketches that best depicted their opinion of a positive learning environment and provided a reason for their choice. As Lakoff (1994:43) asserts 'the locus of metaphor is ...in the way we conceptualise one mental domain in terms of another [such as] the word metaphor has come to mean "cross domain mapping in the conceptual system."

Key terms: Metaphor, critical reflection and pedagogy.

You, me and ICT: Engaging children and their families in an inclusive early childhood programme

Lead Presenter: Bronwyn Glass , Raelene Ellis and Kerry Baker, Botany Downs Kindergarten; Dr Helen Bernstone and Dr Bill Hagan Manuka Institute of Technology

"A broad definition of "inclusion" relates not only to children with disabilities or additional support needs being included but also to ensuring that all children feel valued and welcome. And so we increasingly ask ourselves what we can do to achieve the ideals of inclusion in our own settings" (Casey, 2006).

Botany Downs Kindergarten is one of six Centres of Innovation (round three) in New Zealand. Their research questions ask "how does an inclusive environment enhance the learning of all children?" and "how do visual communication tools invite and extend engagement with children and their families?"

Their action research examines the way partnerships with families can be developed through the use of electronic / digital options. The teaching team use email, txt, their website, blogging, DVD and movie making both within the programme and as a means of communication. Initial findings suggest that we need to diversify the way we communicate using the socio-cultural tools of this generation.

Key terms: Inclusion, engagement and visual communication tools



The development of SDN's curriculum framework: Bringing cohesion between theory, research and practice within an ecological context.

Dr Joy Goodfellow & Dr Sandie Wong, SDN Children's Services

Current thinking suggests that curriculum frameworks should function not only as theoretical and pedagogical 'tools' and be oriented within the socio-cultural political context but must also operate as a point of reference for discussion and debate (Nuttall & Edwards, 2007).

SDN Children's Services provides a range of early childhood programs and during the past year has been proactive in documenting its practices. The process involved observations, conversations, interviews and reflection and this led to a critical appreciation (Fish, 1998) of the diversity of SDN programs and resulted in the creation of a Child & Family Learning Framework. It is a textual response to discourses surrounding the educational provisions within the organisation (Nuttall & Edwards, 2007).

This paper provides a context and rationale for the development of the framework. We demonstrate how the framework provides a sense of cohesion and identifies how it is being used as a vehicle for learning conversations (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002).

Key Terms: Curriculum framework, learning communities, research and practice.

Exploring Research in Early Childhood Astronomy Education to a Core Curriculum in Preschool Education

Mrs Camilla Gordon, Australian Centre for Educational Studies, CRIMSE, Macquarie University

This presentation is a work in progress discussing the linking of a proposed PhD project with recently completed M. Hons research on astronomy learning within families. The initial research applied a phenomenological approach of interpretive and reflexive inquiry to highlight the influencing factors of storytelling, repetition and visual imagery to understandings about the way families' appropriate complexity. This new research proposes collective case studies of three child care centres implementing an innovative science curriculum for preschoolers in the year prior to formal schooling. It will seek to inform the value and effectiveness of early science education using a core curriculum focused on the gestalt of astronomy (Earth and Space Science). This will be applied within a theoretical framework of story telling and visual imagery to reduce the complexity of the subject and build on knowledge already at hand. The primary innovative tool of 'butterfly learning' used in the Starwatcher Programme will be explored and trialled in this new research.

Key terms: Early childhood Science education, Astronomy education and visual imagery.

Adult talk to normally developing and speech delayed children in the preschool years

Dr Patricia Henry, Deakin University

Adult talk with young children is a determining factor in children's language development (Snow, 1995). The function in the adult talk influences the likelihood and nature of the conversation that ensues. In this study of 8 children, 4 children with an identified speech



delay, the function of the adult utterances, described using a speech act model (Vanderveken, 1990), to normally developing children and speech delayed children has been compared. Adults and children were recorded playing at home and in the kindergarten setting. A speech act model enabled a description of the adult language as being more or less representative or directive (Pine, 1994) and drew out other features. Representative language supports the development of conversation whereas directive language more likely elicits physical responses. Speech delayed children heard significantly more directive utterances than their non-delayed peers. Adults can be supported in attempts to provide more representative language using books, songs and poetry.

Key terms: Adult input, speech delay and language development.

Influences on preschool children's physical activity behaviours

Ms Trina Hinkley, Deakin University; Professor David Crawford, Dr Jo Salmon, Dr Kylie Hesketh, Deakin University and Dr Tony Okely, University of Wollongong

Physical activity is established during the critical pre-school developmental period (ages 2-5), (Birch & Fisher, 1998) assists in maintaining a healthy weight, thereby preventing obesity, (Janz & Burns, *et al*, 2005), (US Dept of Health, 1996) and may help protect against early onset of adiposity rebound. (Rolland-Cachera, deheefter *et al* 2006), (Jackson & Reilly *et al*, 2003), (Dorosty, Emmett *et a*, 2000). Factors influencing preschool children's physical activity are not well understood, and have not been studied in Australia. (Hinkley & Crawford *et al* under review) Six focus groups were undertaken with a total of 23 mothers of preschool children. Discussions revolved around influences in home, social, and physical environments, and preschool and childcare settings. Perceived influences on children's opportunities to be active include parental commitments, access to safe and appropriate play spaces, the need for social interaction with others to promote physical activity, and opportunities to be active at preschool/childcare. The findings of this and future research in this area may be used to guide interventions to increase preschool children's physical activity. The potential public health impact of such interventions is substantial, as between 31% and 53% of children aged one to five attend childcare, (ABS, 2006) approximately 56% attend preschool, (ABS, 2004) and the prevalence of overweight and obesity in preschool children in Australia (Wake & Hardy *et al* 2007) is high and increasing. (Vaska & Volkmer, 2004).

Key terms: Physical activity, preschool children and environments

Does the "images" early childhood staff and parents have of each other contribute or become a barrier to an equitable relationship developing?

Pat Jewell, Parenting Australia

Theoretical/conceptual location: Early childhood staff/parent relationships

Much has been written on the importance of the parent/early childhood staff relationship for children's optimal learning and development. (Kasting, 1994) Yet parents and early childhood staff continue to find interacting with each other difficult. (Jensen and Kiley, 2005, Powers 2005)



This master's study is exploring whether the "image" early childhood staff and parents have of each other is contributing to these difficult relationships.

Focusing on:

- communication
- respecting knowledge
- parent's role

Methodology: Grounded Theory

Methods:

Semi structured interviews with staff and parents in 3 long day care centres

Journals by both staff and parents

Participant Little Narrative Conference

Findings: Disprove premise and discover new theory.

Implications for Policy/Practice: Challenge to content and teaching styles of undergraduate early childhood courses.

Key terms: Partnerships in early childhood, early childhood staff/parent relationships and Families and early childhood staff.

Muslims in preschools in Norway, England, Australia and New Zealand: religious difference and Islamic practice with children aged one to five.

Professor Jeanette Rhedding- Jones, Faculty of Early Childhood Education, Oslo University College; Sylvanna Mahmic, Children's Services, Pathways Early Childhood Intervention, Marrackville, Sydney; Deb Mann, Children's Services, SCAN SE and IW Program Manager, Newtown, Sydney; Hawohinda Jama, Playgroup Coordinator, Wellington, New Zealand; Cheryl Isaacs, Liz Everiss and Sue Heathwaite, Ministry of Education, Auckland, New Zealand; Rhonda, Playgroup Coordinator, Christchurch, New Zealand.

Theoretical/conceptual location: The project regards the gendered work of Muslim women in Muslim preschools; new approaches to early childhood studies; discourses and epistemologies in acknowledging religion as a critical issue; and not colonizing minorities.

Methodologies: The project draws from action research, ethnography and anti-colonising methodologies. At the same time it resists becoming normalised research by being named a 'development project'.

Findings: there are very few preschools staffed by a majority of Muslims. Those that are practices Islam alongside normalised (national) curricula.

Implications: from Muslim preschools in Norway and England these regard how to blend cultures and languages. In many ways Muslim practitioners are doing what non- Muslim practitioners are trying to do. Other implications are for those who would decentre and move to let periphery voices speak and make decisions.

Key Terms: Muslims, international and difference.



A snapshot of science education in pre-school settings

Dr Wendy Jobling and Dr Coral Campbell, Deakin University

Across Victoria, early childhood educators are incorporating science experiences into daily activities for their children. A small research project, which asked teachers to describe what they did and how they did it, has highlighted some interesting differences. This presentation will describe case studies of four pre-school settings and some of the activities undertaken by the children - both as part of the formal program and through incidental play. It will consider these through a socio-cultural framework, noting how teachers used their understandings of play and play theory, to enhance children's understandings. The overall results of the preliminary questionnaire will be discussed and used to illustrate different aspects and requirements of early childhood educators.

Key terms: Science education, Case studies and play-based learning

How Collaborative Drawing Can Help to 'Make Sense' in Early Childhood Teaching and Learning

Dr Linda Knight, University of Canberra

Due to their richness of expression, young children's drawings have been extensively used to help construct insightful and advancing understandings into childhood development. More recently, children's drawings have also helped to excavate postmodern insights into a child's individual, social and cultural world.

The child is positioned as a poststructural, postmodern meaning-maker (Foucault, 1984/1998), and the educator as a co-constructor rather than director of that meaning-making process (Rogoff, 1990).

My research utilises visual ethnographic models of data collection to explore how a form of collaborative, intergenerational drawing contributes to the body of extant sociocultural research that seeks to invigorate contemporary early childhood teaching and learning.

This collaborative drawing research presents challenges however; this paper explores the potential symbolising frictions that can surface during intergenerational artmaking, proposing that such frictions facilitate discussion into the persistence of modernist approaches to teaching in Australian Early Childhood Education.

Key terms: Collaborative learning, socio-cultural education and poststructural pedagogies.

Footprints in Time- Following the developmental pathways of Australian Indigenous Children

Laura Bennetts Kneebone, Footprints in Time: The Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children, Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

How is early childhood experienced by Indigenous children? In terms of parenting and household composition, home language or languages, child care and early education, health, nutrition and cultural input, Indigenous children can grow up under a unique set of circumstances (Warrki Jarrinjaku, 2002; Zubrick et al. 2004).



It is not thoroughly understood how these early experiences impact on the child's life course, how they can help a child to grow up strong or what is needed to get a child back on track if they are struggling in some way.

Understanding the developmental pathways of children growing up in urban, regional and remote communities is critical to the formation of future policy and programs designed to assist Indigenous families.

'Footprints in Time: The Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children' is due to commence in 2008. It will involve qualitative and quantitative interviewing of the families and carers of 2000 Indigenous children in eleven urban, regional and remote communities around Australia.

Key terms: Longitudinal research, early childhood research and indigenous children.

Experiences of Leisure Pre/Post- Early Parenthood?

David Lamb, Lincoln University

The theoretical framework for this study is based on a critical post feminist perspective, where the 'actors' in the research are the key to understanding the issues raised in the research. The study group or research 'actors', consists of fourteen couples involved in a heterosexual relationship, both at the pre birth (pregnancy) stage and at the post birth stage. The focus of this study is on how parenthood (pre and post pregnancy) impacts upon family leisure in heterosexual couples.

The study utilised a focus group methodology, an under utilised tool of research in the social sciences. In selecting this methodology, I sought to understand their attitudes, opinions and beliefs about family leisure.

The data generated was analysed with reference to: the context of the research; words spoken by participants; frequency and specificity of their feedback and intensity of their comments. The research has implications for leisure organisations and personnel, concerned with providing for the needs of pregnant couples and parents with young children.

Key terms: Family, leisure and parenthood

Kia Puawai: Giving Children the Best Start in Life/Research & Evaluation Strategy for New Zealand

Ph.D Constance M. Lehman & Ph.D Rachel Sutherland, Center for Social Research & Evaluation, Ministry of Social Development, New Zealand

New Zealand's Kia Puawai (the blossoming) framework was developed by an intergovernmental policy group, lead by the Ministry of Social Development. The purpose of the framework is to build a system of services and supports for children birth to six and their families that has the capacity to achieve five key outcomes for all children, especially those most vulnerable. These outcomes are:

- secure attachment to family and whanau
- good physical and mental health
- safe and free from abuse, neglect, and family violence or death from injury



- support to reach their full potential
- arrive at school ready to learn

This presentation describes the national framework and presents the integrated research and evaluation strategy that will measure progress toward effective system development and improved child outcomes. The research and evaluation strategy is being lead by the Centre for Social Research and Evaluation, with oversight by a steering committee made up of the general managers of the policy and program departments of the Ministry.

Attendees will come away with an understanding of how policy, program, and research groups within New Zealand government collaborate to establish an integrated approach to building and evaluating the system of services and supports intended to improve outcomes for young children. The success factors and challenges to effectively implementing and maintaining a systems approach that incorporates research and evaluation within the strategic design will be discussed.

Key terms: Early childhood, national strategy, research and evaluation.

Early language and literacy as social practice: engaging families, children and preschool staff in an educationally disadvantaged Australian community

Lead Presenter: George Lewis, KU Children's Services

Co Author's / not attending, Kym Booth, Judy Croll, Michelle Davis, Linda Stock, Tracey Wise

KU Children's Services Early Language and Literacy Initiative offered in two preschools in an educationally disadvantaged area of Sydney, uses research on language and literacy as social practice as a basis for increasing children's engagement at preschool and at home during the preschool years. (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; Dickinson & Neuman, 2003).

The model involves supporting preschool staff in undertaking focused planning to involve children and families through (a) staff development and action research, (b) language intervention covering phonemic, semantic, morphemic, and syntactical awareness, and (c) literacy initiatives covering speaking, listening, drawing, reading, viewing, and writing.

Initial findings show that if staff (a) adopt purposeful holistic language and literacy programming, (b) work in an environment that encourages autonomy and provides language and literacy advisory support, and (c) recognise cultural and social diversity, then children and families are more likely to become engaged in language and literacy experiences.

Key terms: Language, literacy and early childhood



Tooty Fruity Vegie in Preschools – A pilot program promoting healthy eating and physical activity in preschools on the North Coast of NSW

Ms Peta Lucas, NSW Department of Health; Ms Jillian Adams, North Coast Area Health Service

Early childhood is a critical time to establish healthy habits in young children. A team of health professionals from the NSW North Coast Area Health Service designed the *Tooty Fruity Vegie for Preschools* program - a healthy eating and physical activity initiative for pre-schools. The program targets preschool staff, parents and children directly with the aim of reducing the rising level of childhood obesity by increasing physical activity and reducing intakes of energy-dense food and drinks of preschool children. The intervention was trialled during 2006 in six preschools with one control preschool. Following promising preliminary findings, the program was extended to include 12 intervention and 12 control preschools in 2007. Results indicate that this innovative program has successfully improved both physical activity and nutritional intake. The program is considered transferable and is the basis for the development and statewide rollout of the Munch & Move initiative across NSW preschools and long day care.

Key terms: Childhood obesity prevention, professional development, nutrition and physical activity.

Can I do what I want to do? Individual agency amongst Playcentre parents-as-educators

Suzanne Manning, Victoria University of Wellington

Playcentre is unique in that the parents are the educators of the children in the centre setting. They are supported through training and mentoring from experienced members, but they come with a variety of backgrounds and knowledges that draw from fields other than early childhood education. This multiple case study research investigated how the different background influenced the teaching practice of four parents-as-educators in one Playcentre, using observations and interviews. The results were analysed using Rogoff's (2003) three planes of analysis, which found that on a personal level, the parents chose to use their parenting skills and their current interests. However, whether they felt empowered to then use these skills depended on their sense of individual agency within the group (Reid and Stover, 2005), and this was influenced by the interpersonal dynamics and the organisational philosophy. Some implications for Playcentre can be suggested from this research.

Key terms: Playcentre, parent participation and individual agency.

Multiple Literacies: a lens for understanding how children acquire writing systems simultaneously

Professor Diana Masny, Faculty of Education University of Ottawa

This presentation examines how children acquire writing systems simultaneously to gain an understanding about learning and creativity (Pahl, 2007) when children develop literacies in a multilingual environment. A Multiple Literacies Theory (Masny, 2006) informs the research. Multiple Literacies are texts conveyed through gestures, attitudes, ways of speaking, writing, and valuing. The research questions are what do children understand about competing writing systems and how their understanding of these systems impact their reading, reading of



the world, and self. The methodology involves a case study focusing on one 7 year old girl speaking Spanish, French, and English. The project combines classroom and home observations, interviews, viewing, and documents from home and school. Following a rhizomatic analysis (Alvermann, 2000), the results reveal the importance of writing as aesthetics, and the role of affect and creativity in writing. Understanding through dialogue how children write can significantly impact classroom and home practices around text.

Key terms: Literacies, multiple literacies theory and competing writing systems

Participation in an online early childhood community: an inspiration and opportunity

Cheryl McConnell & Gillian Postlewaight, Eastern Institute of Technology

This research evaluates a collaborative support and guidance programme, provided by the Eastern Institute of Technology, (EIT) for the registration process of early childhood teachers in Aotearoa/New Zealand. All teachers must gain provisional registration with the New Zealand Teachers Council and participate in a support and guidance programme for two years to gain full registration. In most cases, the registration occurs on a one to one basis. In contrast, EIT's programme involves teachers engaging in collaborative learning; one aspect of which comprises online dialogue. This considers current literature, together with teachers' perceptions from individual interviews, in a discussion about the efficacy of online dialogue in the building of a community of practice and a tool for teacher professional development. A key finding is that online technology provides a more equitable and non-hierarchical learning environment as well as an inspirational space for sharing the tensions and joys of teaching. Technologies have the potential to provide professional development for teachers that will see increased connectedness, community and collaborative reflection.

Key terms: Collaborative learning, online technology and community of practice.

"Phonological awareness: Can it be enhanced in the early childhood setting?"

Lead presenter: Associate Professor Claire McLachlan Co-authors / not attending **Dr Alison Arrow, Massey University College of Education**

There is a growing body of evidence that children who possess both alphabetic and phonological awareness on school entry are in a good position to make the transition from emergent to conventional literacy (Nicholson, 2005; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). One of the challenges is how teachers can foster emergent literacy, including alphabetic and phonological awareness, within a holistic curriculum framework, such as New Zealand's early childhood curriculum, Te Whāriki. Drawing on our respective research studies into children's literacy (Arrow, 2007; McLachlan et al., 2006, 2007), we will discuss the implications for an early childhood intervention project to be carried out in 2008 which is aimed at promoting phonological awareness and alphabetic knowledge in children aged 3-5 years, through professional development of teachers. The issues of challenging teachers' beliefs, the impact of professional development, research with children and teachers, and curriculum development will be explored.

Key terms: phonological awareness, teachers' beliefs, professional development



Why integrate services for young children and their families?

Ms June McLoughlin, Centre for Community Child Health, Royal Children's Hospital.

The Linking Schools and Early Years Project is being undertaken by the Centre for Community Child Health (CCCH) in partnership with three Victorian communities, supported by The R.E. Ross Trust.

Research has demonstrated the potential to better meet the individual needs of children entering school (CCCH, 2006) by linking early years services and schools. The project approach, based on the Ready Child equation (Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, 2005), promotes partnerships between parents, community, early years services and schools to improve transitions between services, connection with families and responsiveness to the individual learning needs of all children.

The project runs from 2007-2012; with year one dedicated to establishing local partnership groups to guide the project. With support from CCCH and informed by local consultation, each partnership is responsible for project conceptualisation, development and implementation.

The presentation will outline the rationale, methodology, early learning and policy implications of the project with reference to the independent evaluation being conducted by the Social Policy Research Centre of UNSW and the use of the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) as a baseline measure.

Key terms: Children, integrate, care and education.

Linking Schools and Early Years – a project case study

Ms June McLoughlin & Ms Bella Laidlaw, Centre for Community Child Health

The Linking Schools and Early Years Project is being undertaken by the Centre for Community Child Health (CCCH) in partnership with three Victorian communities, supported by The R.E. Ross Trust.

Research has demonstrated the potential to better meet the individual needs of children entering school (CCCH, 2006) by linking early years services and schools. The project approach, based on the Ready Child equation (Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, 2005), promotes partnerships between parents, community, early years services and schools to improve transitions between services, connection with families and responsiveness to the individual learning needs of all children.

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Key terms: Local partnerships, children and outcomes.



A Day in the Life of an Early Years Practitioner in England: exploring professional practice

Professor Linda Miller, The Open University

This project, based in England, is part of a wider international project, which strives to identify common features of professional practices through tracing one day of one early childhood practitioner from each of seven countries in their specific local context. The project has aimed to explore professional habitus in relation to professional practices (Oberheumer, 2005). The case study approach draws on the work of Gillen et.al (2007). In many countries national pedagogical and regulatory frameworks have been introduced as a means to foster and control practices and their outcomes (Osgood, 2006). They are often linked to a terminology of 'profession', thus, raising questions about the notion of 'profession' and professional autonomy. The project shows how one early childhood practitioner, 'acts as a professional' in a particular context and identifies some emerging themes and dispositions.

Key terms: Professionalism, early childhood practitioners and habitus

Effective Transitions to school: Perceptions of key stakeholders

Miss Moska Mirkhil, Monash University

The first year of school marks a significant educational transition for children as it involves a child encountering and engaging in different events in comparison to those experienced in their prior-to-school or home environments. Starting school is a major transition in the early years of a child's life as identified by a range of research (Briggs & Potter, 1995; Temperley et al, 2003 & Dockett et al 2000). According to the Victorian Department of Education (DET) (1992), starting school is a key challenge that children have to cope with in their early childhood years. Similarly, Brostrom (2005) advocates that children experience the transition to school in different ways, as they bring with them a range of skills, abilities and curiosities, based on their diverse experiences prior to the commencement of their formal education (Dockett & Perry, 2007). This qualitative case study research project investigated children's, parents, early childhood educators and primary school teachers' views about the transition to school through a semi structured interview with each participant at their relevant settings. In seeking to understand how the stakeholders perceived effective transition, this study added to existing knowledge regarding the importance of transition to children's school experiences, by identifying issues that were experienced by the participant. Understanding how stakeholders perceive the process will help parents, prior-to-school teachers and primary school teachers identify aspect of transition that children experience from perspectives other than their own. This research has further supported current and previous studies indicating that further research is required in the field of transition to school, in order to ensure that children experience social and academic success at school.

Key terms: Transition, school and stakeholders



The dynamics of intergenerational research into child-rearing practices: Grappling with methodological design issues.

Ms Hilary Monk, Monash University

The transmission of societal practices has occurred throughout history. Ideas about what is transmitted and how it is transmitted are prevalent. The role of the intergenerational family is important although it does not hold a monopoly over social and cultural transmission (Bertaux & Thompson, 1993). The dynamics of interaction between three generations and the effects on children's learning have been identified as issues for further research (for example Kenner, Ruby, Jessell, Gregory & Arju, 2007). This paper considers a work in progress where the transmission dynamics (Vygotsky, 1978) of process rather than product are foregrounded. The focus of the research is on the ways motives and goals (Hedegaard, 2005) are appropriated or transformed between the generations, in particular through the family/household child-rearing practices. Using a review of family, childrearing and intergenerational transmission literature, this paper grapples to identify potentially useful units of analysis as a focus for intergenerational research. This session will explore these methodological design issues.

Key terms: Intergenerational, child-rearing and methodology.

ICT in early childhood education: Perceptions, potential and reality

Dr Donna Morrow and Julie Mackey, University of Canterbury

In 2005 the New Zealand Ministry of Education launched a strategy to promote the use of ICT in the early childhood sector, and simultaneously committed significant resources to professional development. A need exists to understand the current deployment of resources, teacher beliefs and capability in order to inform specific professional development initiatives. This research reports on a survey of a broad cross-section of early childhood providers and explores tensions between socio-cultural approaches to learning and a perceived technological imperative (Bolstad, 2004; Siraj-Blatchford & Siraj-Blatchford, 2006; Stephen & Plowman, 2003).

The study examines the relationships between infrastructure, teacher beliefs and implementation. Not surprisingly the survey data indicate that teachers see significant barriers that impede the use of ICT in early childhood. However when asked to identify possible benefits of integrating ICT into early childhood programmes, a majority of teachers made a connection between the use of ICT and learning, indicating that a supportive base for implementation exists. This study explores these beliefs and issues.

Key Terms: Early childhood education, learning, information and communication technologies.



Exploring and enhancing levels of reflection in pre-service early childhood teachers

Lead Presenter: Dr Andrea Nolan
Deakin University
Co Author / not attending Dr Jenny Sim
RMIT University

This presentation will focus on a research project undertaken with pre-service early childhood teachers at Deakin University, Victoria, Australia. The project applied models of assessing reflection to the work of these students, with the aim of enhancing the student teachers' reflection. The first part of the project was to objectively evaluate the students' level of reflection. Based on the data obtained, the second part aimed to develop a better understanding of how lecturers can better assist student teachers, both current and future, to enhance the reflection process. Plack, Driscoll, Blissett, McKenna & Plack (2005) state that 'while reflection is generally accepted as a critical component of learning from experience and essential to professional education, limited research has been conducted to address the issue of how to assess reflection' (p.210). This research project was our attempt to add to that literature. This presentation traces the journey of all those involved and highlights what the researchers have learnt along the way.

Key terms: Levels of reflection, enhancing reflection and pre-service early childhood teachers

Researching children's musical experiences: learning stories, affordances, activity theory and curriculum design

Dr Berenice Nyland and Dr Jill Ferris, RMIT University

This paper examines the musical experiences of children in a local child care centre, where teachers are enthusiastic about music but claim to have no particular musical expertise. The paper describes the provision of musical experiences within the centre and relates these as learning stories (Carr, 2001). Initial observations indicate that music does not have a strong presence within the curriculum practices of this centre. The paper explores the proposition that teacher perception and music, as it is presently constructed, within the curriculum impacts upon music as a cultural artefact and language within this program. Data is used to discuss the relationship between the affordances of materials and teacher beliefs and perceptions about their musical knowledge and skills. Affordances and activity theory (Needham, 2007; Carr, 2000) provide a research structure to extend the "what next" aspect of the learning story framework.

Key terms: Music, childcare and learning stories

The changing language of early childhood education and care

Dr Berenice Nyland, RMIT University

The language of early childhood is changing. In recent years terms like human capital and investment have been adopted by policy-makers, practitioners and researchers alike (Heckman & Tremblay, 2006; Lucas, 2006). This paper discusses the implications of this current economic agenda and queries the impact upon more traditional views of early childhood that have emphasised ideals of rights, social justice and progressive universalism.



Rigby, Tarrant and Neuman (2007) point out that such changes in policy direction and language are choices that are “social, political moral and value-laden” (p. 98). Using a rights perspective (Smith, 2007) and Australia’s early childhood reforms, as promulgated in the National Reform Agenda (NRA), the implications for using concepts like human capital in a framework like Australia’s National Competition Policy will be discussed. It is argued that such an approach has the potential to diminish children’s citizenship rights and even compromise the quality of learning experiences in the early years.

Key terms: Human capital, rights and progressive universalism.

Examining early childhood teacher perceptions of ICT: Do we all speak the same language?"

Lisa Oldridge, Victoria University of Wellington

The use of information and communication technologies has grown exponentially over recent years. There is a growing body of evidence to suggest that it is the pedagogical approach that teachers apply when using information and communication technologies to enhance the educational programme offered that makes the difference to children’s learning (Downes, Arthur, & Beecher, 2001).

This paper will discuss the initial findings of multiple mixed method interpretative (Lincoln & Guba, 2000) case studies (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000) which investigated the

perceptions and practices surrounding the use of information and communication technologies in early childhood settings. This paper will focus on reporting the teacher’s perceptions of this phenomenon and how this research may contribute to early childhood education. This paper draws on data collected as part of a larger doctoral study that is a work in progress.

Key terms: Information and communication technologies, perceptions and methodology

Rethinking Visual Arts in Early Childhood Education

Dr Chris Peers, Monash University

Abstract: This paper examines the prevailing directions and values in early childhood educational literature for the Visual Arts. It provides a historical overview of influences and priorities, and analyses the function that Visual Arts continues to play in early childhood education. The paper approaches these values through a feminist and post-structuralist lens, influenced by the work of Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray. It seeks a new basis for understanding early childhood artistic explorations by considering the relation between aesthetic experience and dominant accounts of the child’s entry into language. By analysing changes in traditional understandings of the relationship between visual imagery, writing and language in Western contexts, it is possible to track the theories and practices through which modern concepts of the Visual Arts as a psychological domain emerged, and in turn, how approaches to art in early childhood have developed historically.

Key terms: Visual arts, early childhood and language.



Diversity, inclusion and transition to school

Ms Anne Petriwskyj, School of Early Childhood, Queensland University of Technology

The intersection of the emerging paradigms of transition to school and inclusion of diverse learners presents challenges to teachers whose understandings have been framed by notions of school readiness and special education for children with disabilities. Using critical and ecological systems theory as frames, this mixed method study of early years children and teachers across 3 Queensland school sites explored the impact of a range of proximal and distal factors on children's achievement and adjustment during school transition. It went beyond structural issues to consider pedagogic responses to diverse learners in transition from preparatory/ kindergarten class to Year 2. While it identified factors supporting successful transition from play-based to outcomes-based programs, it also highlighted areas of tension between inclusive policies and normative beliefs that have implications for teacher preparation, in-service professional learning and collegial relationships as well a resourcing and policy.

Key terms: Transition, diversity and pedagogy

'Santa's Buckle' - Using a cultural-historical framework to show societal, personal and institutional influences on learning in an Australian early childhood community.

Mrs Avis Ridgway, Monash University.

How does an early childhood institution shape what is possible for children, families and staff? The chance discovery of an historically situated artefact (Santa's buckle) is used to probe this question. A local cultural system examined through the mediational affordances of 'Santa's buckle', reveals the relational dynamic between different institutional values, motives and intentions of staff, children and families. Vygotsky's (1978) cultural-historical theory provides a theoretical framework for the idea that learning and understanding are social in origin. Cultural-historical psychology suggests human activity takes place in local cultural systems mediated through language, materials and artifacts (Wertsch, 1985, Hedegaard, 2005). Hedegaard's model of learning and development (2005) builds on Vygotsky's theorizing.

A methodological dialectic developed using historic documentation, images and audio interview, reveals institutional influences shaping possibilities. Findings show the values of frugality and existence of cultural-historic traditions and community expectations have power to shape institutional activity with consequences for practice.

Key terms: Mediating artefact, Relational dynamics: values, motives, intentions and Institutional practices and influences



Physical activity in diverse early childhood settings: reporting formative research findings and recommendations

Mrs Annaleise Riethmuller, Dr Anthony Okely and Ms Kim McKeen, Child Obesity Research Centre, University of Wollongong

Formative research (questionnaires, focus groups, observations, collection of artefacts) was conducted to identify barriers to physical activity in three early childhood settings: long day care, family day care and kindergartens. This research was then used to design a fundamental movement skill development resource and professional development package. The study found key barriers to change were time, financial constraints, motivation, and understanding.

This study increases the body of literature available on early childhood setting structures, and research into physical activity and provision of professional development specifically in early childhood settings. This study provides a valuable support for future research into each of these areas.

This study was part of a larger study, Romp and Chomp, which was based on a social ecological model (Birch & Davison, 2001). The study was also guided by competence motivation theory; the belief that increased competence and confidence in physical activity will lead to increased participation in, and teaching of, physical activity (Weiss, 2000).

Key terms: Physical activity, early childhood and professional development.

Ethical Dilemmas in a Pasifika Research: Samoan men in Early Childhood Education

Ms Seiuli Luama Sauni, Univeristy of Auckland

This paper explores the ethical dilemmas encountered by a Samoan researcher in her investigation of the experiences of Samoan male students in a pre-service Pasifika ECE diploma programme. The paper identifies a number of issues relating to power relations that exist in a researcher-participant relationship, particularly when there are differences based on (i) gender (ii) institutional status and (iii) cultural status. Westernised research methods and theoretical approaches were found to be inadequate sources of support when addressing these ethical dilemmas – as a consequence, an alternative, more authentic and principled approach was developed. The development and application of the 'ula' model, embedded with key values articulated and practiced from a Samoan perspective, enabled the researcher to address these unanticipated barriers in the research process. This enhanced both the terms of engagement for the participants and herself as researcher. The paper argues that this resulted in research that was both authentic and robust.

Key terms: Power relations, cultural perspectives and theoretical framework

ESL@ECC: Supporting children with home languages other than English attending early childhood centres in New Zealand. Initial findings.

Anne Schofield, Dr Louise Keown and Dr Margie Hohepa, University of Auckland

Increasing numbers of young children with diverse home languages are attending Early Childhood Centres in New Zealand but little is known about how centres support the English



language development of these children (Schofield, 2007). Sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) suggests that comprehensible, meaningful interactions with more able adults and peers supports the successful acquisition of language (Halliday, 2004; Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Nunan, 2001)

This study investigated the experiences of children with diverse home languages attending three centres reflecting different philosophies and practices. Four children participated at each centre. Six 90 minute observations collected over 10 months focussed on the participants' interactions with teachers and peers. The participants' productive language development was assessed during observations, and receptive language was measured using the British Picture Vocabulary Scale.

This presentation describes the initial findings of the study. It discusses the participant's different experiences and their impact on English language acquisition.

Key terms: Language diversity, English language acquisition and teacher child interaction

'No gay parents at kindy': Heterosexism, childhood innocence and a pedagogy of inclusion

Mr Anthony Semann, Semann & Slattery & Associate Professor Kerry Robinson, University of Western Sydney

This paper reports on a research study involving early childhood educators in the state of NSW. Its aim was to identify the factors that contribute to homophobia and heterosexism and how these might be challenged and disrupted in educational contexts in order to counteract the discrimination faced by gays and lesbians in society, and more specifically in early childhood education contexts.

A survey containing a combination of multiple choice and short answer questions was sent to over 1000 NSW based children's services providers. The researchers identified a range of emerging discourses including the intersection between childhood innocence and pedagogical endeavours and the mobilisation of child centred pedagogy in order to justify heterosexist practices. Additionally this research study identified the impact that qualifications and management structure have on tackling homophobia and heterosexism. This study builds on previous Australian research (Robinson & Jones-Diaz 2005, Robinson, 2002) where the relevance and challenges in including gay and lesbian issues into early childhood practices were identified.

Key Terms: Homophobia, heterosexism and childhood innocence.

The stress and child care project – where are we now?

Margaret Sims Edith Cowan University, Andrew Guilfoyle and Trevor Parry, Edith Cowan University, University of Western Australia

Chronic atypical stress levels in developing children impact on brain development and thus on long term developmental, health (physical and mental) and wellbeing outcomes (Gunnar & Cheatham, 2003; Seplaki, Goldman, Weinstein, & Yu-Hsuan, 2004). A quality environment for young children is one where stress is kept to a minimum (Sims, Guilfoyle, & Parry, 2006). This study examines the impact of child care quality (measured by QIAS principles) on children's stress levels (measured by salivary cortisol). In high quality programmes children demonstrate

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a decline in cortisol but in programmes rated as unsatisfactory cortisol levels increase. The relationship dimensions of quality have an important influence on children's cortisol levels; children need to feel safe and psychologically secure before they are able to learn. In times of diminishing resources, it is important services recognise attending to relationships will have more positive impacts on children's outcomes than attention to other dimensions of quality.

Key terms: Child care, quality and stress

Literacy in early childhood

Critical analysis of resource document *Literacies, Communities and Under5s*

Archana Sinh, C& K College of Early Childhood

This paper gives a critical analysis (Jones Diaz, 2003; Lankshear, 1998) of the resource document (Resource Document), *Literacies, Communities and Under 5s* (2001). Within this paper a document represents a context and is also an instrument of influence for that context

through its interpretation (Prior, 2003). Australian socio historical background frames the context for its understanding (Arthur, 2001; Lo Bianco, 2000).

Literacy practices are looked at from the perspective of bilingual/multilingual families. Within these understandings literacy is discussed as a social practice; (Arthur, 2001); Critical literacy (Jones Diaz, 2003); literacy and social justice; and some newer understandings of literacy. The newer understandings include, multiliteracies, technology and popular culture (Lankshear 1998: New London Group, 2000).

Application and interpretation of the Resource Document can add a depth to the understanding of early literacy practices and expectations. Evaluation and application of the Resource Document could be the basis for a future dialogue in literacy and language policy in Australia.

Key terms: Critical analysis, understanding early literacy practices, Resource document and context.

Deconstructing Policy: How the Australian government problematises early childhood education and care.

Jess Mison-Smith, Monash University

Foucault's work around the development of the modern, liberal government explicitly suggests that the power of the state cannot exist and function without the interplay of 'other, already-existing power relations' (Foucault [1977], 2000, p.123). This therefore leads to thinking about government policy as shaped by government but given power and function by pre-existing discourses that are socially constructed.

This paper will report on some preliminary policy analysis, which explores how early childhood education and care has been problematised by the Australian government. Bacchi's (2007) "What's the Problem Represented to be" approach will be used to deconstruct the policy



document/s, looking at issues such as what assumptions underlie the problematisations, how subjects are constituted and what can be said and not said.

This work assists in building a picture of the intricacies of policy construction and the ways in which conflicting, contrasting and complimentary discourses converge to establish policy documents in early childhood education and care.

Key terms: Governance, policy and deconstruction

Looking in another way: Considering teachers' roles from the children's perspective

Alison Stephenson, Victoria University of Wellington

The focus of this paper is on children's perspectives of the teachers' roles in an ece centre. Ethnographic data (Carspecken, 1996) collected over 5 months, and children's conversations in the context of a number of research strategies (e.g. an unfinished book, picture questionnaire, children's photographs of their portfolios) were analysed using principles of grounded theory (Charmaz, 1995). Five roles were identified and are described here, with particular attention given to the role of teacher as educator because it was found many

aspects of the role were invisible to children. The implications for both teachers and children are discussed.

The paper is drawn from a larger qualitative research in which Activity Theory (Engeström, 1999) was used as the framework for a study of the hidden and null curriculum (Eisner, 1985) in an early childhood education centre.

Key terms: Children's perspectives, teacher's role and learning and teaching.

Readiness for School – Educators' perceptions and The Australian Early Development Index

Reesa Sorin, James Cook University, Cairns

The Canadian-based Early Development Index (EDI) defines school readiness within five developmental domains: physical health and wellbeing; social competence; emotional maturity; language and cognitive skills' and communication skills and general knowledge. Based on other early development indices and trials within Canada, the EDI uses over one hundred indicators to determine whether a child is "performing well", average or "developmentally vulnerable." From its introduction to Australia in 2003 and subsequent modifications for an Australian audience, the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) has been used in over 50 communities throughout Australia to collect data on school readiness for school, community and government use. However, the definition of what makes a child ready for school is still a debate in schools, early childhood centres and homes nationwide. It is a question I asked of educators in this region in a recent forum of the Far North Early Childhood Network. Their responses, and data collected from the AEDI in Cairns South (2006/7) are presented in this paper as an attempt to further define what it means to be "ready for school".

Key terms: School readiness and Australian early development index



“We do want our children to learn. But we do not know how to help them”

A study on what parents in disadvantaged communities in Sri Lanka need to know to help their children’s learning and development.

Dr Indrani M.M Talagala, Open University of Sri Lanka

Vygotskian theory emphasizes (1934/1987) that children’s learning and thinking is rooted in social situations and relationships (Fleer, 1995). Conversely, Gardner (1998) opines that parents are more important when it comes to children’s education. To provide support for this task a project was launched to raise awareness of Sri Lankan parents in selected disadvantaged communities.

The study sample of the need survey was 100 families. The areas parents need interventions were identified through a questionnaire. The results indicated that parents value education but did not know how to support their children. A handbook was prepared in consultation with preschool teachers and parents as a supportive tool. The on going project will help parents to realize that there is no magic behind children’s performance in preschools, which their own behaviours cannot stimulate.

Key terms: Disadvantaged communities, intervention and learning and development

Reconceptualising children’s racialised thinking: Implications for practice

Dr Anna Targowska Edith Cowan University

Based on the author’s PhD thesis, this paper aims to contribute to the re-conceptualisation of children’s racialised thinking. It questions some of the traditional theories on children and ‘race’ and discusses examples of a gradually growing body of research (Connolly, 1996, 1998b; Rizvi, 1993a; van Ausdale and Feagin, 2001) that demonstrate a paradigmatic shift in understanding of this phenomenon. Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological approach to human development is used as a framework for conceptualising the complexities of children’s racialised ideas and their links to broader social structures. Theoretical reflections are illustrated with some findings from a study conducted with 3-, 5- and 7-year-old children. The excerpts from the face to face interviews demonstrate the contextual, multifaceted nature of children’s racialised thought and the young child’s competence in comprehending the dynamics of ‘race’. The paper argues that the way we conceptualise children’s racialised thought has some important implications for early childhood policy and practice.

Key terms: Early childhood policy and practice, Bronfenbrenner’s ecological theory and children and ‘race’

Professionalising the Early Childhood Education (ECE) workforce

Peggy Tan, Monash University

The purpose of this paper is to examine how professionalising the Early Childhood Education (ECE) workforce will raise the status, improve the practice and reduce the attrition rate of ECE teachers in New Zealand. Literature on teacher professionalism has identified the professional competency of teachers as a key determining factor and a major dimension of quality education. This is also supported by research on quality childcare which linked childcare



workers with training to high quality delivery of childcare curriculum (Abbott and Pugh 1998; Kagan and Rigby 2003; OECD 2006; Shonkoff and Phillips 2000). Although, there is abundant literature on professionalism in general and teacher professionalism in particular, there is a paucity of such literature focusing on early childhood teachers. This is an in-depth case study employing both qualitative and quantitative methods to analyse data obtained from survey questionnaires and interviews. The findings aim to inform policy makers and professional associations by addressing issues such as the retention and professional practice of the ECE workforce.

Key terms: Professionalism, workforce and early childhood

The strengthened rope – O Le Maea Malosi **What is distance learning from a Pasifika perspective?**

Ms Meripa Toso & Ms Seiuli Luama Sauni, University of Auckland

This discussion will include research methods and methodology which incorporate the western perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Gay, 200; Drewery, Bird, 2004). It is a work in progress as it describes the emerging theoretical and conceptual framework for research in the near future. This presentation is about a proposed research topic about the Pacific Island Early Childhood Education Teacher Education Programme at the Faculty of Education,

University of Auckland. The Tokoroa cohort is a satellite programme that was taught from 2004-2007. The teaching staff from the School of Pasifika Education commuted weekly to Tokoroa 214 kilometres in distance to deliver the same courses as their counterparts at the main campus in Epsom Auckland. The satellite programme's unique features necessitated the development of highly specialised forms of interaction between students and lecturers. *O le Maea Malosi* is a metaphor for a model of practice that promotes effective teaching and learning for these specific Pasifika learners. (McDonald, 2004; Alipia, 2005; Airini, 2005; Kaloto, 2001).

Key terms: Pasifika Perspective, early childhood education and teacher Education.

A Vygotskian analysis of young children's thinking

Jill Robbins, Monash University

Lev S. Vygotsky was a man ahead of his time. During the 1920s and the early 1930s he developed a complex theory of sociocultural/cultural-historical development that has, during the last three decades, gained increasing interest in many disciplines - including education and psychology - and his ideas are still undergoing reflection and development.

This presentation will demonstrate one way in which aspects of Vygotsky's (1987, 1997a, 1997b, 1998, 1999) work, such as intermental to intramental functioning, semiotic mediation, lower to high mental functioning, can inform analysis of young children's thinking about the world. Focusing on conversations with children about natural phenomena, the analysis will identify a number of significant issues that are not normally revealed through the dominant forms of analysis which draw on constructivist perspectives. The findings, which reveal



complex and dynamic aspects of children's thinking, have implications for both teachers and researchers working with young children – especially within science education and science education research.

Key terms: Sociocultural/cultural-historical, children's thinking and methodology

Evaluating NZ early childhood education professional development: Access, barriers and effectiveness

Deborah Wansbrough & Sue Cherrington, Victoria University of Wellington

Pathways to the Future: Ngā Huarahi Arataki, the 10-year Strategic Plan for ECE in New Zealand, identified reviewing the delivery of professional development (PD) as one strategy for “promoting the effective delivery of *Te Whāriki*” (Ministry of Education, 2002, p. 15) within the overall goal of improving quality within ECE services. This paper reports on aspects of a national evaluation of ECE professional development undertaken for the Ministry of Education in 2005-06. The paper describes the multi-method approach taken for the evaluation, and highlights findings in two key areas: 1) issues around access to professional development and barriers to practitioners engaging in PD, and 2) the effectiveness of professional development programmes in supporting and sustaining shifts in pedagogical practices underpinned by *Te Whāriki*.

Key terms: Professional development, effectiveness and access and barriers.

A Bakhtinian home-coming: Operationalising dialogism in the context of a Wellington, NZ, early childhood education context

Jayne White, Victoria University of Wellington

Drawing on the ideas of Mikhail Bakhtin, this presentation critically describes the author's attempts to operationalise dialogic principles in a research project that seeks to explore teacher-child authorship. The author will present data from a pilot study (completed in October 2007) in which a teacher (as-author of the assessment) was invited to interpret the metaphoric acts of a toddler, using video footage and a coding-based software programme. These interpretations are considered alongside those of the researcher (as-author of the project), who had access to time-shared video footage from the visual field of the toddler.

The methodological issues of coding data (in terms of composition and genre), and associated notions of aesthetics and morality, which are integral to a Bakhtinian-based methodology will be considered as a prerequisite to the data-generating phase of the project in February 2008. The implications of this work build into the completion of the author's doctoral thesis entitled “The metaphoric act: Authoring the two-year old hero”.

Key terms: Bakhtin, dialogism and methodology



Young Asian children in New Zealand – A case study of settlement experience of newly arrived children with Hong Kong heritage

Melanie Wong

This paper investigates the settlement experiences of children who are newly arrived in New Zealand from Hong Kong heritage. Parents/family background, cultural differences and learning English as a second language impact on conditions of children's settlement (Richard, 1994 and May, 1994). Children's learning and development are determined by the people and environment/culture surrounded them, according to ecological theory. My case study included observations of three children who were from Hong Kong and New Zealand born, and also interviews were done with their parents and teachers. The findings indicate that communication and socialisation are considered to be an important development area for newly settled immigrant children growing up in a different culture. Social-cultural theory asserts the interactions help language development through collaborative involvement (Rogoff, 1990). Both immigrant parents and teachers must be able to work collaboratively, and successful strategies for teachers towards working with newly arrived immigrant children will be discussed.

Key terms: Immigrant, children and experience

Rewards and challenges of transdisciplinary play-based early childhood intervention: An evaluation of SDN's Family Resource Centre and PlayLinks programs.

Dr Sandie Wong, Ms Tamara Cumming & Ms Kay Turner SDN Children's Services

In 2006-07 SDN Children's Services conducted an evaluation of its Child, Family and Children's Services Programs (Wong & Cumming, 2007). This paper presents the findings of two of the six research projects conducted, focusing specifically on the work of the SDN Family Resource Centre and PlayLinks programs.

These two 'non-targeted', family-centred (Dunst, 2000; 2002), strengths-based (McCashen, 2005) early intervention programs are delivered by transdisciplinary teams. These teams work collaboratively (Bruder, 1994) and use purposeful play (Odom & Wolery, 2003) as a non-threatening, non-stigmatising, 'soft entry point' into more targeted early intervention (Centre for Community Child Health, 2006).

In this paper we briefly describe the two programs; outline their theory of change (Funnell, 2000); and present the findings of our evaluation, focusing in particular on: i) outcomes for children and families; ii) the role of the professional; iii) the value of using play-based, strengths-based and capacity-building approaches in early intervention; and iv) some of the challenges faced by the program teams. We conclude by offering some recommendations for policy and practice particularly in regards to early childhood professional preparation and 'non-targeted' early intervention provision.

Key terms: Play-based early intervention, transdisciplinary teamwork and evaluation.



Thinking about ‘thinking’ in early childhood. What, why, how, when and where?

Ms Lyn Wright, School of Early Childhood Teacher Education, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

Whilst notions of “learning” and ‘being a learner’ are strongly promoted in early childhood circles, notions of “thinking” and “being a thinker” seem less overt. This paper presents past research data and literature that has informed the focus of a PhD study that will explore the discourses and practices around ‘thinking’ and ‘being a thinker’ in early childhood settings in New Zealand (Wright, 2003; Ritchhart, 2002; Perkins, 1995; Costa & Kallick, 2000; Claxton, 1999). Particular areas of interest within this will be: the beliefs, values, norms and expectations about thinking and being a thinker that are embedded within settings; how ‘thinking’, and identity formation around ‘being a thinker’, are encouraged and promoted, and whether/in what ways practices are supporting thinking “beyond the self”; thinking about others and inviting/understanding the thinking of others as an integral part of being a member of a community. Discourse, post-modern and social-constructivist/*socio-cultural* theories will underpin the study.

Key terms: Thinking, early childhood and discourses.

Development, implementation and evaluation of a holistic approach to improving the health and wellbeing of children/tamariki in Early Childhood Education Centres

Ms Ann Vanschevensteen, Ms Virginia Alston and Dr Greg Hamilton, Community and Public Health, a division of Canterbury District Health Board

The Canterbury District Health Board funded a Pilot Project in September 2004 to find a more effective way to work within ECE centres from a public health perspective,

As a health promoter I worked alongside 12 centres in Canterbury to ascertain the health needs of tamariki/children, whānau/family and teachers.

The centres were selected based on centre type mix, a NZ Deprivation Index > 7, a mix of urban/rural locations, having a roll of at least 20 tamariki/children; and having been established a minimum of 2 years.

By interviewing all centre staff and a good proportion of the parents and by doing observations I established a clear picture of the health needs. These include nutrition and food security issues, smoking cessation, immunisation levels, vision/hearing testing and dental health provision, information about parenting and many more.

The next step will be to continue to work together to achieve improved health for the children/tamariki, the whānau and the teachers.

Key terms: Pilot project, early childhood education Centres, health and wellbeing.



Teaching in Early Childhood Today, What's it really like?

Mrs Helen Yost, University of Tasmania

Globally major economic, social, political, and technological changes (Arthur, Beecher, Death, Dockett, & Farmer, 2005) have influenced teacher roles and responsibilities and are known to affect teachers' health and wellbeing (Bottery, 2006). In this context of constant change education as it was known in the past, or twenty years ago, or indeed a year ago is constantly changing. Change is part of everyday life in schools. So it must be queried: how are schools coping with the pressures of change; and moreover, are teachers, themselves, coping with these changes?

The literature review undertaken demonstrated the complexity of teaching today in early childhood classes. It became apparent that there was a need to talk to teachers currently in the field to gain their understandings of the situation. So many of the writers reviewed had not undertaken research or considered teachers' perspectives concerning issues in early childhood. Thus this PowerPoint is an attempt to get to the crux of what current practitioners are feeling and experiencing in their daily role as an early childhood teacher. The conversations undertaken with three Tasmanian early childhood teachers confirm the literature review findings.

Key terms: Societal change, early childhood and teacher stress

What educators believe and (why) does it matter? Doing Early Childhood Education with students "At Promise"

David Zyngier, Monash University

This session focuses on how the Amistad Multi-lingual K-8 school in Washington Heights, Manhattan (NY) responding to the call for comprehensive school reform in order to raise student achievement from culturally, linguistically and economically diverse (CLED) backgrounds. A critical approach makes the system - which contributes to these problems - accountable and responsive to the needs of challenged and often marginalised individuals and families (Swardener, 1995). Contrary to the research of Caldwell (2001), there is an emerging body of research that suggests that comprehensive school reform models fail because they focus only on the technical aspects of schooling, ignoring the central role of teacher (deficit) beliefs in this process (Cooper & Jordan, 2003; Swadener & Lubeck, 1995; Valencia et al., 2001).

To create the kind of educational setting where each student learns at high levels requires a focus on teacher beliefs. This session will be accompanied by active participation that will test our own beliefs.

Key terms: Teacher beliefs, student outcomes and CLED communities



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