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Worldviews, Theories and Philosophies in Children's Services

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Acknowledgements

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**CENTRE OF PROFESSIONAL
LEARNING & EDUCATION**



Communities@Work provides a broad suite of quality community programs of social value and practical benefit. Our vision is for a resilient and socially inclusive community that cares for the well-being of all. Communities@Work's Centre of Professional Learning and Education provides quality professional learning and support for the education and care sector.

Community Child Care Co-operative is a non-profit organisation working in the education and care services sector. Our aim is to inform and inspire early education and care services, and influence government policy, practices and programs so that children in Australia have access to high quality education and care services that meet the needs of their communities.

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Introduction

Early childhood educators working in children's services across Australia draw upon a range of worldviews, theories and philosophies in their everyday work. In the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) (Commonwealth of Australia 2009), early childhood educators are explicitly invited to think through the worldviews, theories and philosophies they draw upon.

Research in practice undertaken by early childhood educators illustrates the importance of learning about and engaging with a range of worldviews, theories and philosophies (MacNaughton 2003; Skattebol 2003; Skattebol 2005; Fleet, Patterson et al. 2006; Giugni 2006; Smith 2007; Giugni and Mundine 2010). In addition, research in practice in children's services has demonstrated that change is more likely when there is an explicit engagement with worldviews, theories and philosophies. This view is echoed in the EYLF and subsequent engagements with the concepts belonging, being and becoming (Commonwealth of Australia 2009; Giugni, Freeburn et al. 2010; Giugni 2011; Sumsion and Wong 2011).

With the current and necessary move toward higher expectations for children's services in terms of quality practices and in light of what research in practice

shows, access to a range of worldviews, theories and philosophies is an imperative.

What is this resource?

This audio-visual resource is a collection of conversations with academics, educators, policy makers and activists offering an insight into the wide range of worldviews, theories and philosophies that have helped to inform and define their everyday practice. It is hoped the resource will assist educators, both as individuals and with colleagues to engage with different ideas and concepts as they work in partnership with children and families.

The framework for this resource draws directly from the EYLF (Commonwealth of Australia 2009, p. 11) that states:

Different theories about early childhood inform approaches to children's learning and development. Early childhood educators draw upon a range of perspectives in their work which may include:

- developmental theories that focus on describing and understanding the processes of change in children's learning and development over time
- socio-cultural theories that emphasise the central role that families and cultural groups play in children's learning and the importance of

respectful relationships and provide insight into social and cultural contexts of learning and development

- socio-behaviourist theories that focus on the role of experiences in shaping children's behaviour
- critical theories that invite early childhood educators to challenge assumptions about curriculum, and consider how their decisions may affect children differently
- post-structuralist theories that offer insights into issues of power, equity and social justice in early childhood settings.

Drawing on a range of perspectives and theories can challenge traditional ways of seeing children, teaching and learning, and encourage educators, as individuals and with colleagues, to:

- investigate why they act in the ways that they do
- discuss and debate theories to identify strengths and limitations
- recognise how the theories and beliefs that they use to make sense of their work enable but also limit their actions and thoughts
- consider the consequences of their actions for children's experiences
- find new ways of working fairly and justly.

The video series includes the following titles:

Using Theories in Early Childhood	Developmental Perspectives	Sociocultural Perspectives	Critical Perspectives
Poststructuralist Perspectives	Indigenous Perspectives	Diversities & Differences	Inclusion & Belonging In Curriculum
Curriculum	Anti-Bias Practices & Curriculum	Perspectives On Play	Honouring Children's Rights & Dignity
Contexts For Communication & Learning	Pedagogies & Curriculum Decision Making	Viewing Children & Learning	Children, Families, Learning & Curriculum
Phenomenological Perspectives	Spiritualities	Perspectives On Leadership	Operating Within Policy Frameworks

It is hoped that the video series will be used creatively and in a variety of ways. The primary target audience is for early childhood educators working with children. Nonetheless the potential use of these videos might also include:

- Groups of educators getting together to watch the videos and discuss them.
- Shaping thinking when reviewing or developing personal professional or service philosophies.
- Encouraging discussion and dialogue at team meetings to examine practice.
- Prompting discussion with families to help share knowledges about what informs pedagogy, curriculum and children's learning.
- Shaping professional learning and development.
- Practitioner inquiry or action research into the content and or use of them (this could be done collaboratively with a 'research mentor' or with a group of children's services).
- Study groups.
- Resources for TAFE and University courses.
- And any other place or way that they might be useful!

In the next part of this booklet, some potential ways of using the videos are outlined.

A link video series can be found here: cple.commsatwork.org/free-online-resources

Using the Worldviews, Theories and Philosophies Videos

There are any number of ways in which this video series could be used. This booklet is by no means an instruction manual but rather a **'prompt for possibility'**. What follows are some suggested ways that might prompt beginning engagements with the Worldviews, theories and philosophies in children's services videos.

Beginning at the Beginning: Acknowledgement of Country

Beginning with the **Introduction Video** might be the best place to start.

The Introduction video offers a rationale for the *Worldviews, theories and philosophies* video series and situates it within the Australian context. Aunty Tracey begins with an Acknowledgement of Country before she explains what the intention of the video series is and what you might expect. This Acknowledgment is a practice that helps situate the EYLF as a uniquely Australian national document. Discussion of, and engagement with a range of Indigenous Worldviews feature throughout the videos. This opens up opportunities for discussion about the many different kinds of Indigenous knowledges there are across Australia. In addition, it might prompt you to find out more about your local Indigenous communities, the Country or land on which the children's setting is situated, and some of the particular cultural practices that are specific to the area in which you work.

Beginning with the Overarching Questions from the EYLF

Another way to begin engaging with the *Worldviews, theories and philosophies* video series is by making a direct link between pages 11 and 13 of the EYLF. Page 11 of the EYLF asks early childhood educators to engage in a range of diverse perspectives and then lists some suggested theoretical perspectives. There are videos in the *Worldviews, theories and philosophies* video series that offer insights into these particular theoretical perspectives. There are also videos that illustrate how people have used these theoretical perspectives in their everyday work.

Page 13 of the EYLF offers an outline of the Principles that underpin the framework. While the Principles are explicitly interconnected, Principle 5 – Ongoing learning and reflective practice offers some overarching questions that can help support an engagement with the theoretical perspectives outlined on page 11. The questions on page 13 are:

- What are my understandings of each child?
- What theories, philosophies and understandings shape and assist my work?
- Who is advantaged when I work in this way? Who is disadvantaged?
- What questions do I have about my work? What am I challenged by? What am I curious about? What am I confronted by?
- What aspects of my work are not helped by the theories and guidance that I usually draw on to make sense of what I do?
- Are there other theories or knowledge that could help me to understand better what I have observed or experienced? What are they? How might those theories and that knowledge affect my practice?

By using these reflective questions as a beginning point you might be able to open up discussions about the kinds of worldviews, theories and philosophies that you draw on to shape your everyday work.

These questions demonstrate that we are always using worldviews, theories and philosophies, but sometimes we might not know what they are or how they fit together. By using these questions with the videos, you might begin to work through and figure out the worldviews, theories and philosophies that influence your work. By using these

questions with the videos, you might begin to work through and figure out the worldviews, theories and philosophies that influence your work. In addition these questions might help you work out why you choose particular perspectives over others or why you might choose not to use a particular perspectives.

So you might choose one of these questions and link it to the suggested theories on page 11. Then watch the videos one at a time and begin grappling with the worldviews that are presented in them. If you put the questions together it might help to structure your thinking processes like this:

- *What are my understandings of each child?*
- *From a developmental perspective?*
- *From a sociocultural perspective?*
- *From a critical perspective?*
- *From a poststructuralist perspective?*

If you work through these questions together with the videos, you and your colleagues might expand the different kinds of understandings you have of each child. You might recognise that you use different parts of each of these theories at different times of the day for different reasons. You might find that by working through these questions in tandem with the videos that you learn about some new perspectives about how you can

noting that all theories and philosophies have benefits and limitations.

In the **Using Theories** video some of these benefits and limitations are outlined. Watching this video and then asking the following questions might help highlight some of the similarities and differences between the benefits and limitations of the worldviews, theories and philosophies you have identified that you and your colleagues draw from.

- *What questions do I have about my work? What am I challenged by? What am I curious about? What am I confronted by?*
- *What aspects of my work are not helped by the theories and guidance that I usually draw on to make sense of what I do?*

These questions show that it's ok not to know everything and it's probably not possible to know everything! They indicate that learning about worldviews, theories and philosophies that influence and shape your everyday work is a process that takes time. These questions also indicate that different worldviews, theories and philosophies can reshape your work and perhaps take it in another direction, open up new possibilities and generate new learning about yourself, your colleagues, the children and families with whom you work, and the communities in which you work.

understand each child and therefore expand your curriculum decision-making and intentional teaching.

What theories, philosophies and understandings shape and assist my work?

Sometimes we rely on 'our own' experiences as the primary source of knowledge about what influences everyday practice. This question might help you investigate other worldviews, theories, philosophies and understandings that might not seem as obvious as your own experiences, but still influence your everyday work. For example, think about how you structure daily routines – the decisions you make about how the daily routines are structured are shaped and influenced by particular theoretical perspectives including the 'understandings you have of each child'. Here's where the questions and videos begin to link up to help you figure out which perspectives are shaping your work.

Who is advantaged when I work in this way? Who is disadvantaged?

Once you have begun recognising and working through the different worldviews, theories and philosophies that influence and shape your everyday work, you can begin to critically investigate the benefits and limitations of these perspectives. It's worth

*Are there other theories or knowledge that could help me to understand better what I have observed or experienced?
What are they? How might those theories and that knowledge affect my practice?*

This next question is also very important. This question reiterates that no theory is perfect, but it also indicates that there might be other worldviews, theories and philosophies that are not listed in the EYLF that can be helpful to everyday practice. For example, as the Introduction video highlights, Indigenous knowledges are important for all people living in Australia. So, you might engage with the [Indigenous Perspectives \(1\)](#) video. Other perspectives that are not explicitly named in the EYLF, but underpin the principles and practices include [Anti-Bias Practices and Curriculum \(2\)](#), [Diversities and Differences \(3\)](#), or [Phenomenological Perspectives \(4\)](#). So, this question enables us to open up our repertoire of worldviews, theories and philosophies to a whole host of potential new possibilities.

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Beginning with Some Broad Guiding Questions

Another way in which you and your colleagues might engage with the *Worldviews, theories and philosophies* in children's services video series might be to choose a video and engage with the following questions:

- *What points of view were conveyed in this video?*
- *Which parts did we recognise?*
- *Which parts were unfamiliar? (You might also ask why?)*
- *Were there any obvious links between our everyday practices? What were they?*
- *Were there any new ideas that we thought we could learn more about or try in practice?*
- *How might we document this?*
- *Are there any other resources we can use to help us understand more about this perspective?*

You may use these questions; you might change them or make up your own. Whatever the case, when you engage in a questioning process that as the EYLF suggests, it could become 'a lively culture of professional inquiry' (Commonwealth of Australia 2009, p. 13). This lively culture of professional inquiry is not about knowing everything! Indeed, early childhood educators will be starting from all different places. For some the ideas in these videos will be new, for others, the worldviews, theories and philosophies will be those they have been working with for a number of years. Still for others, there might be some ideas that are familiar and some that are new. So, working together is probably the most important element of engaging with these videos and framing up some questions to help consider the content presented. This way there can be a practice of intergenerational sharing of ideas and experiences that will generate a rich mix of worldviews, theories and philosophies that will influence and shape your everyday practice. What matters most, is the process of engaging with the ideas together.

Documenting Your Engagements, Encounters, and Explorations of Worldviews, Theories and Philosophies

It's always helpful to document the discussions you generate when engaging with the ideas presented in the *Worldviews, theories and philosophies* in children's services video. By documenting these discussions, questions and so on, you have a record of the ongoing learning and reflective practice (Commonwealth of Australia 2009, p. 13) you are undertaking in your setting. This is helpful to look back on, to keep as a repository of ideas that might help generate new ways of seeing your work, the children with whom you work, the families and yourself.

Often we spend most of our time documenting children's learning and writing accounts of the day for families. Sometimes we might document our part in children's learning processes. We might spend time 'evaluating' the programme and 'planning' for learning. We may spend time considering how we might engage in intentional teaching, through setting up spaces and places with and for children, or venturing out into the community. All of this documentation can be undertaken in a variety of ways and will serve a purpose for you and your colleagues depending on how you have designed and undertaken these processes.

Yet, taking the time to document the learning processes of you and your colleagues seems to have had less attention and time. Finding creative ways to document your own thought processes, reflections, critical engagements, new learning, different learning on existing knowledges, new knowledges, investigating your practices for the various theoretical perspectives you notice and identify in them or how ever you work seems necessary in the new system. The focus on early childhood educators illustrating their ongoing learning and reflective practice appears to be linked with how quality may be understood.

It's worth taking the time to think through different methods of documenting your and your colleagues learning whether you use a password protected blog or website, journals, diaries, film, audio, arts informed approaches for inquiry, pedagogical documentation, or other ways that you might develop.

An example can be found at:

www.cscentral.org.au/Resources/Publications/pathways-of-possibilities.pdf

Further Reading and Key Ideas

This list of further reading has been compiled from all of the contributors to this project. The references in this list can cross over between perspectives but were given by the presenters in these particular categories for this particular purpose. This list is by no means exhaustive – it's a beginning. For more information you can Google the names of each presenter, which will, in most cases, draw a direct link to their writings.

Using Theories

Key Ideas

- Enables educators to explore why they do what they do and which theoretical frames they are enacting.
- Encourages educators to explore views that may not sit neatly with their own.
- Brings necessary deeper learning to everyday practice.

Further Readings

Hill, D. (2011). Theory as story: An invitation to engage with the ideas that nourish practice. *The First Years -Ngā Tau Tuatahi: New Zealand Journal of Infant and Toddler Education*, 13(1) pp. 7-11.

Giugni, M, (under review). Worldviews, theories and philosophies in early childhood. *International Journal of Equity and Innovation in Early Childhood*.

MacNaughton, G. (2003). *Shaping early childhood: Learners, curriculum and contexts*. England: Open University Press.

Robinson, K. and C. Jones Díaz (1999). "Doing theory with early childhood educators: Understanding difference and diversity in personal and professional context." *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 24(4) pp. 33-38.

Developmental Perspectives

Key Ideas

- Draw from developmental psychology as a theoretical underpinning.
- Focus on the development of the individual child.
- Claim that if children have a safe secure childhood that they will be prepared for life.

Further Readings

Bowlby, J. (1988). A secure base. *Clinical applications of attachment theory*. London: Routledge.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). The ecology of human development. *Experiments by nature and design*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

Gerber, M. (2002). *Dear parent: Caring for infants with respect* 2nd ed. Los Angeles, CA: Resources for Infant Educators.

Maslow, A. (1970). *Motivation and personality*. New York: Harper and Row.

Montessori, M. (1963) *The Secret of Childhood*. Orient Longmans. Place of Bombay.

Piaget, J. (1952). *The origins of intelligence in children*. New York: International.

Vygotsky, L. (1962). *Thought and knowledge* (E. V. Hanfmann, G, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.

Sociocultural Perspectives

Key Ideas

Sociocultural perspectives (sometimes known called cultural historical perspectives)

- Focus on cultural specificity of when, where and how children live their lives in context (nature and culture).

- Promote interaction between people and their environments as central to learning and developing.
- Claim that through interaction that children can achieve beyond their biological makeup.

Further Readings

Bruner, J, (1996). *The Culture of Education*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge Massachusetts.

Malaguzzi, L. (1993). *For an education based on relationships*. Young Children, 49(1) pp. 9-12.

Malaguzzi, L. (1993a). History, ideas and basic philosophy. In *The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia approach to education*. C. Edwards, L. Gandini and G. Forman. Norwood, NJ: Ablex, pp. 41-89.

Rogoff, B. (2003) *The Cultural Nature of Human Development*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Vygotsky, L. (1978) *Mind in Society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Library of Congress: United States of America.

Critical Perspectives

Key Ideas

- Focus on structural issues of inequality such as race, gender and class.
- Are concerned with transformation of society.
- Argue that children can negotiate agency and are active contributing 'citizens'.

Further Readings

Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a theory practice*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Freire, P. (1972). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books.

Freire, P. (2004). *Pedagogy of hope: Reliving 'Pedagogy of the oppressed'*. London: Continuum.

May, S and Sleeter, C. (Eds.) (2010) *Critical multiculturalism: Theory and praxis*. New York: Routledge.

Poststructuralist Perspectives

Key Ideas

- Questions taken for granted ‘truth claims’ (e.g. that children learn in ages and stages) so all knowledge is contested and contestable.
- Tend to be used in early childhood to address issues of equity and social justice.
- Focus on how through power, knowledge and discourses the world is produced, rather than claims that the world is naturally evolving.

Further Readings

Butler, J. (2004). *Undoing gender*. New York, Routledge.

Foucault, M. (1994). *Power. Essential works of Foucault 1954-1984 volume 3*. London: Penguin Books.

Haraway, D. (2008). *When species meet*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Latour, B. (2005). *Reassembling the social*. Oxford: Oxford University press.

Lyotard, J. (1979). *The postmodern condition*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Walkerdine, V. (1981). *Sex, power and pedagogy*. Screen Education, 38 pp. 14-24.

Indigenous Perspectives

Key Ideas

- Offer knowledges that are built on ancient worldviews that precede colonisation as well as worldviews of how life is lived post colonisation.
- Establish Aboriginal peoples in Australia first nations people.
- Prompt non-Aboriginal peoples to consider how to live ethically in a place that has been colonised.

Further Readings

Atkinson, S. (2008). Victorian Indigenous Elders as Teachers. *International Journal of Equity and Innovation in Early Childhood*, 6(1) pp. 26-41.

Freeburn, T. (2010). ‘Boys Can’t Look After Babies’: Gender Equity in an Aboriginal Preschool. In M. Giugni and K. Mundine (Eds) *Talkin' up and speakin' out: Aboriginal and multicultural voices in early childhood*. Castle Hill, Pademelon Press.

Martin, K. (2005). Childhood, life and relatedness: Aboriginal ways of being, knowing and doing. *Introductory indigenous studies in education: The importance of knowing*. J. Phillips and J. Lampert. Frenchs Forest: Pearson Education pp. 27-40.

Mundine, K. (2010). Flower girl. In M. Giugni and K. Mundine (Eds) *Talkin' up and speakin' out: Aboriginal and multicultural voices in early childhood*. Castle Hill: Pademelon Press.

Townsend-Cross, M. (2004). "Indigenous Australian perspectives in early childhood education." *International Journal of Equity and Innovation in Early Childhood*, 2(2) pp. 2-11.

Diversities and Differences

Key Ideas

- Some diversities and differences have been constructed as more or less valued than others.
- Diversities and differences include all cultures including genders, sexualities, languages, ethnicities, 'race', geographical region, class, SES and so on.
- Diversities and differences are negotiated in power/knowledge relationships, they are not fixed or static.

Further Readings

Robinson, K. (2005). 'Queerying' gender: Heteronormativity in early childhood education. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 30(2) pp. 19-28.

Robinson, K. and C. Jones Díaz (2006). *Diversity and difference in early childhood education: Issues for theory and practice*. Berkshire: Open University Press.

Genishi, C. and A. L. Goodwin (2008). *Diversities in early childhood education: Rethinking and doing*. New York: Routledge.

Giugni, M. and K. Mundine, Eds. (2010). *Talkin' up and speakin' out: Aboriginal and multicultural voices in early childhood*. Castle Hill: Pademelon Press.

Inclusion and Belonging in Curriculum

Key Ideas

- Inclusion is a practice of exploring how diversities and differences can be negotiated, rather than fixing up individuals to 'fit in'.
- Belonging is a practice of negotiating where you are, who you are with, the politics of how you live with others and the ethics of living well together.
- Inclusion and belonging stems beyond human interests to places, things, animals, environments, histories, geographies and so on.

Further Readings

Giugni, M. (2011). Becoming worldly 'with': An encounter with the Early Years Learning Framework. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 12(1) pp. 11-27.

Skattebol, J. (2005). Insider/outside belongings: Traversing the borders of whiteness in early childhood. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 6(2) pp. 189-203.

Sumsion, J. and S. Wong (2011). Interrogating 'Belonging' in Belonging, Being and Becoming: the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 12(1) pp. 28-45.

Taylor, A. (2007). Playing with difference: The cultural politics of childhood belonging. *The International Journal of Diversity in Organisations, Communities and Nations*, 7(3) pp. 143-149.

Curriculum

Key Ideas

- Curriculum is a process, a practice, it is always in flux.
- Curriculum can be negotiated with all who contribute to constructing it (children, families, educators, authorities, community people and so on).
- Curriculum can become a context for negotiating diversities and differences and learning is not limited to the children.

Further Readings

Arthur, L., Beecher, B., Death, E., Dockett, S. & Farmer, S. (2008/2011, in press). *Programming and planning in early childhood settings*, Melbourne: Cengage.

Blaise, M. & Nuttall, J. (2011). *Learning to teach in the early years classroom*. South Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

Carr, M. (2001). *Assessment in early childhood settings: Learning stories*. London: Paul Chapman.

Fleet, A., Patterson, C., and Robertson, J. (eds.) (in press) *Conversations: Behind early childhood pedagogical documentation*. Sydney: Pademelon Press.

Giroux, H.A. (Ed.) (1997). *Pedagogy and the politics of hope: Theory, culture, and schooling; A critical reader*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Jones, E. & Nimmo, J. (1994). *Emergent curriculum*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Anti-Bias Practices and Curriculum

Key Ideas

- Dealing with discrimination in everyday practice (children and adults).

- Standing up to others in the face of discrimination (children and adults).
- To become advocates and activists in everyday practice (children and adults).

Further Readings

Dau, E. (Ed) (2001). *The anti-bias approach in early childhood*. Sydney: Addison Wesley Longman.

Derman-Sparks, L. (1989). *The anti-bias curriculum: Tools for empowering young children*. Washington DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Derman-Sparks, L. and J. Olsen Edwards (2009). *Anti-bias education for young children and ourselves*. Washington DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Giugni, M. and K. Mundine, Eds. (2010). *Talkin' up and speakin' out: Aboriginal and multicultural voices in early childhood*. Castle Hill: Pademelon Press.

Perspectives on Play

Key Ideas

- Play is political.
- Play is a valuable context for learning.
- Play is a context where inclusions and exclusions are negotiated and can have a significant effect on learning.

Further Readings

Beecher, B. and Arthur, L. (2001). *Play and literacy in children's social worlds*. Newtown: Primary English Teaching Association.

Edmiston, B. (2007). *Forming ethical identities in early childhood play*. Routledge: London.

Grieshaber, S. and McArdle, F. (2010). *The trouble with play*. Open University Press; McGraw Hill.

Paley, V. G. (1992) *You Can't Say You Can't Play*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Paley, V. G. (2004) *A Child's Work: The*

Importance of Fantasy Play. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Wood, E. (2007). *New directions in play: Consensus or collision*. Education, 3-13, 35, (4) pp. 309-320.

Honouring Children's Rights and Dignity

Key Ideas

- Children are active 'citizens'.
- Children's rights should be central to children's services, educator philosophy and practice.
- Children make a significant contribution to the world.

Further Readings

MacNaughton, G, Hughes, P., & Smith, K. (Eds.) (2008). *Young children as active citizens: principles, policies and pedagogies*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing: London.

Martin, K. (2005). Childhood, life and relatedness: Aboriginal ways of being,

knowing and doing. *Introductory indigenous studies in education: The importance of knowing*. J. Phillips and J. Lampert. Frenchs Forest, Pearson Education, pp. 27-40.

Paley, V. G. (1990) *The Boy Who Would Be a Helicopter: The Uses of Storytelling in the Classroom*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Swadner, B. B., and Lubek, S. (Eds.) (1995). *Children and families at "promise": Deconstructing the discourse of risk*. State University of New York Press: Albany.

Contexts for Communication and Learning

Key Ideas

- Communication and learning is contextual to children, families and communities.
- Communication and learning is connected to identities, places, and practices of everyday life.

- Communication and learning materializes through all kinds of practices including digital media, arts practices, dancing, music, ceremony, storytelling, writing, play, investigation and so on.

Further Readings

Beecher, B. and Arthur, L. (2001). *Play and literacy in children's worlds*. Newtown: Primary English Teaching Association.

Arthur, L., McArdle, F., and Papic, M. (2010). *Shards are made of glass: Children as capable and creative communicators*. Research in Practice Series. Early Childhood Australia: ACT.

Harrison, C., & Morandini, C. (2010). *Children Creatively Engaging Each Other - Multiliteracies Practices in an Inclusive Program for Children with Diverse Abilities*. In P. Fitzsimmons & B. McKenzie (Eds.), *Creative Engagements - Thinking with children*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Interdisciplinary Press.

Jones Díaz, C. & Harvey, N. (2007) Other words, other worlds: Bilingual identities and literacy in L. Makin, C Jones Díaz, & C. McLaughlan, (eds) *Literacies in childhood: Changing views, challenging practice* (2nd ed) Elsevier: Sydney.

Knight, L. (2009). Drawing together as inclusive practice in early years learning. *Arts Education Australia: Early Childhood Special Edition*, 33(2) pp. 62 – 73.

Martin. K. (2007). Ma(r)king Tracks and reconceptualising Aboriginal early childhood education: An Aboriginal perspective. *Childrenz Issues*, 11(1) pp. 15-20.

Pedagogies and Curriculum Decision-Making

Key Ideas

- Curriculum decision making can happen 'in the moment' as well as planned.
- The pedagogies we engage shape our curriculum decision making practices.
- Inclusion, equity and social justice are significant to the pedagogical and curriculum choices we make.

Further Readings

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Viewing Children and Learning

Key Ideas

- Children learn in a range of different ways that stem from the places in which they live and learn, the context, the people around them and broader cultures such as popular culture.

- Children learn from all kinds of ‘ways of being’, ‘ways of doing’ and ‘ways of knowing’ (discourses) – identity is central to learning and becoming.
- Inclusion, equity and social justice are all central to how and what children learn.

Further Readings

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Children, Families, Learning and Curriculum

Key Ideas

- Families are integral to children's lives and learning.
- Finding ways to negotiate meaningful partnerships is crucial to equitable early childhood education.
- Families come in all shapes and sizes and stem beyond ‘parents’.

Further Readings

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Phenomenological Perspectives

Key Ideas

- Being present in the moment is crucial to the formation of relations.
- Focusing on the experience of being together enables becoming.
- Inclusion can be practices when educators stay in the moment with children and their families.

Further Readings

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Spiritualities

Key Ideas

- Spiritualities are part of everyday life.
- Spiritualities can relate to inclusion, belonging and identity.
- Spiritualities are not necessarily the same as religion.

Further Readings

Bone, J. (2010). Play and metamorphosis: spirituality in early childhood settings. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 11(4) pp. 404-414.

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Perspectives on Leadership

Key Ideas

- Leadership can be understood from many different perspectives.
- Leadership is not always about being 'out in front'.
- Leadership is contextual to groups of people working together in a range of different ways for a range of different reasons.

Further Readings

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heroes to leading that liberates. Crows Nest. Allen & Unwin.

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Operating within Policy Frameworks

Key Ideas

- Policies are processes not simply ‘truths’.
- Policies (such as quality frameworks) can be thought about in a number of different ways depending on the theoretical perspectives you bring to them.
- Children’s services professional identities can be shaped by policies, but also shape policy in a myriad of ways.

Further Readings

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Fenech, M. (2006). The impact of regulatory environments on early childhood professional practice and job satisfaction: A review of conflicting discourses. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 31(2) pp. 49-57.

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Appendices

The two appendices are here to offer an insight into worldviews that are not solely created in written language. These two examples help us to consider that worldviews, theories and philosophies are generated in many sophisticated ways. Denise Proud is an early childhood educators who created her worldviews theories and philosophies through painting and story. These forms of creating worldviews, theories and philosophies are as valid as any written ones. You can watch Denise talking about what knowledges she draws on and how she developed her worldviews theories and philosophies in the Indigenous Perspectives video.

1. Nurturing the Gundoo

Paintings and Story by Denise Proud



- The sitting down shape in the middle represents the child (gundoo).
- The shapes around represents parents, elders and community.
- Uncles and aunts roles are just important as the parents.
- Discipline, knowledge, wisdom and spirituality come from the extended family.
- Represents our indigenous way of nurturing the gundoo.
- Early childhood education has always been embedded within indigenous culture.

Isolation



- The black (half-moon) figure in the middle represents the gundoo (child).
- The straight white lines represent non-indigenous tracks to early childhood setting.
- This painting depicts how our gundoo feels.
- How inclusive are we?

Establishing Connections



- The sitting down shape in the middle represents the child (gundoo) sitting within the early childhood setting.
- The black (half-moon) shapes represents the community.
- The child has a rich interconnectedness with clans, kinship groups, and tribal and language groups.
- Child is still in the centre of this enriching complex environment.
- Respect and protocols must always be observed.
- Knowledge is passed down through generations and it must be respected
- Notice the (lines) pathways leading into the early childhood centre have twists and turns representing the flexibility of options available to the child for their personal growth within the community.
- The white figures represent the non-indigenous society.
- The straight lines represent the rigid regimented pathways of mainstream Australian education as seen through the eyes of the gundoo.
- The three white figures surrounding the gundoo represent the early childhood educators with the centre. The three black figures surrounding the gundoo represent the gundoo's extended family.
- Educators, families and community must work together to be more inclusive, to be flexible and accept differences so the gundoo is our focus at all times.

2. The knowledge dreaming model - A model for intercultural pedagogy and curriculum practice



Figure 9.1. The knowledge dreaming model.

(p.157)

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