Early Childhood Curriculum

Second Edition

The second edition of *Early Childhood Curriculum* provides a comprehensive and lively introduction to curriculum theories, approaches and issues in early childhood settings. Drawing on contemporary research and case studies, the book employs a cultural-historical framework to illustrate a variety of approaches to early childhood education.

New to this edition:

- up-to-date coverage of national curriculum documents, including the Early Years Learning Framework and Te Whāriki
- a glossary of key terms
- learning intentions at the beginning of each chapter
- updated companion website at www.cambridge.edu.au/academic/ earlychildhood.

In each chapter hypothetical transcripts and real-world examples help bring theory to life. The book explores specific domain areas, including science and mathematics; literacy and language; information and communication technology; the arts; and health and wellbeing.

Early Childhood Curriculum equips pre-service teachers with the practical skills and tools to promote young children's learning. It is an essential resource for pre-service teachers and practitioners alike.

Claire McLachlan is Associate Professor, Early Years Education, Massey University College of Education.

Marilyn Fleer is Professor, Early Childhood Education, Faculty of Education, Monash University.

Susan Edwards is Associate Professor, Early Childhood Education, Faculty of Education, Australian Catholic University.

978-1-107-62495-5 - Early Childhood Curriculum: Planning, Assessment and Implementation: Second Edition Claire McLachlan, Marilyn Fleer and Susan Edwards Frontmatter More information

© in this web service Cambridge University Press

Early Childhood Curriculum

Second Edition

Planning, assessment and implementation

Claire McLachlan Marilyn Fleer Susan Edwards



> CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press 477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107624955

© Cambridge University Press 2013

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2010 Reprinted 2011, 2012 Second edition 2013

Cover design by Sardine Design Typeset by Integra Software Services Pvt. Ltd Printed in Singapore by C.O.S. Printers Pte Ltd

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

A Cataloguing-in-Publication entry is available from the catalogue of the National Library of Australia at www.nla.gov.au

ISBN 978-1-107-62495-5 Paperback

Additional resources for this publication at www.cambridge.edu.au/academic/earlychildhood

Reproduction and communication for educational purposes

The Australian *Copyright Act 1968* (the Act) allows a maximum of one chapter or 10% of the pages of this work, whichever is the greater, to be reproduced and/or communicated by any educational institution for its educational purposes provided that the educational institution (or the body that administers it) has given a remuneration notice to Copyright Agency Limited (CAL) under the Act.

For details of the CAL licence for educational institutions contact:

Copyright Agency Limited Level 15, 233 Castlereagh Street Sydney NSW 2000 Telephone: (02) 9394 7600 Facsimile: (02) 9394 7601 E-mail: info@copyright.com.au

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

978-1-107-62495-5 - Early Childhood Curriculum: Planning, Assessment and Implementation: Second Edition Claire McLachlan, Marilyn Fleer and Susan Edwards Frontmatter

More information

Contents

About the authors page ix				
Acknowledgements xi				
_				
1	INTRODUCTION	1		
	The early childhood curriculum	4		
2	THEORY, RESEARCH AND THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULUM	8		
	What is a curriculum?	10		
	Curriculum models	11		
	Dominant ideologies	13		
	Changes in thinking about curriculum	20		
	Research as a driver for change in early childhood curriculum	26		
	Summary	29		
3				
	CURRICULUM IS FRAMED	30		
	Development and curriculum	31		
	Curriculum and child development	35		
	DAP view of development	35		
	A cultural-historical view of development	37		
	Summary	43		
4	CURRICULUM AS A CULTURAL BROKER	46		
	Reflecting on the broker: What should the curriculum mediate?	50		
	Mediating culture and curriculum: A cultural-historical perspective	51		
	Brokering curriculum for the future?	53		
	Thinking professionally about brokering curriculum for the future	55		
	Summary	56		
5	INTERPRETING EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULUM	57		
	Working with early childhood curriculum frameworks	59		
	Relating early childhood curriculum to children, families and communities	63		
	The role of professional learning in curriculum interpretation	64		
	Summary	68		
6	CULTURAL-HISTORICAL CURRICULUM IN ACTION	69		
	Understanding cultural-historical approaches to curriculum	70		
	Beyond multiculturalism: Using cultural practices and engagement to			
	support learning	74		

Contents

	Play and a cultural-historical early childhood curriculum	76
	Extending learning within cultural-historical curriculum	78
	Summary	82
7	CURRICULUM AS A CONCEPTUAL TOOL: OBSERVATION, CONTENT AND	
	PROGRAMMING	83
	Linking observation to planning in the curriculum	84
	What is observation and why is it important?	88
	The role of environments: Observations in the early childhood setting	92
	Zone of Proximal Development and Zone of Actual Development as a framework for assessment	94
	The role of play: Observing the child in action	98
	The role of transitions: The importance of observation, documentation and reflection	101
	The role of relationships: Documenting observations in the early childhood setting	103
	Shaping curriculum around key informants	110
	Summary	111
8	ASSESSING CHILDREN AND EVALUATING CURRICULUM: SHIFTING LENSES	113
	What do we mean by assessment?	114
	The relationship between assessment and curriculum	118
	Curriculum context at Wooranna Park	121
	Assessment, learning and evaluation are interdependent concepts	123
	Evaluation and assessment: Why evaluation matters	127
	Ethical framework for evaluation	128
	Planning for evaluation	131
	Leading evaluations: Outcomes, processes, inputs and design	133
	Curriculum, assessment and evaluation	138
	Summary	139
	Acknowledgements	140
9	CONTENT KNOWLEDGE: THE SCIENCES, MATHS AND NUMERACY	141
	Mathematical concept formation within everyday practice	142
	A cultural-historical reading of concept formation	144
	Thinking consciously about concepts	146
	What about infants and toddlers?	147
	A curriculum model for working with everyday concepts and scientific concepts	148
	Thinking about the working example (Figure 9.6)	149
	Curriculum in practice: Building scientific conceptual knowledge	150
	A way forward: Concepts, contexts and pedagogy	160

978-1-107-62495-5 - Early Childhood Curriculum: Planning, Assessment and Implementation: Second Edition Claire McLachlan, Marilyn Fleer and Susan Edwards Frontmatter

More information

		Contents
	Summary	160
	Acknowledgements	160
10	CONTENT KNOWLEDGE: LANGUAGE, LITERACY AND ICT	161
	Language and literacy	162
	How to encourage language and literacy in the early years	166
	Assessing children's interests in and experiences with literacy	168
	A social practice perspective on literacy	170
	How to incorporate out of school literacies in the early years setting	171
	Information and communication technologies (ICT)	173
	Literacy concepts	180
	Summary	181
11	CONTENT KNOWLEDGE: THE ARTS AND HEALTH, WELLBEING AND	PHYSICAL
	ACTIVITY	182
	Health, wellbeing and physical activity	184
	Physical education concepts	190
	The arts	191
	Musical concepts	195
	Summary	196
12	CONCLUSIONS	197
	ssary	205
	erences	210
Ind	ex	224

978-1-107-62495-5 - Early Childhood Curriculum: Planning, Assessment and Implementation: Second Edition Claire McLachlan, Marilyn Fleer and Susan Edwards Frontmatter More information

© in this web service Cambridge University Press

About the authors

Claire McLachlan is Associate Professor of Early Years Education at Massey University in Palmerston North, New Zealand. Claire became involved with early childhood education through the Playcentre movement as a young mother of three children, and became fascinated with how young children learn. She completed a doctorate on the topic of emergent literacy in New Zealand kindergartens. She has lectured on early childhood education at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, WI, at AUT University in Auckland and at Massey University in Palmerston North, as well as having had various roles as a teacher and manager in early childhood centres. Claire has a longstanding interest in curriculum, particularly literacy, and a number of publications on teachers' beliefs and practices as they relate to various aspects of early childhood curriculum. Since 2006 she has also been the co-editor of the journal *Early Education*, a publication aimed at early childhood practitioners.

Marilyn Fleer is Professor of Early Childhood Education at Monash University in Victoria. She has been a teacher in long day care, preschool and school. She has also been an adviser and curriculum officer for the Ministry of Education in Western Australia. In 2002 she was appointed as a Research Fellow for the Australian Government (then named the Department of Education, Technology and Youth Affairs). She has published nearly 300 works, 30 of which are books. She is currently the President for the International Society for Cultural Activity Research.

Susan Edwards is Associate Professor of Curriculum and Pedagogy in the Faculty of Education at the Australian Catholic University, with a specialisation in early childhood education. She has practised as an early childhood educator in long day care, occasional care and preschool settings. Susan completed a doctorate at Monash University with a focus on how theory informs early childhood curriculum. Susan has been actively involved in researching early childhood curriculum, particularly issues associated with teacher thinking, digital technologies, theories of development and the role of play in learning. She has published several key texts in these areas of research and practice.

978-1-107-62495-5 - Early Childhood Curriculum: Planning, Assessment and Implementation: Second Edition Claire McLachlan, Marilyn Fleer and Susan Edwards Frontmatter More information

© in this web service Cambridge University Press

Acknowledgements

It is impossible to write a book without the support and assistance of many other people. We would like to gratefully acknowledge the support, assistance and contribution of the following people:

- Claire wishes to thank her husband, Simon Barton, for his amazing support, listening to many reports on how the writing was going and cooking beautiful dinners on a regular basis! Claire also wishes to thank her children – Daniel, Jeremy and Jessica Smith – who have provided such inspiration and food for thought over the years.
- Marilyn wishes to acknowledge particular colleagues who have contributed to Chapters 3, 8 and 9 (see below) and to thank Debbie Lee, the commissioning editor, for her continued support for the conceptualisation, writing and publishing of this book:
 - The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations provided funding for the development of a set of early learning resources that were discussed in Chapter 9. Consortium leaders were Professor Bridie Raban and myself. The overall results and theorisation are reported in: M. Fleer and B. Raban (2007) *Early Childhood Literacy and Numeracy: Building Good Practice*. Early Childhood Australia: Canberra; M. Fleer and B. Raban (2006) A cultural-historical analysis of concept formation in early education settings: Conceptual consciousness for the child or only the adult? *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal* 14(2), pp. 69–80.
 - The prestigious Margaret Trembath Research Scholarship fund provided financial assistance for the research reported in Chapter 3. Gloria Quinones provided invaluable support to this project by accompanying me on all field trips to the family home and in videotaping most of the school and centre observations. Carol Fleer has supported this project by assisting with downloading tapes and undertaking some transcriptions of the video clips. The methodological approach to the coding was conceptualised by Professor Mariane Hedegaard, and is reported in: M. Hedegaard and M. Fleer (2009) *Study Children: A Cultural-historical Approach to Research*. UK: Open University Press. The findings of the study are reported in: M. Fleer and M. Hedegaard (2010) Children's development as participation in everyday practices across different institutions: A child's changing relations to reality. *Mind, Culture and Activity* 17(2), pp. 149–68.

Acknowledgements

- Chapter 8 was developed as a result of Amanda and Thomas taking me around their school and sharing their learning with me, and Esme Capp and Linda Sinadinos kindly agreed to being interviewed about the innovations within the school.
- 3. Susan wishes to acknowledge kind permission from Pademelon Press to use excerpts from *Early Childhood Education and Care: A Sociocultural Approach* in this book. She also wishes to acknowledge the work of educators from the City of Casey and students from Monash University that is used in this book.
- 4. The Cambridge University Press team, especially Debbie Lee, who followed up and persisted with the vision for this book and to Isabella Mead for her ongoing helpful support for the revision process.
- Our employing institutions while we have been writing this text: Massey University College of Education, the Faculty of Education, Monash University and the Australian Catholic University.
- 6. Our colleagues at Massey University, Monash University and the Australian Catholic University, who have provided many helpful conversations, and the student teachers and children in early childhood and primary settings who have been its inspiration.