

CO-CREATING A PEDAGOGICAL SUPPORT DOCUMENT TO SUPPORT
MEANINGFUL CURRICULUM AND ENHANCED QUALITY

By

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A GRADUATING PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF EDUCATION

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

(Early Childhood Education)

We accept this graduating paper as conforming
to the required standard

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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

April, 2015

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Abstract

Although Early Learning Frameworks have recently been published by the provincial government in Manitoba, Canada, varied quality still exists in child care centres in this province. This project investigates the potential of a Pedagogical Support Document to enhance quality in Manitoba's Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC), as a follow up to the Early Learning Frameworks, by way of further supporting early childhood educators' pedagogical practice. I argue that a Pedagogical Support Document can contribute to ELCC quality and I make suggestions for its content and dissemination. More specifically, I recommend that the content of a Pedagogical Support Document include broad principles that afford professional judgment and interpretation, based on observation and documentation strategies. In addition, I suggest that a Pedagogical Support Document be conceptualized as a living document that is co-created by policy makers and early childhood educators over time. This approach allows ELCC programs to develop contextually relevant curriculum with locally constructed outcomes for children. Finally, I recommend that ongoing professional development related to the Pedagogical Support Document is necessary in order to make meaningful and sustainable policy and practice connections in Manitoba.

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Acknowledgements

First, I would like to thank the educators who shared their vision of observation and documentation for reflection. Second, I would like to thank Dr. Iris Berger for her never ending faith and guidance as I completed this project. Third, I would like to thank Karla Burr, Diann Dunbar, and Shell Andréa for their editing and proofreading assistance. I would also like to thank Rachelle Blanchette-Deans, my new friend and colleague, for her advice and confidence in my topic. Finally, thank you to Dr. Marianne McTavish, for her suggestions as second reader for my graduating paper.

Dedication

This project is dedicated to my family for believing in my abilities and supporting me while I continually worked on this project. Chris, you can finally retire.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In my career as an early childhood educator, I have experience developing and implementing curriculum for and with children 18 months to five years old in licensed Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) centres. I have taught curriculum and pedagogical practices to Early Childhood Education (ECE) students, and as a consultant, I have mentored early childhood educators as they were developing curriculum in their centres. Most recently, my work with educators has been with the Department of Family Services for the Province of Manitoba. In this role, I was involved as researcher and writer in creating two curriculum frameworks, *Early Returns: Manitoba's Early Learning and Child Care Curriculum Framework for Preschool Centres and Nursery Schools* (Government of Manitoba, 2011) and *Early Returns: Manitoba's Early Learning and Child Care Curriculum Framework for Infant Programs* (Government of Manitoba, 2012). These early learning policy changes were significant and rapid. Along with my colleagues, I introduced the *Early Returns* framework to educators in preschool centres and nursery schools, and supported educators in thinking about, articulating, and evaluating their curriculum development. My consulting and policy experience as a department staff member provided me with insight into the curriculum approaches and pedagogical practices that educators employ. As well, my experience has given me knowledge about the additional supports that educators may require in order to enhance the quality of ELCC programs and to create meaningful and responsive curriculum within diverse communities in Manitoba. A meaningful curriculum expands children's learning by engaging children and their families in authentic ways that reflect the communities in which the programs are situated.

Although Early Learning Frameworks (ELFs), such as *Early Returns*, have provided a standard for creating an early years curriculum to guide practice, there is still varied quality in child care programs. I have observed varying strengths of relationships between educators, children, and families; inconsistent use of pedagogical tools such as observation, reflection, and documentation; and, wide-ranging degrees of effectiveness in creating a meaningful curriculum and responsive pedagogy. Varied quality after the introduction of *Early Returns* suggests that an ELF is not enough to enhance quality and that further support to educators is needed in programs across the province. Therefore, the purpose of this project is to inquire, through a review of the literature, about the potential of a Pedagogical Support Document (PSD) and accompanying professional development to enhance educators' capacity in developing meaningful curriculum and improving the quality of ELCC programs. A PSD, along with a commitment for ongoing professional development based on the PSD, can provide guidance for educators to continually reflect on how their centre's curriculum statement corresponds with their daily pedagogical practice to ensure that the curriculum is consistently responsive to the children, educators, families, and communities in which it is situated.

Key Terms

The following terms will play a key role in discussing this project: early childhood curriculum; pedagogy; observation, documentation, and reflection; Early Learning Framework (ELF); quality of ELCC; and Pedagogical Support Documents.

In Manitoba, *early childhood curriculum* for child care is closely related to developmental theory and “refers to how [educators] organize opportunities [for children] to learn throughout the day. This is based on goals for children's social, emotional, physical and cognitive development” (Government of Manitoba, 2011, p. 2). At the same time, the

Government of Manitoba states that curriculum is “strongly influenced by...beliefs and values...[and] should support and reflect the children, families and community” (p. 20).

Manitoba’s ELFs do not have a definition of *pedagogy*, therefore, for the purposes of this paper, I draw on several sources to assemble a definition of pedagogy. As a starting point, I acknowledge the Ontario Ministry of Education’s (2007) definition of pedagogy as “the understanding of how learning takes place and the philosophy and practice that supports that understanding of learning” (Best Start Panel on Early Learning, 2007, p. 90). I also draw on the idea that pedagogy is influenced by socio-cultural contexts (Vygotsky, 1966, 1978); that is, children’s learning is mediated by their sociocultural contexts, including their families, teachers, curriculum, and community. Finally, I acknowledge that pedagogy involves reflecting on practice. Reflective practices, facilitated by observation, documentation, and collaborative interpretation of children’s learning processes, enables educators to support children’s learning and help educators critically consider their curriculum and pedagogy (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2007).

Observation, Documentation, and Reflection are separate but inter-connected terms that describe pedagogical practices used by early childhood educators. Historically, observation has been used in early childhood programs “to assess children’s...development...in relation to already predetermined categories...[to] define what the normal child should be doing at a particular age” (Dahlberg et al., 2007, p. 146). Recently, there has been a shift in thinking about the purpose of observation and documentation in early childhood settings as tools for reflection and meaning making (Dahlberg et al., 2007). For example, Learning Stories used in New Zealand (Carr & Lee, 2012), described later in this paper, and pedagogical documentation (Dahlberg et al., 2007) use observation and documentation of children as means for reflection among educators,

children, and families about children's learning processes in order to facilitate deeper understanding of children's ways of knowing, while, at the same time, facilitating deeper connections with children and families. Contemporary observation and documentation strategies are also used for making the curriculum more meaningful and responsive, particularly when it is co-created with children and families (Dahlberg et al., 2007). In general, in the process of observation and documentation educators observe and carefully listen to children as they participate in the educational experiences offered during the day in the ELCC centres (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2004). Educators document by writing down what they see and hear (Dahlberg et al., 2007; Government of Manitoba, 2011) or by taking photos or video of these experiences (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2004). Later, educators use this information to reflect and examine the meaning behind the documented experiences as they relate to children's learning and development (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2004). In addition, the educators can reflect on what steps can be taken next in order to plan the curriculum with, and in response to, the children's investigations (Government of Manitoba, 2011; New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2004). Children can also participate in reflection as educators ask questions and share observations and documentation with them (Government of Manitoba, 2011; New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2004). While children and educators co-construct the curriculum, the process is shared with others through documentation panels or displays so that they can participate in the discussions about children's learning and development (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2004).

The term *Early Learning Framework (ELF)* reflects an attempt to move away from the term curriculum which is commonly associated with formal schooling. Curriculum evokes a rigid standard that all educators must follow, while a "framework" refers to a description of

broad principles aimed at guiding educators' curricular approaches (Langford, 2012). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2004) defines an early learning framework as:

a statement of the values and goals that should guide early childhood centres; a summary of programme standards... to facilitate development and learning; ...an outline of the knowledge, skills, dispositions and values that children at different ages can be expected to master across broad developmental areas; and ...pedagogical guidelines outlining the processes through which children achieve these goals, and how educators should support them. (p. 11)

In Manitoba, a draft ELF for preschool centres and nursery schools was introduced to educators through staff meetings led by department staff starting in 2008 (Government of Manitoba, 2008) over three years. In 2011, this draft was finalized and named *Early Returns*. In 2012, each nursery school and child care centre with preschool age children was required to have an approved curriculum statement¹ that described their curricular approach (The Community Child Care Standards Act: Child Care Regulation, 1986). In addition, *Early Returns* for infant programs was published and introduced to educators in infant programs and networking meetings were organized to reflect on topics within this framework. The following year, each nursery school and child care centre with infants was also required to have an approved curriculum statement that described the curricular approach for infants (The Community Child Care Standards Act: Child Care Regulation, 1986).

¹ In Manitoba, licensed child care centres enroll children from 12 weeks to 12 years old. Generally, children 0 – 2 years old are enrolled in infant programs, children 2 – 5 years old are enrolled part- or full-time in preschool centres or part-time in nursery schools, and children 6 and older are enrolled in school age centres. School age centres without infant or preschool children are not required to write a curriculum statement.

Pedagogical Support Documents (PDSs) are policy texts published by government ministries that build from ELFs to further support the work of educators (e.g., Ontario's *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*). PDSs aim at enhancing ELCC quality, in particular, in relation to curriculum and pedagogy. These documents inform early childhood educators on current pedagogical approaches and encourage reflection on practice with the goal of developing a responsive and meaningful curriculum (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014; New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2004).

Enhancing *Quality* in ELCC has been the focus of the Manitoba government since 2008 (Government of Manitoba, 2008; Government of Manitoba, 2014). Quality, though, is a difficult term to define and will be explored more thoroughly throughout this paper. Generally, quality refers to the factors that enable or hinder educators to provide early learning and care appropriate to the children who attend the centre (Doherty, Lero, Goelman, LaGrange, & Tougas, 2000; Flanagan, Beach, & Varmuza, 2013; Friendly, Doherty, & Beach, 2006). In this project, I will argue that a PSD can be a significant resource for enhancing quality in ELCC programs.

Theoretical Orientation

As a government employee who works in the policy area for ELCC, I am cognizant of the broader context that is essential in policy development and subsequently implementation to the sector; hence, my curiosity about a PSD to enhance the child care system to support children and families more effectively and collaboratively. In this paper, I argue that strong relationships between children, educators, families, and communities in ELCC are important for curriculum development, program quality, and policy. Bronfenbrenner's (1974, 1977, 1994) Ecological Systems Theory suggests that relationships within and between systems such as government's policy, the child care centre, the local community, and the home influence each other and affect a

child's learning and development. Bronfenbrenner's (1974, 1977, 1994) Ecological Systems Theory, therefore, provides me with a context for the development and introduction of a PSD.

In addition, Vygotsky's Socio-cultural Theory provides guidance for the content of a PSD, specific to early childhood educator practices. Vygotsky's (1966, 1978) Socio-cultural Theory supports the notion that children learn within the context of meaningful relationships with others. A PSD then, could illustrate how early childhood educators can deepen their relationships with children, families, and their communities, which is also an important component of *Early Returns*.

Throughout this paper, I emphasize the importance of approaching a PSD from a socio-cultural and contextual perspective that are attentive to the values and beliefs of society, communities, families, and children, the knowledge of these individuals and groups, and the relationships between them. Consequently, this project is guided by Bronfenbrenner's (1974, 1977, 1994) Ecological Systems Theory and Vygotsky's (1966, 1978) Socio-cultural Theory.

Overview of Chapters

In this chapter, I introduced the project's topic and its rationale. I also introduced the theoretical framework that guides this project and the key terms used throughout the paper. In the following chapter, I will expand on the theoretical framework and will review literature related to ELCC curriculum, pedagogy, policy, and quality. In Chapter Three, I will draw connections from the reviewed literature to ELCC policy and practice as it pertains to a PSD. In Chapter Four, I will reflect on and summarize this project and make suggestions for follow-up.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I provide an overview of the theoretical framework and the literature as they pertain to my investigation. I begin with a description of my theoretical framework including Bronfenbrenner's (1974, 1977, 1994) Ecological Systems Theory and Vygotsky's (1966, 1978) Socio-cultural Theory. Then, I review the research and literature on quality and policy in ELCC. I examine Pedagogical Support Documents and review New Zealand's pedagogical tool to facilitate reflection and ongoing assessment of the ELCC curriculum, called Learning Stories. I also examine research on dissemination of policy documents and professional development to inform professional development related to a PSD in Manitoba.

Theoretical Framework

This project is guided by theories that recognize the significance of socio-cultural contexts for children's learning and development in order to make curriculum meaningful to those who participate in ELCC programs. Socio-cultural perspectives have influenced early childhood education curriculum in the last 30 years (Edwards, 2003), most recently, through curriculum frameworks that have been introduced in Canada and internationally (Langford, 2012).

Ecological systems theory

The complex inter-relatedness between the systems in Bronfenbrenner's (1974, 1977, 1994) Ecological Systems Theory is considered in this project. In this theory, there are four systems that influence the developing child or person: the microsystem, or the immediate environment in which interactions and participation with others takes place (Bronfenbrenner,

1994, p. 39); the mesosystem, or “the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings containing the developing person” (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40); the exosystem, or the “linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not contain the developing person, but in which events occur that indirectly influence processes within the immediate setting in which the developing person lives” (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40); and the macrosystem, or the collective values and beliefs that guide a society or culture (Bronfenbrenner, 1974, 1977, 1994).

In this project, I recognize that a PSD not only affects the systems of Bronfenbrenner’s (1974, 1977, 1994) Ecological Systems Theory, the document itself can be influenced and mediated by these systems when people within these systems are involved in its creation. Curriculum and pedagogy changes at the microsystem level can lead to enhanced quality in the province at the macrosystem level. A new PSD that attends to the collective values and beliefs about pedagogical practice for ELCC in the Province of Manitoba, while remaining open to local values and beliefs, should support the complex relationships between Bronfenbrenner’s (1974, 1977, 1994) systems. A PSD can provide a framework for pedagogical practice with flexibility so that curriculum can represent the varied socio-cultural contexts in Manitoba, the ELCC centres within the province, and the communities, families, and children involved in each of these centres.

Vygotsky’s socio-cultural theory

While Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory guides my understanding of the multilayered and multidirectional influences of policy, Vygotsky’s Socio-cultural Theory (1966, 1978) guides my thinking about the content of a PSD. Vygotsky’s (1966, 1978) Socio-cultural

Theory suggests that learning does not happen in isolation. Rather, children's learning and higher mental functions evolve while children participate in social interactions with adults and peers in the community, in particular during play.

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is a term Vygotsky (1978) used to discuss the difference between a child's actual developmental level and his or her potential developmental level. In an early childhood centre, educators who are aware of children's ZPD can use scaffolding. Scaffolding is a way for a more experienced member of a culture to guide learning and development incrementally so that gradually a child needs less assistance to reach potential development (Bodrova & Leong, 1996). Scaffolding can occur between educators and children, children and other children, adults and other adults (Vygotsky, 1978). A PSD can focus educators' awareness of individual children's ZPD and can support educators in scaffolding children's learning. Vygotsky's theory demonstrates the important role that educators play in children's learning and development as well as the importance of practices, such as scaffolding, that educators use in everyday experiences with children. However, as I will explain later, sharing the learning that takes place during these interactive classroom experiences by using a pedagogical tool such as observation, documentation, and reflection, is not a simple task. A PSD can support educators in illustrating how learning is shaped and extended in socio-cultural contexts by explicating the use of pedagogical tools such as documentation. Early childhood educators can also be supported to use these tools through professional development that builds on such reflective practices.

Examination of Research and Literature

The following section presents a review and examination of the literature related to quality and policy in early learning curriculum and pedagogy with the purpose of elucidating the

significance and potential content of a PSD. The section includes literature that explores ways in which educators can be supported in creating meaningful curriculum and enhancing quality in their programs.

Quality and policy in early learning and child care

As stated earlier, quality is a difficult term to define. Generally, quality refers to the factors that enable educators to provide ELCC appropriate to the children who attend the centre (Doherty et al., 2000; Flanagan et al., 2013; Friendly et al., 2006). In this paper, I suggest that policy changes in the macrosystem level, such as the introduction of a new PSD, have the potential to positively impact the quality of early learning programs. Therefore, it is important to consider the factors related to quality in ELCC and how a PSD could enhance quality.

In *You Bet We Care!* (Doherty et al., 2000) and *You Bet We Still Care!* (Flanagan et al., 2013) researchers identified and examined quality factors such as educators' commitment and training in addition to adequate funding to provide fair wages and benefits in order to reduce staff turnover. Flanagan and her colleagues (2013) found that another factor was employer participation in quality enhancement activities such as introducing a new curriculum or ELF to educators, participating in external quality assessments or self-assessments, and providing mentoring and training to their educators. In their studies, McCain, Mustard, and McCuaig (2011) and Akbari and McCuaig (2014), identify a number of policy factors that influence quality similar to Doherty et al. and Flanagan et al. including funding, governance, accountability, trends, learning environments, and curriculum.

In the past, governments tended to focus only on quality factors that could be regulated through legislation (e.g., adult-to-child ratios and training requirements), and factors related to

the operation of ELCC centres (e.g., funding for wages and benefits for educators). Although legislative and operational factors are important to early learning quality, there has been a shift in the scholarly literature to include factors related to curriculum and pedagogy that provide an opportunity for new ways to think about policy. The combination of legislative and operational factors with curricular and pedagogical factors may have a greater impact on enhanced quality because more than one factor is being addressed at one time.

For example, Akbari and McCuaig (2014) focus on the pedagogical work of the educators. They state that:

Educators and what they do in early childhood education programs are essential to determining how effective programs are and how much children and their families benefit. Educators who have early childhood development knowledge and pedagogy use curriculum to design effective learning environments. (p. 11)

Akbari and McCuaig further posit that early learning frameworks that guide curricular and pedagogical approaches, in addition to implementing curriculum that aligns early learning programs across child care, kindergarten, and primary grades are factors that affect quality. McCain and his colleagues (2011), focusing on curriculum, add that play-based curricula that is flexible to meet the needs, interests, and abilities of children has been linked to children's future success.

Dahlberg, Moss, and Pence (2007) have a different approach to the concept of quality in early childhood education than the approaches described above. From their point of view, quality is typically seen as quantitatively measurable with observable outcomes (similar to some of the factors indicated in the quality studies described above) along with the idea of curriculum as a set

of predefined standards. According to Dahlberg and colleagues, this conventional definition of quality limits and restricts critical reflection and judgment by educators, and as such, could inhibit quality rather than enhance it. Therefore, they argue for re-conceptualizing quality to include variables particular to the context in which they are situated, rather than having one global definition and overriding universal factors of quality for all. Yet, including contextual variables can still be problematic (Dahlberg et al., 2007). Dahlberg and her colleagues suggest that providing broad principles and values as a base, with flexibility for educators to critically reflect and incorporate cultural and pedagogical specifications that are meaningful in their communities, may be a more ethical way to approach quality in ELCC. Others have also argued that curriculum and pedagogy cannot simply be declared in a policy framework with the expectation that educators follow the text to enhance quality (Pirard, 2011). Rather, professional judgment and interpretation are necessary elements in obtaining an adaptive, fluid and evolving definition of quality in ELCC (Dahlberg et al., 2007; Pirard, 2011). In this vein, a PSD would need to take into account the importance of educators' professional knowledge and pedagogical judgment.

Wood (2004) states that educators in England have had difficulty reconciling their professional knowledge with policy in prescriptive ELFs. She posits that policy co-created with those who use it can be more successful to bridge the distance between policy and practice. Oberhuemer (2005) makes a similar conclusion and suggests that prescriptive policy constrains professionalism in the early learning field. She posits that educators should be able to interpret policy since this has the potential to elevate the professional status of early childhood educators within society as a whole (Oberhuemer, 2005). New Zealand researchers Alvestad and Duncan's (2006) study of early childhood educators' responses to an ELCC curriculum found "that [the

ELF] has embraced diversity in early childhood provision and has placed the professional expertise of the teachers to the fore of the document, but on the other hand, it is a challenge for teachers to work with” (p. 41).

Pirard (2011) and Moloney (2010) state that making policy and practice connections takes time and support. Moloney (2010) examined early learning policy initiatives in Ireland and found that minimum qualification standards for educators and continued professional development are necessary for educators to translate training into practice. Pirard (2011) concluded that support should be available on a long-term basis and that making connections with all stakeholders (e.g., instructors from training institutions in early childhood education programs) including those outside the ELCC sector (e.g., professionals in other fields such as the health sector) can “lead to other ways of thinking and acting” (p. 265). She advocates for a living ELCC policy document where educational views are shared and where reflective practice “allows each team to find the best solutions to fit their own particular context” (p. 265).

The literature reviewed so far indicates that the creation of ELFs may not be sufficient for enhancing ELCC quality. As Pirard aptly (2011) stated:

Our experience... shows that it is not enough to ‘dare’ quality or to decree it.

Frameworks alone are not sufficient to improve educational practice; what is needed rather is a continual reframing, a constant process of redefining and evaluating interactive quality, implying that standards should be continually reformulated and educational project continually redefined. (p. 264)

In the following section, I examine the content and dissemination of PSDs in Canada and beyond, to provide insight into a PSD in Manitoba.

Pedagogical support documents

As discussed earlier, Manitoba published two ELF's in 2011 and 2012 (Government of Manitoba, 2011, 2012) and has not yet published a PSD. The Saskatchewan Ministry of Education published an ELF in 2008 and two Pedagogical Support Documents in 2009, while the Ontario Ministry of Education published an ELF in 2007 and a Pedagogical Support Document in 2014. In this section, I examine Canadian PSDs found in the Ontario and Saskatchewan Ministries of Education, as well as New Zealand Ministry of Education's unique way of approaching the concept of PSDs.

Although many provinces in Canada have ELF's (Akbari & McCuaig, 2014), very few have PSDs. I chose to review PSDs from Saskatchewan and Ontario because they are neighboring provinces to Manitoba. Saskatchewan is a province in Canada similar in population and geography to Manitoba and Ontario has similar training requirements for Early Childhood Educators to Manitoba (College of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario, n.d.; Government of Manitoba, n.d.). Compared to Canada, New Zealand has a longer history with their early childhood curriculum policy guide, *Te Whāriki*, and its accompanying resources, *Assessment for Learning: Early Childhood Exemplars*. Because of its long-standing experience and investment in early childhood education, New Zealand's approach to ELCC policy provides a wealth of information for a PSD in Manitoba.

Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan has two PSDs: *Leading for Change* and *Creating Learning Environments*. The former was created to support early childhood leaders as they facilitated change in their early childhood programs (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2009a). The goal of this document is "to assist in recapturing the delight of working with young

children and their families” (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2009a, p. 12). The second document includes further information on classroom arrangement and play materials for indoor and outdoor environments, as well as suggestions on how to include the children in these plans (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2009b). However, Saskatchewan’s PSD may not be relevant for Manitoba because of the different training requirements for early childhood certification in each province. Saskatchewan requires one year for certification as an Early Childhood Educator (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, n.d.). Manitoba requires a minimum two year diploma or equivalent, and directors of child care programs must have additional training, typically a post-diploma in management and leadership (Government of Manitoba, n.d.). In ECE diploma programs in Manitoba students receive extensive training about creating early learning environments, including ways to creatively incorporate children’s interests into play spaces. Additionally, over the last year, the Province of Manitoba has organized and funded peer-to-peer “mentorship to centre directors to strengthen management and leadership” (Government of Manitoba, 2014, p. 5). Manitoba and Ontario, on the other hand, have similar training requirements (College of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario, n.d.; Government of Manitoba, n.d.).

Ontario. Ontario’s PSD, *How Does Learning Happen?* builds from Ontario’s ELFs. It describes Ontario’s pedagogy by presenting goals for children, expectations for programs on how learning happens through relationships and questions for reflection. It also highlights the use of an observation and documentation skills through the practice of pedagogical documentation (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014). Similar to Saskatchewan, Ontario’s PSD provides examples of what this practice could look like for educators. The Ontario document proposes four foundations for learning that “inform the goals for children and expectations for programs”

(p. 8). These foundations are belonging, well-being, engagement, and expression. Importantly, Ontario's PSD encourages educators' critical reflection through the use of questions. The Ontario Ministry of Education (2014) states that the document "is not so much about providing all the answers, but rather is intended to provoke questions –for it is in exploring our questions that learning happens" (p. 5). The document also illustrates the importance of family and community connections in creating the early learning curriculum, and highlights that researchers, as well as educators, inform pedagogy (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014, p. 10). The content from Ontario's PSD can be considered further in developing a PSD in Manitoba, especially in relation to strategies to support educators in developing their understanding of their pedagogical approaches.

New Zealand. In New Zealand, PSDs have been conceptualized differently than the Canadian PSDs reviewed above. The *Assessment for Learning: Early Childhood Exemplars*, are published on the Ministry website², created by educators, and are a resource for educators compiled in a series of twenty booklets. The booklets address various topics related to the strands of *Te Whāriki*, and show the importance of the social context for children's learning (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2004). The exemplars focus on assessment through the use of Learning Stories. Learning Stories are a narrative form of assessment used in New Zealand (Lee, 2008) that shifts observation, documentation, and assessment of the child from a comparison with a developmental norm to the story of the child with his or her community (Carr & Lee, 2012). Learning stories also describe "the contribution that early childhood experience makes to life-long learning" (Carr et al., 2002, p. 117). Learning Stories are grounded in socio-cultural

² Exemplars are available here:

<http://www.educate.ece.govt.nz/learning/curriculumAndLearning/Assessmentforlearning/KeiTuaotePae.aspx>

theory because they facilitate and encourage educators, children, families, and communities to create and revisit Learning Stories together (Carr & Lee, 2012; Lee, 2008). Through Learning Stories, relationships become deeper and more meaningful as participants share discoveries and the broader community considers the importance of early learning to society (Carr & Lee, 2012). The exemplars support educators in their pedagogical approach in two ways. The exemplars show how New Zealand's ELF is interpreted in practice in different contexts, but more importantly, and different than the Ontario and Saskatchewan's documents, they also show how a policy document could become a meaningful living and evolving resource that supports pedagogy when it draws on "real life" educational experiences. The exemplars show how curriculum is implemented through the relationships between educators, children, and their families in relation to their culture and communities and in accordance with Vygotsky's (1966, 1978) Socio-cultural Theory. These real life exemplars illustrate that curriculum is unique and meaningful to each ELCC centre because it reflects the children, educators, families, and local communities. New Zealand's approach to ELCC policy also aligns with Bronfenbrenner's (1974, 1977, 1994) Ecological Systems Theory, because it illustrates how each of the ecological systems (e.g., family, school, policy, culture) influence the other contexts. In this way, children, families, and educators are engaged in making contextually relevant early learning curriculum, while co-creating resources, such as the exemplars, that are used by New Zealand Ministry of Education as policy documents. This collaborative approach to the development of a PSD is considered further in Chapter Three.

Professional development and pedagogical support documents

As was suggested earlier, creating and disseminating a new policy document, such as ELF or a PSD, may not be sufficient to improve ELCC quality. Rather, policymakers should

think about, and make long term plans, for co-creating policy documents with the ELCC sector, and also actively engage the sector during the implementation phase through professional development. Professional development opportunities can be venues to inform policy development, as well as venues to disseminate policy documents. Educators could benefit from being guided by policy documents (such as a PSD) that invite and encourage critical reflection. Therefore, I include in this section, a review of literature on the topic of professional development in order to gain an understanding of the kind of professional development that may be required to accompany the release of a PSD in Manitoba.

Studies examining professional development for early childhood educators have shown that professional development can improve child care quality (Howe, Jacobs, Vukelich, & Recchia, 2012; Howe & Jacobs, 2012; Howe & Jacobs, 2013; Palsha & Wesley, 1998; Warash, Markstrom, & Lucci, 2005; & Warash, Ward, & Rotilie, 2008). However, how professional development is conducted, either as on-site consultation, mentoring, or occasional workshops, and the amount of time educators need to be involved in professional development, have yet to be clearly identified. To this end, Howe and Jacobs (2013) suggest that individualizing the length of time spent mentoring the educator could most effectively enable change.

One example of a long-term commitment to professional development can be found in New Zealand. When *Te Whāriki* was published, May and Carr (1997) realized that professional development would be necessary for educators to understand how the ELF could be applied to their context and how it could have lasting, positive impacts on children. Carr and her colleagues (2002) state that:

Professional development on assessment and evaluation in early childhood settings should include supporting practitioners over extended periods of time to foster reflection and action research, and practitioners should be encouraged to adapt models of innovative practice to suit their programmes. (p. 123)

Since the release of *Te Whāriki* in 1996 and until 2009, the New Zealand government supported professional development with a focus on assessment and evaluation so that early childhood educators could use *Te Whāriki* effectively (Lee, Carr, Soutar, & Mitchell, 2013; May & Carr, 1997; McLachlan, 2011; Lee, 2008). Professional development for the implementation of *Te Whāriki* typically meant a facilitator mentoring individual centres, although workshops on specific topics were also available (McLachlan, 2011, p. 40). The New Zealand Ministry of Education also funded research related to professional development during this time (Lee et al., 2013).

May and Carr (1997) identified that an appropriate way to assess children was necessary with the new curriculum model in *Te Whāriki* that is based on a continuum of development rather than an incremental one (May & Carr, 2007). The Ministry funded a research project called *The Assessment Project* which identified Learning Stories, “that empower learners and communicate with families” (Carr et al., 2002, p. 117) as an appropriate method of child assessment. Using Learning Stories, educators could identify: the strands of *Te Whāriki*, learning dispositions related to the strands, and the actions and behaviours of children related to the learning dispositions (Carr et al., 2002). With the assistance of educators who participated in this assessment project, professional development with respect to assessment was created (Carr et al., 2002). The Educational Leadership Project (ELP) is a professional development program that mirrors the strands of *Te Whāriki* and uses Learning Stories as assessment (Lee, 2008). The ELP

(Lee, 2008) provides various types of professional development to empower educators to be educational leaders. The focus is on reciprocal relationships between facilitators, educators, and others to create an ELCC community for critical reflection (Lee, 2008). Through critical reflection, educators can define and re-define quality (Pirard, 2011). Over time, Learning Stories were used more broadly throughout the country as assessment and documentation tools in ELCC programs (Carr, 2011). Eventually, as described earlier in this chapter, some of these Learning Stories were published by the New Zealand Ministry of Education (2004) as resources for educators that illustrated the strands of *Te Whāriki*. The New Zealand Ministry of Education (2004) website indicates that the exemplars will continue to be published over time.

The studies from New Zealand illustrate the importance of tools, such as Learning Stories, in professional development opportunities that engage educators in critically reflecting on the curriculum and their pedagogical practice. They also show that through long term, centre-focused professional development, educators could gain a greater understanding of individual children and their socio-cultural contexts and have opportunities to investigate theories of learning and development (Lee et al., 2013). Professional development that builds on practices such as observation, documentation, and reflection is considered further in Chapter Three.

Summary

In Chapter Two, I presented the theoretical framework for this project and a review of the literature on ELCC quality, policy, curriculum, and professional development, as they pertain to a PSD. Not only did the literature indicate that dissemination of policy documents in and of itself does not guarantee improved ELCC quality, it also reiterated that ongoing professional development is necessary, especially through critical reflection practices, where quality is enhanced by deepening educator's understanding of policy and practice.

In the next chapter, I discuss practical application of the research for a Pedagogical Support Document in Manitoba.

CHAPTER THREE: CONNECTING THEORY TO POLICY AND PRACTICE

In Chapter Three, I draw from my experience and from the examination of the literature to put forth recommendations for creation, dissemination, and implementation for an ELCC PSD for Manitoba. I focus on three main areas: building connections between policy and the ELCC sector (i.e., enhancing policy-practice connection), recommended content areas for a PSD, and ensuring ongoing professional development in accordance with a release of a PSD. I also provide a description of the research brief that summarizes my investigation of the process of creating and disseminating a PSD.

As I put forth my recommendations, I propose a PSD that will strengthen the links between policy and practice, build the capacity of educators, and enhance quality of programs for young children. However, as was discussed in Chapter Two, a publication of a government mandated document alone cannot facilitate desired change in practice (Moloney, 2010; Pirard, 2011; Wood, 2004). A plan for accompanying professional development is necessary to bring together the various stakeholders to explore the connections between educational values and beliefs, pedagogical approaches, research and policy pertaining to early education so that the ELFs and the PSD become living documents, interpreted by educators and imbedded in daily practice.

Currently, Manitoba requires ELCC centres to articulate a curriculum statement that describes the curriculum approach used in each program (The Community Child Care Standards Act: Child Care Regulation, 1986). This statement should be based on the applicable ELF to “share how [the] program is unique and what takes place to foster the growth and development of all children” (Government of Manitoba, 2011, p. 20; Government of Manitoba, 2012, p. 25).

Unfortunately, I have observed that these statements are not always contextually relevant, and therefore, may not be meaningful to the children and families at the centre. In addition, practices do not always follow the centre's articulated approach. A PSD that includes ways to facilitate reflective practices may address the disconnect between government policy (the requirement for a curriculum statement), centre policy (the curriculum statement itself), and practice (the curricular approach practiced in the centre), to enhance quality in ELCC.

Building Connections Between Policy and Practice as an Overarching Approach

Throughout this chapter, making links between policy and practice is an overarching approach to enhancing quality related to curriculum and pedagogy in ELCC in Manitoba. The creation of a PSD that provides guiding principles open to professional judgment (Alvestad & Duncan, 2006; Dahlberg et al., 2007) can support policy – practice connections. In contrast, a prescriptive policy document can be detrimental to the goal of policy and practice connections because educator's professional knowledge and policy can seem to conflict (Oberhuemer, 2005; Wood, 2004). A PSD for Manitoba should support curriculum that is co-constructed with children, educators, and families, particularly through practices of observation, documentation, and reflection. As Pirard (2011) suggests, policy and practice connections can be achieved when conditions exist that enable educators to reflect and develop those reflective skills (p. 265), when the accompanying professional development is ongoing, when partnerships are developed and sustained between various stakeholders, and when families' views on educational practice are considered in the curriculum. A new approach to policy creation and dissemination can support policy-practice relationships by engaging the sector in contributing to policy (as in the New Zealand example illustrated) so that educators “see themselves as interpreters and not as mere

implementers of curricular frameworks” (Oberhuemer, 2005, p. 12). In other words, educators are co-producers of policy documents, not just consumers of policy documents.

New Zealand’s approach of using Learning Stories is a way to include and validate educators as interpreters of the ELF (*Te Whāriki*) and is a unique example of connecting early childhood curriculum policy to practice. The New Zealand experience shows that strong relationships between governments, the child care sector, families, and communities are possible and essential to these connections (Lee et al., 2013). The experience also illustrates the importance of educators using Learning Stories as a tool for observation, documentation, and reflection that supports the co-creation of the ELCC centre’s curriculum with children while engaging families in their children’s child care experiences.

Suggested Content Areas for a Pedagogical Support Document

After reviewing the research and literature related to ELCC policy and quality, professional development, as well as reviewing a number of PSDs, I suggest three main ideas for content in a PSD for Manitoba. First, the PSD should include broad principles that guide pedagogy while providing space for educators’ interpretation and professional judgment. Second, the PSD should enable the creation of locally constructed child outcomes, rather than imposing prescriptive outcomes for all children, with the goal of providing flexibility for cultural and contextual relevance. Third, the PSD should include detailed information and specific strategies for reflective practices, using tools such as observation, documentation, and reflection as the platform for collaborative and critical reflections on curriculum and pedagogy. The PSD will be a living document that is continuously evolving through on-going reflection. Documentation of children’s experiences created by educators from observation and reflection on children’s

learning processes in relation to the local ELFs could be published by the Province of Manitoba over time to form a PSD resource much like the exemplars in New Zealand.

Broad principles and professional judgment

A PSD based on broad ELCC principles would allow educators to use their professional judgment (Alvestad & Duncan, 2006; Dahlberg et al., 2007), and at the same time, would afford better connections between policy and practice because educators would have the possibility to interpret the curriculum according to their specific contexts. For example, educators can invite families to share their cultural practices as part of a broad principle about acceptance of diversity and enhancing a sense of belonging.³ As discussions and critical reflection about diversity, acceptance, and belonging evolve, educators can rely on their relationships with families and their professional judgment to decide what cultural practices may be incorporated into the curriculum. Other principles adapted from *Early Returns* that can be interpreted by educators in “real life” situations including learning through play, the importance of relationships with peers and adults, the importance of the environment in which the children learn, the kinds of experiences in which children participate, and inclusion of children with special needs. Broad principles then, guide and facilitate practice, rather than mandate a particular curriculum (Oberhuemer, 2005; Wood, 2004). As educators engage in critical reflection they use their professional judgment to examine relations between the broad principles and their practice, and in so doing connect the policy framework with their local pedagogical practice.

Observation and documentation as a critical reflection tool

³ Note that this principle builds from pedagogical values identified in Manitoba’s *Early Returns* document.

Based on the literature review, and in particular research from New Zealand (Carr, 2011; Carr et al., 2002, May & Carr, 1997), a thorough description of how and why the practice of observation and documentation can be used as a critical reflection tool, its purpose, and strategies for using this pedagogical approach can be included in a PSD for Manitoba. In my experience in Manitoba, observation and documentation methods are taught to ECE students in college diploma programs and are periodically available at conferences and workshops provided by professional organizations and the province. Although there are opportunities to participate in training and professional development, not all programs use these methods, even when it is articulated in their curriculum statement. Research (Carr et al., 2002; Lee, 2008; May & Carr, 2007; The Unit for Early Years Research and Development, n.d.) suggests that documentation can be a tool for reflective practice, yet, research also reveals that educators need ongoing guidance and support to use these tools for critical reflection and to gain insights into children's theories and their own practices.

In keeping with the theoretical framework for this project, a pedagogical tool such as Learning Stories, grounded in socio-cultural theory, can facilitate reflection, as well as relationships between children, educators, families, and the community. Reflection is encouraged and methods to observe and document are suggested in *Early Returns*; however, none are described in detail, nor was sustained professional development offered to educators on using these tools.

The question of predefined child outcomes

The inclusion of specific child outcomes based on a developmental scale in an early years policy document may be problematic (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2007). In most cases, child

outcomes describe the end product of children's typical development within specific social contexts. In contrast, and as the theoretical framework for this project elucidated, learning is a continuum and is contextual. Assessment of learning is often based on values and beliefs of a particular society or culture. Pre-determined end-products such as child outcomes may not be contextually relevant (Dahlberg et al., 2007). As Vygotsky (1966, 1978) suggested, it is the experiences a child has through their relationships with others that provide opportunities for learning and development.

In New Zealand's *Te Whāriki* outcomes are culturally based and include values such as well-being, belonging, contributing, communicating, and exploring (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 1996). However, Manitoba has many different cultures represented in its population, in particular Aboriginal, Francophone, and newcomers to Canada (Government of Manitoba, 2015). To be culturally relevant, programs in Manitoba could articulate child outcomes based the values and beliefs in their own social and cultural contexts. Child outcomes specific to individual children and their contexts could be illustrated in the ELCC centre documentation instead of being linked to predefined, specific outcomes required for all children. This approach to educational outcomes could be described in a PSD and also conveyed in professional development sessions.

Ensuring Ongoing Professional Development

The research and literature examined in this project illustrate that a policy document in and of itself may not facilitate change in curriculum and pedagogical approaches to enhance quality (Alvestad & Duncan, 2006; Carr et al., 2002; Lee et al., 2013; May & Carr, 1997; Moloney, 2010; Pirard, 2011; Wood, 2004). However, research also suggests that enhanced quality can result from sustained professional development (Howe et al., 2012; Howe & Jacobs,

2012; Howe & Jacobs, 2013; Palsha & Wesley, 1998; Pirard, 2011; Warash et al., 2005; Warash et al., 2008) resulting in enhanced experiences for children (Carr, 2011). However, professional development needs to engage educators in meaningful conversations about curriculum development and needs to include time to observe, reflect, and then represent children's learning using documentation tools (Carr et al., 2002; Carr, 2011; May & Carr, 1997; Lee, 2008; Pirard, 2011). Representing children's learning by using observation, documentation, and reflection is a complex approach to curriculum and pedagogy that requires the support of a facilitator who can engage and guide educators in this process through professional development opportunities (Howe et al., 2012; Howe & Jacobs, 2012; Howe & Jacobs, 2013; Pirard, 2011; The Unit for Early Years Research and Development, n.d.). I suggest that the department staff who introduced *Early Returns* to the ELCC field, now called the centralized quality enhancement team, with the Government of Manitoba (2014) facilitate this process because they have extensive knowledge of curriculum and pedagogy, as well as existing relationships with the ELCC sector in Manitoba. The centralized team has knowledge of the ELFs as well as experience encouraging reflective practice using the aforementioned strategies.

Appropriate time and pace

Building relationships between the child's ecological systems and strengthening connections between policy and practice takes time and requires an appropriate pace. Based on the studies examined in the previous chapter (for example, see Howe & Jacobs, 2013; and Carr et al., 2002), it seems that time allotted for professional development needs to be flexible to effectively support educators. Previously, professional development for Manitoba's ELFs was limited in terms of time and provided only an introduction of the documents. Although there was engagement in these activities, limited time and the quick pace made it difficult to maintain and

continue critical reflection on practice after the support period was complete. Instead, professional development related to a PSD that focuses on reflection and interpretation of policy could occur at a pace determined in collaboration between the educators and the policy facilitators.

Research Brief: Recommendations for Creating an Early Learning Pedagogical Support Document in Manitoba

Appendix A contains a Research Brief that I intend to share with my Director, Supervisor, and colleagues at Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care (MELCC). This brief provides a summary of my recommendations related to a PSD and its dissemination in Manitoba. First, it explains that making policy and practice connections are necessary for enhanced quality. Then, it suggests that a PSD be co-created with the sector and include content to strengthen policy-practice connections including: guiding principles, rather than a mandated curriculum; observation and documentation practices that facilitate critical reflection; and locally constructed outcomes that support varied contexts, individual learning, and development continuums. Finally, it shows that ongoing professional development is necessary for sustained critical reflection that could enhance quality in the field.

Summary

In Chapter Three, I connected the literature reviewed in Chapter Two to inform the co-creation of a PSD and its dissemination in Manitoba. I suggested that quality in ELCC can be enhanced when policy and practice have a reciprocal relationship and where policymakers, educators, children and families have an opportunity to participate meaningfully in curriculum development. I also suggested that a PSD provide in depth information about observation and documentation as a tool for reflective practice, and that communities be encouraged to create

child outcomes that are relevant to their context. Finally, I argued that ongoing professional development is necessary for continued critical reflection and that educators should be involved in deciding the amount of time and the pace of professional development related to the PSD. In Chapter Four, I will conclude this project, point out its limitations, and describe how I will follow-up on my findings.

CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION

The literature examined in this project validated the significance of developing a PSD for ELCC in Manitoba. Research about policy suggests that in order to have a meaningful effect on pedagogical practices, policy cannot simply be stated in policy documents. Drawing on Bronfenbrenner's (1974, 1977, 1994) Ecological Theory, I argued that engaging policymakers, educators, children, families, and communities in curricular and pedagogical decisions, enables a collective responsibility for ELCC. This means that a PSD can be designed to give educators the tools and opportunities to reflect on their practice, to use their professional judgment, and to engage their communities in co-creating culturally relevant curriculum.

In the process of studying this topic, I have come to three main conclusions: 1) to affect change in ELCC quality stronger connections between policy and practice are needed; 2) a PSD should be based on broad principles rather than narrowly defined child outcomes, and should include guidelines for observation and documentation that encourage reflective practice; 3) for any policy implementation to be successful, ongoing professional development with the sustained involvement of a knowledgeable mentor or facilitator must be available to educators.

Using pedagogical practices such as observation and documentation to critically reflect on practice, to deepen relationships with children and families, and to create meaningful, responsive curriculum is complex work that will require time and facilitation by a professional. Like New Zealand, the Province of Manitoba could support professional development that engages educators in critical examination of curriculum and pedagogy and facilitate educators' use of pedagogical tools similar to Learning Stories.

Limitations and Direction for Further Research

The scope of this project may be limited by its focus on the context of ELCC in Manitoba and by my particular work experience with the Province of Manitoba. However, it is because of my professional association with Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care that the findings from this project can provoke and guide future government initiatives for quality enhancement in Manitoba ELCC. My main suggestion would be that a PSD be created in a similar vein to New Zealand's *Assessment for Learning: Early Childhood Exemplars*. Namely, that the PSD be created by drawing from early childhood educators' "real life" experiences. These examples from practice can then be published over time to illustrate various principles from the ELFs and PSD. It is my hope that this approach to policy will result in a continuous movement of enhancing quality so that young children and their families have the best experiences possible in Manitoba's early learning and child care settings.

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Appendix

Research Brief: Recommendations for Creating an Early Learning Pedagogical Support Document in Manitoba

Creating meaningful curriculum with children and their families is not easily accomplished. Through an examination of the research and literature on this topic, I suggest that building connections between policy and practice in a Pedagogical Support Document is an overarching approach to contextually relevant, and therefore, meaningful curriculum. A Pedagogical Support Document and accompanying professional development can be a strategy to build policy - practice connections, create meaningful curriculum, and enhance quality in early learning and child care (ELCC) centres in Manitoba.

Recommendation

1. Strengthening Policy-Practice Connections

Effective policy cannot simply be mandated (Moloney, 2010; Oberhuemer, 2005; Pirard, 2011; Wood, 2004). Educators need opportunities to use their professional judgment to interpret and make choices about curriculum (Alvestad & Duncan, 2006; Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2007; Oberhuemer, 2005). Learning Stories, used in New Zealand, are a pedagogical tool that educators can use to interpret an ELF as they co-create the curriculum with children and families and in doing so, strengthen the relationships between them (Carr & Lee, 2012). When educators are encouraged and supported to use critical reflection, interpretation, and professional judgment (Alvestad & Duncan, 2006; Oberhuemer, 2005; Pirard, 2011; Wood, 2004), they can make policy and practice connections in a meaningful way. Much like how relationships are strengthened between families and educators as Learning Stories are created, relationships are developed and sustained between the sector and government as they create a Pedagogical Support Document together. Through these relationships, connections between policy and practice can be made (Oberhuemer, 2005; Pirard, 2011; Wood, 2004) and quality ELCC for children becomes a collective responsibility.

2. Co-Creating a Document with the Sector

The research examined suggests that an effective policy document is co-created with the ELCC sector. In New Zealand, Learning Stories about children's learning experiences were written by educators and published by the New Zealand Ministry of Education to illustrate how New Zealand's ELF was interpreted in practice (Lee, Carr, Soutar, & Mitchell, 2013). Manitoba can use a similar approach to a local Pedagogical Support Document. As the sector uses a

pedagogical tool to observe, reflect, and document children's learning, the Province of Manitoba can publish this documentation with an explanation of the pedagogical approach. While content for a Pedagogical Support Document will be created with the sector over time, there is specific content that can be considered. This is described below.

a. Broad Principles

Broad principles should not mandate a particular curriculum, but rather guide and facilitate educators' practice (Oberhuemer, 2005; Wood, 2004). While broad principles provide a frame at the same time they leave space for educators' professional judgment (Alvestad & Duncan, 2006; Dahlberg et al., 2007). The components included in *Early Returns* (Government of Manitoba, 2011, 2012) can be used as a frame that is open to educator's interpretation (Alvestad & Duncan, 2006; Dahlberg et al., 2007; Oberhuemer, 2005; Wood, 2004) so that the curriculum can be culturally relevant. The relationships between educators, children, families, and communities along with educators' professional judgment facilitate the incorporation of cultural practices into the curriculum. While engaged in critical reflection on pedagogy, educators can make connections between these broad principles and their practice and share them with their communities.

b. Observation and Documentation

Research examined shows that in depth information about observation and documentation as reflective tools be included in a Pedagogical Support Document. In particular, the research from New Zealand (Carr, 2011; Carr et al., 2002; Lee, 2008; May & Carr, 1997) indicates that using an observation and documentation approach (e.g., Learning Stories) is an effective way to create contextually meaningful curriculum since it engages children and their families as documentation of children's learning shared with the centre's community. In addition, a Pedagogical Support Document could illustrate the educators' process as they critically reflected on their curriculum and the strategies mentors used to facilitate the use of observation and documentation as a pedagogical tool.

c. Locally Constructed Outcomes

Pre-defined child outcomes for all children are problematic when they do not take into account individual contexts (Dahlberg et al., 2007). As Vygotsky's (1966, 1978) Socio-cultural Theory suggests, the experiences children have through their relationships with others provide opportunities for diverse ways of learning and development as these vary considerably based on context. Pre-determined end-products such as mandated child outcomes do not give value to context, and do not provide an opportunity for educators to interpret and use their own professional judgment as they create curricular goals with children (Dahlberg et al., 2007). Locally constructed outcomes, rather than mandated child outcomes for every child support varied contexts, individual learning, and development continuums.

3. Engaging in Ongoing Professional Development

The literature and research on policy, curriculum, and pedagogy suggest that ongoing professional development (Howe et al., 2012; Howe & Jacobs, 2012; Howe & Jacobs, 2013; Palsha & Wesley, 1998; Pirard, 2011; Warash et al., 2005; Warash et al., 2008) with a facilitator (Howe et al., 2012; Howe & Jacobs, 2012; Howe & Jacobs, 2013; Pirard, 2011) is necessary to make policy and practice connections. The amount of time and pace should be determined in collaboration with the educators (Carr et al., 2002; Jacobs & Howe, 2013) as they work through a critical examination of their pedagogical practice, including the use of observation, documentation, and reflection (Carr et al., 2002; Carr, 2011; Lee, 2008).

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