Output 3: Programme Framework for ECCE Qualifications (Working Papers)

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Executive Summary

The Programme Framework in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) for Initial Teacher Education (ITE) is Output 3 in the Project for Inclusive Early Childhood Care and Education (PIECCE). This is a multi-stakeholder project funded by the European Union (EU) with university funding support from the Department of Higher Education (DHET). The overall objective of PIECCE is to contribute towards the professionalisation of the birth to 4 years category with special reference to programmes in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The programme framework is informed by baseline findings on ECCE programmes from 14 teacher-training institutions in 6 provinces in South Africa (SA), literature on ECCE teacher education, as well as deliberations from PIECCE meetings.

The main purpose of the Programme Framework in ECCE for ITE is to provide guidelines to assist with a more standardised development of the Diploma and the Degree in ECCE to be offered by HEIs. This purpose must be understood in the current landscape of high fragmentation and concerns for preparation of a workforce that is responsive to the complexities and the variabilities in the South African ECCE context. The framework presents 11 chapters (working papers) to address multiple facets that are considered necessary to build a quality ECCE workforce for birth to 4 who will be equipped with the knowledge, skills and professional dispositions for personal development, and for quality practice in diverse contexts.

Chapter 1 introduces the programme framework as an output of the PIECCE project. It presents the different drivers informing the programme framework and provides the structure and themes.

Chapter 2 deals with the context and principles that guide programme development. Five contextual issues are discussed to show the relevance for a programme framework of this nature. The PIECCE principles of quality, inclusivity and collaboration, together with the principles contained in the *Policy on Minimum Requirements for Programmes Leading to Qualifications in Higher Education for ECD Educators* (DHET, 2017) are viewed as relevant to guiding ECCE

programme development. The main call is for the preparation of teachers who are critical-thinkers, and who are reflective and responsive to the diverse ECCE realities in SA.

Chapter 3 presents the knowledge and practice standards for ECCE ITE as well as the 3 thematic aspects that frame the standards. These standards are developed from the PMRP (DHET, 2017), a literature review on ECCE standards, and community of practice deliberations from PIECCE meetings. This provides an opportunity to develop standardised programmes which address the current fragmentation in the field. Further, these standards need to feed into discussions on other related avenues of influence for a systemic response to ECCE teacher education and workforce development. It is also envisaged that there would be an integrated and holistic response to the standards to improve the professional competence of ECCE teachers. In this regard, there needs to be a more intense dialogue with South African Council for Educators (SACE) about their professional standards and synergies with the 10 knowledge and practice standards in the framework. Another point to consider is how the notion of standards is appropriate and effective in preparing critical-thinking teachers – an issue that needs to be deliberated on with the relevant roleplayers.

Chapter 4 aims at democratising the knowledge space in ECCE teacher education. Taking into account the importance of foregrounding African realities, promoting Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) and building a sense of belonging for both ECCE professionals and the children they support, ECCE teacher education has to be responsive to local realities. The chapter makes a case for the inclusion of marginalised knowledge bases and practices to shape a more inclusive teacher education curriculum.

Chapter 5 examines the concept of developmental education for the holistic development of the ECCE workforce. The chapter shows how areas such as foundational mathematics competencies, English reading and writing, information literacy, social-emotional skills and subject specific skills require attention. The themes from the framework, for example, standards, recognition of prior learning (RPL) and Work Integrated Learning [WIL], are used to show the kinds of student support that is required. Attention is also drawn to the structure of developmental education and the

assessment strategy in alignment with what is articulated concerning the new Diploma and the Degree in ECCE. The role of variety of key stakeholders is outlined to make developmental education workable.

Chapter 6 encompasses the pedagogies that are relevant to support active student-centred learning in ECCE teacher education at HEIs. It recommends a shift away from the overuse of the authoritative discourses in early childhood teacher education and transmissive pedagogies to more transformative pedagogies. A case is made for culturally responsive, inclusive and participatory pedagogies that are more affirming on how ECCE students should be trained for responsiveness to the realities that they will encounter in the field. There is a strong call for pedagogies and theories of change that create diversity awareness, inclusion and critical engagement.

Chapter 7 emphasises the importance of a play-based approach to support young children's growth, development and learning. It examines the contested nature of play, in addition to presenting incisive insights for a more shared understanding of play in a diverse society like SA. The value of play is discussed to outline its benefits for the holistic development of young children. It is also acknowledged that the implementation of playful pedagogies is difficult if teachers are not well trained. This chapter therefore explores challenges and possibilities for implementing playful pedagogies in a variety of ECCE settings. A play framework has been developed with the intention of facilitating a shared understanding of play in practice, that will guide the development of support materials for teacher education in different qualifications from birth to 9 years. To strengthen play in existing early childhood education programmes, a set of NQF aligned packages of teacher learning materials on play-based learning and assessment tools has been developed. This is intended to complement existing training programmes for early childhood education and the Foundation Phase (Grades R to 3).

Chapter 8 discusses assessment as the lynchpin for gathering evidence of student learning. It maintains that assessment is a process to help students to develop their competences. Also, the themes of professional knowledge, professional practice and professional mindsets, including

roles and responsibilities, are shown to be inextricably intertwined with authentic assessment practices. Given the complexities of how students learn, a variety of assessment techniques is encouraged to support student teachers in their learning.

Chapter 9 is about Work Integrated Learning (WIL). Three case studies from the HEIs, NGOs and TVETs are used to show the commonalities and differences in the current WIL component. The chapter also informs us on the use of teaching practice standards and the techniques for bridging theory into practice. In order to enable students to grow professionally, reflective practice is viewed as an important tool to allow them to dissect their own thinking and those of others in the context in which they learn.

Chapter 10 elaborates on the modes of engagement for both programme development and materials design. Attention is also drawn to the importance of considering engagement from the perspective of student-support in all aspects of programme and materials design. The administration and planning with regard to human resources, registration, online learning management, standards, pedagogies, WIL, RPL and technology which are discussed in an integrated way.

Chapter 11 focuses on the importance of RPL in the context of equity, social justice and inclusion. The ECCE field is particularly in need of this form of access taking into account the history of the field. The design of the RPL for creating access is also explained. This chapter also draws attention to the system that needs to be in place, and the types of assessment that are relevant to the ECCE field.

In summary, this programme framework is a living document to be informed by the ECCE field. It was circulated for comments to ensure many voices inform the new thrust to ECCE initial teacher education. Considering that the aspect of professionalism of the ECCE workforce continues to increase in importance on the agenda, the issues raised in the framework will thus continue to invite debate and dialogue.

PIECCE

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AfL	Assessment for Learning
BEd	Bachelor of Education
COP	Community of Practice
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
EU	European Union
FETC	Further Education and Training Certificate
HEI	Higher Education Institution
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
LMS	Learning Management System
NCF	National Curriculum Framework
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPO	Non-Profit Organisation
NQF	National Qualification Framework
ODL	Open Distance Learning
PIECCE	Project for Inclusive Early Childhood Care and Education
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
PMRP	Policy on Minimum Requirements for Programmes Leading to Qualifications in Higher Education for Early Childhood Development Educators
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SA	South Africa
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
WIL	Work Integrated Learning

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK FOR ECCE INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

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1.1 BACKGROUND

In rapidly transforming societies, citizens are encouraged to think critically and act responsibly to effect social change, and thus contribute to human development. Well-designed programmes in ECCE facilitate opportunities for nurturing our youngest citizens in accordance with democratic values and principles. In South Africa, the increasing diversity means that ECCE is a complex field of intervention. Young children in early childhood settings come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicities and cultures. They differ in their abilities and experiences. The South African ECCE workforce must therefore be adequately prepared to care for and educate young children from diverse backgrounds.

The development of a high quality workforce for the age group birth to 4 is complex and varied. The training of the different ECCE workers lies in different sectors (education, health, and social services) and in different institutions (NGOs, HEIs, TVETs, and private providers). There are polarisations and overlaps between sectors and institutions; however, little exists in terms of harmonising teacher education for the birth to 4 age group.

The qualifications of the workforce are also problematic. The workforce consists of largely unqualified and underqualified Black females. Morrow (2007:28), in his response to the challenges in South African education, maintains that the “remedy is going to have to be professional”. This is particularly true for ECCE where the professionalisation of the workforce was a non-issue until recently. Working with young children is complex, dynamic and challenging and makes demands on a variety of professional roles (Institute of Medicine and National Research Council, 2015). It includes paying attention to curbing risks and building protective mechanisms in early childhood education. Richter et al. (2012) together with Berry

et al. (2013) focus on how poverty, high infant mortality rates, malnutrition and anti-social behaviour, lead to risky early childhood development.

Consequently, it is appropriate, timeous, and critical to develop a programme framework for ECCE Initial Teacher Education (ITE). In this document, ITE is viewed as a process where a variety of students from the existing field of ECCE practice, as well as new recruits completing their further education and training, enter the teaching profession. Students are expected to display a variety of prior knowledge and skills in ECCE practice at entry point, but these will be deepened as their training as professionals progresses.

This programme framework is an umbrella document which guides the process of designing appropriate teacher education programmes for the birth to 4 age group, and includes other initiatives concerning an emerging field. This framework is inspired by the need to:

- engage with and implement the Policy on Minimum Requirements for Programmes Leading to Qualifications in Higher Education for ECD Educators (DHET, 2017);
- harmonise a fragmentary field and build a common vision and shared understandings to guide the professionalisation and professionalism of the ECCE workforce;
- collaborate with different ECCE stakeholders in PIECCE and beyond for the design of programmes; and
- contribute to making birth to 4 teacher education an area of scholarly and professional focus.

1.2 PROJECT FOR INCLUSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION (PIECCE)

This programme framework emanates from PIECCE which is a multi-stakeholder project dedicated to developing teacher education for the birth to 4 age group. The project is funded by the European Union (EU) and university participation is supported by the Department of Higher Education (DHET).

The *overall objective* is to:

Contribute towards the professionalisation of the ECCE sector by increasing access to quality birth to 4 education programmes in HEIs.

The *specific objective* is to:

Develop a standardised programme framework for the ECCE diploma and the Bachelor of Education degree at Levels 6 and 7.

There are 3 drivers in PIECCE: quality, collaboration and inclusivity. These drivers cross-cut and inform the work of the entire project. Within PIECCE, professionalism embraces the following:

- foregrounding principles of inclusive education;
- emphasising the centrality and uniqueness of the learner;
- preparing a critically reflective workforce;
- promoting an understanding of contextual and situational realities to respect diversity; and
- building communities of practice for ECCE teacher education and practice.

There are three outputs to PIECCE:

- Output 1:

A collaborative process model for programme development.

- Output 2:

A research review of fitness for the purpose of a representative selection of existing ECD and related capacity-building programmes.

- Output 3:

A standardised programme framework and a set of support materials.

The implementation of PIECCE commenced from 2017-2019 led by a consortium from UNISA and funded by the EU and the South African Department of Higher Education. The consortium partners in the first year of implementation included the Centre for Social Development (CSD), Rhodes University, BRIDGE, South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE), TREE, Ntataise and False Bay Colleges.

The partners (nine universities outside the core team) are as follows:

1. University of Pretoria
2. Witwatersrand University
3. University of Fort Hare
4. University of Free State
5. University of KwaZulu-Natal
6. Walter Sisulu University
7. Cape Peninsula University of Technology
8. North West University
9. University of the Western Cape (joined in 2019)

1.3 RESEARCH EVIDENCE FROM PIECCE INFORMING THE PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK

Output 2 in PIECCE concentrated on familiarisation with contextual issues of ECCE teacher education for birth to 4 in SA through research (Harrison, 2017). A mixed method study was conducted using a multi-stakeholder team. Data was produced through literature reviews and 3 national surveys at 14 institutions in 6 provinces. The study deliberated on 4 topics: academic support, work-integrated learning, record of prior knowledge, and knowledge and practice standards. The findings revealed the following:

- There are different types of teacher-training organisations, and that there is a wide variety of qualifications in ECD offered by TVETS, NPOs and HEIs, with a shift from the traditional NQF ECD Level 5 from the NPO/TVET sector, to some HEIs.
- All institution types acknowledged the need for academic support, with an emphasis on mentorship at multiple levels. Mentorship is given in diverse ways ranging from teacher educators providing individual attention, to peer mentorship to guide teachers.

- A community of practice (CoP) approach is advocated for the development of professional learning communities where there are possibilities for reflection, mentoring and coaching.
- The concept of reflective practice was considered as an essential aspect of learning for students as well as for teacher educators themselves. An analysis of a quality tool kit that focused on reflective practice revealed that teachers found it to be beneficial, but were reluctant to apply it when there was no mentor present to guide the process.
- The importance of an adaptive approach to context emerged in the WIL component of the study. There was consensus that context is a key component of transformative pedagogy and that students must be given the opportunity to work in a variety of contexts, but most importantly should be equipped with the skills to be flexible and sensitive to these contexts.
- An examination of the policies that drive ECCE showed that a competency approach to teacher development is potentially the best way forward. Ten competencies from the PMRP (DHET, 2017) were isolated and considered to shape what ECCE teachers should know, and be able to do.
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) appears to have minimal interest within HEIs. There is evidence that RPL is gaining traction in the NPO sector, but it is generally not sufficiently supported by training institutions because it is time-consuming and costly when working with large cohorts. Given the present trend toward acknowledging that many in the ECCE workforce have considerable experience in the field, but not necessarily supported by formal qualifications, the recommendation is that RPL be considered as a priority area for access.
- There is a collaborative commitment to addressing diversity in training, but this is primarily being done in a non-integrated manner with particular emphasis in specific modules. Understanding of diversity, equity and inclusion needs more attention since these are critical drivers that complexify practice in the ECCE field.

- Quality professional development must provide academic support, mentorship at multiple levels, opportunities for reflective practice, engagement with diversity in order to produce adaptive, and flexible educators who are able to be pedagogic leaders in their field while acquiring a set of competencies.

The findings of this study, together with deliberations in the PIECCE meetings, contributed to vision-building for ECCE teacher education, and to the themes for the development of the chapters in the programme framework.

1.4 PURPOSE, VISION, AND MISSION OF THE ECCE PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK FOR ITE

- The *main purpose* of this programme framework is to provide guidelines to assist in the development of ECCE qualifications and practices in ITE.
- The *vision* is to build a society where ECCE professionals are developed to reach their full potential in order to act in the best interest of all young children.
- The *mission* is to prepare ECCE professionals who are equipped with knowledge, skills and professional dispositions to deliver quality ECCE practice in diverse contexts.

1.5 TARGET AUDIENCE

This programme framework is aimed at the following categories of people who have a vested interest in teacher education, specifically for the birth to four age group:

- Programme developers
- Curriculum designers and co-ordinators
- Managers
- Policymakers
- Quality assurers
- Teacher educators
- Academics

- Researchers
- Student teachers
- Members of professions who have an interest in early childhood education

1.6 THEMES AND STRUCTURE

In order to engage with the different facets of ECCE programmes for ITE leading up to qualifications, the programme framework addresses the following:

- Context and principles
- Knowledge and practice standards
- Africanisation, indigenous knowledge and belonging
- Developmental education
- Pedagogy
- Play
- Assessment
- Work integrated learning
- Modes of engagement
- Recognition of prior learning

Each of these themes forms specific chapters in the programme framework. They include, but are not limited, to the following:

- Introduction
- Purpose
- Concepts, issues and debates
- Guidelines for programme development

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CHAPTER 2

THE SOUTH AFRICAN ECCE CONTEXT AND PRINCIPLES FOR TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

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2.1 INTRODUCTION

The early childhood teacher education system must be considered in the light of mounting pressure calling for Government support for educating children in their early years (birth to 4). In SA, there is an urgent need to intervene to ensure optimal development of young children so that they can have the best possible start in life. The complexity of appropriate interventions is linked to expectations of educators. Considering that ITE is the entry point to professionalism, it is imperative to capacitate educators to effectively and efficiently facilitate ECCE that is responsive to SA realities. This is particularly important, given the tenuous link between the training of educators and the crisis in SA education (Osman, 2010; Reeves & Robinson, 2014; Taylor, Van der Berg & Mabogoane, 2013).

The provision of quality entry-level programmes is viewed as fundamental to addressing this crisis. The PMRP (DHET, 2017) calls for producing knowledgeable as opposed to technical ECCE educators. Inquiry, reflection and responsiveness should be forthcoming. For this to happen, entry-level teacher education needs to go beyond superficial content knowledge and decontextualised ECCE practice tips. In order to forge ahead with appropriate ECCE teacher education programmes in SA, it is crucial to gain an incisive insight into the context that warrants action through teacher education. The platform for action must be guided by broad principles of best practice.

2.2 PURPOSE

This chapter presents the key contextual issues that warrant attention in ITE for ECCE. Taking into account the need for collective action in this field, the broad guiding principles are tabled in action-orientated ways.

2.3 KEY CONTEXTUAL ISSUES

There are 5 identifiable issues that provide an understanding for intervention and action in the development of professionals in ECCE:

- vulnerable early childhoods
- low status of women in the workforce
- poor retention
- questionable teacher quality
- fragmentation of the field.

Each issue poses challenges for ECCE teacher education at entry levels.

2.3.1 Vulnerable Early Childhoods

The situational realities of children in early childhood in SA affect their growth, development and learning. There are varied childhood experiences that shape the nature of ECCE work. Whilst some children live in stimulating environments that contribute to their optimal development, there are many whose development is compromised. There are 6 311 000 children under the age of six in South Africa (South African ECD Review, 2016) who are affected by geographical location and socio-economic conditions which impact negatively on most children's lives. In the Eastern Cape, Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga, more than 60% of children under six live in rural areas. Four million children under six live in the poorest 40% households. Children are left in the care of grandparents, relatives and neighbours as their mothers seek employment mainly in urban areas. There is child poverty but this has decreased since the introduction of the child support grant. The dire living conditions expose them to a constellation of risks. Poor infrastructure and little access to basic amenities result in poor hygiene, which leads to disease and infection. This state of affairs calls for ECCE educators to be responsive to the context of vulnerability. Hence, ECCE educators should be sensitive and knowledgeable about the needs and capabilities of children in the early childhood stage. Special attention should be given to children in disadvantaged contexts, and those with special needs.

2.3.2 Women's Work with Little or No Pay

ECCE is generally assumed to be women's work. As such, it has been regarded as unpaid labour where there is an expectation that work will be done as part of a moral orientation towards values of love, commitment and interdependence (William, 2010). Volunteering is still viewed as an entry point to paid labour in ECCE in SA. This response is more likely for those working in non-centre-based settings in poor rural locations (Biersteker, 2007). Accordingly, ECCE educators need to be developed in their professional roles, responsibilities and mindsets to embrace the challenges of care and education work in an emerging system of professionalisation.

2.3.3 Unstable Workforce – Low Retention

The unstable workforce resulted from the lack of a government-led ECCE system; specifically the absence of a human resource strategy for education in the early years. Whilst this is being addressed under the human resource strategy in the *National Integrated ECD Policy* (2015), it is still to be fully implemented. Working in educating children in their early years (below Grade R) is a poorly paid job (Ebrahim, 2010). In SA, like in other low and middle income countries, the status, pay, and benefits for the ECCE workforce are lower than those of primary school teachers, and this can lead to low levels of job-satisfaction and poor retention rates (UNESCO, 2015). Whilst ECD centres receive subsidies, they also charge fees and poor parents are unable to meet these financial obligations made on them. The lack of job security and poor conditions of service (ETDP SETA, 2012) are seen as reasons to leave the sector. Where support was provided through learnerships, there were unintended consequences. Biesteker (2008) alludes to how practitioners who received financial support for training were dissatisfied with what they received once the training was completed. They therefore left the sector, sought other learnerships, or made their way towards teaching Grade Rs, which is more established. The impact of HIV/Aids and natural attrition also contribute to the instability in the workforce.

Both the poor conditions of service and the low qualifications of the ECCE workforce demands building knowledgeable and skilful professionalism in a volatile job market. Hence, the need to factor basic knowledge and skills into the programme for prospective students who will

pursue the entrepreneurship route. This also pertains to practitioners who will be required to support learning, and play the role of managers. In addition, knowledge of leadership, management, administration, policies, and legislations are important.

2.3.4 Teacher Quality

Quality is a relative concept but recently there is some agreement, that at the very least, we should be able to make a difference in the lives of young children and their families. Research has shown that quality more than race, is a consistent predictor of children's growth, development and learning, socio-economic status, and parental education (Darling-Hammond, 1999). Improvement of access and quality is connected to the development of competent, well-trained, and well-supported educators (UNESCO, 2015). In SA, the knowledge and practice competencies and qualifications of the workforce is a cause for concern.

The Western Cape Department of Social Development (HSRC & Early Learning Resource Unit, 2010) conducted an audit of the quality of service in centre-based provision for pre-grade R children. Findings showed that the standard of activities provided for babies and toddlers was of low quality. In addition, early identification of children with special needs was problematic; and training was limited but valued when offered. The National Audit of 19 971 ECD centres across the 9 provinces found that educator qualifications were below the norm (Department of Social Development & Economic Policy Research Institute, 2014). Only thirty per cent (30%) of practitioners had ECD certificates on any level, and diplomas and degrees were rare. Fifty five per cent (55%) of the practitioners had no formal qualifications at all. There is evidence in low and middle income countries that reveal that the positive correlation between the programme quality and child outcomes can be attributed to input from teachers who are better educated and trained (Engle et al., 2011; Behrman et al., 2013; Rao et al., 2014). For this to happen in substantive ways, the support in ITE as well as continuing professional development, has to be definitely strengthened.

2.3.5 A Fragmentary Field of Training

There are 8 categories of ECCE workers identified in the National Integrated ECD Policy (Department of Social Development & UNICEF, 2015). The training resides with the health

care sector, other social service professions, and the education sector. Each has its own regulatory and quality assurance bodies. Most ECCE training for below Grade R educators reside with the NGOs. Biersteker's (2007) and later Biersteker's and Picken's (2013) review of NGO programmes show that qualifications range from skills courses with certificates to diplomas. There are overlaps between different sectors and their course offerings, but this has not yet been fully explored. Hence, there is an urgent need to harmonise the training of the ECCE workforce. The NGOs, TVETS and HEIs need to share a common vision and common knowledge and practice standards to guide the preparation of a quality workforce who can make a difference to the lives of children and their families.

2.4 PRINCIPLES

Critically looking at the fragmentation of the ECCE field, together with the concerns for quality programmes, we see that there is a need for a set of broad principles to guide ITE. The way in which principles find expression in programmes leading up to ECCE qualifications is dependent on the nature and context of institutions and the calibre of its teaching staff. The principles are helpful in promoting shared goals for the development of high quality educators for the early years. The SA ECCE teacher education programmes (adapted from the PMRP 2017) must implement the following principles which are tabled in action-orientated ways:

- Encouraging transformative and lifelong-learning through reflection and inquiry;
- Envisioning the educator as a *critically reflective professional* and then equipping him/her with a variety of knowledges, skills and professional dispositions to act in the best interest of young children and their families in context;
- Building responsiveness to young children and the settings in which they find themselves;
- Promoting diversity, equity and inclusion as key elements to respect the rights of all children;
- Promote the understanding of the holistic development of young children and the nature of their learning (culturally, developmentally, and linguistically);
- Ensuring the development of a knowledge mix which builds sound knowledge, perspectives, and pedagogical expertise;

- Affording opportunities to engage with, and implement inclusive curricula and pedagogies;
- Forging partnerships between teacher education institutions and early childhood settings in order to bridge the divide between theory and practice;
- Providing opportunities to collaborate with site-based staff to develop effective practices with, and for young children;
- Promoting a research mindset through exposure to a variety of knowledges and skills for problematising and investigating practice; and
- Supporting innovation to improve the quality of training educators for contextually responsive practice.

2.5 GUIDELINES: CONTEXTUAL ISSUES AND PRINCIPLES FOR PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

Guidelines in utilising contextual factors and implementing principles for programme development are outlined below:

- Quality, inclusivity and collaboration as noted in PIECCE, function as principles. These must be embedded in the curriculum, and more broadly in teacher education programmes for the early years.
- Educators in ECCE should to be trained in ways that they are able to effectively address the needs of young children in all contexts. Due attention should be given to practice with children in the disadvantaged contexts, and those with special needs.
- Programmes must take into account the professional roles, responsibilities and mindsets to work in a variety of ECCE contexts. This can be accomplished through affording student teachers opportunities to engage with the self-in-context and to make reflective practice part of the natural repertoire for learning how to be a professional.
- The curriculum must consider the need for a highly specialised workforce, not only in ECCE practice, but also in the management of ECCE centres as many members in the workforce will be required to play dual roles.
- All efforts in programme development should be informed by wide stakeholder collaboration for ECCE teacher education.
- Broad principles aimed at effective teacher education must be used to promote the goal of developing a high quality workforce for the early years.

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CHAPTER 3

KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION

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3.1 INTRODUCTION

Internationally, the demand to increase quality provision in early childhood development is leading to a growing emphasis on professionalising teacher education. Additionally, there is general agreement amongst researchers, policymakers and early childhood practitioners that the "quality of early childhood services and ultimately the outcomes for children and their families depend on a well-educated, experienced and competent staff" (Urban, 2012: 7). However, one has to ask what exactly constitutes teacher competencies in early childhood teacher education? In other words, what should competent teachers know, and be able to do in a highly complex and demanding field of practice?

ECD policies and legislation provide messages for action. These interlinked messages stress the importance of being responsive to context, gaining advantage from policies, and exploring the potential of standards to unite a fragmentary field. The *Policy on Minimum Requirements for Programmes Leading to Qualifications in Higher Education for ECD Educators* (DHET, 2017) uses a competency-based model for ECCE teacher education. This model follows the fundamental premise that it is necessary to define *what educators should be able to know and do.* Student teachers have to demonstrate their knowledge and practice competencies through the learning opportunities in the ECCE programmes, and then effect these as professionals once they graduate. The competencies provide benchmarks of what the minimum levels of achievement in various aspects of practice should be. These competencies, when packaged as knowledge and practice standards, are helpful in designing quality teacher education practices.

In the PMRP (DHET, 2017), the basic competencies for professional qualifications are listed in Appendix 1. There are also indications of competencies in other parts of the document such

as the knowledge mix. Better organisation of the competencies is necessary so that the smooth functioning of knowledge and practice standards effectively inform processes such as programme design, curriculum, monitoring and evaluation. If intelligently designed, then the knowledge and practice standards can be utilised not only for ITE, but also for an expanding and continuing teacher education workforce.

3.2 PURPOSE

The purpose of this chapter is to package the competencies tabled in the PMRP (DHET, 2017) as knowledge and practice standards so that they can, amongst others, inform programmes leading to qualifications in ECCE.

3.3 ISSUES AND DEBATES

Recently, in first-world countries, there has been a move to standardise all knowledge and practice standards for educators from early childhood to basic education levels. In low and middle-income countries, however, the professional competencies and guidelines are less forthcoming - but this is gradually changing (UNESCO, 2015). One of the reasons for the slow progress is that there is not enough evidence on the level, content and organisation of teacher-training and professional development to pass judgement on what is most effective for improving quality. Moreover, many changes are attempted simultaneously, thus it is blurry to ascertain which aspect(s) make a difference to quality ECCE.

Regarding ECCE practice in SA, the National Early Learning Standards (NELDS) document specifies what children at different ages should be able to know and do. It is unclear to what extent the NELDS was used as framings for the development of core competencies for ECCE educators. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) concerning the birth-to-four age group still needs to be unpacked in order to ascertain its key messages for ECCE teacher education. Thus far in ECCE, the drawing on knowledge and practice standards, is evident in qualifications accredited by the ETDP SETA. For example, the Further Education and Training Certificate for Early Childhood Development (ECD), which is an entry-level qualification, previously made use of unit standards informed by international comparability.

3.3.1 Top-down Knowledge and Practice Standards

Regarding qualifications offered by HEIs, the core knowledge and practice standards have not yet been comprehensively outlined in policy documents. Sayed et al. (2016) explain how the *Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ)* policy (DHET, 2011) aimed at ECCE (Foundation Phase), does not provide details on pedagogies, theories and structures that providers need to be adhering to. This approach has been adopted to avoid a government-imposed regulatory framework. Where this approach is strong, there could be the risk of promoting one particular view of teaching, and what it means to be a teacher (Sachs, 2003). To obviate this, it is expected that the specialists in this field would collaborate to develop a shared framework to inform programme development. In the Foundation Phase this has been problematic as there is no significant community of practice guiding this type of work. Of late, however, there has been some progress concerning languages and mathematics. Additionally, there is institutional competitiveness and this hampers collaborative endeavours for programme development. For ECCE, PIECCE was designed to promote collaboration among different stakeholders to develop shared goals and cohesive responses for qualification development.

3.3.2 Value of the Minimum Knowledge and Practice Standards that are Developed and Overseen by the ECCE Profession

It is important to strengthen and expand the minimum standards outlined in the PMRP (DHET, 2017). There is value on several fronts when we consider the attainment of achievements. Minimum standards for practice can guarantee the health and safety of children in ECCE environments. In addition, they ensure the conditions of learning and care are followed by defining duration, staff qualification levels, and curriculum in order to shape staff behaviour (Burchinal et al., 2009; OECD, 2001). These national regulatory frameworks with appropriate minimum standards encourage equity by ensuring that all children benefit from a minimum quality of education and care (Belsky, 2011; Eurydice, 2009; Vandenbroeck, 2011). Raising standards or setting minimum standards can help reduce knowledge gaps for all, although the effect is greater in populations of low-income, immigrant and minority children (OECD, 2006; 2011).

For minimum standards to be relevant in teacher education, it must access input from the ECCE field in addition to being owned and overseen by the profession. The defining of knowledge and practices for ECCE standards should be specified by a community of practice consisting of a variety of providers from the profession. It should be flexible and adapted to address contextual realities together with concerns for career pathways. This is important so that the uniqueness of the ECCE profession is safeguarded, and a one-size-fits-all approach is avoided. This fragmented ECCE teacher-education system is in need of a shared vision and a shared understanding that will unite the field. Hence, PIECCE can be seen as a vehicle to facilitate this process.

Student teachers should be recognised as professionals who should be able to perform effectively in a variety of contexts. The emphasising of the knowledge, skills and professional dispositions can guide the building of foundations for a strong workforce. However, what must be avoided at all costs, is the use of middle-class urban norms to define the knowledge and practice standards. Focus must be on situated and value-laden definitions of quality if there is to be sensitivity to the variety of ways in which knowledge and practice competencies can be looked at.

Accordingly, ECCE educators can begin to identify themselves, not just through diploma and degree qualifications, but also through knowledge and practice competencies gained through participating in the learning opportunities offered in the specific academic programme. To achieve this, professional learning opportunities must be carefully planned and designed to promote student teachers' understanding and acceptance of new cultures, new thinking and related actions. The goal should be the application of knowledge and practice standards as a basis for curriculum development, thus leading to the approval of programmes by DHET and the Council for Higher Education (CHE), including evaluations by teacher educators and the awarding of degrees.

3.3.3 SA Core Competencies for ECCE Professionals

In order to gain a holistic picture of the competencies for ECCE professions in SA, a brief analysis was conducted using entry level qualifications; namely, the *Occupational Certificate in Early Childhood Development*, the *Further Education and Training Certificate in Early*

Childhood Development, and the *PMRP* (DHET, 2017). The first two qualifications aimed at developing practitioners for centre and non-centre-based provision. The occupational qualification has an explicit focus on supporting practitioners dealing with the younger school-going children. The FETC Level 4 qualification is intended for practitioners who are in ECCE settings but have no formal qualifications. Both these qualifications offer basic knowledge and practical competencies. The FETC Level 4 qualification focuses on communication and basic mathematics requirements for building practitioners' academic competence. The PMRP (DHET, 2017) which is a level above, is aimed at developing educators who are expected to deliver structured ECCE programmes which include, but not limited to, the implementation of formal ECCE curriculum frameworks.

When the *Occupational Certificate for ECD* and the *Further Education and Training Certificate for ECD* were compared with competencies in the PMRP, it was evident that there were some commonalities. Ten common competencies were identified. In addition, international core competencies for ECCE educators were studied for comparability. There were some competencies that only featured in the entry level qualifications. For example, the content knowledge does not feature strongly, the ethics of working with young children is absent, and there is a limited reference to context responsiveness although mention is made of diversity and inclusivity. Parity at levels of qualifications is also an issue of concern. These could be addressed through a standard-based approach to competencies which produce critical-thinking educators.

The 10 core competencies listed are embedded in the PMRP, and some of them are alluded to in other ECCE entry level qualifications such as the Level 4 qualifications. They show some alignment to international standards such as the National Association for the Education of the Young Child, Teacher Standards in the UK, and some NGO programmes in low and middle-income countries.

Knowledge and practice standards - 10 Core Competencies found in SA ECCE qualifications and the PMRP (DHET 2017)

1. Becoming a professional by paying attention to mindset, roles and responsibilities
2. Understanding and promoting child development and learning in different contexts
3. Building family and community relationships

4. **4.** Ensuring effective health, safety and nutrition practices
5. **5.** Creating effective learning environments including managing behaviour
6. **6.** Planning and facilitating learning through play and other transformative pedagogies in appropriate ways (developmentally, culturally linguistically)
7. **7.** Using curriculum and relevant content knowledge to build meaningful learning opportunities (6 Early Learning and Development Areas [ELDAs] in NCF)
8. **8.** Observing, documenting and assessing to support young children's development and learning
9. **9.** Understanding and addressing diversity, inclusion and equity to act in the best interest of all children
10. **10.** Showing basic leadership, management and administration skills

The 10 competencies are linked to the knowledge mix in the PMRP (DHET, 2017). The table that follows shows the link to the knowledge mix.

Table 3.1: An example of the link between knowledge and practice standards, and the knowledge mix

Knowledge and practice standards and the knowledge mix	Knowledge Mix					
	FL	EL	DL	PL	SL	PRL
Becoming a professional by paying attention to mindset, roles and responsibilities	X	X			X	X
Understanding and promoting child development and learning in different contexts			X			
Building family and community relationships			X		X	
Ensuring effective health, safety and nutrition practices			X		X	X
Creating effective care and learning environments including managing behaviour				X		X
Planning and facilitating care and learning through play and other transformative pedagogies in appropriate ways (developmentally, culturally, linguistically)				X		X
Using curriculum and relevant content knowledge to build meaningful learning (e.g. 6 Early Learning Areas [ELDAs] in NCF)			X	X		X
Observing, documenting and assessing to support young children's development and learning			X	X		X
Having knowledge and addressing diversity, inclusion and equity to include all children			X	X	X	
Showing basic leadership, management and administration skills			X	X		

3.3.4 Organising Knowledge and Practice Standards

The 10 competencies which overlap and are interrelated, fall under 3 broad themes.

- *Professional Knowledge (Knowing)*

Different types of knowledges are needed in order to help students to be responsive to children's needs and interests in different contexts; and in an inclusive way. This knowledge must be linked to practice to cement a strong theory-practice relationship.

- *Professional Practice (Doing)*

Student teachers need to draw on their professional knowledge and apply this in practice. This knowledge must be relevant as a tool to enable student teachers to make practice contextually responsive and inclusive. For the SA context they should be equipped with a variety of strategies, methodologies and techniques to effect quality care and sound education experiences for children. There should be opportunities to learn *in*, *from* and *about* practices.

- *Professional mindset, roles and responsibilities*

Student teachers must acknowledge that they are developing as members of an ECCE profession. Thus the model of teacher-education is important. The shaping of mindsets to develop critically reflective educators is imperative in order to curtail the rise of technical educators who privilege outcomes without considering the contextual needs and interests of individual children as being unique. It is also important to promote the creation of ethical educators who should understand and promote the ethical protocols and implement other relevant guidelines when interacting with young children.

Figure 3.1: Three themes informing the professional

Figure 3.2: Three themes around which the knowledge and practice standards are organised

3.4 GUIDELINES FOR PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

- The knowledge and practice standards should become the key driver to inform the qualification development and design for the Diploma and Degree in ECCE. It is a unifier in terms of strengthening a fragmentary HEI ECCE field to facilitate the commonality of qualification experience and possibilities of portability of credits for students.

- The Community of Practice (CoP) for ECCE must unpack each knowledge and practice standard thus fostering the possibility for integration concerning the Diploma and Degree. This is also important to consider for the National ECCE Qualifications Development.
- Whilst the aim is commonality, there are bound to be contextual differences; for example, the language offerings and electives related to student support which are interconnected to different modes of engagement. This aspect must be considered when working with the knowledge and practice standards.
- The knowledge and practice standards are also of advantage in that it stimulates a greater synergy between the theoretical modules and WIL. More intense discussions are required on WIL standards to guide ECCE practice. This is to some extent addressed in chapter eight.
- There needs to be greater dialogue on how the SACE professional standards are related to ECCE knowledge and practice standards.

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PIECCE

CHAPTER 4

AFRICANISATION, INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS, AND BELONGING IN ECCE TEACHER EDUCATION

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4.1 INTRODUCTION

The PMRP (DHET, 2017) has stimulated new dialogue regarding the knowledge base that ECCE teachers should be exposed to. One of the pertinent issues relates to what vehicles should be the "primary and principal communicator of the African experience" (Ramose, 1998: iv). This does not assume that the there is only one type of African experience, but there are many that influence the lives of people and their families in Africa.

Education is an indispensable tool for empowering people to participate more interactively in their communities. As a fundamental human right, it can protect, preserve and develop traditional indigenous skills and cultures. Additionally, it is an invaluable asset to attain freedom and social justice (Champagne & Duane, 2009*).* Current debates in SA are calling for the inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) in the ECCE curriculum. This can be read in the context of aligning young children's experiences to their sociocultural worldviews and groundings (DBE, 2015: 2). Research findings and relevant policies convey a clear message that local, indigenous and traditional knowledge must uphold children's rights and allow them to be curious and energetic about exploring their world safely (ibid). Mosimege and Onwu (2004:2) contend that indigenous knowledge is all-inclusive and that it safeguards practices, technologies, and the way of life that has been (and is still) followed by humans who exist in a variety of environments. These traditional and local knowledge systems are dynamic expressions of perceiving and understanding our world. The decolonising of knowledge through the inclusion of indigenous knowledge perspectives in curricula in schools and in higher institutions of learning, is a global movement (Agrawal, 1995; Dei, 2008; Heber, 2008).

The ECCE teacher-education qualifications require the in-depth specialisation of knowledge, as well as practical skills and experience aligned to ECCE contexts (DBE, 2017). The

democratisation and decolonisation of the ECCE knowledge space means integrating worldviews with related knowledge systems that ECCE educators are exposed to.

4.2 PURPOSE

The purpose of this chapter is to provide information on Africanisation and IKS in terms of shaping a more relevant ECCE teacher-education system for SA.

4.3 AFRICANISATION, IKS AND BELONGING: IMPLICATIONS FOR ECCE TEACHER-EDUCATION

To Africanise means to value and validate African ways of knowing and African ways of being. African traditions promote an informal and relaxed way of living with multiple expressions such as singing, dancing, laughing, painting, and sculpturing. Many Africans regard this happier style of living as unique and peculiar to Africa. Essentially, Africanising the curriculum implies a call for African countries to reflect on their own cultures, identities, languages, and histories (Obanya, 2005; Moalosi, 2007). Hence, the ECCE qualification requires an in-depth specialisation of knowledge, as well as practical skills and experience required in an ECCE context (DBE, 2017). Further, an IKS has a significant role to play in the education system as it promotes the creation of opportunities for the learners in providing South African parents and guardians a voice in their children's education. The policy in ECCE is supportive of a contextual response to teacher-education (DBE, 2017). The IKS is one way of contributing to humanising the Western knowledge systems as it will be a major contributor to the cognitive justice of young learners. Historically, the accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills are essential for household individual functioning and well-being (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003). Africanising education will capacitate ECCE teachers with a knowledge of science to compensate for centuries of marginalisation and devaluation (Abah, Mashebe & Denuga, 2015).

Another key issue to consider is the concept of *Ubuntu* - an Nguni word from South Africa which emphasises interconnectedness, common humanity, and the responsibility to each other that flows from connection (Nussbaum, 2003: 21). Ubuntu appears to be more of a collective responsibility rather than individualistic. It is quite important that the perspective

of Ubuntu represents a wider worldview or belief system rather than just a set of discernible characteristics.

Education in all African countries was embedded in the culture of the *Other* as is the case today in many African societies (O'Donoghue, Lotz-Sisitka, Asafo-Adjei, Kota & Hanisi, 2007). The foundational principle of curriculum structuring must be that it is made responsive to IKS in order to fulfil cultural survival, environmental responsibility, and sustainable development (Emeagwali, 2003). Teaching IKS as a foundation phase subject in initial teacher-education programmes has revealed positive and challenging outcomes (Hart & Moore, 2005). For some student teachers, the prospect of understanding IKS has engendered cultural awareness. When student teachers are exposed to a variety of knowledge bases in child development, they are challenged to be critically reflective such that they are able to make connections, in addition to experiencing a sense of belonging. This occurs if their ways of knowing and being form part of the knowledge-mix during their training.

4.4. KINDS OF KNOWLEDGE TO BE INCLUDED IN THE CURRICULUM

Wyk and Higgs (2004) argue that the only way an African child can interpret African philosophy is by knowing his/her culture that is infused in the IKS.

Curriculum as a concept can be divided into three (3) key components: intended curriculum, implemented curriculum, and attained curriculum. The intended curriculum typically includes the guiding documents produced by the Ministry of Education or other education authorities which dictate *how much*, *how often* and *what* should be the content areas and learning goals. The implemented curriculum is what actually occurs in the classroom in terms of how effectively educators support early learning. The attained curriculum is what children actually learn. Therefore implementing a curriculum that values IKS would direct African children to reflect on their own language, culture, identity and history (Moalosi, 2007; Gaotlhobongwe, 2012). It must be remembered that a worldview shapes consciousness and forms the theoretical frameworks within which knowledge is sought, critiqued and understood (Sarpong, 2002). Hence, ECCE student teachers must be exposed to a variety of worldviews

and opportunities to examine and compare their own beliefs and working theories on young children, and thereafter put these into practice.

In early childhood, children need to be exposed to IKS in order to be "socialised" into their cultural practices; which in SA is valued as a national asset. This must be viewed against the historical background of the rejection of IKS. "Schooling has been explicitly and implicitly a site of rejection of indigenous knowledge and language; it has been used as a means of assimilating and integrating indigenous peoples into a "national" society and identity at the cost of their indigenous identity and social practices" (Jacob, Liu & Lee, 2005).

4.5 AFRICAN LANGUAGES

Koch and Burkett (2005) confirm that the HEIs in South Africa choose English as the predominant medium of instruction for teaching and learning despite the fact that this is the second and sometimes the third language of most of the students on this continent. Transitioning students on bilingual education aims to move them from the home language to the dominant language (English). Recent policies in teacher-education, however, make it compulsory for students to develop competence in the indigenous languages. Students have the opportunity of choosing different African language combinations to build their competence in home languages and additional languages. This is complex and challenging for higher education. In light of the fact that English is the global language of communication and commerce, creative solutions need to be forthcoming to address the needs of supporting early learning through mother-tongue instruction.

4.6 GUIDELINES FOR PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

- Decolonisation of knowledge, Africanisation and IKS must be given prominence when considering the knowledge-base that ECCE educators should be exposed to. This is important for bringing marginalised knowledge to the fore, and to inculcate a sense of belonging. The ECCE curriculum for teacher-education needs revision concerning the knowledge-base it uses to train professionals. Since IKS has been marginalised, it should be now given its rightful place in the curriculum.
- There should be ample leeway for subject-choice combinations in African languages to support mother-tongue instruction in the early years. This also raises questions

about the competence of teacher educators in the African languages, and supervisory support during WIL.

- In order to be relevant, functional and connected to families and communities in terms of their care and educational practices, there should be the inclusion of service learning components as part of the WIL, or as assignments to help ECCE student teachers to be more aware of the realities of children and their families.

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PIECCE

CHAPTER 5

DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION – AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO ACADEMIC SUPPORT

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5.1 INTRODUCTION

Access and success are two fundamental aspects in the delivery of quality education. One way of facilitating access to the NQF Level 6 Diploma and Level 7 Degree in ECCE is by aligning these programmes as closely as possible with the existing and/or revised Level 4 and Level 5 ECD qualification/s in the occupational and vocational sector. This includes aligning the Foundational Learning and Academic Skills components of the qualifications more closely. However, once students have access, we need to focus on how we support them to succeed. There are many ways in which we can provide student support, but providing academic support is paramount.

The Institute of Training and Education for Capacity-building (ITEC, 2017) noted that ECD practitioners who have the equivalent of at least Grade 11 (Standard 9 or Level 3) in communication and mathematical literacy, usually struggle with the reading and writing components required to learn effectively at Level 4. Spaull (2013: 7) asserts that irrespective of which subject or grade one chooses to test, most South African children are performing significantly below the curriculum, often failing to acquire functional numeracy and literacy skills. Apart from the twenty five per cent (25%) of schools that are mostly functional, South African schools as they currently stand do not, and arguably cannot impart to learners the foundational knowledge and skills they should be delivering at school.

This implies that even Grade 12s, and ECD practitioners with level 4 legacy/occupational qualifications or a level 5 certificate/diploma wanting to further their education, may lack certain foundational skills, conceptual knowledge, language development, critical-thinking skills, life skills and academic skills necessary to support their further study towards level 6

and 7 qualifications. "Higher education is suffering an 'articulation gap', defined as a mismatch or discontinuity between the learning requirements of higher education programs and the actual knowledge and competencies of entry-level students. In other words, there is a mismatch between the statutory minimum requirements for admission to higher education and the level of academic preparedness that is needed for succeeding in conventional higher education programs" (Fisher, 2011). Torr, cited in Boughhey (2010), notes that academic support was "developed to assist students without the necessary background to be able to benefit immediately from lectures and tutorials".

5.2 PURPOSE

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the concept of developmental education as an alternative way of thinking about "academic support". The main thrust is that developmental education favours an integrated approach. This chapter identifies some issues that need careful consideration, and offers some guidelines for implementing developmental education.

5.3 CONCEPTS, ISSUES AND DEBATES

5.3.1 Defining Developmental Education

The term *academic support* refers to "a wide variety of instructional methods, educational services, or school resources provided to students in an effort to help them accelerate their learning progress, catch up with their peers, meet learning standards, or generally succeed" (Harrison, 2017: 31). There is, however, often a stigma attached to academic support, with students being labelled as "at risk", or at a disadvantage. There is an assumption that "disadvantage" can be addressed independently of mainstream learning, and Boughhey (2010) contends that "academic support is largely given as a separate or isolated programme and that this makes it difficult for students to marry what they learn in academic support with their course as a whole". Therefore, it is suggested that "an integrated response that allows for strong mentorship would be more effective and would build students' confidence" (Harrison, 2017: 31). The concept *developmental education* refers to the way structures such

as curriculum, language, literacy and pedagogy intersect with race and social class. It thus sees "disadvantage" or "unpreparedness" more holistically and directs attention not just on the qualification, but also on the institution (system, pedagogy and curriculum, etc.).

Developmental education "understands academic life as a form of social practice to which some had more access than others because of previous social and cultural experiences, and acknowledges that access to academic practice is only developed over time, through engagement with learning in the disciplines and through support, which [should be] embedded in those disciplines" (Boughhey, 2010).

The concept of developmental education helps us to understand that academic practice is developed over time, and is not a set of skills that is content-independent and practised in a void. Academic skills are developed through engagement with "complex tasks that require subject knowledge and an understanding of the nature of knowledge in the specific discipline" (Wingate, 2007). Developmental education requires implementation through a range of strategies, and suggests students need different inputs or support at different times. Developmental education is an integral component of student support provided within a programme or qualification to ensure student success.

5.3.2 Issues and Debates

The integrated approach to developmental education raises several issues and debates, which are presently unresolved, and consequently institutions will need to explore them within their own contexts.

The first issue is about context itself: this framework acknowledges that institutions may have existing developmental education approaches and policies. However, in this framework we want to encourage institutions to review their developmental education approach and policies and explore a more integrated approach in the quest to improve quality by being more inclusive, more culturally responsive, and more participatory.

The second issue is about human resources. The approach to developmental education that we are proposing is dependent on the use of teacher educators and/or tutors and/or mentors to guide and support students through their developmental education journey. Many

institutions do not have sufficient staff, or the budget to increase their staff. We can mitigate these challenges by using teacher educators to execute this role in addition to the support they give students concerning the academic programme. Moreover, by using the same tutors/mentors for different components of the programme such as WIL, developmental education and academic tutoring, will lead to the promotion of the programme in a more effective manner. Also, applying creative and innovative strategies where students support each other reduces the need for tutors/mentors. Further, by co-operating with existing structures such as teaching and learning centres and/or writing centres, developmental education becomes a smooth process for all roleplayers.

The third issue relates to the structure of the programme. Institutions will have to consider how to structure the Diploma and Degree programmes to allow for more integrated academic, developmental education and assessment strategies.

5.4 GUIDELINES FOR PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

Content

The literature review (Harrison, 2017) identified the primary areas where students required support. These included foundational mathematics competencies, English reading and writing skills, information literacy, social-emotional skills, and subject-specific skills. The nature of that content can be derived from the kind of support students might need in relation to the demands across the entire academic programme (i.e. Diploma/Degree in ECCE). Table 5.1 below illustrates how we can think about the aspect of content in relation to student-support-needs across all components of the programme framework; and this includes types of resources that can be utilised in an integrated manner in order to support learning.

Table 5.1: Student-support-needs, and developmental education content and resources

Programme Framework Component	Student Support	Developmental Education: Content
1. Purpose, Mission and Vision	Kind of teacher we need; our view of children/ childhood, quality, inclusivity, pedagogy.	Professionalism
2. Target audience / Context		
3. Principles		
4. Knowledge & Practice Standards and Curriculum	Pedagogy that is supportive of learning (e.g. activity-based vs lecture-based) and models which encourage best practice in early childhood pedagogy.	a. English: conversational, written a verbal presentation, academic es writing, case studies, discipline specific discourse, etc. b. Mathematical Literacy/Foundat understanding.
5. RPL	PoE development support	a. Digital literacy (also see WIL); b. Academic: information literacy, discipline specific reading and writing, discipline specific discou referencing and plagiarism, critic thinking, evaluation, study skills.
6. WIL	Implementation support: planning, transport, CoP, reflection, access to ECCE sites, ECCE site culture, sharing resources, problem- solving,	➢ Report writing, ➢ Record keeping, scheduling ➢ Keeping a journal ➢ Programme planning ➢ Time management

	networking, study groups/peer support, community engagement, parent involvement.	➢ Communication/ networking ➢ Minute-taking ➢ Digital literacy
7. Assessment Strategy	Assessment support in the form of guidelines, schedules, variety of assessment methods, tools and instruments, PoE development support	a. Exam writing b. Time management c. Report and essay writing d. Research skills e. Digital literacy
8. Articulation and alignment	Integration and articulation with other qualifications embedded in the model	a. Career guidance/ exploration b. Study choices
9. Mode of delivery	Contact sessions, tutorials, online learning, syndicate groups	a. Digital literacy b. Time management c. Networking and communication
10. Context	Acknowledgement and understanding of diversity in ECCE contexts	a. Critical-thinking, problem-solving etc. b. Networking and collaboration sk
11. Resources	Mode of delivery (ICT, technology and connectivity, access to libraries and other resources, partnerships, access to play and learning environments,	a. Creative-thinking, problem-solvi b. Reading instructions c. Networking and communication d. Personal admin. (e.g. CV, etc.)

12. Administration	Registration, fees, resources, student handbook – student orientation on admission / commencement of the academic year	a. Financial planning b. Time management c. Rules and procedures d. Class participation e. Scheduling f. Digital literacy
13. Student support	Integrated across the programme and within Developmental Education	
14. Planning	Integrated into developmental education	
15. African perspectives / Indigenous knowledge	Acknowledgement and understanding of diversity in ECCE contexts; alternative views of children/ childhood; child rearing practices; education through and for democracy	a. Diversity b. Critical-thinking, problem-solving etc. c. Collaboration skills

Structure

The structure of a developmental education programme should be aligned to the structure of the academic programme; that is, the Diploma/Degree in ECCE. This ensures that the content of the developmental programme provides students with the timeous support they need. For example, at the beginning of the academic programme, students may be expected to spend time during their first teaching practice session to observe a lesson being taught at an early learning site, keep a journal record of their experiences, and write a brief report. An appropriate developmental education module is offered just before the WIL module to teach students recording skills (for the observation), basic report writing skills, and journal writing skills. During the WIL module, students practise what they learnt; thus they are required to submit a report/journal for the assessment of their developmental education module as part of their WIL.

Furthermore, we should consider what aspects of developmental education may be needed before students enter the academic programme; possibly some kind of short bridging course. This could be standard for everyone, or may be based on needs identified during an entry-level assessment. However, an entry-level type of assessment may be seen as a deficit approach in that it separates those students who “fail” from those who don’t. To circumvent this requires integrating a “developmental bridging” component into the first six months of the academic programme content and assessment strategy which will support learner-transition and reinforce previous knowledge and skills.

At different stages within the structure of the developmental education programme, a variety of strategies, pedagogies and assessment methods should be used, that must align with the strategies, pedagogies and methodologies used in the academic programme itself. For example, if the academic programme adopts a student-support strategy of establishing study groups, then these same strategies should also support developmental education.

Assessment Strategy

Assessment in the developmental education programme should lead to credits, and should be as far as possible integrated into the overall academic programme. The example of WIL (given above) describes one way in which the assessment of the developmental programme

can be integrated into the academic programme. Further, students should imbibe concepts and skills before being assessed. In other words, students should not be assessed, for example, on their research skills if they have not yet been taught or provided with the opportunity to acquire research skills.

Consequently, students should be given a number of opportunities to demonstrate skills and knowledge that lead to the achievement of developmental education outcomes in order to improve and to succeed throughout the academic programme. For example, when students submit a research assignment for assessment in the academic programme, this developmental education aspect is assessed by applying the relevant assessment instruments as per rubric(s). Students receive feedback on this assessment task, and have another opportunity to be assessed using the same criteria on submission of the next relevant assignment.

Human Resources

In general, an integrated approach to developmental education requires team-teaching and strong collaboration among lecturers, tutors and students:

- Role of lecturers: Where possible ECCE specialist lecturers actively integrate developmental education into the professional-technical ECCE content.
- Role of tutors and mentors: Specialist developmental education lecturers are involved as active, engaged class-attending tutors and mentors. The roles of tutors, developmental education lecturers and ECCE specialist lecturers can be executed by the same or different people, depending on the staffing structure at universities. It is in the implementation of these support functions of staff that institutions will need to be creative and assertive.
- Students support each other through on-or-off site study groups/communities of practice/ support groups, appropriate to the mode of delivery. Students also make use of technology such as whatsapp which they have easy access to interact on academic matters.
- Other university/organisational support structures such as existing writing centres or centres for teaching and learning, are used either in specialist tutor roles and/or in complementary roles.

Resources

Students engage in self-study pertaining to developmental education by using high-quality learning guides, blended with face-to-face support/tutorials. The learning guides should

reflect the same strategies, pedagogies and methodologies used in the overall academic programme. Relevant resources such as planning tools, charts, records and early learning materials for children that require the application of developmental education knowledge and skills, are used and assessed towards developmental education progress.

Technology

Online technology can support developmental education by facilitating access to tools, digital resources and references. Institutions should consider whether to develop a separate platform specific to developmental education, or whether all the resources for the entire programme should be integrated into one platform. Other social media and mobile technologies can be used as a means of providing tutor/mentor support, and of students supporting each other.

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CHAPTER 6

PEDAGOGIES IN TEACHER EDUCATION FOR ECCE

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6.1 INTRODUCTION

The higher education contexts in South Africa including academic staff developers, have a significant role to play in assisting universities to create favourable conditions to enhance the capacity-building processes of teaching and learning (CHE, 2017). We argue that the pedagogies implemented in higher education for capacity-building of early childhood teachers is paramount to achieve quality outcomes in children. The importance of a well-qualified workforce is often emphasised through policy and research, but these attempts to enhance teaching and learning do not necessarily translate into effective practice as issues of compliance, management and organisation take precedence. Pedagogy in higher education focuses more on barriers and challenges rather than acknowledging that there might be a need for adopting new strategies in teaching, learning and assessment (Mitchell et al., 2006). It is therefore critical that creative pedagogy for ECCE in higher education is not the "business as usual" approach, but rather a strategic endeavour to motivate a high quality workforce to produce noteworthy teaching-learning spaces which engenders quality outcomes in terms of children's academic performances, thus contributing to making a positive difference to SA society.

6.2 PURPOSE

The purpose of this chapter is to foreground the pedagogies that are relevant to ECCE teacher-education in higher education. Miller, Dalli and Urban (2012) state that professionalism in early childhood practice cannot be defined as being universal; rather it is something that must firstly be embedded in local contexts, visible in relational interactions, and involve multiple layers of knowledge, judgement and influences from the broader societal contexts. We argue that the same is true for pedagogy in higher education. This chapter makes a particular case for culturally responsive, inclusive and participatory pedagogies. We believe these pedagogies

address the complexity and variability in the field. Considering the history and current status of ECCE, these pedagogies uncover possibilities for interactive student-centred ways of learning.

6.3 DOMINANT PEDAGOGY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The pedagogical landscape for most early childhood teacher preparation programmes are framed by dominant pedagogies that disadvantages the preparation of teachers for early childhood education by stifling their (teachers') critically reflective potential. These pedagogies stem from discourses which are historically derived from power and authority which constrains individuals and demands unconditional allegiance - it includes traditions of early childhood education preparation (Massing, 2015). For many years, the early childhood education field has been dominated by this form of authority, power and allegiance, which are evident in texts, policies, regulations, standards and programmes emanating mostly from Western sources. This dominant pedagogy of power has infiltrated into how teachers teach and care for young children (Massing, 2015).

Moreover, authoritative discourse is characterised by Western child development theories, which promote the understanding of a universal childhood that is decontextualised and distanced from situational experiences of young children and the students themselves. This authoritative tradition creates the sense of the truth regimes that were compulsory to include in teacher preparation programmes for the early years; and this persists despite the criticisms of these framings for ECCE teacher-education (Kirova, Massing, Prochner & Cleghorn, 2016). The dominant authoritative pedagogies situate teacher educators as mere purveyors of knowledge if they subscribe to its philosophy, principles and teachings. The students on the other hand, are led to think that authoritative knowledge will lead to them becoming effective ECE teachers. Where, for example, a decontextualised approach to developmentally appropriate practice is mainstream, ECCE student teachers could then focus on development, but to the detriment of culturally and linguistically-appropriate practice.

An authoritative discourse in early childhood education (ECE) also favours schoolification (Van Laere, Peters & Vandenbroeck, 2012) which is characterised by the teacher being the

technician who delivers a curriculum engaging in "performative professionalism" where the "correct action is determined in relation to universal competence standards and codes of practice" (Taggert, 2011: 88). This idea of universal competence of young children is endorsed by most policymakers and practice, thus excluding teachers from the production of knowledge that governs the field (Kirova, Massing, Prochner & Cleghorn, 2016). Thus, professionalism cannot be defined in simple universalistic and inflexible terms (Miller, Dalli & Urban, 2012).

Professionalism is strongly linked to local contexts visible in relational interactions; it is ethical and political in nature involving multiple layers of knowledge, judgement, and influences from the broader societal context (Kirova, Massing, Prochner & Cleghorn, 2016). These multiple layers need to be understood when designing a pedagogy for early childhood teacher education programmes. The teacher educator must resist the temptation to become a technician delivering outcomes to students (Lobman & Ryan, 2007; Woodrow, 2008). Montecino (2004), cited in Wilgus (2013:7), states that when such a role is dominant, culturally-based understandings that students bring to their teacher preparation programme about teaching and learning are ignored.

6.4 TRANSFORMING HIGHER EDUCATION PEDAGOGY FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER PREPARATION

In order for pedagogy to shift from an authoritative discourse and its constraining effects, it needs transformation towards a more learner-centred, work-centred and attribute-focused pedagogy (Chappell, 2004; Smith & Blake, 2005). Where this is the case, emphasis is on transforming people, with teachers using different pedagogical strategies to serve the needs of learners and contexts (Smith & Blake, 2005). Smith and Blake (2005) also state that pedagogy within higher education should place teacher educators as facilitators of learning with the learner playing an active role in the construction of knowledge. Gamble (2013) argues that contemporary vocational pedagogy goes far beyond just "learning by doing"; but sees the need for conceptual knowledge and higher-order thinking skills, emphasising the importance of situated and social learning as well as constructivist and experiential modes of

learning. In this regard, Corbel (2013) emphasises the importance of transformative learning aligned to procedure and compliance, leading to a more competency-based training. These observations have resulted in more learner-centred, transformative, constructive and socially critical modes (Bedi & Germein, 2016).

Considering the above views, transforming pedagogy in higher education for early childhood teacher preparation calls for an eclectic, culturally responsive, inclusive, and participatory approach.

6.5 AFFIRMING PEDAGOGIES FOR ECCE TEACHER EDUCATION

6.5.1 Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Many teacher educators avoid discussions on diversity issues for a myriad of reasons. This results in numerous novice teachers graduating but lacking quality learning opportunities to become well-versed on issues of diversity in meaningful ways that can translate to best practice. Researchers have elaborated on instructional practices and resources used by teacher educators who, grounded in an understanding of diversity awareness and identity development as well as culturally relevant pedagogy, are actively preparing the next generation of teachers to be culturally responsive (Ellerrock, Cruz, Vasquez & Howes, 2016).

As teacher educators, we recognise the difficulties associated with teaching diversity and facilitating pre-service teachers' acquisition of culturally relevant pedagogy. We also acknowledge that culture is constantly evolving and that the issues of diversity that arise vary with context within South Africa and internationally. Culturally relevant pedagogy requires that teachers genuinely care about their students. In addition, Ladson-Billings (1995) explains that "culturally relevant pedagogy would also necessarily propose to do three things - produce students who can achieve academically, produce students who demonstrate cultural competence, and develop students who can both understand and critique the existing social order". Ellerbrock et al. (2016:227) assert that culturally relevant pedagogy focusing on diversity awareness and identity development, supports teacher educators for pre-service teacher-training.

Culturally responsive pedagogy holds that culture is central to student learning as it is an approach that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Han, Vomvoridi-Ivanović, Jacobs, Karanxha, Lypka, Topdemir & Feldman, 2014).

Various pedagogical practices that could help ECCE educators have been developed and documented across disciplines. Reflecting via journal entries or self-assessment tools, and participating in book clubs would also help ECCE educators to increase their sociolinguistic awareness to examine and challenge stereotypes about culture, race, language, gender, and class, amongst others. Organising first-hand learning experiences with diverse students in their communities and with their families, is another commonly used practice that would foster ECCE educators to gain deeper insights on using culturally responsive pedagogy. Visiting and conducting community walks, participating in community service-learning, and fulfilling field experiences in diverse contexts, are considered as effective experiences that would support ECCE educators' learning of culturally responsive pedagogy. Importantly, framing college classroom environments or activities through the perspectives of the under-served and under-represented students is another instructional practice which could be used to prepare ECCE educators to use culturally responsive pedagogy.

Sobel, Gutierrez, Zion and Blanchett (2011) who contend that culturally responsive teaching (CRT) is a comprehensive endeavour that focuses on student needs, curriculum content, counselling and guidance, instructional strategies, and performance assessment, stress that a responsive programme should strive to form partnerships with family members as communication dynamics may be intensified when cultural differences between teachers and families are present. All educators should be challenged to build networks among students and their communities in order to further incorporate relevant experiences and resources into school practices. Therefore, ECCE teacher education programmes should engage in professional development that supports systematic processes to connect every future educator with relevant resources and community-based learning opportunities.

The table 6.1 describes how teacher educators prepare students to become culturally responsive.

Table 6.1: Practices for Culturally Responsive Educators (adapted: Ellerbrock et al., 2016)

Establishing a positive classroom learning environment	If the instructor does not promote an atmosphere that values diversity and fosters alliances among pre-service teachers (PSTs) and teacher educators, then the university classroom will possibly become a place of great discontent and conflict. Learning occurs within the social context of a classroom, thus the establishment of a positive classroom environment is vital for culturally responsive teaching.
Build relationships	Creating a sense of belonging requires teacher educators to provide time and structures for class members to build relationships with one another. Creating semester-long learning circles consisting of heterogeneous groups of four to five would promote collegial relationships. Hence, PSTs must work collaboratively to develop deeper understandings of course materials. To establish learning circles, time must be set aside during the first few class sessions for each learning circle's members to get to know each other through a series of structured activities (e.g. icebreakers). It is this bond that will help foster a sense of belonging.
Promote cooperation	Incorporating cooperative learning also has the potential to create an environment where class members feel vested in each other's success. To be successful, cooperative learning activities must explicitly support positive interdependence and individual accountability, encourage the success of others, promote social skills development, and include a group-processing component
Encourage self-reflection	Providing PSTs with opportunities for self-reflection and participating in those opportunities to model self-reflection

	would help PSTs develop their diversity-awareness. Effective teacher educators provide opportunities for their students to not only self-reflect, but also to participate in reflecting on their own beliefs and practices.
Implementing purposeful learning activities	Activities that PSTs engage in during their assignments also facilitate their growth in diversity-awareness while encouraging them to understand and critique the existing social order. Thus, PSTs will be better equipped to do the same for the education of their own birth to school-going children. Such activities encourage PSTs to build cultural competence, investigate school demographics, make meaning of inequities, build socio-political consciousness, examine their own assumptions, and consider cross-cultural perspectives.

The following are also considered as purposeful learning activities and should be utilised by the teacher educator:

- Build cultural competence
- Investigate school demographics
- Make meaning of inequities
- Build socio-political consciousness
- Examine one's own assumptions

Culturally responsive pedagogy to effectively and efficiently educate every child is a long-term commitment, not only to our students, but also to society. A nation of diverse ECCE children and the future of society depend on our efforts as dedicated teacher educators.

6.5.2 Participatory Pedagogy

A participatory pedagogy resonates with the work carried out by Paulo Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970). A critical consciousness is developed when using this participatory

framework. Thus, students become agents of solving their own problems, while educators dissect and interpret the world that surrounds the oppressed learner so that they (learners) reflect on their own realities (Freire, 1970). Freire (1970) refers to the lecturing approach to education as "banking" whereby the lecturer banks knowledge onto students and further states that such an approach creates naive consciousness with the educated where individuals are aware of the situation but do not undertake any concerted effort to change the situation.

Freire (1970) thus offers a participatory pedagogy where the educator and the learner contribute to the learning process. The adoption of Freire's participatory framework that contributes to a participatory pedagogy is useful to consider within the context of pedagogy for ECCE in higher education. This contribution will lead to a dialogical process between teacher-trainers and students of ECCE who will be exposed to opportunities to think creatively and problem-solve critically. This participatory pedagogy also conscientises students on the importance of the work they do with young children in ECCE.

Another understanding of a participatory pedagogy comes from the work carried out by Formosinho and Formosinho (2015) who contend that democracy is a concept central to participatory pedagogy which emphasises equality and inclusion especially concerning diversities. A participatory pedagogy ensures that teacher educators value pre-service teachers' voices and actions in practice, and that they are supported to guide pre-service students to become conscious of their own learning. A participatory pedagogy is co-constructed and promotes a different view of the learning process, of pre-service students, of teacher educators, and the learning environment (Formosinho & Formosinho, 2015). In the context of teacher-training for birth to four, a participatory pedagogy could be designed to promote different views of teaching and learning. Just as a participatory pedagogy aims to involve children in the experience and the construction of learning in continuous and interactive learning, the same applies to interactive teaching concerning teacher-training for the birth to four age group.

With images of the child being that of an active, competent being, so too is the image of a student in teacher-training of being an active competent being. The motivation of learning is

sustained by the intrinsic interest in the task, and in the intrinsic motivation of children and adults (Formosinho & Formosinho, 2016). Consequently, the learning process is an interactive development between child and adult; and the educational spaces and times are structured to enable this interactive education. Hence, the same is relative to how educational spaces are designed by teacher-trainers for students to exploit interactive education. If students experience a pedagogy that is participatory in nature, then they too will invite a participatory pedagogy in their practice.

6.5.3 Inclusive Pedagogy

Promoting inclusive pedagogy in HEIs strongly relates to our advocacy for change. Moreover, inclusive pedagogy focuses on the content (what) and pedagogy (how) to train students in HEIs (Danowitz & Tuitt, 2011). However, Dewsbury (2015) asserts that inclusive pedagogy is essentially about the mindset and awareness of the teacher educator in relation to student diversity. For example, students from different cultural backgrounds should build on their knowledge of child-rearing practices, instead of disregarding it by focusing exclusively on Euro-Western practices.

Hockings (2010) defines inclusive pedagogies in higher education as follows:

Inclusive learning and teaching in higher education refers to the ways in which pedagogy, curricula and assessment are designed and delivered to engage students in learning that is meaningful, relevant and accessible to all. It embraces a view of the individual and individual difference as the source of diversity that can enrich the lives and learning of others.

Moreover, teacher educators need to ensure that all students are able to participate actively so that they all experience success. Scholars such as May and Bridger (2010) contend that HEIs need to entrench inclusive policies and practices to enhance the learning of all students, especially those who were historically marginalised or excluded. Two important aspects for quality higher education include:

(i) Equality for the physically challenged, and

(ii) widening participation.

This is crucial as seven per cent (7%) of students currently enrolled in HEIs are physically challenged (DHET, 2018). However, this requires systemic and attitudinal change to enhance professional practice. Teacher educators must believe that they have the ability to teach all students (Florian, 2015). Similarly, Danowitz and Tuitt (2011) and Hitch, Macfarlane and Nihill (2015) agree that strategic administrative actions, curricular revisions, and pedagogical changes are required across HEIs. This should include ensuring physical access, the provision of assistive devices and other accommodative practices to enhance participation and strengthen student support to ensure that all students achieve all the outcomes.

Aims of inclusive pedagogical initiatives

In the UK, HEIs introduced the following inclusive pedagogical initiatives, emphasising the importance of shared responsibility and consistent uptake across the entire institution.

Table 6.2: Inclusive pedagogical initiatives and aims (Adapted from May & Bridger, 2010)

Inclusive Pedagogical Initiative	Aim
Enhancing learning, teaching, assessment strategies, and practices for disabled students.	To achieve a more inclusive approach to learning, teaching and assessment.
Success for all, from widening participation to enhancing student achievement.	To provide learning and support infrastructure to promote students' access, reduce barriers to learning, improve student retention, and enhance achievement for all students.
Building curricular needs for the 21st century learner.	To develop and embed tools to enhance the design and delivery of programmes that promote diversity.
Bridging the digital divide: widening participation and success through e-learning platforms.	To enable students who have historically been excluded to access and benefits of the university's e-learning and communication facilities.
Widening participation and students' writing in the disciplines.	To develop a coherent approach within the curriculum to develop students' academic literacy writing skills.
An integrated approach to equality and diversity.	To create a learning environment that values and embraces diversity through inclusive policies and practices.

Embedding inclusive curriculum practices.	To develop sustainable approaches towards inclusive curriculum design, delivery and assessment.
Designing an inclusive curriculum in higher education.	To entrench effective inclusive practices in learning, teaching and assessment.

Danowitz and Tuitt's (2011) study in the USA promote inclusive pedagogical initiatives that focus on diversifying the curriculum and integrating practices that embody multiple student identities. This includes the following as shown in table 6.3.

Table 6.3: Inclusive pedagogical initiatives and its aims

Inclusive Pedagogical Initiative	**Aim**
Focusing on students' social and academic (intellectual) development.	To offer the best possible course of study appropriate for the students' contexts.
Purposely designing and using educational resources to enhance students' participation, learning and achievement.	To establish a learning environment that challenges every student to achieve high levels academically while encouraging every student to contribute to all students' overall learning and development.
Paying attention to the cultural differences diverse learners bring to the educational experience, and how these cultural differences enhance the teaching and learning environment.	To promote students' understanding of, and respect for cultural diversity. To use cultural diversity as a resource.
Creating a welcoming classroom environment that actively engages all students.	To utilise diversity in the pursuit of individual and collaborative learning.
Using a range of teaching, learning and assessment strategies.	To guide students to consider how they could promote equity, examine assumptions, ask questions, and question cultural myths related to the prevailing social order.
Examining race, gender, inclusive values, knowledge and pedagogy.	Developing a higher education programme demonstrating curricular and pedagogical reforms that produce graduates with the capacity to provide leadership for highly diverse organisations.

Examining diversity in meaningful ways, rather than as an add-on.	To challenge students to apply the knowledge they acquired to promote equity and social justice.

Hitch, Macfarlane and Nihill (2015) examined the support structures provided to Australian academics to implement inclusive teaching, and they found that HEIs are attracting students who are increasingly diverse, with varied levels of readiness for higher education. Instead of focusing on individual challenges, HEIs should focus on adaptations required in the learning environment. Moreover, rather than perpetuating the deficit model of difference, a more incisive understanding of diversity is promoted that considers students' characteristics such as previous education, personal disposition, cultural background, and current circumstances. Hence, student diversity is regarded as a phenomenon that enhances learning. Despite this, the current professional development practices for academic staff is inadequate as it mainly consists of once-off training sessions.

Teacher educators in South Africa should therefore consider a systemic approach to inclusive pedagogy where professional development is regular and ongoing. This should include frequent opportunities to reflect on their knowledge, skills and attitudes, as well as whether their classroom practices accommodate student diversity.

Inclusive pedagogical approach

The pedagogical approach based on the philosophy of inclusive pedagogy was developed in the context of higher education, and has since been widely applied in teacher education. It includes the following considerations:

- All educational settings are more diverse today than ever before – ethnicity, culture, languages, disability status (Florian, 2015).
- The emphasis of inclusive education should be on practical applications of how to translate policies into classroom practice (Majoko & Phasha, 2018).

- The inclusive pedagogical approach promotes the creation of rich learning experiences and is available for everyone so that all students can participate in meaningful classroom life (Florian, 2015).
- Inclusive pedagogy acknowledges students' individual differences but avoids viewing differences as problems, as this reinforces stigma associated with difference.
- Schools are encouraged to include a greater diversity of students since they enrich learning.
- Teacher educators should view their students' learning as a shared activity as learners learn from one another.
- Teacher educators should design and implement strategies to raise the achievement of all students.
- Teacher educators should craft their knowledge to enable them to extend what is generally available to all students.
- Inclusive education should be integrated into all teacher education courses and programmes so that it "becomes part of the discourse of teaching" (Majoko & Phasha, 2018:74).
- By experiencing this during their teacher-training, student teachers will be able to implement them in their own classrooms.
- Student teachers should experience how inclusive education extends the scope of ordinary ways of thinking about improving learning, assessing performance, and performing assessments.
- Teacher educators should train their students to engage in inclusive practices, collaborative actions, as well as join professional and social networks that actively seek to enhance social justice.
- Student teachers should understand that teachers' engagement with families is also essential. They should view parents as partners in their children's education and treat them with respect.

- Teacher educators should train teachers to address exclusion, underachievement and collaboration with other professionals. This is critical to reduce the current dropout rate of 60%.
- Teacher educators should ensure that their students develop:
  - The core expertise (knowing, doing, believing) of inclusive pedagogy – recognising the potential of all students (Pantic & Florian, 2015; Majoko, 2016a), and
  - Basic skills needed for successful inclusion (Majoko, 2016a, 2016b) include:
    1. Basic knowledge of the characteristics of children with various disabilities.
    2. Student teachers' understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the special education process, including referral (responses to intervention, assessments, individualised planning, classroom assistance, working with children and families).
    3. Early screening and identification of barriers to learning.
    4. Exposure and assessment of all children to the mainstream curriculum.
    5. Modifications and adaptations to the curriculum to optimise achievement of all children. This may include modifying the learning environment, learning support materials, the duration of activities, teaching strategies or the assessment.
    6. Adapting instruction to meet the needs of children with diverse abilities. For example, simplifying activities or providing individual support to ensure that children who experience barriers to learning are able to achieve the desired outcomes.

Implications of inclusive pedagogies for ECCE teachers' classroom practice

- Inclusive pedagogies relate to the practical implementation of inclusive education (Vaz *et al*., 2015).

- It promotes positive attitudes of teachers towards inclusion (Nishimura, 2014). The teacher must believe that he or she can teach all children.
- It enables teachers to develop a deeper understanding of inclusive practices (Majoko, 2016a; 2016b). The teacher is therefore proficient in a wide range of teaching strategies, including the adaptations required to accommodate the needs of children with specific challenges to learning.
- Teachers' engagement in pedagogical practice is essential to empower them to apply knowledge in terms of individual differences – how teachers respond to individual differences, the pedagogical choices teachers make, and how they utilise specialist knowledge. Teachers should work collaboratively with colleagues at special schools since they are regarded as resource centres (DoE, 2001).
- HEIs should expose pre-service teachers to special schools and full-service schools during WIL. Teacher educators should train their students on specialist pedagogies for children with specific barriers to learning. This will contribute to a more positive attitude and a sense of readiness to teach all learners (Majoko & Phasha, 2018).
- Differential instructional techniques are essential. For example, teachers need to be motivated to learn how to accommodate children with specific barriers in their classrooms. In addition, teachers should tailor their Instructional techniques to a child's individual strengths, interests and needs.
- Teacher education should provide opportunities for teachers to practise how to differentiate their lessons (Majoko, 2016a) since this is key to effective professional development. Individual children may require additional support such as more time, alternative assessment techniques or assistive devices.
- Teacher professional development should be accompanied by coaching, modelling and reflection on practice. More experienced colleagues should mentor less experienced colleagues. This model of inclusive pedagogy and reflection on effective teaching, learning and assessment is crucial for continuous improvement and professional development.

- Teachers' collaboration with colleagues and other stakeholders such as special education teachers, therapists and support staff is essential for creating communities of practice with colleagues, including how to communicate effectively, and how to engage in co-teaching partnerships.
- Teacher education should ensure that student teachers master effective classroom management strategies consistent with the philosophy of inclusion. In other words, classroom management should promote learners' participation within a democratic and ethical and socially just approach to learning and teaching. This will enable teachers to enhance children's academic engagement and pro-social behaviour, and enable them to manage challenging behaviour (Majoko, 2016a).

6.6 GUIDELINES FOR PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

It is imperative that teacher educators and HEIs commit to preparing teachers who can implement culturally responsive, inclusive and participatory pedagogies. It is also necessary that teacher educators train teachers in ECCE who have the knowledge and skills necessary to not only meet the needs of a diverse ECCE student body, but also to sustain the linguistic, literate, and cultural plurality of the students in our classrooms, which is the hallmark of democratic schooling.

To aid the above effort, teacher educators can establish and maintain a positive classroom learning environment, implement purposeful learning activities, and provide quality field experiences that support pre-service teachers' development of diversity-awareness. It is only through this kind of thoughtful and intense reflection that future teachers will be equipped to work successfully with diverse students. We would like to encourage additional research that must focus on aspects of international cultural diversity, specifically how diversity is conceptualised, approached, and supported in international teacher education and practice. Also, teacher educators are encouraged to research and publish articles about the impact of pedagogical diversity initiatives on pre-service teachers and ECCE students under them. The time has come to spend less energy and time theorising about issues of diversity and the resistance to them; more energy should be spent on unearthing innovative research strategies to facilitate pre-service progress toward acceptance and internalisation. Such

scholarship would aid teacher education programmes in the preparation of pre-service teachers who will support ECCE learners to achieve academically, demonstrate cultural competence, and understand and critique the existing social order.

Additionally, as noted by Danowitz and Tuitt (2011), in order for HEIs to change their policies and practices to embrace diversity, its leadership should be committed to diversity. Also, all stakeholders should be willing to learn about the anticipated challenges that will inevitably accompany the change process. For this reason, PIECCE recognises the need to link our work in inclusive pedagogy with our theory of change.

This commitment to educate every child effectively and efficiently cannot end when the pre-service teachers leave our institutions, but rather it is a long-term commitment, not just to our students, but also to society. A population of diverse ECCE learners and the future of our society depends on our (and all stakeholders') concerted efforts.

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CHAPTER 7

PLAY

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7.1 INTRODUCTION

Today it is widely accepted that playful learning experiences underpin successful growth, development and learning in infants, toddlers and young children. In fact, the value of learning through play interactions is also becoming increasingly popular and recognised throughout the foundation phase of education.

Children's right to play is recognised and enshrined in the *United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child* which South Africa ratified in 1995. This right is captured in the *South African Constitution* (RSA, 1996) and the *South African National Curriculum Framework* [NCF] (DBE, 2015). The importance of learning and teaching through play, especially for the Grade Rs, is endorsed in the *South African Curriculum and Assessment Statement* [CAPS] (DBE, 2012). The qualification framework for early childhood care and education (DHET, 2017) emphasises a play-based approach to teaching and learning. However, despite this increasing recognition of the importance of play in early learning, there is still little consensus on what is meant by play and specifically on how to support play as an effective teaching-learning tool..

In this chapter, we not only investigate the contested nature of play, but also attempt to reach a common understanding of what learning and teaching through play might mean for the diverse South African context. To achieve this, we explore the value of play and investigate the many different classifications and types of play. Also, we examine some of the constraints and challenges, including the possibilities for implementing playful pedagogies in a variety of ECCE settings.

7.2 EXPLORING THE CONCEPT OF PLAY

Huizinga's (1949) seminal work on play explains that play is the most fundamental human function; one that has permeated different cultures from the beginning of civilisation. Further, Lucich (2011) asserts that play fulfils an important role in contributing to children's

total humanisation; it allows children to find out about themselves and explore their world or environment around them.

According to Berk (2007), play provides children with opportunities to be independent, to make decisions on their own, and thus become self-reliant. In this way children's self-confidence is promoted leading to a positive self-image (Mayesky, 2006). Ridgway (2012) adds that play encourages language as well as personal development.

Meaningful play offers a plethora of important, interactive experiences that contribute to knowledge-production enabling children to learn new skills and knowledge while reinforcing existing concepts. Moreover, it leads to the formation of positive attitudes and values which enhances children's social interactions and emotional wellbeing that influences future behaviour (DBE, 2008).

Concerns over children's abilities to take their rightful place as global citizens of the 21st century have prompted a number of researchers to explore what type of behaviours young children ought to acquire. Twenty first century skills have been identified as collaboration, communication, critical-thinking and executive functioning (referring to self-regulatory behaviours and other essential social and emotional behaviours that help an individual to function in the world). It is widely accepted that these skills are developed through quality play opportunities. Golinkoff and Hirsh-Pasek (2016) have identified additional skills which children ought to develop through playful experiences; they termed these collective skills the "6Cs", as outlined below:

- Children should be able to communicate ideas;
- collaborate with others;
- initiate creative solutions to problems;
- think critically and evaluate data;
- have the confidence to try new things and be willing to fail; and
- have the content knowledge which is the foundation underpinning all other functions.

Golinkoff and Hirsh-Pasek (2016) further contend that regardless of whether a play activity falls closer to free play, guided play or games on the continuum (see 3.3), optimal learning through play is experienced as joyful. It must help children find meaning in what they are doing or learning, and involve them in active, engaged, mind-opening, and iterative (repetitive) thinking such as experimentation and hypothesis testing. Most importantly, it involves social interaction which is the most powerful resource available to humans (Hirsh-Pasek, Zosh, Golinkoff, Gray, Robb & Kaufman, 2015). Accordingly, when children are active (minds-on) and engaged (not distracted) with meaningful learning materials, especially in socially interactive contexts, they develop a deep, conceptual understanding of various forms of knowledge. This entails a systematic approach to the provision of quality playful learning and teaching opportunities made possible through a pedagogy of play (see 2.6), which is one way of alleviating the tension that often occurs between the practice of playful learning and teaching.

According to Liu et al (2017), there are five definitive characteristics of playful learning experiences. These are that play should:

- be a joyful experience – this allows for the release of dopamine in the brain which is linked to the improvement of cognitive functions such as memory, attention, mental shifting, creativity, and motivation;
- be meaningful – The child should be able to make connections between familiar and unfamiliar stimuli. This fosters easier learning through the enhancement of analogical thinking, improves memory skills, and develops metacognition;
- Involve active engagement which promotes children's agency and decision- making abilities. Through active engagement, children's memory and retrieval processes are enhanced. Executive control is improved through children developing skills which prevents them from being distracted thus improving short term memory and lifelong learning;
- be iterative (involve repetition). Children acquire important learning habits such as perseverance which ultimately leads to greater flexibility in their thinking; and

- encourage social interaction which should include positive caregiving practices. Social interaction leads to the healthy development of social-emotional regulation and the lessening of learning barriers such as stress, while helping children to cope with challenges later in life.

While it is recognised that play is universal regardless of race or culture, all children, if given the opportunity, will play as it is natural (Maynard, 2002). The meaning and value of play varies across cultures and contexts (Roopnarine, Patte, Johnson & Kuschner, 2015); and opinions about play are closely related to social beliefs and values (Moyles, 2015). Different cultural perspectives on play will be outlined in the following section.

7.2.1 Understandings of Play from a Western Perspective

Conventional perceptions of play are strongly influenced by the West and these have shaped contemporary thinking in ECE, and continue to inform current ECCE practices.

From a Western perspective, play has long been accepted as being any voluntary activity that the child performs solely for the pleasure it gives him/her. Play takes many forms, but the heart of play is pleasure. Play is intrinsically motivated, relatively free of externally imposed rules; as it is the process, not the outcome that is important (Feeny, 2008). Consequently, the value of play in early learning has been recognised for centuries by educationists who have promoted it as an optimal learning pathway, especially for younger children. For example, Pestalozzi (1746 – 1827) recognised that the child achieves harmony and develops skills and knowledge for life through play. Froebel (1678- 1782), the father of the kindergarten, further described the importance of play in learning.

Additionally, play is the purest spiritual activity of man, typical of human life as a whole. It gives joy, freedom, contentment, and inner peace with the world, as it holds all that is good (Froebel, 2005: 55).

Froebel (2005) also stated that children should play until the age of seven and thereafter only begin with the more formal elements of schooling. Froebel's influence extended to the United States of America as well as to South Africa where the kindergarten became a popular

institution of early childhood education in the twentieth century. The notion of kindergarten education continues to influence current ECCE thinking.

This belief in the value of play as an important vehicle for learning continued to be expounded by educationists throughout Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries. Thus, when the nursery-school movement began in England in the early 1800s, play-based learning was foundational in the different nursery school programmes. Robert Owen who established the Infant School in 1816, and the MacMillian sisters who began the Open Air Nursery School in 1914, advocated a play-based approach to teaching and learning. These ideas on early tears education were extended by Susan Isaacs (1885-1948) who promoted the concept of free play where children learn through exploration and self-discovery (Prochner & Kabiru, 2008).

The growth of developmental psychology, a movement which began in the late 1800s, became extremely influential for the greater part of the 20th century and added further impetus to the adoption of a play-based approach to teaching and learning. Piaget (1896-1980), a cognitive theorist described children as sensory motor, active, hands-on learners who acquire skills and knowledge best through experiential as well as concrete learning opportunities. According to Piaget, people construct their own knowledge through exploration and discovery. The teacher facilitates and supports the child's learning through, for example, structuring the early learning environment. This reinforces the idea that all people are unique thus the focus is on individual learning which has a major positive influence on education throughout all phases of schooling.

However, Vygotsky (1896-1934), a social constructivist, viewed learning as a social process. He reinforced the collaborative, interactive nature of learning and viewed the teacher as a mediator. He proposed that language is one of the chief means of communicating new knowledge to children (and to social contexts), where children engage playfully with each other, thus forming ideal learning environments. For Vygotsky, socio-dramatic play is an essential part of any child's learning; and it is through this form of play that children acquire self-regulatory behaviours (Karpov, 2005).

Psychosocial theorists such as Freud (YR), Erikson (YR) and Rogers (YR) also noted the value of playful learning experiences for helping children make sense of their world. Erikson (YR),

for example, observed that through playful experiences, children developed both socially and emotionally, thus developing their personalities.

We have explored a few developmental theories which support the play-based approach to teaching and learning in ECCE. The work of many other developmental theorists (e.g. Bruner, Bowlby, Ainsworth, and Gardiner) could be examined and findings will be similar as play is pivotal to successful growth, development, and learning in the early years.

Drawing on work of various developmental theorists, an influential early childhood development (ECD) programme known as developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) was introduced in the USA in the second half of the 20th century (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). This programme, which remains influential in the USA as well as South Africa, continues to advocate play as the chief vehicle of learning in early education.

At the turn of the 19th century there were other early educationists who developed alternative programmes to those mentioned above. Early childhood educationists such as Maria Montessori, Rudolph Steiner and later Loris Malaguzzi who introduced the Reggio Emilia approach, drew on the development theory to formulate their own specific understandings of ECE. Despite differing philosophical and epistemological understandings, these programmes all acknowledged the importance of the play approach in learning. These programmes remain influential throughout the Western world and continue to advocate for a playful approach to teaching and learning.

In more recent years with advances in medical and other fields of science, more conclusive empirical evidence became available to demonstrate the importance of various forms of play in the development of the brain and nervous system, and what is today called neural plasticity. It is predominately through appropriate play-based stimulation and interactions with adults that the number and density of neural pathways increase (Conbayir, 2017). This increase is greatest in the first few years of life. Hence, from birth onwards (if not before) infants and young children should be immersed in stimulating and playful interactions with others.

However, despite the strong evidence for promoting the play-based learning and teaching approach in the early years as the best way of supporting children's development, the play approach is not necessarily accepted by all. Opposition to playful approaches exist both in the West and in other cultural groups, especially in relation to so-called academic learning. There is increasing evidence that playful approaches are being replaced by more formal approaches in many Western countries including South Africa (Gordon & Browne, 2017; Anning, 2006; Wits School of Education, 2009). We will briefly explore some of these trends and counter arguments to play-based learning and teaching.

7.2.2 Contestations to Play-based Learning and Teaching

Carlsson-Paige, cited in Strauss (2015: 3), illustrates the place of play in childhood learning, but at the same time laments its diminishing status.

There are many advantages of the play approach. Play is the primary engine-room of human growth; it's universal – as much as walking and talking. Play is the way children perceive ideas and make sense of their experience, enabling them to feel safe. We can look at all the maths concepts at work in kindergartens, or watch a 4-year-old put on a cape and pretend to be a superhero after witnessing some scary event. But play is disappearing from classrooms even though we know its benefits for young kids; we are seeing it side-lined to make room for academic instruction and "rigour".

Misconceptions about play-based learning abound. Eliason and Jenkins (2008: 26) have analysed some of these misconceptions and stress the need to correct them. They state:

To some, it (play) suggests frivolous leisure activities, "killing time," and recreational activities. Play does not provide a concrete, tangible, or academic end-product that can be displayed to parents. It is not teacher-directed. However, through mature play, children learn and develop skills that will prepare them for academic competence needed in the future.

In a competitive world where the emphasis is on individual success, play-based learning continues to be challenged by education authorities and parents alike. Learning through playful experiences is a process. This type of learning defies specific short-term goals and becomes difficult to assess through recognised assessment tools. Playful learning is not easy

to measure but in education circles there is an emphasis on assessment standards (DBE, 2012). It is easier to assess the teaching event as well as the child's supposed learning through more structured assessment approaches to teaching and learning. Hence, regrettably, playful learning is being replaced by more formal approaches to teaching and learning.

Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2013) refer to this move as schoolification and bemoan the top-down approach that is impinging on early learning programmes resulting in the increasing formalisation of education. The "schoolification" of the years before Grade 1 is being felt in many countries. Nicolopoulou (2010) informs us of the alarming disappearance of play and the "academisation" of early childhood programmes. Both Nicolopoulou (2010) and Hirsch-Pasek et al. (2009) have warned against the erosion of play in favour of more didactic approaches in areas such as literacy acquisition in preparation for test-based school assessment. Gunnarsdottir (2014) argues that this occurs by introducing more formal teaching-learning approaches infiltrating over the years to meet the demand for children's learning to be formally measured and scored.

In addition, evidence from research on neuroscience and early learning has shown that the separation of work and play in laying academic foundations for the growing child is misconstrued (Abbas, Othman & Rahman, 2012; Collivier, 2011; Conbayir, 2017). In particular, constructivist early childhood educators argue that striking a balance between "work" and "play" provides the avenues for children, not only to explore their environment and build their personality, but to also construct knowledge that is unique to them (Bodrova & Leong, 2010). Consequently, there is the need to continually interrogate the landscapes of the play-versus-work controversy, if scholars are to responsibly guide the "future directions of play, scholarship and policy" (Colliver, 2011: 13).

Consequently, many early childhood educators are now asking whose agenda does early childhood knowledge serve, and for what purpose? This has been at the forefront of debate concerning play as a pedagogical tool that is disappearing from programmes for young children in favour of early "academic" tasks through implementing a pushdown curriculum. Good play experiences stimulate all aspects of development which promote social, emotional, physical, intellectual, moral, creative, and cultural benefits for young children (Eliason &

Jenkins, 2008:26). Through playful learning experiences, children develop relevant competencies as they are afforded opportunities to balance “work” with “play”.

Challenges to play-based approaches do not only originate from the West. Roopnarine et al. (2015) argue that while some cultural communities place a strong emphasis on the connections between play activities and learning, others believe that children learn through a combination of work and play. Some alternative perspectives will be briefly explored (7.2.3).

7.2.3 Alternative Cultural Perspectives on Play and Play-based Learning

Within African culture, there are different understandings of the terms *work* and *play.* A famous nursery school rhyme in Nigeria highlights these differences – *“Work while you work, and play while you play; to be useful and happy, this is the way”.* This rhyme reflects a clear separation of play from work, and the situation is compounded by pressure from home.

Durojaiye (1977) claims that many parents, including the “educated” ones, insist that their children, even as young as two or three year old, must immediately settle down to the “serious business of learning”. In other words, there is widespread belief that ECCE is “a simple extension of primary school, enabling formal instruction to start a little earlier and therefore ensuring entry to primary school and a headstart on admission there” (Durojaiye, 1977:9). In many African cultures, children do not necessarily distinguish between working and playing, but at some point work has to be prioritised over playing (Boyette, 2016; Michelet, 2016). Wadende, Oburu, and Morara (2016) confirm that children growing up in an African community learn and play by doing tasks such as caring for siblings and helping older siblings or parents to assist in household chores.

Ng'asike, (2014) and Wadende et al. (2016) assert that in an African community, children’s play and learning is deeply rooted in local indigenous cultural knowledge. Therefore people’s beliefs about play and learning through play, will be directly influenced by their cultural practices and the child’s social, cultural, historical and domestic contexts (Ng'asike, 2014; Wood, 2014). The strong cultural influences on children’s opportunities to play purposefully necessitates that the parents become aware of the long-lasting learning benefits of play so that children are able to participate in meaningful early play experiences. However, parents

and teachers need to be aware of the conditions that ought to be met if children are to gain maximum benefits from play-based learning experiences. Play is thus not always beneficial for all children.

7.2.4 Some Additional Challenges concerning Play-based Learning

Despite play being widely accepted in most education circles as the most effective way for young children to develop and learn within the context of practice, there is evidence that play can be problematic (Wood, 2009). The terms *play*, *playful,* and even *learning* are complex and complicated with ambiguous relationships between them. For instance, not all play is playful (e.g. professional football). Although play often supports learning, some kinds of play described by King (1987) as "illicit play" can also undermine and subvert targeted learning.

Thus, there is a growing concern over the blanket, uncritical acceptance that all children learn through play. This concern stems specifically from the post-structuralist movement (MacNaughton, 2003; Cannella & Viruru, 2004) which challenges the assumption that all children learn through play. They question, for example, the validity of the frequently held Western belief that childhood is essentially a joyous and pleasurable time for children. They argue that this belief contributes to a specific construction that ensures that children who are vulnerable and needy and require nurturing (a loving, secure environment) are able to learn through play (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2013).

The post-structuralists claim that this type of childhood is not one that is open to many of the world's children as life is hard, and from an early age many children have to learn to survive and become self-reliant. Thus, the image of happy children who learn through play-based pedagogies is only true for a relatively small number of privileged children. The majority of children (including those in South Africa) have very different childhoods; childhoods which are much more demanding and much harsher (Hall, Richter, Mokomane & Lake, 2018). Many young children grow up in extremely vulnerable circumstances where opportunities to play are not readily forthcoming.

In addition, post-structuralists question many of the conditions that need to be in place for playful learning to occur. These conditions refer to social, cultural, socioeconomic and

personal contexts. For example, in a traditional ECCE setting, play-based learning privileges the dominant cultural group, namely children growing up in a Western, often middle-class society. These children have voice and agency and have been encouraged to explore freely. They are therefore far more likely to interact meaningfully with the ECCE environment. They will avail themselves of the resources and move on to others when bored. Whereas children coming from more conservative homes might be reluctant to take toys off the shelf and play with them as in their home context they either have to ask for permission to play, or are told what resources they may access, and when. Choice is not an option.

Furthermore, introverted children do not necessarily readily engage with the group; they might be excluded from play-based activities because of their reluctance to initiate contact with another child or group of children. Children who are extroverts or domineering or bullying might, through their behaviour, exclude other children from interacting with resources or joining a group. Children who do not speak the language of learning and teaching might also be excluded from participating; either because other children ignore them or they fail to follow conversations or fail to make themselves understood. Children who suffer from various afflictions or illnesses (chronic or acute) might also be excluded from playing with others.

Wood, (2009) argues that if play is to be of educational value, teachers should neither idealise, nor trivialise play. Bennett, Wood and Rogers (1997) posit that play must be intellectually challenging, especially for older children, and sufficiently rigorous to guarantee optimal learning opportunities; in other words, play can be repetitive and a waste of time if it is not sufficiently challenging and stimulating. Where good quality play opportunities are limited, children become frustrated and may lose focus. In these instances, good quality learning outcomes are not always achieved, hence it becomes difficult to sustain progression in learning through play.

Though these constraints and challenges should not prevent teachers from introducing play-based learning programmes, they do call for teachers and other adults to be alert to the many limitations that might impede play-based learning, thus ensuring that programmes incorporating play are framed by effective pedagogies.

These concerns suggest that the debates on play must be ongoing. As early childhood educationists, we ought to be discussing and debating the multifaceted and complex nature of play and questioning our own beliefs around play-based learning. Questions need to be asked such as:

- do we have a common understanding of play?
- do we, as ECCE teachers, believe that play-based learning underpins children's early learning experiences?
- how best can we introduce play-based learning experiences to all children in a way that will enhance their holistic development and learning?
- how can we ensure that we teach playfully?
- how can we encourage parents to introduce playful learning experiences in the home?'

This means that not only do we have to understand the value of play, but we also have to gain insight into the various contextual aspects that support or constrain learning and teaching through play. We also require insight into the characteristics and various types of play so that we are able to offer children a rich exposure to many different playful learning and teaching experiences.

7.3 CHARACTERISTICS, CLASSIFICATION, AND TYPES OF PLAY

Despite the complex and contested nature of play, it displays a number of commonalities which are evident in the recognised characteristics, in the classification, as well as the identified types of play.

7.3.1 Characteristics of Play

Drawing on previous discussions, a number of characteristics can be identified. These are:

- Play is a universal activity; all children (in fact all people) will play given the right conditions.
- Children from different cultures might play differently; play is culturally determined.

- Children choose to play; it is a voluntary activity. Adults, however, might have influenced the child's decisions about what, where, when and with whom to play (Bruce, 2010).
- Play is spontaneous. Children shape it as they go, changing the characters, events, objects, and locations. Play is an active, enjoyable and pleasurable activity that is self-motivating, and is in itself a reward for children.
- Play is self-satisfying; children often experience a feeling of personnel satisfaction when playing which promotes a sense of independence and boosts their self-esteem.
- Play is therapeutic in that it helps children to express and work through emotions and experiences. Play can therefore be seen as a major roleplayer in emotional and social development.
- Play is process-orientated; it might not have an end or goal in sight (Barblett, 2010).
- Play can be adventurous and risky, and helps children explore the unknown.
- At times play is a solitary undertaking, but it is often a social activity. Children share information in a variety of verbal and non-verbal ways.

In brief, play is usually a deeply intellectual and meaningful activity for children. It is closely linked to self-regulated learning, executive functioning and metacognition. It is an important context for the child discovering him/herself and for developing helpful learning behaviours such as perseverance, curiosity, responsibility, and a positive self-concept (Carr, 2001). Resilience, playfulness and reciprocity are other learning dispositions acquired through play (Carr, 2001). Positive learning dispositions are central to successful engagement in lifelong learning.

Play offers opportunities for concrete learning experiences which provide the context for the emergence of symbolic thought which allows the child to imagine objects or events that are not present - a forerunner to abstract thinking (Worthington, 2010). During play, children imagine and pretend - they try out ideas, feelings and roles. They re-enact the past and rehearse the future. Through these processes, they are enhancing emergent literacy and numeracy skills that contribute to successful academic learning in the future. In addition, they are developing positive personal and social behaviours that are essential for becoming a valued member of society.

7.3.2 Classification of Play

7.3.2.1 Parten's 1932 classification.

This is one of the first classifications of play, and one that is still useful today. Parten (1932) classified play according to children's ages, and the extent to which they interacted with each other. Modern thinking on play, however, questions the rigidity of this classification and acknowledges that there are variations in age/stage relationships that were not recognised in Parten's (1932) time.

Solitary play:

According to Parten, this form of play occurs in babies and toddlers. They tend to play alone, absorbed in their own play and are generally unaware of what other children are doing. Today we recognise that babies and toddlers might interact with each other briefly. We also acknowledge that other children might engage in solitary play. Examples are:

- older children who are egocentric;
- older children who are not able or ready to share and co-operate during play;
- older child who are possibly emotionally and socially uneasy; and
- older children who choose to play alone (Excell & Linington, 2015).

Spectator play:

The child watches others playing without joining in. This often occurs in younger children but can occur at any age, depending on circumstances.

Parallel play:

Children play alongside other children, notice what the other children are doing, but continue with their own activity. They do not really interact socially with other children. In addition to toddlers, children who play in this way include those who are perhaps shy, who would like to become more involved with other players but are not sure how to do this.

Associative play:

Children begin to play together, developing interactions through doing the same activities or playing with similar equipment or by imitating each other. However, they will follow their

own desires and not necessarily cooperate with others. Three-to-four year olds often demonstrate this type of play.

Co-operative play:

Children interact, take turns, share and decide how and what to play. They collaborate, develop, and negotiate ideas for their play activities. They are prepared to put aside their own desires and interests in order to follow those of the group. Children usually play cooperatively from about five years of age, but might begin at an earlier age.

7.3.2.2 Piaget's classification

Piaget classified play according to ages and stages. Once again the age/stage criterion has been challenged; but knowledge of this classification remains relevant today. Piaget's classification are the following:

Sensory-motor/Practice play:

This begins in infancy and today it is acknowledged that this form of play continues throughout life. Much of this play is just for the pleasure of exploring through one's senses. It involves a lot of repetition; for example, a baby casting (throwing down) blocks, swinging on a swing, or throwing a ball.

Symbolic Play:

This begins somewhere towards the end of a child's first year when they start to give a different meaning to an actual object. For example, a doll becomes a baby; the swing could now become a rocket ship travelling into space; a block could become a cell phone. Wadsworth (1989: 60) notes that in 1967 Piaget stated that "its [symbolic play's] function is to satisfy the self by transforming what is real into what is desired". Children often use symbols during make- believe, fantasy, or pretend-play.

Games with rules:

Children begin to make and agree to rules which will govern their play. They might invent their own games and make up the rules as they go along. This form of play is typical of children from 5 years onwards. But, like co-operative play, children might engage in games with rules from an earlier age.

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7 3.2.3 A continuum of play

More recent play has been framed according to a play continuum (Zosh, Hopkins, Jensen, Liu, Neale, Hirsh-Pasek, Solis & Whitebread, 2017) informed by the degree of control the child and/or the adult have over the play process. It ranges from free play (child-initiated activities) where children, usually within a structured environment, are free to choose what, where, and with whom they want to play, to a play experience which is predominantly controlled by the adult (teacher-directed play). Instruction is the most controlled form of teacher-directed play. In between these two parameters are varying degrees of control by either the adult or the child. This is called guided play or collaborative interactions between child and adult. In guided play, there is some intentional intervention by the adult who facilitates or scaffold play by making, for example, appropriate suggestions. During the course of a learning day all approaches should be utilised in order to optimise children's playful learning and teaching opportunities.

In short, by understanding the different classifications of play, one is able to ensure that children are given the opportunities to participate in a wide range of play scenarios that provide for varied learning possibilities. In addition, to support rich play-based learning opportunities children need to be immersed in many different types of play. Types of play should be loosely described because play is (as already mentioned) complex, multifaceted, dynamic, flexible, and always changing.

7.3.3 Types of Play

Indicators for how the different types of play are described include location (indoor or outdoor play), use and type of resources (sand play, water play, and socio-dramatic play), the promotion of specific developmental skills such as physical or creative development, as well as contexts (indigenous play). More recently descriptions have been related to subject disciplines such as nature, science (discovery play) and even language play. In this chapter we explore a number of different types of play which are not absolute. There is no one correct way of describing play and playful learning opportunities. When planning children's play activities, you need to ensure that children have access to all types of play, and to a variety of different resources - even for similar types of play.

An easy organising framework, especially from a teaching perspective, is to explore types of play from a "WH" perspective which stands for what, why, when and where (Excell & Linington, nd).

Using this framework, the following forms of play were identified:

7.3.3.1 Functional play

Functional play starts in infancy when one learns to control one's actions and make things happen such as shaking a rattle or casting objects. These simple and repetitive movements which emphasise the physical actions of play are slowly replaced by more complex forms of play. Moreover, functional play is enjoyed by children throughout their childhood as they practise and master new skills, particularly in relation to physical development (gross and fine motor skills, balance, posture, coordination and spatial orientation). It includes the use of the senses and the exploration of the environment (closely related to nature and scientific play). It is often played for its own sake (Smilansky & Shefatya, 1990). Because of its physical characteristic, it provides suitable occasions for adventurous and/or risky play which have an important place in human development as children require opportunities to challenge themselves to reach new heights.

7.3.3.2 Construction play

This form of play is important from a learning perspective as children grasp concepts and skills, thus supporting literacy and numeracy learning. It begins during infancy when babies build a tower of two cubes, but is most enjoyed when the children's physical movements become more controlled to build elaborate constructions; for example, a tower of five or more blocks. This involves constructive, creative and the imaginative use of play materials. It becomes purposeful play when children are encouraged to solve problems and develop reasoning abilities. Today Duplo for younger children and Lego for older children are popular forms of construction play eliciting successful learning outcomes.

7.3.3.3 Manipulative play

Manipulative play refers to activities where children move, order, turn or screw items to make them fit. It allows children to take control of their world by mastering the use of objects. It

involves mostly small muscles of the hands and fingers but teachers should also encourage fine movements of the feet and toes as well as the muscles of the face and eyes. It begins shortly after birth when babies, for example, manipulate rattles and activity boards. Later on toddlers could be encouraged to pick up tiny objects such as small pebbles, grains of rice, and dried beans between the thumb and the forefinger. Older children complete lacing cards and pegboards. Puzzles which can be introduced from late infancy (size and number of pieces should be age and stage-appropriate) enhance development of many additional skills such spatial and visual-perceptual motor behaviours. Manipulative play also includes sand and water play, as well as creating figures with clay and dough which also support the development of cognitive and imaginative skills. Finger rhymes and games are also fun ways of enhancing fine motor skills that are developed during manipulative play.

7.3.3.4 Socio-dramatic play (fantasy, pretend-play, make-belief play)

This form of play allows children to use and develop their imagination as it provides opportunities to create an inner world within which children can make things happen in whatever way they wish. Pretend-play is often symbolic as children use a stick as a horse or a bottle as a gun. Socio-dramatic play provides opportunities for children to make sense of their world and enables them to practise language and literacy skills as well as develop emergent mathematical understanding. They also get the chance to play with different forms of ICT such as mobile phones, computers, keyboards, cameras, and calculators. Sometimes the community may supply old ICT items for use in fantasy play; and sometimes children use other objects to symbolically represent ICT equipment.

For Vygotsky, socio-dramatic play is the lead activity for children between 3 and 6 years. Vygotsky maintained that it is through socio-dramatic play that children acquire and refine many of their self-regulatory behaviours which is essential for success in formal schooling (Karpov, 2005).

7.3.3.5 Games with rules

Games with rules begin as children enter the Grade R phase. By this age children are mature enough to play cooperatively and more able to understand and follow rules, even though they

might at times view them as being flexible. Accordingly, they also develop an understanding of winning and losing, which is often the final outcome in such games. Games with rules can be played both indoors and outdoors. We must draw on games within the experience of the child's culture in order to make them (games) fun-filled which leads to affirming one's identity.

Play can be put into different categories or types. However, we would argue that the types of play included in this chapter incorporate and support many alternative descriptions of play-types. The categories of play mentioned in this section embrace all aspects of development, allow for subject specific-type learning for symbolic play as well as play activities which utilise a variety of resources and materials.

In order for children to master new knowledge and skills, they should be provided with varied opportunities to play. Hence, the adult (parent, teacher or caregiver) has a significant role to play in ensuring that optimal learning takes place. This is one of the many known challenges as many teachers find it difficult to incorporate meaningful play approaches into teaching and learning. Wood (2009) asserts that though most teachers agree that children learn through play and understand what learning through play entails, very few teachers have a deep insight into play teaching techniques. Given the increasing emphasis on the importance of play in [early] learning, this becomes an extremely worrying situation. One way to address this gap is to view early childhood teaching and learning through an alternative lens; one which Wood (2009) has called "a pedagogy of play".

7.4 A PEDAGOGY OF PLAY

Teaching playfully is challenging as playful approaches to teaching require insightful, thoughtful teachers who have an incisive understanding of play, children, and the children's specific contexts. Informed by socio-cultural theory, the emphasis in a "pedagogy of play" shifts to how children learn through play as well as to how teachers teach playfully (Wood, 2009). Pedagogies of play explain the exciting role of teachers as co-constructors of knowledge and supporters of sustained shared-thinking (Siraj-Blatchford, 2009).

7.4.1 Exploring Playful Pedagogies

According to Wood (2009) and Rogers (2010), playful pedagogies uncover how teachers make provision for play and playful approaches to teaching and learning. In addition, teachers become involved in the planning of the learning environment, make pedagogical decisions (such as the strategies and methodological approaches), allocate time to play, and provide a variety of resources. Play is sustained through reciprocal and responsive relationships, and is situated in activities that are socially constructed and mediated. “[C]hildren’s interests remain central to curriculum planning [while] the subject disciplines enrich and extend the children’s learning” (Wood, 2009: 27). Accordingly, the curriculum is culturally driven and based on the child’s interests such that it is often called an emergent curriculum which places the child at the centre of the teaching-learning process.

Importantly, in playful pedagogy, children have an opportunity to explore the notions of agency, power and control. In other words, who controls what happens during play; and is the adult all-powerful or do children have some opportunities for making choices and decisions during their play? They must be able to negotiate rules and meanings, and feel free to use their imagination, and engage in multi-layered types of play - both by themselves and with others. The focus, however, is on social interaction rather than individual development. Thus, from a South African perspective, a pedagogy of play resonates with traditional African values of collaborative learning which provides an alternative to the formalisation of early education. In summary, playful pedagogies reinforce the benefits of playful learning (see 2.1) in addition to providing the foundation principles and characteristics of what children learn and how they learn through play (see 2.5).

7.4.1.1 An emergent responsive approach

The following can be elicited from this approach:

- enables the teacher to respond appropriately to children’s choices and interests in relation to their emerging knowledge, skills and understandings.
- encourages interactive, participatory learning where knowledge is co-constructed with others as children participate in their social and cultural worlds.

- recognises ways of knowing and participating in different socio-cultural practices which embody the beliefs, rules, patterns of behaviours, language, and interaction routines, and expectations within communities.
- ensures learning becomes culturally and contextually relevant (Wood, 2016).

In other words, this approach recognises the knowledge that children bring to the setting. Children's knowledge and abilities can be identified through observing their interests, motivation, and choices. This is done through noticing how children express themselves through multi-modal representations such as drawing, painting, constructing, and role-playing. Children's engagement will also differ as they become more confident, knowledgeable and skilful (Wood, 2014). For Wood (2014), an emergent responsive form of play is the opposite of many current approaches concerning play-based learning and teaching which she has called a cultural transmission/directive approach.

7.4.1.2 A cultural transmission/directive approach

Wood (2014) claims this approach espouses the beliefs of those who have the most power in society. In this approach, play becomes "educational practice"; for example, children manipulate materials to improve fine motor coordination to promote good pencil grip. Also, they complete worksheets meant to teach a specific skill such as visual matching, and thus the worksheet replaces creative (imaginative) art; and story-time becomes a phonics lesson.

In other words, through play, children are "trained" to acquire preparatory skills and basic knowledge deemed essential for early formal schooling. The role of the teacher is to transmit knowledge, skills and understandings that are considered suitable and valuable to children. The teacher or adult has all the power; the adult controls the type, amount, time and resources made available for play. Children have limited ownership and control over their own play experiences as imagination and creativity are limited. This approach tends to regulate children and make them all the same.

Regrettably, in many ECCE settings, play is "over-prescribed". Proponents of the pedagogy of play acknowledge that many teachers need support to make the transition from controlling children's play to giving children the tools to regulate their own play choices (Podmore, 2009).

However, as Wood (2014) maintains that there is still a place for a cultural transmission/directive model as it is important for children to learn about and value their cultural heritage. At home, parents/caregivers will use the transmission model to impart important cultural information. From a teaching perspective we should ensure that children are not encouraged to adopt negative cultural attitudes towards other people.

7.4.1.3 Moving from a cultural transmission to emergent responsive approaches

Making links between play and learning, and play and pedagogy, remains problematic. Possibly, the most important aspect of adopting a more open-ended approach to play is changing the way teachers think about play and playful approaches to teaching and learning. This is challenging as it entails deep reflection by teachers about their attitudes and beliefs towards children, play, learning and teaching. In order to effect positive change, teachers should intensively reflect on:

- children and childhood;
- the place of play in ECCE programmes;
- the type of programme offered to children (this includes the curriculum and planning the learning environment);
- who initiates the activities;
- how to work with families; and
- assessment practices.

The role of the teacher is pivotal in promoting rich play-based experiences for children if they are going reach their optimal development and learning potential. Children need many and varied opportunities to play from birth onwards. This entails drawing on the entire play-teaching continuum by providing children with opportunities for free play, semi-structured play as well teacher-directed play and instruction. As already mentioned, one way of ensuring that teachers retain a playful approach to pedagogy is for them to think about power and power relations. Teachers need to continually ask themselves: “who is controlling what and for what reason?” Through careful on-going reflection, it becomes possible to achieve an emergent responsive approach to playful teaching as well as playful learning (Wood, 2016).

7.4.2 Extending the Notion of Playful Learning

Another understanding of playful learning and teaching focuses on a school (centre) culture where playfulness is celebrated, examined, made visible, and perceived as a powerful pathway of learning (Project Zero, 2017). It explores a pedagogy of play not only from an ECCE perspective, but also from the perspective of primary schooling. However, the core tenets of playful learning remain the same; taking risks, making mistakes, exploring new ideas, and experiencing joy. The idea of playfulness is fundamental to the understanding of true play. Barnett (1990) and Lieberman (1977) cited in Project Zero (2017), suggest that in order to truly play, children need to demonstrate a predisposition to perceive an activity as play. Christian (2012) notes that "it is the child's playfulness that renders an activity as play". Hence, playfulness is the disposition to frame or reframe a situation to include possibilities for enjoyment, exploration, and choice.

Indicators of playful learning have been identified, and it is envisioned that these might be used by teachers to plan for, assess, and reflect on playful teaching and learning (Project Zero, 2017). The indicators comprise three overlapping categories: delight, wonder and choice. These indicators aim to describe the quality of children's experience as they build understanding, knowledge, and skills. Choice fosters a sense of empowerment, autonomy, ownership, spontaneity and intrinsic motivation. When allowed to choose, children set goals, develop and share ideas, make and change rules, and negotiate challenges. They are also likely to choose collaborators and specific roles, how long to work or play, and when to move around. Wonder leads to curiosity, novelty, surprise, and challenges. A sense of wonder promotes improvisation, creativity, and stimulation of the imagination. This allows them to take risks or learn by trial and error. Feelings of delight include excitement, joy, satisfaction, inspiration, anticipation, pride, and belonging.

However, these indictors should not be seen as binary constructs. All children will experience wonder, delight, or choice to a certain degree, depending on the setting, the activity, and their personality. The teacher has an important role to play as he/she creates the conditions in which playful learning flourishes. This means the consideration of context including cultural relevance as well the extent of the teacher's involvement. Accurately "reading" the indicators

are crucial to determining the extent of the teacher's interaction with the children. This understanding of the pedagogy of play in ECCE resonates well with that of Wood's (2014). It too demands a critical and reflective approach to ensure that children have enjoyable, rich quality play-based learning and teaching experiences.

A critical and reflective approach to playful pedagogies in early childhood aligns with contemporary understandings of transformative pedagogy. Transformative pedagogy, like playful pedagogies, is viewed as being culturally relevant, inclusive and participatory in nature. The following section draws heavily on chapter six of the framework, and should be read in conjunction with this chapter. In chapter six, the focus is on the teacher educator and the education of student teachers. However, the principles of transformative pedagogy are similar regardless of whether one is educating student teachers or teaching young children. The relationship between playful and transformative pedagogies will now be briefly explored.

7.5 PLAY AND TRANSFORMATIVE PEDAGOGY

Transformative pedagogy is a culturally relevant pedagogy; within an ECCE paradigm this would align with an emergent responsive pedagogy (see 4.1.1). Within the South African context, a culturally relevant pedagogy of play would be dynamic and continually changing to accommodate ongoing issues of diversity. Culturally relevant pedagogy requires that teachers genuinely care about the children they teach. Teachers should strive to ensure that all children are involved in meaningful learning opportunities in an atmosphere of acceptance and collaboration. Importantly, children are introduced to concepts of tolerance and respect as being democratic values that underpin the curriculum. Such an approach necessitates the education of a specific type of teacher; and thus cultural pedagogy outlines a definite role for the teacher educator.

Further, Ellerbrock, Cruz, Vásquez and Howes (2016) maintain that culturally relevant pedagogy is premised on the idea that culture is central to student learning. It focuses on diversity-awareness and identity development which becomes a function of pre-service teacher education. Students should be supported to become empowered intellectually, socially, emotionally and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and

attitudes (Han, Vomvoridi-Ivanović, Jacobs, Karanxha, Lypka, Topdemir & Feldman, 2014). Such a pedagogical approach draws on participatory pedagogy.

As mentioned in chapter six of the framework, participatory pedagogy is informed by the work of Paulo Freire. Through a participatory approach an attempt is made to develop a critical consciousness. This process gives student teachers voice and agency. It therefore enables them to engage with challenging issues often related to power and control whilst finding solutions to their problems (Freire, 1970).

Another understanding of a participatory pedagogy comes from the work of Formosinho and Formosinho (2015) who contend that democracy is a concept that is central to participatory pedagogy. Thus, participatory pedagogy acknowledges diversity by emphasising equality and inclusivity for all. Through this approach student teachers are encouraged to become conscious of their own learning, and to respect alternative views of teaching and learning. Similarly, student teachers should acknowledge both themselves and the children they will eventually teach as active, competent beings as the learning process involves interaction between child and teacher. The educational spaces and times are thus designed to promote an interactive approach. It is envisaged that students who are exposed to participatory pedagogies will adopt a similar pedagogical approach in their practice. However, this notion ought to be made explicit to students.

An extension of participatory pedagogy is inclusive pedagogy. Inclusive pedagogy has been understood in a variety of ways but most of these understandings acknowledge the acceptance of diversity and the participatory nature of pedagogy. Dewsbury (2015) argues that inclusive pedagogy is essentially about the mindset and awareness of the educator in relation to student diversity. In essence, inclusive pedagogy considers how pedagogy, curricula and assessment are designed to engage students in meaningful, relevant and accessible learning. It views individual differences as the source of diversity that can enrich the lives and learning of others (Hocking, 2010).

An inclusive pedagogical approach acknowledges the following:

- Ethnicity, culture, multilingualism and disability and actively encourages playroom diversity. Individual differences are not considered to be problematic.

- The provision of rich learning experiences facilitates participation for all in play activities (Florian, 2015).
- Teachers have the responsibility to design and implement strategies that support the performance and achievement of all children.
- The co-construction of knowledge and views, and learning as a shared activity between teacher and children, are valued.

To encourage student teachers to adopt inclusive practices in their own playrooms, appropriate practices should be made explicit to them during their studies. They should experience how inclusive play-based pedagogies enable them to think about improving learning and doing authentic assessments in playful learning environments.

Immersion in transformative pedagogies support student teachers to engage in inclusive practices, and to collaborate with professional and social networks that actively seek to enhance social justice and interaction with families.

In summary, transformative pedagogical practice empowers teachers to apply knowledge pertaining to individual difference, and to utilise their specialist knowledge and pedagogical strategies to ensure that all the children they teach are offered quality learning experiences. And in an ECCE setting, such an approach resonates strongly with an emergent responsive approach to play-based learning that informs the pedagogy of play. A pedagogy of play not only demands that we pay attention to both playful learning and teaching (and this should be culturally relevant, participatory and inclusive), but that we also rethink how we assess children and how we collaborate with all stakeholders, especially parents. We will briefly consider both aspects, assessment and collaboration.

7.6 ASSESSMENT THROUGH A PLAYFUL PEDAGOGICAL LENS

This section draws on the assessment chapter 8 in the framework and should be read in conjunction with this chapter. The ECCE assessment (like learning) is a process; children require repetition and many varied opportunities to acquire appropriate knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. Assessment is thus inextricably linked to teaching and learning and is therefore not an incidental activity separate from teaching; rather, it is a deliberate and conscious part of it.

As in all phases of education assessment, evidence must be accurate and trustworthy. Therefore the assessment process should be systematic, planned and have clear criteria for it to be authentic and reliable (Darling-Hammond & Snyders, 2010). In ECCE, assessment evidence should be gathered over a period of time before any judgement or evaluation about the child's competence is made. Because assessment is a process, the collection of evidence should be on-going and should occur throughout the day. This is done subtly as children should not be aware that they are being assessed.

This means that the teacher must have a deep insight into the nature of children, the learning environment, and factors that impact teaching and learning. Teachers have to collect multiple sources of evidence over time in diverse contexts. Furthermore, assessment evidence is evaluated by teachers with relevant expertise against an agreed-on set of standards, which are frequently drawn from developmental milestones. These standards might therefore be controversial in the ECCE context, but if applied effectively they will give the teachers a clear indication of children's progress, and if necessary intervention strategies.

We assess for a number of reasons and it is essential for teachers to know what they are assessing, and why they are assessing children. There are different types of assessment: in ECCE contexts assessment should be formative and focus on the teaching and learning process, which is known as assessment for learning. According to Maphalala (2016), assessment for learning is a continuous process of gathering and interpreting evidence about children's learning for the purpose of determining their progress to inform the teaching and learning process. This type of assessment should guide the teachers' planning and inform the roll-out of the daily programme. In addition, it helps teachers identify possible gaps and strengths; and this leads to making the necessary adjustments to the programme and activities offered to children. It should also provide information about children that can be shared with parents for information purposes which is central to teaching practice. In ECCE, on-going observation is the preferred way of assessing for learning.

However, at times we also practise assessment of learning. This relies on the teacher gathering evidence to make overall judgements of children's achievements and competencies using a set of criteria which is drawn from the learning goals and developmental milestones.

But because learning is a process, it is not a favoured form of assessment. This type of assessment is more formal and is summative in nature; for example, assessing a child's progress towards the end of the Grade R year. Assessment of learning can also inform long-term planning.

There is a third category of assessment; namely, assessment as learning. Here, students reflect on and monitor their own progress to inform their future learning goals. However, in the ECCE context, this is not always possible, given the age of the children. But assessment as learning could be a tool that teachers can share with parents as it could help them understand elements of the daily programme and why children best learn through playful approaches. Also, it informs parents of what they could do to support their children's early learning through playful interactions between parent and child.

There is a variety of assessment techniques but in early childhood, assessment should be informal and based on the sharp and unobtrusive observing of children. Observations are at times planned, and a variety of different observation tools can be used to record that which is being observed. But at times they will also be spontaneous and teachers will have to record these as soon as a suitable opportunity presents itself. Photographic evidence and video-recordings are some of the more contemporary ways of supporting assessment processes which provide rich documentation of the learning and teaching process. Teachers could also compile portfolios of children's activities such as drawings and paintings which have been collected over time. All documentation should be shared with parents in an informative and sensitive manner.

Parents are the children's first and most influential teachers; they are children's primary educators. Ideally, the ECCE centre should be an extension of the home allowing for a smooth transition from one secure space to the next. Therefore working and collaborating with families is an essential part of a playful pedagogical approach.

7.7 PARENTAL COLLABORATION TO SUPPORT PLAYFUL PEDAGOGIES

As with most aspects related to play, the extent of parental involvement in children's play is also a contentious space. According to Stach (2017), today's parents are increasingly expected

to become actively involved in their children's play. However, the extent to which parents value play is, as previously mentioned (see 2.3), often culturally determined. Moyles (2015) and Wood (2014) assert that cultural factors in the home environment cannot be ignored because they have a large influence on children's later play and behaviour patterns. Cultural beliefs and practices define parents' attitude about play and invariably determine the guidance and support parents will give to their children regarding play activities (Stach, 2017).

Roopnarine, Patte, Johnson, and Kuschner (2015) state that values and beliefs attached to play in the early years vary between cultures and sub-cultures. For example, an adult playing with children may be frowned upon by African cultures, since play is seen by some as something done by children without adult involvement (Gosso & Carvalho, 2013; Lester & Russell, 2010). Boyette (2016) maintains that children are rarely seen to engage in play with their parents, but they do play with older siblings of varying ages. Boyette (2016) further claims that the play of children in developed societies is different from that of children in rural or pastoral societies. However, Lancy (2007) argues that despite claims that parents are disinterested in parent-child play, many mothers and fathers invest considerable time by being around their children such as taking children outdoors, and engaging in collaborative play activities.

Recent research (Epstein, 2018; Rouse, 2014) concerning the benefits of play suggests that parental interest in their children's play activities is pivotal for children's optimal growth and development, especially when there's collaboration. Encouraging this involvement might be challenging, and this speaks to a specific role for the ECCE teacher. Promoting dynamic teacher-parent partnerships where the value of play-based learning is shared with parents is paramount. In addition, teachers should guide parents on how to stimulate their children in their home environment. These suggestions should be culturally and contextually appropriate where trainee-teachers draw on the natural environment including recycling waste materials as these are both easy to access and affordable for parents.

Good parent-teacher partnerships, like so many facets of ECCE, are essential if children are to receive effective nurturing, care, teaching and learning in their early years. This chapter on playful teaching and learning can only highlight the importance of these collaborative

relationships and bring it to the attention of the teacher educator. The teacher educator must ensure that a section on establishing and maintaining collaborative partnerships be included in the students' curriculum.

7.8 GUIDELINES FOR PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

The following act as guidelines to inform programme development:

- Play must be understood as a multifaceted, complex and contested concept within the South African context. There should be exposure to readings, debates and performances that illustrate play in thought and action.
- Programmes must afford opportunities for students to design learning experiences where children experience joy, meaning-making, and social interactions as part of getting-to-know their world.
- The role of the teacher in playful pedagogies must be understood and students must have experiences related to this. Due attention should be given to planning of playful learning environments, and observation of children's interactions with adults and peers.
- As co-constructors of knowledge, students should develop their skills of knowing when to intervene, when to stand back, and when to take control of the group of children.
- Students should gain experience in practising the role of a collaborator, supervisor, and assessor, in the context of playful pedagogies.

A play framework has been developed with the intention of facilitating a shared understanding of play in practice, that will guide the development of support materials for teacher education in different qualifications from birth to 9 years. To strengthen play in existing early childhood education programmes, a set of NQF aligned packages of teacher learning materials on play-based learning and assessment tools has been developed. This is intended to complement existing training programmes for early childhood education and the Foundation Phase (Grades R to 3).

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CHAPTER 8

ASSESSMENT IN ECCE TEACHER EDUCATION

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8.1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, HEIs in South Africa have been subjected to increasing levels of scrutiny and calls for accountability. Due to low and declining graduation output, compounded by indications that graduates are not meeting the expectations of future employers in terms of competencies, and exacerbated by students generally not developing crucial 21st century requirements such as critical-thinking and problem-solving skills, questions are being asked on how HEIs assess what students have learnt in their programmes. Being able to assess what students are learning has been found to be central in understanding what they know, and are able to do. It can also provide insights on how to improve instruction in the future and as well as in identifying pedagogical practices and curricular structures that are best poised to accomplish the set outcomes for students. Research has shown that current assessment systems and policies for ECCE educators reinforce and reward a narrow view of effectiveness and competence while missing best practices that should be fostered and recognised in professionals working with children from birth to 8 years (Allen & Kelly, 2015).

Given the current flaws in the system of basic education, many students enter HEIs with limited academic skills. As shown in other chapters in this report, many students demonstrate a lack of confidence in reading and writing skills, and have few tools to generally expand their academic skills. Moreover, there is a high dropout rate of practising ECD practitioners in post-professional qualification studies due to poor academic skills and ineffective study habits. Furthermore student teachers who register for ECCE teacher education programmes come from diverse backgrounds, with different insights, competencies and experiences in ECD. They will also have different learning styles and will explore these in different contexts. There is therefore the need for a performance-based assessment system that will enable student teachers to demonstrate what they know and can do.

8.2 PURPOSE

The purpose of this chapter is to examine possibilities on the nature of assessment in ECCE teacher education. The chapter opens with a conceptualisation of assessment. It then explores the competencies that should be fostered and recognised in professionals working with children from the birth-to-four age group and the relevant assessment practices thereof. It closes by proposing guidelines on assessment for the ECCE programme framework.

The examination of the nature of assessment for ECCE teachers is structured as follows:

- The conceptualising assessment and its purpose, and the different types of assessment processes which translate to assessment techniques, and lastly the proposed guidelines on assessment for the ECCE programme framework.
- Teacher educators sometimes question the validity and reliability of standardised tests when used concerning young children. Also, questioned are the purposes for administering tests to children who are culturally and contextually diverse.

8.3 CONCEPTUALISING ASSESSMENT AND ITS PURPOSE

The concept of assessment in HEIs in South Africa has developed to such an extent that the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) promotes the development of HEI staff as certified assessors, and frowns upon underprepared and underqualified staff administering formal assessment (Riley, 2013; Ardrey, 2017). Assessment of children from birth through to the preschool years is different from the assessment of older people. Early learning practitioners need to understand that generally children cannot write or read, therefore assessment can be done through the measurement strategies. In relation to assessment in HEIs, widespread agreement exists that curricula that comprises of early childhood programmes must be based on evidence, and evaluated for its effectiveness (National Research Council, 2001). Assessment approaches must be congruent with the level of mental, social, and physical development at each stage of the child's growth. The developmental change in young children is rapid, thus there is a need to assess whether development is progressing normally (Gallahue, & Donnelly, 2007). If development is not normal, then the measurement and evaluation procedures which must be used are important in making decisions regarding appropriate intervention services during infancy and the preschool years.

Assessment can be defined in a number of ways. According to the South African Qualifications Authority National Policy and Criteria for Designing and Implementing Assessment for NQF Qualifications and Part-Qualifications and Professional Designations, assessment is viewed as the process to identify, gather and interpret information and evidence against the required competencies in a qualification, part-qualification, or professional designation in order to make a judgement about a learner's achievement (SAQA, 2015: 4).

Bennett (2011) defines assessment as a process of gathering and interpreting evidence about learners' performance using clearly defined assessment criteria to determine what the learner knows, and can do.

The above definitions of assessment foreground four important aspects about assessment that are helpful to consider in designing ECCE teacher education programmes:

- **Firstly**, assessment is a process and not an event. This means that assessment evidence should be gathered over a period of time before judgement about the individual's performance is made.
- **Secondly**, the term *process* also denotes that the gathering of assessment evidence should be systematic, planned and have clear criteria for it to be authentic and reliable. We believe the above aspects on assessment are what prompted Darling-Hammond and Snyders (2010) to identify four characteristics of authentic assessments of teaching:
    - ✓ the assessment should sample the actual knowledge, skills, and dispositions desired of teachers in real teaching and learning contexts;
    - ✓ the assessments integrate multiple facets of knowledge and skills used in teaching practice;
    - ✓ multiple sources of evidence are collected over time, and in diverse contexts; and
    - ✓ assessment evidence is evaluated by individuals with relevant expertise against an agreed-upon set of standards relevant for teaching performance.

- **Thirdly,** assessment is purposeful - it is done to determine an individual's performance and achievement. Performance is seen as multi-dimensional as it refers to what an individual knows, and can do.
- **Fourthly**, during assessment, an individual is assessed against the required competencies relevant to a qualification or professional designation. The PIECCE consortium has researched and agreed on a set of practice standards for ECCE teacher preparation, and each practice standard has its quality indicators that describe criteria for professional practice. An assessment strategy for ECCE student teachers should therefore be aligned to the agreed-upon practice standards and their quality indicators. This implies that when student teachers are assessed, the assessment evidence should measure whether the student teachers have met the appropriate standards and its embedded quality indicators. Moreover, assessment is conducted at various levels: programme level and course level; and this is a process that involves a framework for prioritising and focusing on student learning, programme and course objectives, organisation of the curriculum, pedagogy and student development.

A modern view on teaching and learning is that assessment is inextricably intertwined to teaching and learning. Assessment is therefore not an incidental activity separate from teaching, but a deliberate and conscious part of it. Forehand (2010) argues that Bloom's Taxonomy which was developed to classify educational goals for evaluating student performance is still widely valued and used as a strategy for teaching and assessing learners. It brought about a paradigm shift in the way teachers have been teaching and assessing learners. According to Bloom's taxonomy, human learning can be classified into three domains: cognitive, affective and psychomotor. Within each level are sub-categories which focus on levels of learning development, which also increase in difficulty. According to Bloom's taxonomy, each level must be mastered before one progresses to the next.

Table 8.1: Domains of learning in Bloom's Taxonomy

COGNITIVE	AFFECTIVE	PSYCHOMOTOR
• Creating • Evaluating • Analysing • Applying • Understanding • Remembering	• Characterising • Organising • Valuing • Responding • Receiving	• Mastering • Producing • Conforming • Simulating • Perceiving

(Higher-order thinking skills appear first).

The next section examines the types of assessment processes linking teaching and learning.

8.4 DIFFERENT TYPES OF ASSESSMENTS

8.4.1 Assessment for Learning

Swaffield (2011) argues that assessment for learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by students and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go, and how best to get there. Similarly, Maphalala (2016) views assessment for learning as a continuous process of gathering and interpreting evidence about students' learning for the purpose of determining student's progress to inform the teaching and learning process while helping to provide feedback to teachers and students. The feedback assists students and teachers to identify gaps and strengths. For example, students may realise that they have gaps in their content knowledge and teachers may also realise that they need to employ alternative pedagogical practices if feedback reveals that current practices are not the relevant and appropriate tools to use towards the achievement of set teaching and learning goals. Swaffield (2011: 436) also suggests research-based principles to guide assessment for learning practices, and these are that assessment for learning should:

- be part of effective planning of teaching and learning;
- focus on how students learn;
- recognise assessment as central to classroom practice;
- regard assessment as a key professional skill for teachers;

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- be sensitive and constructive because any assessment has an emotional impact;
- take account the importance of learner motivation;
- promote commitment to learning goals and shared understanding of the criteria by which they are assessed;
- develop learners' capacity for self-assessment so that they become reflective and self-managing; and
- be involved in constructive guidance about how to improve.

Assessment for learning maybe conducted through teacher-observation and during instructional communication to determine how learning is progressing. One of the strategies teachers use during instructional communication to determine how learning is progressing, is questioning. Teachers ask questions as a means of establishing whether learners understand, for gaining learners opinions on the teaching and learning that is taking place, and to promote higher-order thinking skills. Assessment of learning should also take into consideration both formal and informal assessments.

8.4.2 Assessment of Learning

Assessment of learning relies on gathering evidence by the teacher to make overall judgements of a learner's achievement against the criteria of learning goals. It is usually formal and occurs at or near the end of a learning cycle where it sums up students' performance at a particular point in time. It has a summative element which shows how students are progressing against identified objectives or goals. It also has a formative element that provides evidence that informs long-time planning. The evidence gathered maybe used to communicate student achievement to a variety of stakeholders; for example, to students themselves, other teachers, bursary sponsors and Government. Teachers must ensure that the assessment criteria are very clear to students before the assessment process begins. Teachers should therefore explain to students which knowledge and skills are being assessed, and the levels of cognition or performance including which rubrics will be utilised for defining criteria and assessing achievement. Timeous feedback should be provided to the students after assessment and could take the form of whole-class discussion or student-lecturer interactions.

8.4.3 Assessment as Learning

In assessment as learning, students reflect on and monitor their own progress to inform their future learning goals. It helps students to take greater responsibility for their own learning and to monitor their future directions. Assessment as learning is a form of formative assessment in which students are encouraged to conduct self-assessment, peer-assessment and do their own reflections using journals. The goal is to get students to understand why they are learning and comprehend what they need to do to achieve their learning goals. This process helps the students to understand themselves as learners and become aware of how they learn to become metacognitive (knowledge about one's own thinking processes or thinking about one's thinking). For students to be able to assess themselves, to continuously reflect on their work and determine what their next learning will be, the lecturer should assist the students to grasp the concept of cognitive levels in a simplified manner by using action words to help students to perform at appropriate cognitive levels of Blooms's Taxonomy (Maphalala, 2016).

8.5 ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES

Blended assessment is advocated by SAQA, (2015) and this is based on a variety of modes, types, sites, outputs, contexts, platforms and other aspects including technology-mediated learning. Below are some of the widely used assessment techniques that should be utilised to contribute to a multi-dimensional and blended approach to assessment.

8.5.1 Multi-dimensional Formative Assessment should utilise the following assessment tools:

- Written assignments;
- Oral assignments/presentations;
- Structured Portfolios: These require student teachers to submit specific artefacts of teaching with standardised prompts that require direct responses (Kennedy, 2010). These artefacts and responses are then scored in a standardised way using common evaluation tools, usually rubrics that describe in detail the indicators of performance

and these should be designed in agreement with ECCE lecturers in individual institutions;

- Tests;
- Personal journaling: This promotes teacher-reflection on their learning and classroom practices. It can also be used to encourage students to develop and use three kinds of writing: descriptive, analytical and reflective;
- Action research; and
- Observation-based assessments: Designed by lecturers teaching theory, content and methodology courses which be could be linked to WIL.

8.5.2 Summative Forms of Assessment utilise the following tools:

- Traditional sit-down examinations administered in a standard way;
- On-demand performance tasks: These present student teachers with problem-based scenarios or simulations that mimic authentic teaching situations and do not necessarily have one correct answer. These prompt the student teachers to explain their thinking so as to make their content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge transparent to the assessor (Arends, 2006)

8.5.3 Structured Portfolio

These require student teachers to collect and submit specific artefacts of teaching with standardised prompts that require direct responses (Kennedy, 2010). These artefacts and responses are then scored in a standardised way by trained assessors using common evaluation tools, usually rubrics that describe in detail the indicators of performance; and these should be designed and agreed upon by institutions that are members of the PIECCE consortium. A moderation process is then undertaken to ensure that the scoring process is fair.

8.5.4 Baseline and Diagnostic Assessment

These should measure foundational knowledge and skills essential for tertiary education and the profession of teaching.

Formative Assessment: This should be administered using the following methods:

- ECCE Lecturer assessment: Assessment evidence should be evaluated by ECCE lecturers.
- Self -Assessment**:** Student teachers can review and reflect on their knowledge, progress, and what they have learnt and achieved during a unit, topic or project. It allows them to express their own views about their performance, and reflect on the personal and organisational factors that had an impact on their performance, for improvement purposes.
- Peer Assessment: Student teachers can be involved in observing and recording each other's performance. Peer reflection can also be used in combination with other assessment tools.
- Summative assessment may involve external assessors and moderators: Assessment evidence should be evaluated by professionals with relevant expertise against agreed-upon practice standards and their quality indicators using common evaluation tools, usually rubrics that describe in detail the indicators of performance.

8.6 GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

The following guidelines direct the process of assessing programme development:

- Assessment is a process and not an event. This means that assessment evidence should be gathered over a period of time before judgement about the individual's performance is made.
- The gathering of assessment evidence should be systematic, planned and have clear criteria for it to be authentic and reliable.
- Assessment should be transparent: Teachers should explain to students which knowledge and skills are being assessed, and the levels of cognition or performance by using rubrics for defining criteria and assessing achievement.

- Timeous feedback should be provided to the students during and after assessment.
- The students registered in ECCE programmes will have varied backgrounds, different insights, competencies and experiences in ECD. Moreover, they will also have different learning styles and will practise in different contexts. Their teaching competencies can therefore not be evaluated through paper-and- pencil tests alone. Also, ECCE programme developers should create and implement authentic multidimensional assessment techniques and strategies that use innovative performance-based approaches for teacher assessment focusing not only on teaching knowledge but on the application of this knowledge in practice.
- The performance-based approaches should also stimulate and support student learning, promote student reflection, as well as inform revisions of the programme content and delivery. They should be guided by the following types of assessment processes: assessment of learning, assessment for learning, and assessment as learning.
- A blended approach to assessment is recommended. Blended assessment is based on a variety of modes, types, sites outputs, contexts, platforms and other aspects including technology-mediated learning.
- The PIECCE consortium has researched and agreed on a set of practice standards for ECCE teacher preparation; and each practice standard has its quality indicators that describe criteria for professional practice. An assessment strategy for ECCE students should therefore be aligned to the agreed-upon practice standards and their quality indicators. This implies that when students are assessed, the assessment evidence should measure whether the students have met the appropriate standards and its requisite quality indicators.
- Gathering of assessment evidence should be at course and programme levels, and should be guided by the following types of assessment processes: assessment of learning, assessment for learning, and assessment as learning.

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CHAPTER 9

WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING (WIL)

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9.1 INTRODUCTION

Theoretical knowledge alone does not make one an excellent teacher, since such knowledge does not naturally translate into the ability to intelligently apply it practically in the workplace. As a result, there is a considerable need to prepare students both theoretically and practically, and this is where the Work Integrated Learning (WIL) comes in, to assist in improving students' work-readiness. It is a vehicle that bridges the gap between theory and practice by giving students an opportunity to put the theory and the wide range of skills that they have learned into practice in a real classroom set-up. Du Plessis (2010:206) states that students get an opportunity to learn from authentic work experiences and are required to produce evidence of such learning in the form of portfolios, projects, reports, logbooks, applied assignments and/or presentations to panels for evaluation purposes. The Council of Higher Education (CHE) adds to this by suggesting that it is university learning that is less didactic and more situated, participative, and "real world" orientated.

To incorporate theoretical forms of learning into practice, it makes sense to then describe WIL as "an educational approach that aligns academic and workplace practices for the mutual benefit of students and workplaces" (Engel-Hills et al., 2010). The South African Council on Higher Education defined WIL in the following ways:

- an umbrella term to describe curricular, pedagogic and assessment practices, across a range of academic disciplines that integrate formal learning and workplace concerns.
- an approach to career-focused education that includes classroom-based and workplace-based forms of learning that are appropriate for the professional qualification.

- an educational approach that aligns academic and workplace practices for the mutual benefit of students and workplaces (CHE, 2011:4).

Engel-Hills et al. (2010) define WIL as "an educational approach that aligns academic and workplace practices for the mutual benefit of students and workplaces". They further stated that WIL can be categorised into four different types (Table 9.1).

Table 9.1: Types of WIL

Type		Structure	Application
1	**Work-directed theoretical learning**	Forms of knowledge are sequenced in ways which meet academic criteria and are applicable and relevant to the career-specific components (Barnet, 2006)	Suits mathematics and physics learning in engineering programmes
2	**Problem-based learning**	Pedagogy that encourages students to learn through the structured exploration of a research or practice-based problem (Savin-Baden & Major, 2004)	Students usually work in small, self-directed groups on a task which is usually based on a "real-life" problem (Breslow et al., 2005). The "problem", which brings more than one discipline together, is carefully structured to direct the students' learning towards outcomes. The lecturer is usually the coordinator and resource person.
3	**Project-based learning**	Combines problem-based learning and experience learning by combining intellectual inquiry, real-world problems and student engagement in relevant and meaningful work (Barron et al., 1998)	Connects students with communities, service partners, and academic experts.
4	**Workplace learning**	A practical on-site experience at a site of professional practice. May be known as	Workplace learning can stretch from a few weeks to a few years. Can be strongly or

		job-shadowing, an internship or a learnership.	weakly integrated into the academic learning programme. The workplace is considered a place of learning where model practice is demonstrated.

Essentially, WIL is an educational construct. According to Engel-Hills et al. (2010), it is predicated on the "front-end model of learning" and then tries to bolt on some exposure to work in order to contextualise the context-free, supposed universal "theory". Hence, it defines and describes WIL largely in terms of that paradigm.

9.2 PURPOSE

The purpose of this chapter is to unpack the WIL component to inform the Diploma and Degree in ECCE. In order to do this, we present WIL information from literature as well as case studies from an HEI, NPO and TVET college. The case studies raise issues for consideration for the design of the WIL component for the Diploma and Degree in ECCE.

9.3 WORK EXPERIENCE

In the working world WIL operates in a different paradigm. It is primarily a social process. As Cross (2007:226) described in his work on informal learning: Work = learning; Learning = Work. Work Integrated Learning (WIL) is the term given to an activity or programme that integrates academic learning with its application in the workplace. The practice may be real or simulated and can occur in the workplace, at the university, online or face-to-face. Vorwerk (2009, 2012), in his description of WIL on work experience, sees it as being the fundamental learning modality. If one focuses on how people engage with work, from the novice towards becoming proficient (e.g. Dreyfus', 2004, five-level model of skill-acquisition) then a different conception of learning emerges. There is a shift from being a consumer of pre-packaged information to becoming:

- an observer, relying on using the senses to acquire information;

- a participant in a process of producing goods and services; and
- a producer of goods and services.

9.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF WIL

Firstly, WIL is very significant for student development as it helps students obtain experience that is associated with their qualification while enhancing their learning. The effect of WIL is reiterated by different studies, and they all agree on the fact that WIL programmes develop students' competencies (Arnold et al., 1999:43). Other studies have also linked WIL with improved academic performance (Hughes & Moore, 1999:12). Without the WIL experience, it can be difficult for teachers to link their theoretical knowledge with the actual classroom context. Additionally, there are considerable benefits for students in WIL. Dressler and Keeling (2004:225) found that WIL improves students' confidence, increases disciplined thinking, improves learning, takes responsibility for learning, improves learning how to learn, improves problem-solving, develops analytical thinking, improves performance in the classroom, increases GPA and commitment to educational goals. The Southern Cross University also agrees with these benefits and further highlights the following benefits for student teachers:

- career gains: up-skilling and/or career change for older workers, work readiness for youth, direct recruitment into employment, networking.
- academic gains: enhanced critical-thinking and generic skills (due to the high levels of student engagement generated by active learning), enhanced disciplinary understanding through application of concepts and observation of skilled practitioners, and enhanced problem-solving skills.
- personal gains: clarity regarding career preferences, professionalism and professional identity development, communication, time management, and other soft skills development.

CHE (2011) reiterates some of the many advantages for students who engage in WIL as follows:

- academic benefits such as improved general academic performance, enhancement of interdisciplinary thinking, increased motivation to learn.
- personal benefits such as increased communication skills, teamwork, leadership and cooperation.
- career benefits, for example, career clarification, professional identity, increased employment opportunities and salaries, development of positive work values and ethics.
- skills development, including increased competence and increased technical knowledge and skill.

One of the HEIs in the PIECCE research project had a clear indication of why WIL is important, and this has been adjusted to address the needs of the ECCE practicum in the following ways:

- to bring students into contact with the practice of teaching from an educational and care perspective;
- to provide students with the opportunity to practise the various roles of the teacher in authentic ECCE sites;
- to provide opportunities for students to explore ECCE sites in different social contexts;
- to give students the opportunity to observe experienced teachers delivering lessons and engaging in ECCE activities;
- to give students the opportunity to plan lessons in context, and as aspirant teachers to conduct classes and mediate learning opportunities;
- to give students the opportunity to make independent decisions with regard to the choice of suitable learning content, the resources that can be used, as well as teaching and assessment methods;
- to give students the opportunity to correctly execute a number of tasks, such as using appropriate pedagogies and authentic assessment under the guidance of experienced teachers;
- to give students the opportunity to participate in extra and co-curricular activities;

- to create opportunities in which students' knowledge, competencies and attitudes can be assessed in practice; and
- to give students the opportunity to reflect on their experiences during the practicum.

Windschitl (2002), as cited in Du Plessis (2010:209), similarly states that the following activities encourage meaningful learning:

- Students' ideas and experiences relating to key topics such as lesson plans, teaching media and assessment criteria are elicited, and this is followed by the fashioning of learning situations which help students elaborate on or restructure their current knowledge;
- Students are given ample opportunity to engage in complex, meaningful, problem-based activities, such as designing lesson plans during the teaching practice periods at schools;
- Students receive external support in the form of coaching from supervisor teachers/mentors, as well as hints, feedback, models and reminders;
- Students work collaboratively. They are encouraged to engage in task- orientated dialogue with one another;
- When planning and presenting lessons, students are asked to apply knowledge in diverse and authentic contexts to explain ideas, interpret texts, predict phenomena and construct arguments based on evidence, rather than to focus on the acquisition of predetermined "right answers";
- Supervisor teachers/mentors employ a variety of assessment strategies to understand how students' ideas are evolving, in addition to giving feedback on the processes and products of their thinking.

The above advantages show that WIL cannot be an instant solution to transformation in terms of reaching very advanced skills, nor can WIL fill in the lack of competitiveness in the working environment, but it does play a pivotal role with regard to graduates' readiness on entering the world of work (CHE, 2011).

9.5 CASE STUDY 1: THE WIL COMPONENT AT AN HEI

What follows is a detailed description of how one of the HEIs participating in this research project conducts WIL concerning a Diploma in Grade R. To support students in this opportunity to learn from theory and from practice, students receive tutorial notes, which should be used in conjunction with a study guide. Students are strongly advised to attend a WIL orientation that will be presented via a scheduled whiteboard presentation. Furthermore, the student must prepare for this session by studying the respective WIL tasks and instructions and identify problem areas. During the whiteboard presentation, students have the opportunity to discuss and ask questions in preparation for their WIL experience.

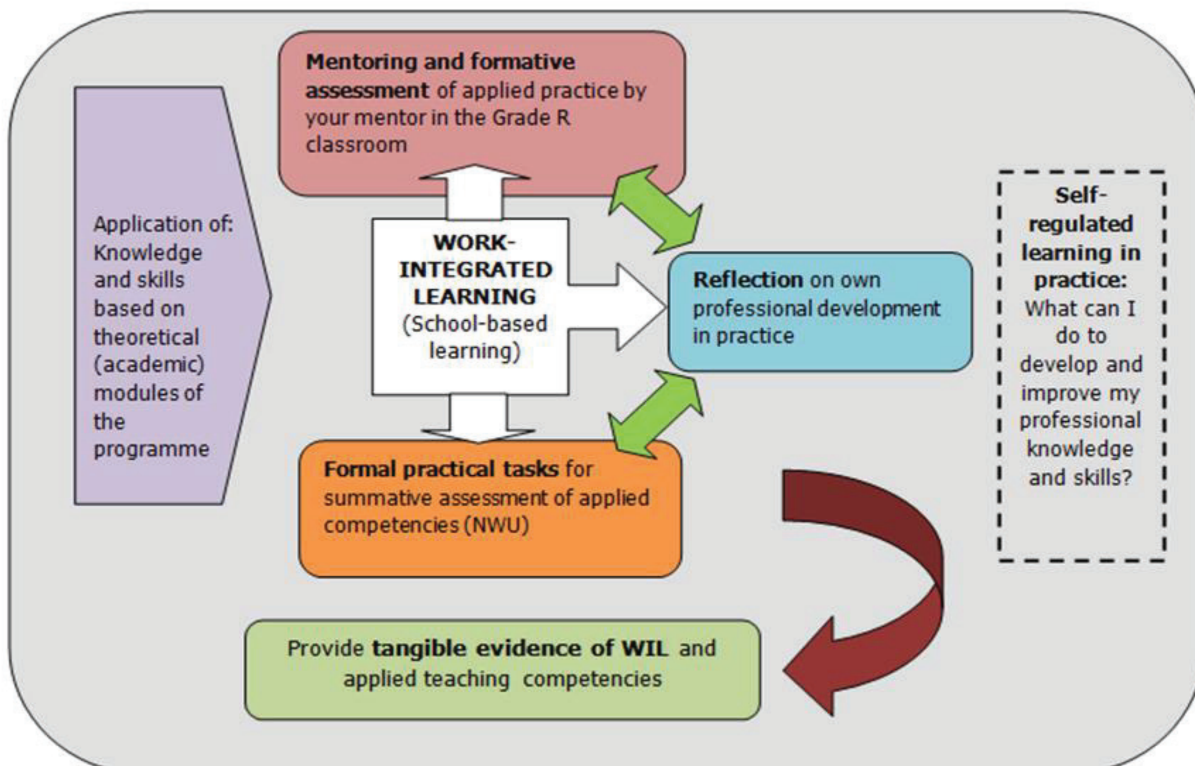

Figure 9.1: What does an HEI WIL look like?

Regarding the Diploma in Grade R teaching, WIL is implemented in an integrated way (Figure 9.1). Students have to apply their knowledge and skills gleaned from the academic modules in combination with knowledge and skills mastered from practice, in addition to being guided by a professional mentor in the field of Grade R education. A study guide directs students in the implementation of informal and formal practical tasks, as well as reflective learning to

develop an increasingly self-regulated teaching practice. Assessment of WIL by mentors and academic staff is based on tangible proof of applied competencies in the form of a portfolio.

A portfolio is generally regarded as a purposeful collection of a student's work reflecting efforts and achievements in one or more areas, as well as providing evidence of self-reflection. A portfolio can also be seen as a mechanism designed in order to evaluate performance in relation to external evaluation requirements, and for exploring feelings, values, beliefs and dispositions, collected over time. The value of a portfolio to support the development of reflective thinking on practical teaching matters has been documented by various researchers (Orland-Barak, 2005). Williams et al. (2003) viewed the portfolio as one tool that can be used to "house" a variety of authentic assessments. Candidates can demonstrate their knowledge and skills as effective teachers through the use of actual products that they develop in classroom settings (e.g. lesson plans, instructional units, learner work examples, classroom management plans, etc.).

Orland-Barak (2005) referred to research findings indicating that the compilation of portfolios in teacher education programmes enhances teaching practice by providing opportunities for uncovering strengths and weaknesses in teacher-students' performance (Redman, 1994; Smith & Tillema, 1998), developing competence awareness (Topping, 1998), providing evidence of achievement in learning to teach (Loughran & Corrigan, 1995), and promoting reflective practice (Laboskey, 1994; Borko et al., 1997; Bain et al., 1993).

9.5.1 The Role-players

According to an HEI's Faculty of Education Sciences WIL manual (2015), WIL is compulsory for all Diploma in Grade R Teaching, BEd and PGCE students who must successfully complete all requirements before a full qualification can be awarded. However, since WIL is a partnership between the student, the school, and the university, there are different roleplayers as well. This is particularly because "WIL is based on the principle that learning should be demonstrated to be appropriate for a qualification and should be assessed wherever it takes place or is provided" (Engel-Hills et al., 2010). These roleplayers include the practicum leader, practicum coordinator, mentor, and class teacher. All these people have specific roles and a collective responsibility to maximise the students' WIL experience.

9.5.2 The Student

One of the most important requirements for students during WIL is their portfolio, which is a personal document in which their growth, learning and development are reflected. Among other things, the student should:

- Be in the classroom of the allocated class teacher at all times, even when the teacher is busy with other subject classes;
- Make the learner his/her priority, strive for excellence and ensure that his/her conduct is exemplary;
- Dress like a professional, and behave like a professional;
- Familiarity with class teacher's class rules and time-table is essential;
- Offer assistance to sharpen knowledge and skills;
- Be well-prepared at all times;
- Be punctual at all times and offer timeous notification in case of non-availability;
- Be mindful of the prohibition of corporal punishment, and all behaviour management strategies should be discussed with the class teacher;
- Be consistent and unambiguous;
- Treat all documents as official – complete them fully, neatly and hand in on time;
- Take advantage of the opportunity to observe lessons in subjects other than your own, but get permission to attend first;
- Thank the teacher with whom you are "attached" to; and
- Participate fully in the extra and co-curricular activities of the school.

9.5.3 The Practicum Leader

Practicum leaders contact the principal before the school closes for the vacation to find out logistical details (e.g. dates and time) that the students need in order to report at the institution at the beginning of the next term. The meeting time and other details must then

be communicated to the members of the group of teaching students. Practicum leaders meet the students at the entrance to the school and then introduce them to the principal and the practicum coordinator. The following are the practicum leaders' duties:

- Practicum leaders are responsible for keeping a general attendance register, but must also make sure that each student also keeps his/her own attendance register on a daily basis.
- Any problems with students must be immediately sorted out with the practicum coordinator at school. Any serious misconduct by students must be reported to the WIL office.
- The time-table for visiting lecturers is drawn up by the practicum leader and checked by the practicum coordinator before it is sent to the relevant lecturer.
- The lesson assessment times must be communicated to the relevant lecturer 48 hours in advance of the specific day via SMS, e-mail or telephone.
- Practicum leaders meet the lecturer at the school entrance and introduce them to the principal and/or practicum coordinator.
- The students who is to give the first lesson accompanies the lecturer to the class for the first lesson.
- Practicum leaders or the practicum coordinator takes leave of the lecturer as soon as the last reflection has been completed.
- Practicum leaders must provide the required documents, the general attendance register, and the practicum leader's report to the WIL office on or before the closing stipulated date.

9.5.4 The Practicum Coordinator

The practicum coordinator serves as the contact person with the staff of the WIL office. They and/or the principal receive the necessary communications from the WIL office and act on them accordingly. They, in conjunction with the principal, deal with the placement of the students under specific experienced staff members.

- They also receive the students on their arrival at the school, and they are responsible for all arrangements in the school with regard to the students.
- They monitor the students' assimilation into the school and ensure that the communication and cooperation between student and class teacher are functioning satisfactorily.
- They assist the practicum leaders with their arrangements for visiting lecturers.
- They serve as advisors for students in conjunction with the school principal; and embraces all matters that the class teacher cannot address, including any disciplinary problems with students.
- All relevant documentation of the students at the end of the WIL period must be signed off and stamped by the practicum coordinator before the students depart from the school.

The above case study demonstrates that WIL is a complex endeavour involving multiple parties in order to ensure a streamlined process. There are built in checks-and-balances which suggest that the training institution is aware that their students/practitioners are guests in the schools or ECD centres.

9.5.5 Mentoring

An additional and fundamental aspect of WIL is mentoring. The Diploma in Grade R as indicated in the case study supports the mentoring model and therefore provides mentor-assisted tasks. It also trains mentors in ways to assist the beginner-teacher in WIL and to guide the teacher-student in reflective teaching. Mentoring is regarded by Kupila (2017) as "[p]romoting an individual's awareness and refinement of his/her own professional development by providing and recommending structured opportunities for reflection and observation".

Synonyms for the word mentor include terms such as advisor, counsellor, tutor, guide, teacher, and guru. A mentor should adhere to all these roles by guiding the teacher-student in attaining practice-based competencies through advising, counselling and tutoring.

Mentorship, however, involves more than guiding teacher-students through learning outcomes and skills, but also extends to providing strong and continuous emotional support. Good mentorship involves helping beginner-teachers work effectively within the school context. A mentor should have ample experience of Grade R teaching and learning and be able to give professional guidance while developing applied competencies within the Grade R context. Good mentors are not only sure of their own judgements regarding effective Grade R teaching and learning, but should also be open, sensitive and receptive to the opinions of others. Teachers have important knowledge and skills to learn from colleagues, parents, learners and community members, about the particular children they teach and about ways to teach them. Mentors therefore have to provide guidance in ways sensitive to the context of the school, as well as to the community.

The mentor will not only provide the teacher-student with valuable feedback to support his/her professional development, but also will be expected to report to the HEI regarding the progress and development of the teacher-student's applied teaching competencies during the WIL process. The WIL reports form part of the teacher-student's portfolio in the Diploma in Grade R Teaching and these accumulate to a final WIL mark. The summative assessment of the WIL is the responsibility of the HEI. Mentor support should actually not stop after this qualification has been attained, but should form part of ongoing professional teaching where each teacher identifies a mentor who can help to keep him/her accountable and to refine the teaching and learning processes that take place in his/her classroom. A professional and self-regulated teacher will also extend mentorship by allowing the entire school community to act as mentors. We can all learn from one another and should be receptive to inputs from colleagues, parents and even learners. A beginner-teacher or teacher-student should be assured of the support of colleagues, and should be able to ask for assistance and guidance from experienced teachers whenever necessary.

The HEI undertakes to ensure that suitably qualified and experienced workplace mentors are appointed to assist students to recognise their strengths and weaknesses in their work, to develop existing and new abilities, and to gain knowledge of work practices. The partner school's principal identifies programme-specific mentors in his/her school as part of the

Service Level Agreement (SLA) and in accordance with the HEI's criteria for the appointment of mentors. These mentors will be trained by the HEI's lecturers. An example of a checklist for mentors is given in table 9.2.

Table 9.2: An example of a checklist for mentors

Criteria	**Check**	☑	☒
Appropriate qualification	Does the person have an appropriate teaching and professional qualification?		
Experience within the context of a specific programme	Years of experience in a particular phase and/or subject.		
Good supporting skills (mentor not a tormentor!)	Does the person have the kind of professional attitude that will ensure sound professional mentoring of WIL?		
Assessment and administration skills	Will the mentor be able to assess and support teaching competencies through observations, such as lesson planning, implementation, administrative skills, etc.? (Are there any demographic or time constraints?)		
Professional role-model	Is the person appropriate as a role-model for teacher students?		
Professional conduct	Does this person uphold professional conduct regarding all facets of education?		

Two types of mentors are appropriate for implementing the WIL programme. Firstly, a generalist mentor is appointed to oversee the WIL programme at a school, to supervise and to assess the phase-specific and general didactic aspects. Furthermore, the role of the generalist mentor entails, amongst other aspects, the responsibility for WIL administration at school, to coordinate, to support the students according to the HEI's requirements and to provide guidance (e.g. in portfolio compilation). Secondly, a specialist mentor is appointed as an expert professional for subject specific/phase-specific guidance, supervision and assessment. An assessment report completed by the mentor should be submitted with each assessment task as set out in each WIL component. These reports and assessment forms can be found in the WIL administration booklet.

Training of mentors is compulsory and is offered by the HEI as an accredited (SAQA approved) short learning programme. A database of all accredited mentors is established and maintained by the HEI's WIL office. Regional study centres and the centre coordinators are utilised for this purpose to serve partner schools in a specific cluster. The mentorship short learning programme is presented by approved and qualified trainers. Comprehensive and programme-related study material is provided for the mentoring training. The successful completion of the mentor training leads to the acknowledgement of approved mentor status for this HEI's WIL programmes. The mentors receive a certificate after completion of the mentor short learning programme as proof of mentor status.

Continuous support is provided by the faculty's WIL office to the regional study centre coordinators and facilitators, the school principal, mentors, educators and students. Support is provided by means of a comprehensive WIL programme manual and study guide, open access to a dedicated WIL official, call centres, and electronic learning management platforms (eFundi). Additionally, mentors, educators and students have full access via telephone and e-mail to the qualification programme leader, regional study centre coordinator, and HEI lecturers. Support from the HEI lecturers is provided through tutorial notes, whiteboard sessions, vacation schools, telephone, e-mail, and face-to-face contact, if necessary. No diploma can be presented to any student who has not completed the WIL as set out in the HEI's study guide.

The term *best practice* suggests an opportunity for a student/practitioner to observe and engage with mentors or teacher mentors who are considered experts in their field. It would be expected that training institutions should expose their students/practitioners to the aforementioned best practice in order to assist the student/practitioner in either upskilling a current pedagogy or developing a new set of skills. Best practice is additionally relevant in the choice of schools at which students may conduct WIL, as the opportunity to observe or benefit from best practice can be directly linked to where the student/practitioner is placed for their period of WIL. This therefore raises the question of who chooses the school, how easy it is to gain access to schools, and the relevancy of exposure to a variety of contexts for teaching and learning. As some of the participants in this research project are in-service practitioners, they

do not have a choice in their context for teaching, and may therefore need the opportunity to visit other ECD centres or schools to observe best practice.

9.5.6 Reflection

The development and application of reflective learning strategies will instil in teachers a tendency towards a *reflective teaching practice*, which is often viewed as the most important characteristic of an expert teacher. Effective and meaningful learning, theoretical and practical, is always nestled in reflective learning. (See Figure 9.2)

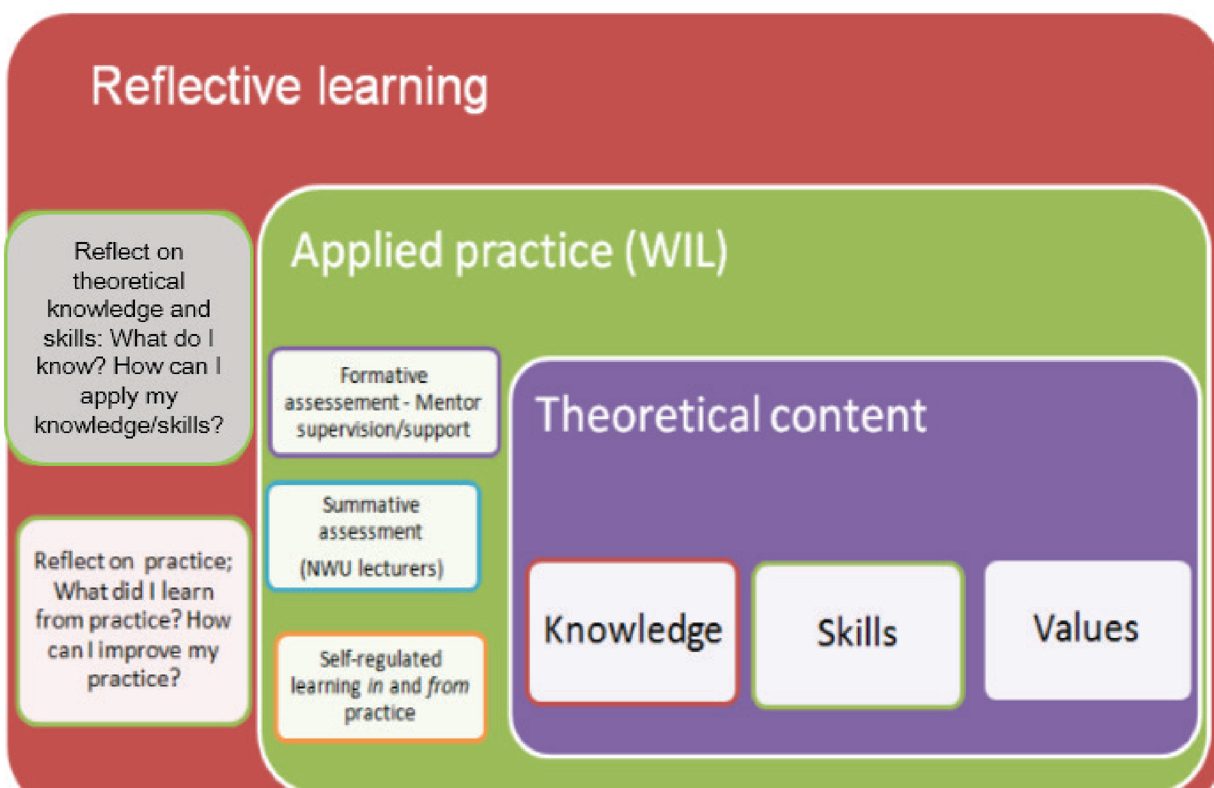

Figure 9.2: Reflective learning

Students thus have to continuously reflect on learning through theory (academic modules), as well as on learning *in* and *from* practice. Research shows that reflective learning by teachers can make a lasting impact on their teaching practice.

The reflective portfolio forms part of the Portfolio of Evidence (PoE) and is usually a set of assignments that are specifically designed to encourage reflection on the part of the student/practitioner. For example, a student may be asked to reflect and write a short piece on their early experience of learning to read. The purpose behind such an activity would be

for the student to understand their attitude towards teaching reading and what their learners might be experiencing. According to Henderson, Napan and Monteiro (2004), reflection can be described as consciously thinking about and analysing what one has done (or is doing). Reflective learning encourages deeper learning, and offers a relevant framework for the development of professionals who will be lifelong learners, committed to continuous improvement of their practice (Henderson, Napan & Monteiro, 2004). Reflection is the process that includes a series of steps, including reviewing, reconstructing, re-enacting, and critically analysing one's teaching in order to improve. It is a means for reliving and recapturing experiences in order to make sense of it, to learn from it, and to develop new understandings and appreciations (Knapp, 1993 cited in Rahima & Donald, 1996). The root of the word *reflection* comes from the Latin word *reflectere*, which means "to bend back". As a mirror reflects a physical image, so does reflection as a thought process reveals to us aspects of our experience that might have remained hidden had we not taken the time to explore them. Whether students apply reflective thinking to practical teaching matters, problems in the midst of teaching, or institutional goals and criteria, conscious reflection begins with a focus on experience (Rahima & Donald, 1996:64).

Reflection as a term is used in a number of different ways by different authors. We take our definition from Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985:19) who state that reflection is "a generic term for those intellectual and affective activities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to lead to new understandings and appreciations". Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) also developed a three-stage model of the reflection process focusing on returning to the experience, attending to feelings connected with the experience, and re-evaluating the experience through recognising implications and outcomes. This model has subsequently been extended into a model for facilitating learning from experience (Boud, Cohen & Walker, 1993). The essence of this model is that learning from experience can be enhanced through both reflection in action (reflection, which occurs in the midst of experience), and through reflection after an event (reflection on action). Both forms of reflection can be introduced into courses, but in different ways (Martin & Hughes, 2009:12).

As research clearly indicates, the value of reflection on teachers' knowledge and skills regarding their practice should rub off on students who need to reflect on a daily and continuous basis on their professional development through their programme of study. Although students will reflect on practice after their daily teaching experiences, they should try to also remember and note down their reflections in practice, which may have played a role in the way they managed a teaching/learning experience or any aspect of their education.

9.5.7. Evidence of Teaching Competencies

Students need to present tangible evidence of professional teaching competencies. Tangible evidence takes the form of the following:

- knowledge and understanding of ECCE teaching and learning (e.g. the planning and implementing of learning experiences);
- conducting developmentally appropriate assessment of 0-4 year old learners' progress and development;
- knowledge of the ECCE teacher's roles and how to fulfil each of the these roles;
- personal qualities – for example, the ability to collaborate with colleagues and parents in the best interests of the learners;
- the ability to reflect on one's own professional development and skills;
- the ability to apply knowledge, and an understanding of effective and ethical ECCE practice; and
- creating a disciplined, but learner-centred ECCE environment.

Evidence is the tangible proof that is produced by individuals (or about them) in order to demonstrate competence in respect of defined outcomes. This evidence is used as a basis for making judgements about the competence of individuals in relation to outcomes described in unit standards, qualifications, or other performance standards. Therefore, there must be a direct relationship between the evidence and the outcomes. Evidence can be provided in a variety of ways, but it must be presented in a tangible way and be perceivable to the senses.

The differences between the three main types of evidence (SAQA, 2001:38-39) is outlined in table 9.3 below.

Table 9.3: Three main types of evidence

DIRECT EVIDENCE	INDIRECT EVIDENCE	HISTORICAL EVIDENCE
● This is actual evidence produced by the candidate. ● his is the most valid and authentic evidence and should be the primary source of evidence. ● This is particularly valuable if the assessor works with the candidate on a daily basis e.g. a mentor.	● This is evidence produced about the candidate by a third party, other than the assessor. ● It can be used to verify the authenticity of other forms of evidence. ● Witnesses must be familiar with the standards required and able to comment authoritatively on the candidate's performance.	● It is evidence of what the candidate was capable of doing in the past. ● It is the least reliable, because it does not guarantee or prove current competence. ● It usually needs to be checked for authenticity and supplemented by an assessment of current competence.
Examples: ● Direct observation of tasks and activities. ● Oral or written answers to questions. ● Evaluation of products or output.	**Examples:** ● Testimony from colleagues and supervisors. ● Work previously completed. ● Training records. ● Customer ratings.	**Examples:** ● Previously completed products and portfolios. ● Performance appraisals. ● Certificates, qualifications, ● medals, prizes and testimonials.

9.6. CASE STUDY 2: THE WIL COMPONENT AT A NPO

Since the training of practitioners in ECD has resided in the NPO sector over a number of years prior to HEIs and TVETs taking up the responsibility, it is appropriate to examine how WIL is implemented.

Generally the practice is that the NPOs have some kind of "formula" on how they blend theory and practice teaching for the ECD learners. Most NPOs follow an accredited curriculum with the ETDP SETA which tends to structure a modular training that is interfaced with practical periods of work experience gained. In many respects this type of interface is similar, at least

in part, to the kind that Vorwerk (2014: 53) described in the literature review above. The approach is geared to teach the learner to "do" ECD, rather than to simply "know" ECD. However, despite the good intention, it is regrettable that specific WIL policies are not developed to any degree of depth within organisations. However, many do have standard operation procedures in addressing practical work experience as this is often a requirement of the ETDP SETA verification protocol.

9.6.1 The NPO WIL Experience

Generally the ECD NPO emanates from a philosophy of developmental coaching and mentorship. This has been necessitated by the fact that the history of ECD teaching and learning, as well as service delivery, comes from a background of working with the most disadvantaged and marginalised (often women) and least literate populations of SA. The ECD programmes offered by all NPOs have a significant leaning towards a strong component of showing, coaching and supporting, alongside theoretical teaching. In a systemic review of ECD working conditions involving over 28 countries, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (2015) found that Long-term CPD interventions integrated into practice, such as pedagogical guidance and coaching in reflection groups, have proved effective in very different contexts – in countries with a well-established system of ECCE provisions and a high level of qualification requirements for the practitioners, but also in countries with poorly subsidised ECCE systems and low qualification requirements. Thus, independent of the kind of ECCE system, long-term pedagogical support to staff by specialised coaches or counsellors in reflection groups was found effective in enhancing the quality of ECEC services, as well as in improving children's outcomes.

Accordingly, WIL is one aspect of the NPOs commitment to the concept of real-world learning. Many courses and qualifications that are offered by the NPOs offer WIL as an opportunity for academic and practice-based professional learning to occur together, within a work environment as part of the course of study. In some organisations this is referred to as in-service training. The mix or balance between contact sessions (theoretical teaching) and in practice (filed application or practical experience) differs greatly from organisation to organisation. Also it's noted that within organisations, this time is disaggregated according to

the type of course for example accredited vs non accredited ECD courses. In other words, each course varies in relation to the nature of the ECD intervention required.

Many NPOs consider work experience in the sector or community-based learning to be WIL. By and large this activity is covered by providing learning support to the practitioner during the learning activity. The work integrated learning forms a part of a course. Learning support for work experience includes the following:

- interaction with the practitioner which includes site visits and practice observations, as well as assessments;
- organisation of placements;
- ongoing monitoring of playgroup work and progress; and
- assessment of practitioners' and playgroup facilitators' learning and performance during the learning activity.

Table 9.4: Summary of models of WIL in NPOs.

	Contact Learning	**On-site Support**	**Evidence Generation**
NQF Level 4 & 5	Residential training one week per month during which they cover one theory module. They then go back to their places of work to implement this theory and complete set assignments.	Additional structured on-site visits at the practitioner's place of work for support, assessment and observation.	Most RTOs have an accredited curriculum they follow which requires the learners to develop a portfolio of evidence that blends both practical and theoretical learning. Portfolio of Evidence compilation, moderation, verification from ETDP SETA
Short & Skills Courses	Facilitators attend and an initial week of orientation of ECD training which can be residential. Strong emphasis placed on experiential learning (playgroups, home visiting programmes) under	Thereafter they work as ECD facilitators in their communities and come back for one day of training every month. (Most of these play facilitators have already finished their L4 certificate)	Most RTOs don't have a PoE in place for the short courses although there is evidence of extensive contact by coaches and mentors.

	guidance of mentors and clusters of practitioners.		
Other types of learner support	There are some organisations that have modified the practical field work into role-play or simulations such as demonstrations of practical experiences (e.g. practitioners acting out play activities or case studies, and drawing on principles from their experiences). However, site visits are mainly used for assessment.		

9.6.2 Administrative Support for WIL in the NPO Sector

Many organisations depend on the training staff to organise and arrange WIL with their students. Given the scarcity of human resource personnel within NGOs, it is not practical to have a specific WIL officer. However, there is often administrative staff that supports the trainer with training and field support plans. As alluded to earlier, the model that many NPOs use is that of an in-service approach, thus the workplace is already defined because the practitioner is employed there.

Training organisations are now ensuring that they enforce clearance as per provisions of the Children's Act 38 of 2005. The empirical data on Survey 1 showed that only 40% of staff indicated that they were cleared to work with children, while 60% were unsure if their students/practitioners had been cleared. This suggests that there is a lack of awareness of the importance of obtaining clearance, and possibly of informing students/practitioners of the Act.

Furthermore, students'/practitioners' training through an NPO, is already being done while in the employment of ECD institutions that recruited them, sometimes without a relevant qualification. As most NPOs have an orientation week at the beginning of their training programme, perhaps it is appropriate to include in this week the importance of the Children's Act and obtaining clearance. This is a valuable period in which topics such as assessment, site visits, PoEs and the general expectations of the training programme, are covered.

9.6.3 Institutional Capacity

Many NPOs use standardised assessment templates aligned to the qualification they are registered to train. In many cases, the same trainer who trains the practitioners is also the

one that goes out to evaluate the practical work and to observe the practitioner in practice. This set-up places a lot of strain on the NPO's capacity, and thus those who do this will spend an incredible amount of time on the site supporting and monitoring, which in turn can limit the NPO's capacity to train personnel and this is exacerbated by the increase in costs. There is no evidence of a stand-alone evaluation responsibility within NPOs. However, the advantage is that the ECD trainer knows what they are looking for and therefore the practitioner really benefits from the visit of the trainer because the trainer is an expert in ECD. The on-site support visit is an intensely structured process that utilises set templates and documents for recording progress.

Table 9.5: Matching processes

Step 1	**Matching process:**
	• Community stakeholder engagement to disseminate information about the learning programme and invite applications.
Step 2	• Applications in writing or via community meeting.
Step 3	• Placement assessment, placement and registration administration
Step 4	• 1 day learner orientation, guidance and support (varies depending on course).
	• 3 days of learner administration (including possible contracts and compliance forms for working in the ECD sector e.g. police clearance.
	Training skills programme formally commences:
Step 5	5 days of theory learning block for clustered and sequenced Module 1 related to the following: • Work with families and communities to support ECD
	15 days of experiential learning working in the playgroup programme under the guidance of mentor and coaches.
	Assessment of Module 1 (theory and practice).
Step 6	5 days of theory learning block for clustered and sequenced Module 2 related to the following: • Prepare resources and set up the environment to support the development of babies, toddlers and young children. • Interact with babies, toddlers and young children

	45 days of experiential learning working in playgroup programme under the guidance of mentor and coaches.
	Assessment of Module 2 theory and practice.
	Feedback on assessment for module 1 (Remediation as required)
Step 7	Final exit assessment presentations
Step 8	Training administration (including QA admin, PoE compilation, moderation, verification and statements of results from SETA)
Step 9	Certification ceremony

Unlike HEIs, the NPO training courses are primarily SETA accredited which has an impact on delivery as the SETA processes for certification are complicated and this causes delays in issuing certificates for newly qualified practitioners. What is evident from the above table 9.5, is that considerable effort is put into training practitioners and this should not be hampered by delays in receiving final certificates.

9.7 CASE STUDY 3: The WIL Component at a TVET

A collaboration between the academic and job placement departments Incorporates:

- Theory content covered in the classroom;
- Practical components done in the workshop/SIM/kitchen/restaurant;
- Exposure to real-life workplace-based experience (WBE). Responsibility:

Programme Head and Academic Manager

Support from Job Placement Team;

- National Diploma Students are placed in the workplace to complete a compulsory component of work-based exposure in order to be awarded the full Diploma qualification. This is called in-service training.

  Responsibility: Job Placement

  Support from Programme Head;

- Students who have finished a qualification and do not have an additional practical component are assisted with placement into permanent employment.

  Responsibility: Job Placement

  Support from Programme Head.

Table 9.6: Structures and resources needed to implement WIL at TVET Colleges

Academic Management	**Programme Heads for each academic stream**	**Student Support and Job Placement (JPOs allocated to each specific academic stream)**	**Partnerships and Linkage Manager**
Deputy Principal Education and Training with Academic Heads	Each stream has a Programme Head (e.g. Hospitality, Electrical, Business Management, Educare, etc.)	Student Support Manager and team of 5 Job Placement Officers (JPOs) specialising in one particular academic stream	Funding: sourcing new projects, contact with companies, and contact with industry.
SUPPORT PROVIDED	**SUPPORT PROVIDED**	**SUPPORT PROVIDED**	**SUPPORT PROVIDED**
Provide support in setting targets, strategic focus, monitoring and evaluation Site Visit Logbooks	time-tables, data, company contacts, site visits, and programme-specific needs.	placement services, job-readiness, company contacts, site visits, and statistics.	links with industry and Information on scarce skills

9.7.1 The Approach to WIL at TVET Colleges

This combines the theory content covered in the classroom with the practical components done in the workshop/SIM/kitchen/restaurant in addition to getting exposure to real-life workplace-based experience (WBE). Once a student has completed his or her studies, there are TWO placement options.

Table 9.7: Placement Options

Students are placed in the workplace to complete a compulsory component of work- based exposure or practical in order to be awarded the full qualification (e.g. N6 National Diploma). This is called in-service training Responsibility: Job Placement Support from Programme Head.	Students who have finished a qualification that does not have an additional practical component, are assisted with placement into permanent employment. Responsibility: Job Placement Support from Programme Head.

The process to introduce students to WBE (Workplace-based exposure during the qualification and after the theoretical component) appears in figure 9.3 below.

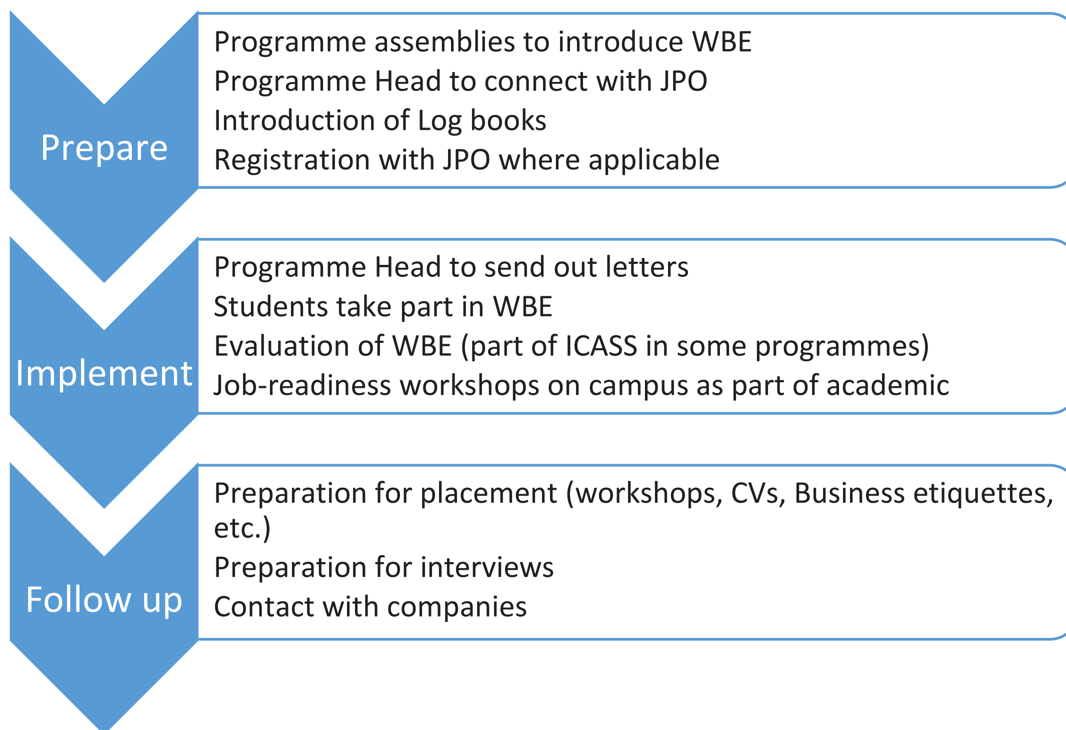

Figure 9.3: process to introduce students to WBE

It is not only the relevant skills in the programme that count! What else is needed? Putting the theory into practice, projects to simulate the real workplace, problem-solving, collaborating, applying knowledge within the real-world working environment, negotiation skills, developing social relationships, conflict management, leadership and motivation, ability

to deal with stress and emotional experiences, improved communication (written and oral), and solving real-life problems with inputs from industry.

9.7.2 Lecturer Placement in the Workplace

Lecturer placement is part of the strategic planning at the end of each year for the following year. Targets are set globally for the college and then translated into a campus total. Staff engage in a variety of placements including a full five-day placement process, day visits to industry, and visiting students in industry. The success of the student WBE programme showed the necessity for this to be linked to a lecturer placement programme as well. Students come back from industry fired up at what they have seen. It becomes critical that staff then also visit the industry to be able to bring these "new elements" into the classroom.

Table 9.8: WIL within Education studies

PROGRAMME STREAM	WIL COMPONENT
NATIONAL CERTIFICATE VOCATIONAL (NCV)	A MINIMUM OF 5 DAYS PER ANNUM (LIMITED WIL EXPOSURE)
REPORT 191 (NATED) CERTIFICATES N4 – N6	IN-SERVICE MODEL Students spend 4 days a week in contact sessions and 1 day a week at their sites (translates to approx. 55 days during an 18 month period). Students also complete block weeks at sites during block week (minimum of 1 week).
REPORT 191 (NATED) NATIONAL N DIPLOMA	IN-SERVICE MODEL Students complete 18 moths of in-service training.
OCCUPATIONAL CERTIFICATES	IN-SERVICE MODEL Students are site-based and spend one day a week in contact sessions. Block week training arranged during breaks.

9.8 STANDARDS FOR WIL EXPERIENCE

Table NUMBER below can be used to develop ideas on shaping a developmental experience for students from entry to exit level. The standards of achievement help to think about levels of complexity and pacing of learning to reach the exit level outcomes.

9.8.1 Student Teacher Standards

This document makes use of the basic competencies of a beginner-teacher (MRTEQ – Appendix C) as well as wording and concepts from the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) For School-Based Educators. It also considers the types of learning for teaching as set out in MRTEQ and is arranged according to the *11 competencies for beginning teachers* in MRTEQ. Below follows Miller's (YEAR) rating scale and pyramid of competence (figure 9.4).

Miller's pyramid of competence underpinned by the competency-based approach follows:

Rating Scale:

Level 1: Still developing. This level of performance does not meet minimum expectations and requires urgent interventions and support.

Level 2: Satisfies minimum expectations. This level of performance is acceptable and is in line with minimum expectations, but development and support are still required.

Level 3: Transcends minimum requirements. Performance is good and meets expectations, but some areas are still in need of development and support.

Level 4: Exemplary performance. Performance is outstanding and exceeds expectations. Although performance is excellent, continuous self-development and improvement are advised.

Relevant African epistemologies

Letskeka – Fairness and communality, Ubuntu

Mosana – Ubuntu

Mkabela - African approach to education

Beets & Le Grange – Africanisation and assessment

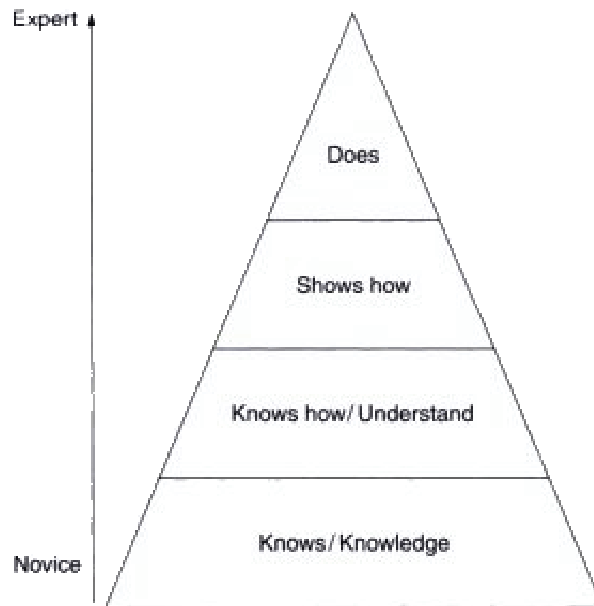

Figure 9.4: Millers' pyramid of competence

Table 9.9: Unisa BEd and PGCE achievement standards for initial teacher education

	Four levels of performance			
	Still developing	**Satisfies minimum expectations**	**Transcends minimum requirements**	**Exemplary performance**
Student Teacher Competency	**Level 1** **Can mostly be assessed through traditional assessments/ simulations/ co-teaching**	**Level 2** **Can be assessed through traditional and supervised practical teaching assessments**	**Level 3** **Can be assessed during practical teaching in supervised authentic environments**	**Level 4** **Can usually only be assessed in a real unsupervised authentic environment**
1. Must have sound subject knowledge (Disciplinary learning) **Shuman's categories of content knowledge: subject matter content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge & curricular knowledge. Mazrui's seven pillars of wisdom in integrating indigenous knowledge – tolerance, social justice, MENTION ALL 7.**				

Acquire and maintain sound subject knowledge.	Academic knowledge about the subject(s) and phase(s) is inaccurate or limited or still being acquired. Unable to apply knowledge effectively in lessons.	Demonstrate academic knowledge of the subject at expected level when teaching. Knowledge is adequate but not comprehensive. Demonstrates only what is required for the lesson.	Demonstrate academic subject knowledge of the subject at a higher level than expected when teaching. Knowledge is comprehensive (has a broader understanding of the subject than only textbook content). Holistic subject knowledge is evident.	Demonstrate academic subject knowledge at an advanced level when teaching. There is evidence of continuous updating, extension and development of subject knowledge through further study, reading and engagement in national or international subject committees.
Understand that different knowledge systems exist and should be accommodated in teaching and learning.	Aware of IKS but does not know how to accommodate this in teaching and learning.	Demonstrate cultural sensitivity/ context-consciousness and is able to accommodate different life views and knowledge systems in the classroom to some extent.	Actively encourage the expression of different life views and utilisation of different knowledge systems in carefully designed lesson activities.	Expression of different life views and utilising different knowledge systems are encouraged, planned for, implemented, respected and shared continuously in teaching and learning.
2. Know how to teach the subject: select, determine the sequence and pace of content in accordance with both subject and learner needs. (Pedagogical learning). **Shulman – PCK, Vygotsky – Socio-cultural learning, Ubuntu values of caring, sharing, dignity, etc. Storytelling, Du Plessis - Context consciousness.**				

Select content for subject and learner needs.	Inadequate/ incorrect selection of content. Selection does not effectively meet teaching or learning needs.	Adequate selection of content. Selection is relevant to teaching and learning needs.	Good selection of content. Selection meets teaching and learning needs. Content leads to meaningful and relevant learning experiences.	Good selection of content. Content leads to meaningful and relevant learning experiences where inter-relatedness of concepts is clear.
Sequencing and pacing of content	Sequencing and pacing of content within and across lessons does not allow learners to build conceptual understanding of the subject. Setting out of content needs a clearer trajectory. No support of content understanding is evident.	Sequencing and pacing of content within and across lessons is adequate but may not contribute to solid understanding of concepts. Sequencing or pacing may need to be revised. Learners may need a different pace. Learners may need more content support.	Sequencing and pacing of content within and across lessons is good. Clear trajectory of content and pacing that is in accordance with learners' needs.	Sequencing and pacing of content within and across lessons is excellent. Learners are able to build a solid understanding of subject concepts through well-supported content sequencing and pacing.
Teach/facilitate	Aware of all requirements necessary for teaching effectively but needs support to implement and coordinate lesson activities.	Demonstrates a suitable teaching strategy, and at least one resource to engage learners and contribute to learning.	Demonstrat es varied teaching strategies and resources are employed to effectively engage learners and	Varied teaching strategies and superb resources that include ICT are employed with complete confidence to effectively engage learners and contribute to learning.

			contribute to learning.	
Adapt (adjust or change) teaching when needed.	Aware that sometimes teaching needs to be adapted but is unable to adapt lessons accordingly.	Able to identify when adaptation is needed. Is able to adapt a lesson to a satisfactory degree.	Able to adapt teaching to a range of contexts and for multiple purposes such as correcting misunderstandings.	Confidently adapts teaching to a range of contexts and for multiple purposes such as correcting misunderstandings. Uses alternative strategies to ensure learning for different learning abilities and/or preferences and/or overcoming learning barriers.

3. Know who their learners are and how they learn **(Pedagogical learning)** **Gardner – learning preferences, Vygotsky – Socio-cultural learning, Ubuntu values of caring, sharing, dignity, etc. Du Plessis - Content consciousness.**

Acquire and maintain knowledge about learners and learning	Aware that learners have different abilities at various levels but need support.	Demonstrates an activity that is appropriate for the abilities of learners.	Demonstrates a range of activities that are appropriate for the level of learning required and caters to a variety of learning styles.	Demonstrates and uses activities that are appropriate for the abilities of learners.
	Aware that learners have learning preferences but need support in catering for these learners.	Uses an activity that is associated with a learning preference.	Uses activities that are suitable to a variety of learning styles.	Develops and uses a range of activities that cater for different learning styles.
	Aware that learners experience barriers to learning but need support.	Identifies some barriers to learning among learners in a class, and uses an activity that caters for these learners.	Facilitates and acknowledges and respects individuality and diversity. Caters for barriers to learning.	Identifies a range of learning barriers and uses a range of strategie,s and alternative learning activities to overcome such barriers. Uses inclusive strategies and promotes respect for individuality and diversity.
4. Communicate effectively in order to mediate learning. **Ginott's Congruent Communication Theory. Letsheka – Ubuntu values**				
Classroom communication	Struggles to communicate effectively. Needs to develop spoken and written confidence in a	Communicates sufficiently to facilitate learning to most learners. Is able to convey the lesson content. Will need	Communicates well during the lesson. Learners are motivated and interested. Good verbal, non-verbal and	Excellent communication during the lesson. Is able to captivate learners during the entire

	classroom. Needs guidance with re-explaining concepts in a different way. Needs guidance with verbal, non-verbal or written classroom communication.	support with verbal, non-verbal or written classroom communication. Mostly confident.	written classroom communication. Is confident.	lesson. Excellent verbal, non-verbal and written classroom communication . Very confident.
5. Highly developed literacy, numeracy and Information Technology (IT) skills. **(Fundamental learning)** **TPACK**				
Literacy	Basic literacy skills necessary for preparing, planning and presenting lessons as well as for general classroom management.	Sufficient literacy skills to cope with preparing, planning and presenting lesson, as well as for general classroom management. Many aspects can be improved.	Good literacy skills needed to plan, prepare and present lessons as well as for general classroom management. May need to improve on one or two aspects.	Excellent literacy skills and this is evident in lesson-planning, preparation and presentation as well as for general classroom management.
Numeracy	Basic numeracy skills necessary for preparing, planning and presenting lessons as well as for general classroom management.	Sufficient numeracy skills to cope with preparing, planning and presenting lesson, as well as for general classroom management. Many aspects can be improved.	Good numeracy skills needed to plan, prepare and present lessons, as well as for general classroom management. May need to improve on one or two aspects.	Excellent numeracy skills and this is evident in lesson planning, preparation and presentation, as well as for general classroom management.
IT	Basic IT skills necessary for preparing, planning and presenting	Sufficient IT skills to cope with preparing, planning and presenting	Good IT skills needed to plan, prepare and present lessons as well as general	Excellent IT skills and this is evident in lesson planning, preparation and

	lessons, as well as for general classroom management.	lessons, as well as general classroom management. Many aspects can be improved.	classroom management. May need to improve on one or two aspects.	presentation, and general classroom management.
6. Knowledgeable about the school curriculum; unpack its specialised content; use available resources; plan and design suitable learning. (Disciplinary and Practical learning – Work integrated learning: WIL) **Shulman – Curriculum knowledge, Multiple knowledge systems - IKS**				
Acquire and maintain *sound curriculum knowledge*	Limited knowledge of curriculum documents for subject(s) and phase(s).	Sufficient knowledge of curriculum topics using CAPS.	Good knowledge of curriculum topics and their alignment with CAPS.	Excellent knowledge of curriculum topics which are aligned with CAPS.
	Knowledge and application of curriculum content is at a basic level (follows textbook only)	Knowledge and application of the curriculum content is at an acceptable level (can situate the lesson within the curriculum)	Knowledge and application of the curriculum content is at a good level. Lessons show clear pathway through the curriculum.	Knowledge and application of the curriculum content shows inter-relatedness with other subjects or contexts.
Plan teaching	Limited knowledge and evidence of lesson planning strategies.	Can plan a learning experience that engages and interests the learners.	Makes use of a range of active, collaborative and cooperative learning strategies in planning learning events.	Can use and/or develop own strategies for active, collaborative and cooperative planning learning events.
Prepare resources	Limited knowledge about resources and teaching media, including ICT, that are meant to engage	Demonstrates knowledge of a range of resources and teaching media, including ICT, that engage learners in	Finds, selects and adapts resources and teaching media, including ICT, that engage learners in the learning process.	Finds, selects, adapts and/or develops resources and teaching media, including ICT that can be used to generate

	learners in the learning process.	the learning process.		interest and engage learners in the learning process.
	Does not use resources. Does not plan well for using resources.	Use and planning for basic resources is satisfactory.	Demonstrates the use of well-planned appropriate resources to enhance learning.	Resources are well planned and available to ensure the smooth flow and enrichment of lesson activities. Resources used support and enhance learning.
7. Understand diversity in the South African Context **(Situational learning)** **Du Plessis- context consciousness, Lave & Wenger – Situated learning, Ubuntu values such as respect, Ways of learning - Letsheka**				
The SA education environment.	Awareness of SA education system.	Knowledge of how the present education system developed.	Knowledge of the principles and procedures of the present curriculum.	Promotes the goals of attaining social justice, Africanisation of the curriculum, and Ubuntu through inclusion of different value systems and culturally sensitive teaching.
8. Manage classrooms effectively; ensure a conducive learning environment **(practical learning)** **Skinner's operant conditioning, Glasser's choice theory, Kohn's student-directed learning theory**				

School context	Aware that schools in SA operate in vastly different contexts.	Determines the context of a particular school.	Adapts teaching in accordance with the context of the school to enrich learning despite challenges.	Uses innovative strategies that can overcome challenges in a particular school context that will ensure effective teaching and learning.
	Limited knowledge and understanding of learners' backgrounds (values, living circumstances, family and community contexts).	Knowledge and understanding of learners' backgrounds is known.	Knowledge and understanding of learners' backgrounds is used to inform an appropriate general teaching approach.	Knowledge and understanding of learners' backgrounds inform lessons and assessments so that they are meaningful to all learners despite their backgrounds.
Classroom environment	Aware that teachers must prepare and maintain a safe, invitational and disciplined classroom environment.	Makes use of what is available at a school in a particular context to prepare a classroom for a lesson and maintain acceptable learner behaviour.	Prepares the classroom environment for a particular subject(s) and maintain acceptable learner behaviour.	Prepares a classroom environment that is suitable for teaching a subject and the learners at a certain attainment level(s) and maintain acceptable learner behaviour.

	No effort to create a learning space that is conducive to teaching and learning. Organisation of learning space hampers teaching and learning.	There is evidence of creating and organising a suitable learning environment which enables individual and/or group learning in a particular context.	Organisation of learning space enables the effective use of teaching resources and encourages and supports individual and group activities.	Organisation of learning space shows creativity and enables all learners to be productively engaged in individual and cooperative learning.
	No discipline and much time is wasted. Learners do not accept discipline, or discipline is experienced by learners as humiliating.	Learners are disciplined and learning is not interrupted unnecessarily.	Learners are encouraged. There is positive reinforcement. Learners accept discipline without feeling threatened.	Learners are motivated and self-disciplined.
9. Assess learners in reliable and varied ways; use the results of assessment to improve teaching and learning. **(Disciplinary and Pedagogical learning)** **Sadler's assessment theory. Millers pyramid of competence, Letsheka communality and fairness** **Beets & Le Grange – Africanisation and assessment**				
Use knowledge of assessment policies and guidelines to develop assessment strategies suitable to their phase(s) and subject(s).	Does not demonstrate an understanding of different types of assessment, e.g. only uses tests	Demonstrates basic understanding of different types of assessment. Tends to use the same type repeatedly.	A variety of assessment techniques are used, allowing learners to demonstrate their abilities and assisting them to overcome learning barriers.	Different assessment techniques used to cater for learners from diverse backgrounds, with multiple intelligences and preferred learning styles while using alternative assessments to accommodate learners with

				barriers to learning.
Giving meaningful assessment feedback.	No evidence of meaningful feedback to learners, or feedback is irregular and inconsistent.	Some evidence of feedback.	Feedback is regular, consistent and timeously provided.	Feedback is insightful, regular, consistent, timeous, and integrated as part of learning.
10. Positive work ethic, display appropriate values and conduct themselves in a manner that befits, enhances and develops the teaching profession. **Eliot Freidson - Theory of professionalism, Ubuntu values**				
Acquire sound professional knowledge and maintain professional behaviour.	Familiar with the code of conduct for student teachers and the SACE code of conduct for teachers.	Familiar with the code of conduct for student teachers, the school code of conduct for teachers and the SACE code of conduct for teachers.	Demonstrates good understanding of the code of conduct for students, school's code of conduct and SACE code of conduct. Acts professionally during all aspects of teaching practice and situations in accordance with all codes of conduct.	Demonstrates excellent understanding of the code of conduct for students, school's code of conduct and SACE code of conduct. Sets an example of impeccable professional conduct in all aspects of teaching.
11. Reflect critically on their own practice **Schön – importance of reflection, Bound – three stages, Jeffs and Smith – expansion of Bound. Discussion with elders (mentors) or community of practice**				

Able to reflect and assess own teaching from the perspective of other stake-holders.	Unable to consider the impact of his/her teaching on other stakeholders.	Aware of the impact he/she has as a teacher on others.	Makes decisions based on a reflective awareness.	Deeply conscious of his/her impact on the curriculum/learners/parents/colleagues.
Is able to consider both the positive and negative aspects of their teaching and suggests improvements and alternatives.	Unable to be critical of his/her lessons, and to suggest own improvements and recommendations.	Critical of his/her lessons but not always able to suggest effective improvements or recommendations.	Critical of his/her lessons and able to suggest some effective improvements or recommendations. Takes initiative in reflection and improving own teaching.	Critical of his/her lessons and able to suggest effective improvements or recommendations. Takes initiative in reflection and improving own teaching. Innovative in teaching.

Compiled by: Johann Dreyer, Piera Biccard and Fatima Fernandes

9.9 GUIDELINES FOR WIL IN PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

During a student's three years of study, WIL modules for Diploma (Level 6) programmes in higher education for birth to four, he/she will have to do a total of 18 weeks practical teaching in an ECCE site – three weeks per semester or six weeks continuous teaching as decided by each HEI.

During four years of study, WIL modules for Degree (Level 7) programmes in higher education for birth to four, students will have to do a total of 24 weeks practical teaching in an ECCE site – three weeks per semester or six weeks continuously as per each HEI's policy. During each WIL period, students need to compile a portfolio as proof of WIL outcomes reached in the ECCE classroom context – thus six WIL portfolios need to be submitted as proof of WIL outcomes attained over the three years or three portfolios if they are practising for six

consecutive weeks. Hence, WIL is implemented in an integrated way within the Degree/Diploma. Students have to apply their knowledge and skills attained through the academic modules of the respective semester together with knowledge and skills mastered from practical sessions, while guided by a professional mentor in the field of ECCE education. A study guide informs students on the implementation of informal and formal practical tasks, as well as reflective learning to develop an increasingly self-regulated teaching practice. The assessment of WIL by mentors and academic staff should be based on the tangible proof of applied competencies in the form of a portfolio.

9.10 Standards for WIL Experience

Table 8.9 in chapter 8 presents the achievement standards for a WIL experience for the Foundation Phase. It is important that the ECCE WIL is well-structured to afford the student a developmental experience. Each stage should be guided by a specific type of learning that is in keeping with the aim of bridging the theory-practice divide and addressing the concern for the holistic development of the ECCE professional. This, of course, needs greater engagement with the field. In what follows, the building blocks to build the WIL standards are provided to encourage debate on the standards for the ECCE WIL.

The following are the stages which builds on each other, and the types of WIL experiences to achieve this:

- Preparatory Stage University-based learning (Theory)
- Initiation Stage Introduction to ECCE site-based learning (Observation)
- Consolidation Stage Guided-practice (Scaffolded student performance)
- Autonomy Stage Independent practice (Independent student performance)
- Reflective Practitioner Stage Exemplary performance (Independent and reflective)

Each stage should consider the following:

- Knowledge
- Learning environment

- Professional conduct
- Planning and supporting learning
- Assessment
- Broader involvement at the ECCE site (parents, community, and support services)

9.11 STUDY GUIDES TO STRUCTURE THE WIL

The study guide must be based on the packaging of the agreed-upon standards. Once this is unpacked for an institution, it could include three study units which address the following components regarding the planning and implementation of the WIL portfolio:

Study unit 1	Self-assessment and reflection (assessed by the university)
Study unit 2	Formative assessment in the ECCE site (assessed by the mentor)
Study unit 3	Evidence of WIL for formal assessment of ECCE applied competencies (assessed by the university)

Study Unit 1 deals with reflective learning and practice, and students will provide evidence of this skill in Section 1 of their Portfolio. This component of WIL guides students in reflective learning during the practical, and during the mastering of theoretical components of the programme.

Students should demonstrate reflection and critically evaluate their own professional development gained from practice within the context of the ECCE classroom, in addition to mastering pedagogical content knowledge through the academic modules of the programme.

Reflection on ECCE practice: Students need to reflect on a daily and continuous basis on their experiences within the ECCE classroom during each of their practical periods. Certain portfolio tasks include self-assessed activities or questions to guide and develop students' ability to reflect critically on their own teaching skills and professional development. Reflection on the teaching strategies of other teachers, such as the mentor, also forms part of reflective

practice. A reflective journal therefore forms part of the WIL practical portfolio and should be filed in Section 1 of the Portfolio. Students should use this opportunity for professional development by reflecting daily on their experiences in practice. This forms an important part of the evaluation process as research shows that the ability to critically reflect on one's own teaching practice and experiences, as well as the practice of others in order to promote expert teaching. Students' ability to reflect on ECCE practice should be continuously monitored by the mentor, and also assessed by academic staff of the University.

Reflection on knowledge (pedagogical content knowledge [PCK]): All academic modules in the programme require students to reflect on their professional development through the theoretical components of the programme by completing the reflective addenda at the back of each study guide. These reflections on knowledge, skills and attitudes gained through each module (in this module cluster) should also be included in Section 1 of the portfolio.

Whilst everyone agrees that reflective practice is essential if a teacher is to continue to improve on his/her efficacy in the classroom, empowering teachers to value this approach is a little more challenging. Perhaps the answer lies in incorporating reflection into the structure of the lesson plan diary rather than focusing on reflective journals which teachers consider to be extra work.

Study Unit 2 guides students in the implementation of practical tasks, which are assessed through direct observation by the mentor. During the practical teaching period students will be guided to observe learning experiences as presented by a teacher, and to present learning experiences to the learners. The teacher and/or mentor who will support them in the planning and presentation, will also report on their progress. Students therefore have to plan and implement two practical tasks in the ECCE context. The mentor should not only support students in the planning of these tasks, but should also provide continuous formative feedback and assess the student's applied competence by scoring in the rubric on each of the tasks. While all mentor assessment forms are filed in Section 2 of the portfolio, all evidence of the implementation should be filed in Section 3 of the portfolio.

Apart from the marking rubric supplied for the various practical tasks, students need to include all mentor assessments and reports in Section 2 of the portfolio, as well as all forms

that need to be completed and signed by the mentor and stamped by the school. All forms and resources are included in the WIL Administration booklet.

Study Unit 3 guides students in the compilation of all evidence of their work-integrated learning and consequent development of applied competency. It is important that this evidence should correlate with the evidence submitted in Section 2 of the Portfolio. The university examiners will assess all evidence summatively, which should be filed in Section 3 of the portfolio.

Students should utilise Section 4 of their Portfolios to file any additional evidence. This section should also show students' own choice of compilation – thus it should include evidence with motivation that students feel provides effective proof of their professional learning and development during the WIL period.

9.12 MENTORSHIP TO SUPPORT WIL

This is a key component of WIL and supervisors must be trained on how to be an effective mentor, in addition to devoting sufficient time to feedback for students and allow for different sources of mentorship. Primary sources should be the class teacher, tutors and peers. More use can be made of technology when exposing students to best practice. Training institutions should empower their staff to understand how to access relevant clips, download them and use them in their lectures. This must be coupled with making sure that the relevant technology is available in training centres/lecture theatres so that lecturers/facilitators are not demotivated by glitches when operating items of technology. Reflective practice is a key aspect of WIL and students must be given the tools to acquire this type of skill in order to improve on their pedagogy.

There is a need to ask, how can we ensure that our teachers are exposed to good quality teaching and also receive mentorship at multiple levels? It appears that there is some emphasis on observation by both the assessor and the student. Are we perhaps putting too much emphasis on this and not enough on actual practical teaching where the student teacher has to experience a hands-on approach from the onset. Perhaps this balance needs to be re-evaluated in HEIs where students are complaining about insufficient practice time.

The one complication we are going to face is where the students pursues a qualification higher than that of the practitioner at the site. What kind of mentorship should the practitioner receive to support our students? Then there is the issue of the practitioner being the student. In this case who mentors the student/practitioner and how does the student/practitioner obtain effective guided-practice beyond his/her own site? How does the distancing of the practitioners from the student occur when assignments have to be completed? These are critical questions that need further engagement.

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CHAPTER 10

MODES OF ENGAGEMENT

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10.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to clarify what we mean by *Modes of Engagement*, to think about what mode of engagement you will employ for the NQF Level 6 or the NQF Level 7 programmes, and to carefully consider the implications of the mode of engagement at your institution for different aspects of programme implementation. This NQF Level 6 Diploma and NQF Level 7 BEd Programme Framework for Birth to Four has been designed to be implemented using modes of engagement relevant to a range of contexts.

Modes of engagement refer to how programmes are offered to students. We talk about a mode of engagement, rather than a mode of delivery, because education - and particularly teacher education - is much more than simply delivering a programme. We think about modes of engagement as a grid which reflects, on the one hand, the geographical distribution of students (from face-to-face to distance learning, and anything in between), and on the other hand, the extent of ICT support (from no digital support to being fully online).

The Programme Frameworks for the ECCE Diploma and Degree are underpinned by open-learning principles. The principles of open-learning help us to consider the many components of programme design and materials development that go beyond simple delivery or instruction.

10.2 CONCEPTS AND ISSUES

Decisions that we make about modes of engagement are influenced by a number of factors. These factors impact on different components of programme design and materials development.

10.2.1 Open Learning Principles

One often hears the term *Open Distance Learning* - or ODL, sometimes ODeL. This term implies that Open Learning and Distance Education are almost the same, or are closely associated in some way. But Open Learning and Distance Learning cannot simply be conflated. Ideally, we should strive to *open* all education avenues, including using face-to-face and distance learning methods.

Open Learning is an approach to all education that seeks to remove unnecessary barriers to learning, while aiming to provide learners with a reasonable chance of success in programmes centred on their specific needs and located in multiple arenas of learning.

Key principles inform an Open Learning approach. These can be clustered as follows:

1. Increasing access for success

- learners have meaningful and affordable access to opportunities for lifelong learning
- unnecessary barriers to access are removed
- wherever appropriate, learning provision is flexible, allowing learners to increasingly determine where, when, what and how they learn, as well as the pace at which they will learn

2. Enabling success

- providers create the conditions for learner success through learner support, contextually appropriate resources and sound pedagogical practices
- learning processes centre on the learners and contexts of learning, build on their experience and encourage active engagement leading to independent and critical thinking

3. Continuing success

- prior learning and experience is recognised wherever possible
- arrangements for credit transfer and articulation between qualifications facilitate further learning

These principles should be applied in order to develop meaningful educational opportunities, regardless of the 'mode of delivery' used. Sometimes learners do not enjoy proximity to conventional learning centres, or if they do have access to classes and courses near to the place whether they live, they may be working, or have family responsibilities which render them unable to attend fixed face-to-face classes at a centralised venue. Or, they may simply

prefer to study in their own environment, at their own pace. To provide access for these learners, education programmes should be designed using open learning principles.

10.2.2 Mode of Engagement Grid

Let us consider different contexts of learning in relation to the distribution of students and teachers. On the one hand we can think about a geographical continuum ranging from face-to-face to being fully off-campus. Blended learning is anything in between. See this represented in Figure 10.1.

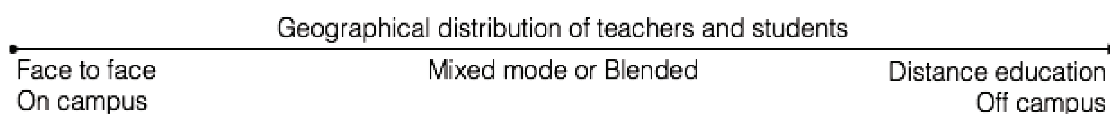

Figure 10.1: Geographical distribution of teachers' and students' continuum

Related to this, is a second continuum that considers the availability and use of ICT to support students (figure 10.2). The ICT support continuum is aligned to the programme implementation context. This has become a stronger consideration since within the South African education system, and especially in Higher Education, broadband access has greatly improved over recent times, and the cost of broadband has also decreased.

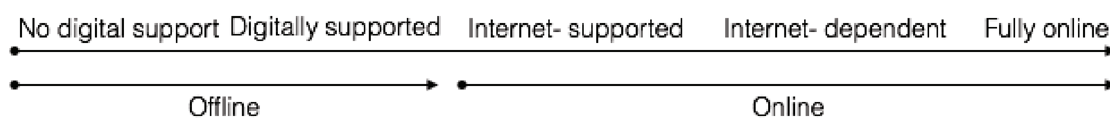

Figure 10.2: ICT support continuum

Consequently, the mode of engagement is essentially about the geographical and ICT contexts in which a programme is implemented at any particular institution. We can think about this as a grid, like the one in figure 10.3 below.

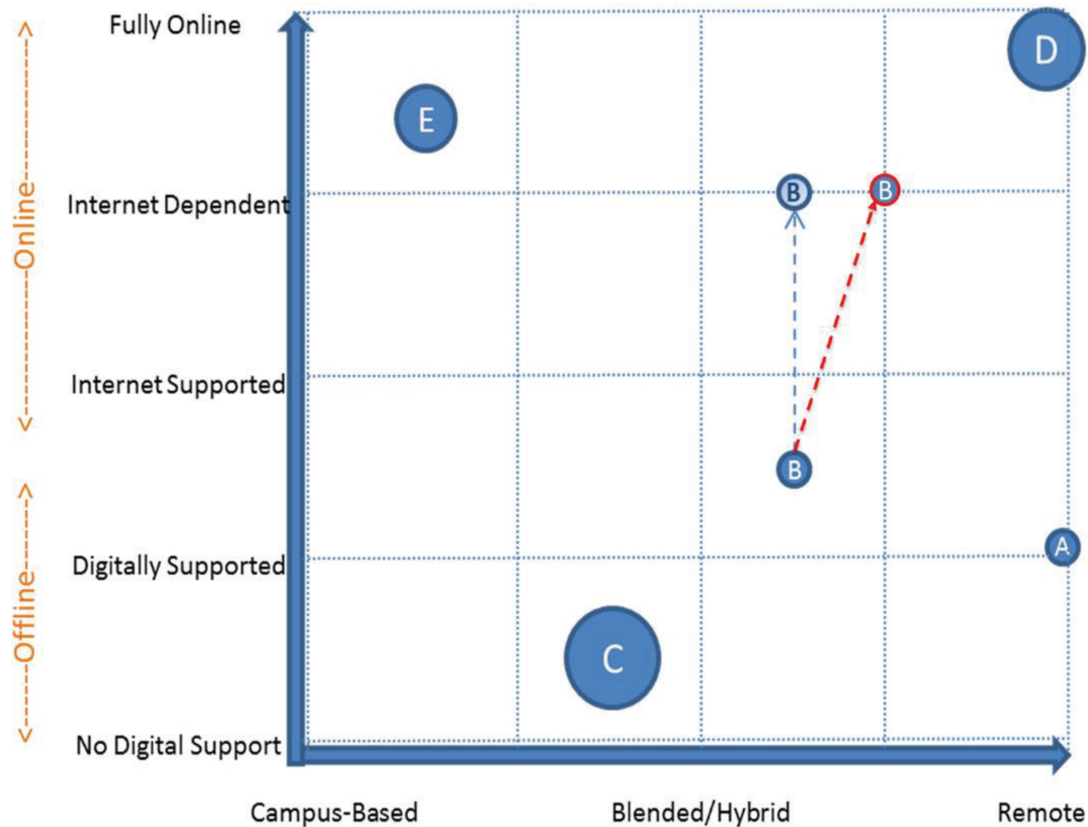

Figure 10.3. Mode of engagement grid (Saide, 2012).

When we analyse the above grid we can see that the institution of learning at A offers programmes that are digitally supported off-line and which are off-campus. The institution at C will offer blended learning programmes that are mostly print-based with some digital support, sometimes face-to-face with some self-study supported by on-site visits. Institution B on the grid above, currently offers blended programmes in which students do a fair amount of self-study with digital support, sometimes requiring access to the internet. They plan to become more reliant on internet connectivity for students' learning, which will enable them to take on larger numbers of students who are more remote-based..

Think about where your institution is on this grid for the implementation of the birth to four Diploma or Degree. This decision will impact on how you design the different components of your programme.

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10.2.3 Student Support

Student support is key to student success in all components of the programme framework. As far as possible we need to build student support into the design of the programme. When we think about different modes of engagement, student support is at the heart of it. Regardless of the mode of engagement, we need an understanding of who the students are, and what context they come from. This will impact on the varying levels of support that students may need, from support with RPL and administrative support, to academic and developmental education support including pedagogical and technological support. Also, through assessment support and support in accessing and using resources, student success will be attained. Whether support is offered in a face-to-face, blended or online environment, it needs to be facilitated and managed by highly qualified and committed teachers.

10.2.4 Technology

In order to engage students in a blended, internet-supported or fully online environment, we have to consider what access students will have to internet, on-campus or off-campus.

In addition to thinking about whether students have access to technology that is needed for the mode of engagement, it is important to consider the pedagogical use of technology. We can add two more vectors to the *mode of engagement grid* in figure 10.3 above.

The ICT in the education vector in figure 10.4 below shows a continuum of how technology is used to support instruction (content delivery, drill and practice, and skills development through repeated practice), cognitive development (use of technology to represent information), or as a tool to facilitate knowledge-construction (represent knowledge in different ways).

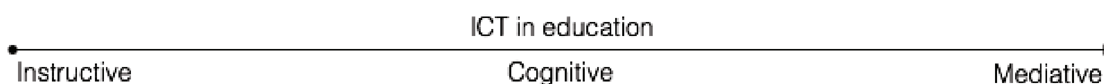

Figure 10.4: Pedagogical use of ICT in education vector

The fourth vector describes the outcomes of learning, as described in Bloom's Revised Taxonomy (Clark, 2004). This includes remembering, understanding, application, evaluating and creating (figure 10.5).

Figure 10.5: Bloom's Revised Taxonomy vector

The above two vectors are always aligned to the learning outcomes of a programme.

So whether we are using technology in a blended context where students have access to digital devices on or off campus, or in an online context where students are using mobile devices and computers for self-study, the technology is driven by the outcomes of the programme and the pedagogy - not the other way around.

10.2.5 Structure

Northedge (1994:140) suggests that "when a course has a strong and explicit structure built into it, students are able to become independent far more rapidly" and that "purposeful action can only be undertaken within a frame of reference of some kind". The purpose of the structure of a programme is to support students along a learning pathway. This becomes particularly important when students are studying in blended or online modes, especially if students are not familiar with learning in an online or blended environment. Nevertheless, the use of digital and online technology does allow us to give students some choices about direction from within a set structure.

There are two other important aspects to consider in relation to how programmes are structured for different modes of engagement.

The first relates to the students' context and prior knowledge, and has to do with the level of proficiency in their use of technology. Do students have the necessary technological skills to navigate their way through online components of the programme? Salmon's (2004) five-

stage model can be used as an overarching model for designing and facilitating an online learning programme. This model factors in a programme component at the beginning that orientates students to online learning. This facilitates the development of technical skills students might not have, but importantly also gives opportunities for online socialisation, access and motivation.

The second consideration relates to feedback and support. Any good programme is structured to allow for regular opportunities for feedback and support, regardless of mode. However, when we consider blended and online modes, we have to make sure that self-study and feedback or contact time is well balanced. For example, we need to structure the programme so that there is sufficient time for self-study before contact sessions take place, and sufficient time for marking of assessments before feedback session. Of course, the contact sessions themselves need to be long enough to allow for meaningful engagement between students, and between students and tutors.

10.2.6 Administration and Planning

This component of the framework includes considerations about human resources, registration and fees, among others. One thinks about these differently depending on the mode of engagement. For example, if you are engaging with students in an online environment, what staff capacity will you need to enrol students online, and what staff capacity one needs to facilitate online feedback sessions, and to load all the materials onto an online platform?

10.3 Guidelines for modes of engagement for ECCE programme and materials development and design

10.3.1 Pedagogy

We have discussed previously the pedagogical principles that underpin this programme. These principles will apply no matter what mode is used to engage students. Whether we are offering a face-to-face programme, a blended programme, or even a fully online programme, we will model and teach open, inclusive, activity-based pedagogical practices, which support students to be reflective, critical-thinkers.

This means that in our own teaching of student teachers, whether in an online, blended or face-to-face environment, we apply the principles associated with being and becoming a professional ECCE teacher, including promoting the practice of self-reflection, guided-reflection and critical-reflection. In order to do this, we provide a range of different kinds of engaging activities that facilitate doing, thinking and reflective practice.

In an online or blended programme we do not simply digitise lecture notes and learning materials and “dump” them in an online platform or Learning Management System (LMS). The same principles that inform the development of learning materials that we use in a face-to-face, or blended context, are applied for online use. The learning and teaching strategy, and not the technology, influences the quality of learning. Online learning, like any other learning, must create challenging activities that enable learners to link new information to old, acquire meaningful knowledge, and develop and use their meta-cognitive abilities. (Ally, 2004).

10.3.2 Types of presence

A theoretical framework that is underpinned by three *“types of presence*” provides a sound basis on which to structure content, and to design learning activities in order to integrate pedagogic mediation, sharing and collaborating, as well as critical-reflection during the learning process (Anderson & Elloumi, 2004). The *three types of presence* are outlined below:

- **Teacher presence** is about mediating, stimulating, guiding, and supporting learners to reflect on their experiences in order to master more complex academic knowledge and independent learning. In face-to-face tuition, the learner and the teacher are able to have a conversation in which the teacher can respond to what the learner does or says, and may start to challenge and shift the conceptions that the learner is developing. In a blended or online environment, the materials take on the role of the teacher. The learning materials “talk to” and establish dialogue with the learners through the text. Feedback, whether it is written, verbal or virtual (e.g. in a chat forum), encourages students to think critically about what they have done, and provides a framework against which students are able to discover and reflect on mistakes they may have made.

- **Social presence** is about understanding that learning is a social activity that involves a collaborative construction of knowledge. The greatest danger in distance education is for learners to be isolated, and thus endure the burden of learning in very prohibitive learning spaces. Social presence is about collaborative learning, and in online learning this occurs both synchronously and asynchronously, in a virtual sense.
- **Cognitive presence** is an act of the mind. It is about the mental processing of information gained through experience, and reflecting upon that information in order to construct new knowledge. Whether online or face-to-face, learning involves mental processes.

A balance of the *"three presences"* is the best recipe for a meaningful learning experience, depending where you situate your institution according to the modes of engagement grid.

10.3.3 Assessment strategy

All assessment principles apply, regardless of the mode of engagement, and we should always strive to have a variety of assessment methods in an integrated assessment strategy. Reflexive competence is the demonstrated ability to integrate our performances with our understanding so that we are able to adapt to changed circumstances and explain the reason behind these adaptations (SAQA, 2001).

10.3.4 Recognition of prior learning (RPL)

Key to any design and development process is the understanding who your target audience is. The nature of ECCE's target audience may be such that students require additional support with RPL. This would apply regardless of the mode of engagement with the RPL process.

Some institutions are already considering integrating the RPL process into their learning management systems (LMS). In this case, or in the case of RPL processes, making use of new technologies should be carefully thought out in terms of introducing some sort of orientation for these new modes of engagement, including providing appropriate pedagogical support and mentorship during RPL.

An important component of RPL is demonstrating practical competence. It is possible to make use of multimedia in the same way we might when evaluating practice in our programmes. This means we can make use of videos, work products, simulations accompanied by narratives, and using technology such as Whatsapp, among others.

10.3.5 Work Integrated Learning (WIL)

Work Integrated Learning opens up a number of opportunities to engage with students using different modes. For example, student teachers, mentors and tutors can make use of social media to communicate, plan, and give and receive feedback during their WIL experiences. This can include the use of video-recordings to supplement observations and to demonstrate practical teaching. This can be done regardless of whether the programme as a whole is being offered face-to-face, in blended mode, or online.

Some institutions have begun asking students to submit e-portfolios. This means submitting evidence of learning, including practical learning, via an online platform. The advantages and disadvantages of e-portfolios are outlined in the *PIECCE Illustrative Pack on WIL*. Regardless of the mode of engagement, they can be an efficient and creative way of compiling portfolios, but they do rely heavily on access to the internet. We need to make sure that e-portfolios do not become a barrier to student access and success. Students may need initial and increased support to compile and submit e-portfolios. We need to be sure that teacher educators, tutors and mentors are trained in the use, compiling, marking and submitting of e-portfolios.

When using any technology as a platform for communication, support and feedback are needed to ensure that technology does not become a barrier to participation and success.

10.3.6 Developmental education

Orientation and support are key regardless of the mode of engagement. Developmental education is an opportunity to integrate this orientation into the programme, and systematically ensure that students are not denied access due to the lack of skills.

Tutors, mentors and educators need to have the necessary skills and time to support students. If HEIs are offering blended or online courses, some skills such as facilitating online may be new to the staff; they need the necessary training and support. A blended mode may provide

more flexibility for structuring an integrated developmental education programme in relation to sequencing, pacing, feedback and support. In developmental education you will have to give particular attention to issues such as how students submit their work, receive feedback, and have opportunities to improve and re-submit.

As in other components of the programme, social media and new technologies offer opportunities for students/teacher educators and peer groups to support and communicate with each other via, among others, whatsapp, sms, and email during their developmental education journey.

10.3.7 Resources

The resources that we avail to students in blended or online modes need to follow the same sound pedagogical principles that we follow in the face-to-face mode. For example, if students are expected to engage in self-study activities, we need to provide learning materials that support reflective practice and critical-thinking.

Resources can, and should support a range of varied activities. These include using multimedia resources such as videos, photographs, storybooks, games, and journal articles and other readings.

In addition to any copyright considerations that a regular face-to-face programme may demand, there are those online resources, particularly multimedia resources, where further issues of copyright may arise. For example, if you are offering a course online, you need to check that you are not violating any copyright by sharing resources on your platform.

The use of Open Educational Resources (OER) has become widespread. Internationally the use of OER is endorsed by the *UNESCO Paris OER Declaration 2012*. This was formally adopted at the 2012 World Open Educational Resources (OER) Congress held at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris from 20 – 22 June 2012. The Declaration is part of a growing movement promoting the development of OER. It promotes open licensing of all educational materials that are publicly funded.

When we put an OER licence on educational materials, we facilitate the sharing of those materials without violating copyright.

The PIECCE Consortium has developed teacher educator *Illustrative Packs for the ECCE Diploma,* based on this programme framework. A requirement of EU funding was that these materials, the Programme Framework itself, are produced under a Creative Commons Licence. The materials are copyrighted to the PIECCE Consortium. In addition to copyright, we have put a Creative Commons (CC) licence on them. A Creative Commons licence gives permission for others to use, adapt and/or share those materials, without removing the copyright. There are different types of CC licences which give different kinds of permission.

The following link provides an explanation of the different licences:

https://creativecommons.org/licenses/.

The PIECCE Illustrative Packs found on the website relate to:

1. Inclusive learning environments for young children;
2. Becoming a professional in ECCE;
3. Constructions of childhood and children;
4. Language diversity and multilingualism in ECCE;
5. Relationship Building to Promote Health, Safety and Nutrition in ECCE
6. Work Integrated Learning: Guide to Effective Practice

10.3.8 Helpful questions to consider

- How often can students register?
- Do students have a choice with regard to the form of assessment e.g. multiple-choice, portfolio, or essay?
- Are there set assignments and examination dates, or can students choose dates when they are ready?
- Is there a wide range of student support options from which students can choose?
- Is student support accessible and affordable?
- How open are the technologies used? Can students access learning environments and resources from a range of devices?
- How prescriptive are curricula? How much choice do students have? What are the implications of the options?
- How open is the accreditation students will receive? Is it nationally and internationally recognised?
- How open are the curricula and exit points? Or are students left with nothing if they decide not to complete the “full” qualification?
- To what extent do the programmes open up the future for students?

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CHAPTER 11

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)

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11.1 INTRODUCTION

Internationally, there is renewed focus on the recognition of prior learning (RPL) aimed at enhancing countries' human capital and participation in the competitive global economy (Cavaco, Lafont & Pariat, 2014; Pitman & Vidovich, 2013). Consequently, RPL is a mechanism to facilitate flexible pathways into higher education, improve degree completion, and implement competency-based assessment (Gair, 2013) as reflected in a range of South African policies on RPL (CHE, 2016; DHET, 2017; SAQA, 2002, 2013). Further, RPL is focused on the recognition and validation of acquired experience [RVAE] (Diedrich, 2013) and is associated with access to lifelong learning (DHET, 2013), social justice (Jackson, 2011) and skills development (Cooper & Harris, 2013).

In South Africa, RPL is closely associated with credit accumulation and transfer [CAT] (Umalusi, 2010). It grants access to a qualification programme or exemption (also referred to as advanced standing) from courses or modules that form part of a qualification but does not involve credits (CHE, 2016). Moreover, RPL is entrenched in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) since it was introduced for the purpose of redress, social justice, as well as to increase articulation and mobility into further education and training (DHET, 2013) for those previously excluded from education under apartheid (Gair, 2013).

The PIECCE working group on RPL noted that all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in South Africa appear to be implementing RPL according to established policies, procedures and guidelines (See list of HEIs' websites). Many HEIs have RPL offices and dedicated personnel. Despite this, the DHET (2013) contends that RPL has not yet begun to fulfil its potential since practice is lagging behind policy, and uptake is restricted (Cooper & Harris, 2013).

However, PIECCE has the potential to transform the early childhood field in South Africa. In this chapter, we highlight RPL as an essential feature of ECCE programme design. How HEIs conceptualise and implement RPL, will determine who enrols for the new programmes. If we wish to be inclusive, our programme design and delivery must ensure redress of our historically marginalised field of education. This compels us to think creatively about how we facilitate access to and achieve success in higher education for ECCE practitioners, as they are the key to the quality enhancement of programmes for our youngest and most vulnerable children.

11.2 PURPOSE

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss how HEIs could extend current practice in RPL to promote equity, social justice and inclusion. This purpose is advanced bearing in mind that HEIs are encouraged to develop mechanisms for facilitating access to students across diverse contexts. Many existing ECCE practitioners are mature, non-traditional students who already possess experience. Therefore RPL is a mechanism to facilitate flexible pathways into higher education, improve degree completion, and implement competency-based assessment. Moreover, validating ECCE practitioners' practical knowledge, and foregrounding this in the Diploma and Degree programmes create the potential to boost students' confidence in what they already know, and thus build on their prior knowledge. Consequently, one of the key goals of RPL should be to widen participation in the new programmes, as recommended by Dismore (2016).

11.3 CONCEPTS AND ISSUES

There are a number of complex concepts and considerations for the implementation of RPL. In particular, RPL should not be misinterpreted as implying diminished standards or expectations. Instead, the rigour and integrity of the degree should be maintained, while recognising that some students will possess knowledge and skills "beyond the novice" (Gair, 2013). Furthermore, institutions must strive to balance the recognition of prior knowledge and skills, current learning needs, and graduate knowledge and skills, including how to

translate theory into practice in diverse ECCE settings. Equally important is recognising that RPL must be accompanied by support required for success in academic learning.

Harrison (2017:75) found that language is a significant barrier since 95% of HEIs conduct RPL in English, despite it being the non-mother tongue of the majority of applicants. Therefore HEIs should adopt alternative methods and provide additional support mechanisms such as extra training sessions or assignments.

11.3.1 Definition of the Concept of RPL

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process through which informal, non-formal and formal learning are measured, mediated for recognition across diverse contexts, and certified against the requirements for access, credit, inclusion or advancement in the workplace or formal education and training system (SAQA, 2014). It provides for the recognition of prior learning regardless of when or where it occurred (Andersson, Fejes & Sandberg, 2013). In this way, it makes prior learning visible by recognising non-formal and informal processes. However, it is essential to distinguish RPL from credit transfer for formal learning. Hence, PIECCE recognises that existing ECCE practitioners have prior learning practice and current competencies that can be recognised, assessed, and accredited.

11.3.2 Type of Student

Many existing ECCCE practitioners are experienced and need to be distinguished from other students who enrol for initial teacher education programmes. They are emerging professionals, since they may already possess some of the Basic Competences for Professionally Qualified Early Childhood Educators (DHET, 2017). They include:

- ECCE practitioners who have acquired knowledge, experience and skills gained through informal or formal training;
- ECCE practitioners with years of workplace practice and experience;
- ECCE practitioners who have credit-bearing certificates for portability and admission to the diploma/degree programmes:

- ECCE practitioners who are willing to do additional training as top-up and support to address their identified gaps (e.g. academic support for foundational learning and any gaps identified through RPL);
- ECCE practitioners who completed short courses with credits or without credits as well as those with attendance certificates as proof of their learning; and
- Mature, experienced ECCE students who could potentially complete the programmes in a shorter time by reducing the duration of the programmes.

11.3.3 Value and Potential of RPL

Much of the existing research notes that the uptake of RPL is limited. Many countries are currently addressing the barriers to uptake since RPL has the potential to:

- Advance economic goals through stimulating mobility in the labour market (Pitman & Vidovich, 2013);
- Promote social/democratic objectives, for example, the validation of informal and non-formal learning to increase access to education (Diedrich, 2013; Pitman & Vidovich, 2013; Bofelo, Shah, Moodley, Cooper & Jones, 2013);
- Redress social injustice through addressing the needs of historically under-represented learners in higher education (Pitman & Vidovich, 2013);
- Embody emancipation and social justice by advantaging the excluded and illuminating knowledge that was previously invisible, and breaking down discriminatory barriers to education in order to advance a human rights agenda (Gair, 2013; Barros, 2013);
- Endorse lifelong learning and recognise mature women’s contributions to the economy and the skilled labour market, enhance access to learning institutions, and help workers acquire “qualified” status without compelling them to re-learn what they already know (Gair, 2013);
- Recognise experience gained outside academic contexts (Snyman, 2013)

- Facilitate the conversion of not-for-degree (NFD) studies into degree studies by recognising NFD studies as an alternative entry mechanism for students without the requisite qualifications (Klein-Collins & Wertheim, 2013). For example, we should explore whether the completion of relevant short learning programmes could allow for credit transfer towards a diploma or degree course.
- Implement the Degree Qualifications Profile, a competency-based approach to measure the outcomes of learning - that is, what students already know and can do (Klein-Collins & Wertheim, 2013);
- Implement contextualisation as a teaching strategy, where students' prior knowledge acquired at home, school and community is linked to academic content to enhance the meaning and relevance of academic material. Therefore, HEIs should make meaningful connections between what the student knows and the new content to be learned (Wyatt, 2016); and
- Make education more accessible and assist in closing the gap between privileged and marginalised groups.

Pitman and Vidovich (2013) promote an alternative approach to understanding RPL as a Bourdieuian process of "capital conversion". Consequently, an individual's economic, social and cultural capital are assessed as being equal to academic experience (Pitman & Vidovich, 2013). Rather than considering the epistemology of prior learning, institutions should consider the equivalence in socio-cultural influence. In addition, HEIs should view RPL as more than an objective act of measuring specific learning outcomes. Furthermore, RPL requires ongoing communication and reflection to allow the student and the assessor to reach mutual understanding of what learning has occurred (Pitman & Vidovich, 2013). This would also ensure that RPL is more learner-centred in nature. Moreover, HEIs should consider the "student profile including distinctive personal traits, such as motivation, task orientation, a sense of responsibility, and an orientation towards the future" (Snyman, 2013: v). As noted by Armsby (2013), reflective practice is a cornerstone of work-based learning, thus institutions should recognise that learning occurs most effectively through participation in a

community of practice. Therefore, HEIs could engage in the process of "capital conversion" if they recognise prior life and work experience.

11.3.4 Confidence-building

In PIECCE, confidence-building is an important consideration, particularly for ECCE practitioners who have historically not had access to higher education. We therefore recommend that HEIs:

- Give credit to the practical experience of the ECCE practitioners who wish to pursue further studies as this has the potential to boost students' confidence and build on their prior knowledge (Armsby, 2013; Dismore, 2016; Hyland-Russel & Syrnyk, 2015; Snyman, 2013).
- Provide appropriate pedagogical support to students who lack the advanced literacy skills required to complete portfolios of prior learning and ensure their success in academic learning as this will have a positive impact on building students' confidence.
- Promote students' positive beliefs about themselves and their place in the world through consciously creating ways for them to reflect on their experience and actively participate in their learning (Hyland-Russell & Syrnyk, 2015). As Burkšaitienė (2015) points out, students require moral support throughout the RPL process to build their confidence. Moreover, RPL staff at HEIs need to develop appropriate counselling skills.
- Use new technologies in reading and writing while developing ECCE practitioners' competencies and their self-esteem (Cavaco et al., 2014).
- Design WIL to improve students' confidence (Dressler & Keeling, 2004:225).
- Provide integrated support through strong mentorship to build students' confidence, and facilitate their transition from informal to formal settings.

11.3.5 Transition from Informal Schooling to Formal Qualifications

It is also important to consider how to support students to transition successfully to higher education. However, PIECCE may provide opportunities to develop bridging programmes in partnership with HEIs and TVET colleges to ensure that students are able to meet the

academic demands of full qualifications at university level. As indicated in the PIECCE research report, there would be a need to pay attention to the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students, and employ contextualisation to link their personal experiences and cultural knowledge with academic content, as recommended by Wyatt (2016). Consequently, institutional policies and practices must explicitly address the barriers to learning and assessment in order to build student's confidence and facilitate a smooth transition from informal schooling to formal qualifications.

11.3.6 Access to RPL

Many existing ECCE practitioners require access to RPL for admission, and credit transfer. In particular, for admission to the Diploma in Early Care and Education or Dip (ECCE). However, four (4) cohorts of ECCE practitioners deserve special consideration.

This includes practitioners who have completed the following:

(i) Further Education and Training Certificate in Early Childhood Development (FETC: ECD);

(ii) National Certificate in Vocational Training NC(V) in Early Childhood Development at NQF Level 4;

(iii) Report 191 National Certificates at N4, N5 and N6 equivalent to NQF Level 5; or

(iv) Higher Certificate in Early Childhood Development at NQF Level 5.

Many of these practitioners do not hold National Senior Certificates (NSC) with Diploma endorsement. Therefore, HEIs are encouraged to recognise the equivalence of the NQF Level 4 occupational-directed and vocational-directed qualifications. Similarly, for admission to the Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood Care and Education Degree or BEd (ECCE), the equivalence of qualifications at NQF Level 5 should be recognised. If HEIs insist on matric certificates, it would pose a threat to the admission of non-traditional ECCE students, many of whom are experienced practitioners. Moreover, a lack of RPL in PIECCE would be a significant disincentive to mature-aged ECCE students with prior practice knowledge who are at a different starting points as compared to inexperienced students (Gair, 2013). In addition,

failing to recognise indigenous knowledge within curricula would constitute an ongoing barrier to learning.

Snyman's (2013) conception of the RPL process as a bridging opportunity to prepare students for the demands of higher education (access for success) compels us to explore ways of promoting access to RPL and repurpose it within HEIs (Klein-Collins & Wertheim, 2013).

Important considerations include:

(i) staff capacity development and support related to the rationale for the process, the learning theory that supports it and the academic integrity and rigour of the RPL methods employed;

(ii) financial aid for the costs associated with assessing students' knowledge, skills and abilities for the purpose of awarding credits; and

(iii) a learner support system which requires dramatic transformation on how HEIs structure the new programmes, award credits, and implement the programmes.

In PIECCE, we further need to distinguish between credit accumulation and credit transfer (Umalusi, 2010). Credit accumulation is "the totalling of credits required to complete a qualification, usually limited to a specific programme, often within a particular institution". Paradoxically, credit transfer is "the vertical or horizontal relocation of specific credits towards a qualification on the same or higher level, that usually takes place between programmes, often between different institutions" (SAQA, 2006).

The Policy on the Minimum Requirements for Programmes Leading to Qualifications in Higher Education for Early Childhood Development Educators (DHET, 2017) notes that:

- Many students who enter ECCE programmes are already employed in ECCE settings and possess knowledge as a result of learning in the workplace.
- In order to recognise relevant prior learning, learning outcomes must not be compromised in the process. Hence, RPL must occur on a student-by-student basis in order to make a professional judgement of the individual's prior learning.

- The admitting institutions should conduct RPL for access and advanced credit standing according to national policies, quality council policies, and institutional policies. Consequently, SAQA's National Policy for the Implementation of the Recognition of Prior Learning (SAQA, 2013), outlines how providers should implement RPL.
- The CHE's (2016) RPL Policy must also be considered.
- The 2017 Policy on the Minimum Requirements for Programmes Leading to Qualifications in Higher Education for Early Childhood Development Educators notes that Credit Accumulation and Transfer should:
  - ✓ Recognise that many students who embark on ECD educator programmes will already hold prior qualifications or part-qualifications that could be considered for credit accumulation and transfer (CAT) purposes.
  - ✓ These include credits gained at Level 5 and above through the completion of qualifications or part-qualifications developed, implemented and quality assured by the CHE, Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO), and the Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training (Umalusi, 2016).
  - ✓ Prospective students, who obtain credits through relevant prior qualifications or part-qualifications, may receive recognition for previously earned credits. However, institutions need to establish the equivalence between the learning content and NQF level of the prior learning and the learning that will be "credited" in the new qualification.
- The HEQSF (2013) provides that "any and all credits for an incomplete qualification may be recognised by the same or different institution as meeting part of the requirements for a different qualification, or may be recognised by a different institution as meeting part of the requirements for the same qualification".
- A full qualification cannot be awarded through RPL (CHE, 2017).

- The HEQSF (2013) also provides that "a maximum of 50% of the credits of a completed qualification may be transferred to another qualification, provided also that no more than 50% of the credits required for the other qualification are credits that have been used for a completed qualification".
- Institutions should apply CAT according to the HEQSF and the CHE's CAT policy to facilitate access to lifelong learning and the workplace (CHE, 2017).
- RPL and CAT may lead to advanced credit standing if:
    - ✓ The admitting institution is "satisfied that the applicant has competence in the appropriate field of intended study at the appropriate entry level of the target qualification".
    - ✓ Candidates complete at least all the required credits at the exit level of the qualification" (DHET, 2017).

However, "the recognition of credits for the purposes of transfer from one qualification to another is determined by the nature of the qualifications, the relationship between them, the nature, complexity, and extent of the curricula associated with the specific subjects to be recognised for exemption and/or inclusion, and the nature of the assessment used" (CHE, 2017:2).

11.3.7 RPL Strategies

Institutions are encouraged to adopt a variety of methods of RPL in order to assess what knowledge the student has that can be formalised against an academic qualification. Accordingly, RPL methods include examinations, compiling individual portfolios or the formal review of training programmes to determine whether they are at university level (Klein-Collins & Wertheim, 2013). The first two methods assess what the individual knows and can do, whilst the second focuses on the learning outcomes. The last method assesses the inputs of the programme, including the materials and learning activities. According to Popova-Gonci and Lamb (2012), it is also essential to assess students' integrated learning and critical-thinking abilities and suggest that concept-mapping be employed as an assessment tool.

The empirical data (figure 11.1) collected for the PIECCE baseline report (2017) on current practices across the institutions, presented the issue of a misunderstanding around what RPL's role is, which indicated a predominant emphasis on credit transfer and limited use of site visits to evaluate pedagogic practice (Harrison, 2017:75). This is concerning given that the essential purpose of RPL is to recognise the informal knowledge gained within the workplace which would be difficult to ascertain unless the student was assessed on site.

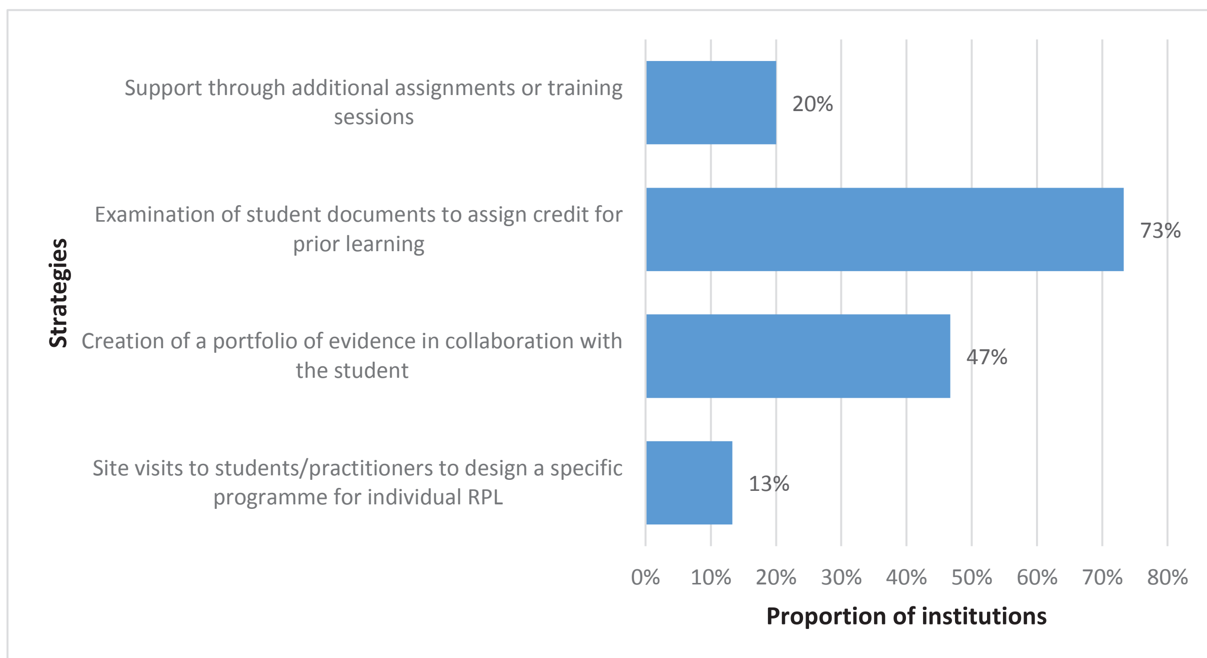

Figure 11.1: Strategies for implementing RPL [Number of respondent institutions = 13]. (Harrison, 2017:75)

Furthermore, the literature review in the PIECCE report, suggested that the creation of a Portfolio of Evidence (PoE) is the preferred assessment tool for access. However, it is often challenging, owing to the fact that many ECCE students/practitioners struggle with academic literacy. Snyman (2013) therefore recommends that HEIs should:

- Adopt a developmental approach so that the PoE constitutes as a "learning portfolio".
- Include literacy assessment in the development of the PoE.
- Provide adequate preparation for assessment and therefore offer portfolio development workshops.

In addition, the literature review considers the issue of dealing with students who are working in multilingual contexts, have literacy challenges of their own but are expected to be RPLed

in a non-native language. The empirical data showed that 95% of RPL programmes run by the participating institutions are delivered in English and only 15% in isiXhosa. The use of support through additional assignments or training sessions (20%) echoes with the empirical data linked to academic support, which showed that lecturers spend time providing extra training sessions, readings, and workbooks for practising to grasp a new concept.

An acknowledged aspect of RPL is that of catering for the individual needs of the student, which inevitably requires a unique assessment process for each student that is being RPLed. Designing individual programmes for RPL is time-consuming and requires considerable human resources. This raises the question of how much can an institution practically do in terms of implementing RPL? The solution emerges from thinking laterally and appreciating the strength in collaboration, which has been a powerful and unique aspect of the PIECCE project. If we accept that it is challenging for institutions that have high enrolment numbers to conduct RPL, then it is obvious that the solution can be found in providing the human resources through the collaborative efforts of two different types of teacher-training institutions. The proposal is to couple an NGO that has considerable spread over a number of provinces with the HEI that requires the additional human resources. As NGOs have spent many years working in the ECCE sector and thereby have acquired expert skills in the field, they provide an “army” of relatively inexpensive but expert human resources who are able to access students on site and provide mentorship, assessment and support in the RPL process. Furthermore, when addressing the issue of inequity that a student should produce a PoE in English whilst teaching in a mother-tongue, we can partially resolve this by allowing the expert assessor to conduct a mother-tongue interview with the student whilst on site. This document can be completed by means of technology (e.g. making use of an APP or simply filling in details by the assessor whilst the interview is being conducted). The benefit of the mother-tongue interview is that it allows one to demonstrate what one knows without being challenged by the need to formulate thoughts in a “foreign” language. This is a step towards equity as it means that the PoE does not only consist of English documents but has some documents that are in written in the mother-tongue. Most HEIs would argue that they are unable to assess a document that is not in English and that their training programmes are in English, therefore the student must know how to complete assignments in the English language. However,

having a few assignments that are already assessed by the site visit assessor somewhat resolves the problem. The student is still producing the majority of the material in English but there is some attempt at acknowledging the need to provide a home-language produced assignment.

Portfolio assessment should be supplemented by demonstrated competencies beyond written narratives and supporting documents submitted by the student by including video demonstrations, work products and simulations (Klein-Collins & Wertheim, 2013). One of the aims of the PIECCE project was to be innovative in the programme development. The RPL process, in particular the PoE, provides a vehicle for the latter. However, it is clearly expensive to conduct site visits yet if we accept that RPL's emphasis should be on the informal practical knowledge of the student; then we need to provide opportunities for the student to generate this information in their PoE outside of a site visit. One of the ways in which this can be done is by means of technology. Despite poverty, evidence has shown that most students will have access[1] to a sophisticated cell phone (Imaginet, 2016). The phone can be used to film short clips such as how the teacher implements a sensory-based activity for the 3-year-old learners in their classroom. The cell phone can additionally be used to take pictures of the classroom or outside activities. When the material is accompanied by a short reflective piece, it allows the assessor to gather information about a student's practice. The information can be copied onto a DVD disc (something that the academic support department can assist with) which is then placed in the PoE together with the reflective piece. The film clips can also be sent via WhatsApp to an administrative assistant who may be charged with transferring the material onto a disc.

Furthermore, RPL requires ongoing communication and reflection to allow the student and the assessor to reach mutual understanding of what learning has occurred (Pitman & Vidovich, 2013). This would ensure that RPL is more learner-centred in nature. The empirical data from the baseline report evidenced a common understanding of a reflective teacher who uses the reflection to plan and improve on their practice. When RPLing a student it therefore makes sense to ask them to compile a PoE, and write a letter of motivation that will encourage

[1] SA has a population of 51.8 million with a total of 66.1 million people having a cellphone – Imaginet, 2016.

the student to reflect on his/her informal knowledge and how this should be recognised as an *entre* to a particular qualification. Reflection can further be evidenced in the student's lesson plans, which should contain a section on the template that allows for daily reflection. The quality of these reflections and evidence of how the teacher has tweaked the pedagogy as a result of reflective practice, would be an aspect that would need to be assessed by the expert, thus enriching the RPL process. The above recommendations indicate how the programme development for the 0-4 ECCE Diploma/Degree can work towards ensuring that RPL is a key aspect of restoring equity, addressing inclusivity, and providing quality ECCE for learners.

11.4 GUIDELINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RPL

The following points are suggested as a guide for implementing RPL as part of an ECCE training programme:

- Recognising that ECCE students with prior knowledge constitute non-traditional HEI students, since they are experienced practitioners.
- Strengthening RPL to advance equity, social justice and inclusion, while building on current best practice.
- Viewing RPL as a specialised pedagogical practice, since PIECCE programmes have a specific purpose and a special design.
- Developing mechanisms for facilitating access to students across diverse contexts and building these into the programme design.
- Proposing a credit accumulation, exemption, recognition and transfer system, accompanied by a convincing rationale appropriate for the ECCE context. In particular, there should be credit recognition for experience gained in the early childhood workplace, and credit transfer for students who completed qualifications or part qualifications with another training provider and transfer to a HEI.
- Developing clear guidelines for credit exemption.
- Recognising the equivalence of Level 4 ECD qualifications to Grade 12.

- Recognising the relevance of TVET qualifications at NQF levels 5 and 6.
- Exploring additional forms of RPL to augment portfolio assessment such as workplace assessment, interviews, simulations and admission tests.
- Providing appropriate pedagogical support to students who lack the advanced literacy skills required to complete portfolios of prior learning, and for success in academic learning.
- Providing pedagogical support for students to progress from experiential knowledge to codified/formal knowledge.
- Considering how to support students to transition successfully to higher education.
- Exploring the possibility of developing guidelines for credit transfer towards practice teaching requirements.
- Exploring whether credits could be allocated towards some modules, where appropriate.
- As recommended by the CHE (2016), a maximum of 10% of a cohort of students could be admitted through RPL to a higher education programme.

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PIECCE

List of websites containing HEI policies and procedures

Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT): www.cput.ac.za/study/rpl

North West University:

http://www.nwu.ac.za/sites/www.nwu.ac.za/files/files/i-governance-management/policy/8P-8.4.3-RPL_e.pdf

Rhodes University:

https://www.ru.ac.za/admissiongateway/

https://www.ru.ac.za/registrar/info/policies/

https://www.ru.ac.za/media/rhodesuniversity/content/institutionalplanning/documents/RPL%20POLICY%202007.pdf

University of Fort Hare (UFH):

http://www.ufh.ac.za/tlc/sites/default/files/UFH%20Recognition%20of%20Prior%20Learning%20Policy.%20TLC.005.pdf

http://www.ufh.ac.za/files/tlc/policy/UFHRecognitionofPriorLearningPolicyTLC005.doc

http://www.ufh.ac.za/tlc/sites/default/files/UFHTeachingandLearningPolicy.pd

University of the Free State (UFS)

https://www.ufs.ac.za/supportservices/departments/recognition-of-prior-learning-office-home

https://www.ufs.ac.za/supportservices/...of-prior.../rpl-application-forms-and-information

University of Johannesburg (UJ)

https://www.uj.ac.za/studyatUJ/sec/Pages/Recognition-of-Prior-Learning.aspx

https://www.uj.ac.za/studyatUJ/sec/Documents/RPL%20Request%20Form.pdf

University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN):

https://ukznextendedlearning.com/about-us/

http://www.joe.ukzn.ac.za/.../Exploring_RPL_assessment_device_and_or_specialised_peda gogica.

University of Limpopo:

https://www.ul.ac.za/index.php?Entity=agri_rules

https://www.ul.ac.za/index.php?Entity=bio_rules_post

University of Pretoria (UP):

http://www.up.ac.za/en/yearbooks/2017/modules/view/RPL%20320

University of South Africa (Unisa): http://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Search-results/Apply-for-admission/Undergraduate-qualifications/Recognition-of-Prior-Learning-(RPL)/RPL-for-module-credit www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/.../Recognition-of-Prior-Learning-(RPL)

University of Stellenbosch (SUN): http://academic.sun.ac.za/chae/rpl.html

Walter Sisulu University of Technology:

http://wsu.ac.za/studywithus/images/resources/folded%20recruitment%20brochure.pdf

University of the Witwatersrand (WITS):

https://www.wits.ac.za/glu/academic-programmes/application-process-for-the-glu/

Resources for the teacher educator for RPL

This might include a classroom observation tool/APP, so that the site visitor has an assessment tool to use when evaluating the student who is being RPLed.

UNISA RPL Processes and Portfolio Guidelines

www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/.../Recognition-of-Prior-Learning-(RPL)

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