

Quality play and media 2014

Adelaide 8 July 2014

Keynote Speakers

Dr Kate Highfield

Broadly Kate researches the impact of technology as a tool in learning and play, with young children, undergraduate students, parents and educators. Under this broad umbrella Kate has worked with teachers in rural and remote settings, parents and children. Kate's current research explores young children's learning and play with technology, with a focus on touch technologies, including mobile devices, Tablets, iPads and smartphones. This work examines digital play, in both home and educational settings, and focuses on the impact of interactive multi-media on learning and play.

Topic: **Quality play and media in early childhood education and care**

Many parents and educators are struggling with the use of digital technologies and media in young children's lives. Here, we grapple with our notions of play and its essential role in early learning and the fear that technology may be taking away from and undermining quality play. This session examines current research on the use of technologies in early childhood contexts and explores how we can use these tools to extend and enhance play for young learners. Possibilities and pitfalls are explored with strategies to encourage play beyond the screen.



Professor Margaret Sims

Margaret is Professor of Early Childhood at the University of New England. She currently edits the *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood* and is well known internationally for her research into quality care in early childhood. Her recent publications include *Program Planning for Infants and Toddlers*, *Social Inclusion and the Early Years Framework* and *Building Integrated Connections for Children their Families and Communities*

Topic: **Quality play in a cybervillage**

In this presentation I will look at the opportunities children have for play in the cyber-village. I will discuss what the Australian National Quality Framework identifies as quality play and how these principles relate to play in the cyber-village. Finally I will analyse the role adults play in supporting children's quality play in cyber space.



Dr Glenn Cupit

Glenn has recently retired from 38 years in early childhood teacher education. A developmental psychologist, he has concentrated his research on children's interactions with electronic media and their spiritual development. Glenn has also been a consultant to television networks and regulatory bodies, given evidence to many government enquiries, and was educational advisor to Humphrey B. Bear. He has published and spoken widely about children's interaction with electronic media & his most recent publication is *Play and quality in early childhood: Superheroes and Fairy princesses* which will be launched at this conference. Glenn is Vice-President of the Australian Council on Children and the Media.

Topic: **Media based play**

Children's play is significantly impacted by their exposure to contemporary electronic media both in its content and patterns. This presentation explores the effect on play of being a 'digital native', the particular characteristics of media based play, its positive and negative qualities, and effective and ineffective strategies for optimising how and what children will learn from involvement in such play. In particular it considers the gendered nature of media based play, and the use of such strategies as *laissez faire*, prevention, replacement, engagement, and curriculum application.



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Concurrent sessions

David Badenoch

The benefits of outdoor and nature play

David has long regarded play as a relatively misunderstood and under valued concept. Having held positions as school teacher, Education Advisor, National Journal Editor, Senior Lecturer, Researcher, Head of School and International Consultant he has devoted decades of his professional life to teaching and publishing in this area and presenting at national and international conferences. Areas of particular interest include Play, Adventure, Physical Education, Outdoor Education, University Teaching, Olympism and Children's Sport and Wilderness Adventure programs for youth at risk.

As former Coordinator of the Physical Education, Sport and Play Studies major and recipient of several *Excellence in Teaching Awards* at the University of South Australia, David has also provided sustained academic leadership in Play Studies. He designed and taught the course *Play Studies: Concepts and Issues* which examined the nature, forms, causes, functions, benefits and applications of play for individuals, education and society from an interdisciplinary and lifelong perspective.

ABSTRACT

Australia is a highly urbanized, technological society with significant childhood health issues related to physical inactivity. As several scholars and critics argue, Australia's childhood population is also experiencing a reduction in meaningful contact with nature. This presentation will explore the ideas that outdoor and nature play can provide unique and significant pathways to a healthier and more meaningful life for children by developing their physical health and wellbeing and restoring more meaningful contact with nature.

Karl Brettig

Quality parenting in the cybervillage

Karl Brettig is Manager of Salisbury Communities for Children, a community development initiative of the Australian Government based at the Salvation Army Ingle Farm which focuses on building support for young children, their families and communities. Karl has worked in various roles in adult education and community services across different sectors. The Salisbury C4C site has developed several highly effective child and family community initiatives including FamilyZone Ingle Farm Hub in partnership with a number of non-government and government agencies and the *Wellbeing Classroom* initiative. See www.salisburyc4c.org.au. Together with a team of child and family support stakeholders he convened the Children Communities Connections conferences which brought together practitioners, policy makers and researchers from across Australia in 2008, 2010 & 2012 to further develop effective policy and practice for integrated service delivery for children and their families. He is co-editor with Professor Margaret Sims of *Building Integrated Connections for Children their Families and Communities*

ABSTRACT

Before electronic communication arrived most families talked to each other a lot more extensively and in a lot more depth. In a cyber-connected world the art of building attachment and the in-depth conversation is waning. Social media does not easily support a deep sense of connection and people may end up feeling more isolated than ever. Cyber-connecting can end up creating more stress, less meaning and more loneliness in our world. We know that social networking sites can become a haven for bullying and other anti-social behaviours but can they be used to build the kind of community interaction that supports good parenting practices and enhances child development? How do we build relationship skills with cyber-connected young parents?

As a priority we need to communicate the importance of the early years and being as well prepared as possible for the arrival of baby. This means that learning begins from the modelling we receive from parents and caregivers and continues through life. What are the kind of relationship knowledge and skills that make a difference in family life? Some of these include understanding of how babies develop, parenting as a team, setting boundaries for children, issues for single parents, understanding and resolving conflict and understanding ourselves. These are age old issues but their significance needs to be communicated in language and media that engages Gen Y & Z parents and caregivers.

Michael Edgecombe Quality play & media in a primary classroom

Michael has long been a campaigner for children, families, and young people. He strives to celebrate life, to see people for who they could become, and in encouraging life in all its fullness. His most notable work is the creation of The Wellbeing Classroom framework, which encourages wellbeing as a daily communal conversation. Michael is currently the Community Services Manager with Schools Ministry Group.

ABSTRACT

Influence by definition is *the capacity or power of persons or things to be a compelling force on or produce effects on the actions, behaviour, and opinions of others*. Adults can all look back and identify the people who have made the difference in their lives, the people who have changed them, who have taught them. When our current children look back in 15-20 years' time, who or what will they see as having major influence on their life journey? Generation Z are the fastest, and most technologically advanced generation yet. In years gone by, all we had to worry about was our children sneaking out to get a glimpse of a movie mum and dad were watching, or picking up a paper and reading something inappropriate. We could monitor who they were spending time with, and who was having that influence. Generation Z are using technology 10hours 19 mins per day on average, including 5.1 billion Google searches, 4 billion YouTube views, and 500 million tweets. They are growing up faster as a result, and not having the chance to be a child and play. So how do we have an influence on our children? This session will briefly describe the current situation, explore who Generation Z are, and begin a conversation exploring strategies that allow us as responsible adults to have significant positive influence with our children and future citizens.

Lesley-Anne Ey

Sexy culture, sexy kids: A research-based look

Lesley-Anne Ey (is a Research Fellow at the University of South Australia; Education, Arts and Human Sciences Division. She teaches in research, child protection and child development. Her PhD examined the influence of contemporary music media on children's gender role and self-identity. Her research area explores the influence of media on children's learning and development with a heavy focus on sexualised media, cyber-safety and educative strategies. She is currently engaged in an international research project about pre-service teachers understanding of bullying and cyberbullying between Australia and India.

ABSTRACT

There is no escaping the reality that 'sexiness' is valued in our culture. Media and marketing play a significant role in shaping and normalising sexualised presentation. The degree to which this has filtered into products that children intentionally and unintentionally consume is of some concern. This presentation explores the increase of sexualised media and products available for children and how this is contributing to children's gender role and self-identity, and their attitudes and behaviours.

Louiza Hehardt

The effects of misrepresentation of gender in the media on developing minds

Louiza (MSocSc; MEd) has worked as a Primary School Counsellor in settings across sectors since 2006. Since 2010 she's worked privately as an Education Consultant, specialising in the area of Staff Wellbeing with her main focus being to raise awareness in school staff about issues they encounter in their professional roles. Louiza organised the screening of the American documentary 'Miss Representation' as part of Adelaide Fringe 2013.

ABSTRACT

The documentary 'Miss Representation' explores the impact of the media's misrepresentation of women and girls. In this session Louiza will discuss the potential impact of this on the developing minds of both girls and boys and will share case studies of the effects on both male and female students as she has experienced them as a Counsellor in the primary school setting. The session will include discussion about increasing the media literacy (including e-literacy) of the young people with whom we work. Louiza will also provide information for attendees about how to best increase student understanding about this issue and will give further information about how the media can be used to create positive change around this issue as well as some exciting upcoming examples of this to watch out for!

Kate Highfield

The ECA Digital Business Kit

ECA is one of ten sector groups chosen by the Australian Government to develop Digital Business Kits. The early childhood education and care (ECEC) kit will equip managers, educators, and other staff as well as families and experts to understand the possibilities and impacts that digital technology brings. It will include tip sheets, case studies, online guides and web links.

**Sue Hill &
Christy Ward**

Language play for early literacy development

Dr Christy Ward is an Adjunct Lecturer, School of Education, University of South Australia interested in the care and education of infants and toddlers in child care settings and in the social and emotional development of children

Dr Susan Hill is an Adjunct Associate Professor of Early Childhood Education, School of Education, University of South Australia. She is a researcher in the field of early language and literacy and has authored a number of books for researchers, teachers and children. Dr Hill's current research involves the connection between oral language and learning to read and write and improving children's early reading and writing in the first years of school. She has lead a longitudinal research project titled *Babies and books: A longitudinal study into family reading practices* (2011-2013), with the Little Big Book Club and investigated literacy at home in Indigenous communities in the project *What do young Indigenous children want to read?* (Hill, Glover & Colbung 2009-2010). Dr Hill was chief investigator on the *Mapping multiliteracies: children of the new millennium project* ARC Linkage (2002-2006), exploring how young children engage with technology and the way teachers work in the digital environment.

ABSTRACT

There is a network of important people, mothers, fathers, grandparents and friends engaging in shared book reading, as well as playing and singing with babies and toddlers. Research with the Little Big Book Club and the University of South Australia revealed that while parents may prefer to read aloud traditional books, young children also like to use mobile digital devices for play, music and singing which open up new dialogic spaces or playful textual playgrounds for early language and literacy development.

Janet McDowall

New media and music in early childhood education

Janet McDowall has recently retired from the University of South Australia where her work focused over many years on arts education, particularly music education. She also has a strong in educational uses of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Combining these interests, she has conducted various research studies that have investigated the use of technology in music education with children.

ABSTRACT

Music is a central part of our culture and, most often, our experience of music is mediated through Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), including sophisticated recording and distribution processes. In keeping with this trend, contemporary music education has been enriched by ICTs. This presentation will explain ways in which ICTs, including 'new media' such as apps on tablet devices, are contributing to children's musical experience and to their formal and informal music education. It will demonstrate that, through the affordances of these devices, even young children can access information about music, develop musical skills, and importantly, *create* music in richly meaningful ways that include making fine-grained artistic choices. Links will be made to the Early Years Learning Framework and the Australian Curriculum: The Arts and ways in which adults can interact with children, often as co-players, will be suggested.

**Deb Moyle, Megan
Hickman and Robert
Taylor**

Electronic Media and Aboriginal Early Childhood Development

Deb Moyle is a member of the Ngarrindjeri nation of South Australia and has cultural and family relationships with many Aboriginal communities across South Australia. She has worked for the South Australian Government in the Department of Education and Children's Services Principal Policy Adviser for Aboriginal early childhood services since 1985. Her work took her into both urban and rural regions, across government, non-government and private sectors at local, regional, state-wide and national levels. Throughout Deb's professional and personal life she has acted as an effective advocate for Aboriginal children, for Aboriginal community leadership and for system reform to improve outcomes for Aboriginal children, their families and communities.

Megan Hickman is a proud member of the Ngarrindjeri nation of South Australia and has strong family and cultural connections across the metropolitan and regional and remote locations of South Australia. She has worked for 15 years in various community development roles both within early childhood and communities and social inclusion. Megan has excellent community development skills and proven ability to be a strong advocate for inclusive practices of Aboriginal perspectives within the government and non-government, local councils and private sectors. Throughout her professional and personal life she is recognised for role modelling in developing effective partnerships between Aboriginal communities and frontline services to improve outcomes for Aboriginal children their families and the community.

Robert Taylor is a Ngarrindjeri man who is the father of three children and has had extensive involvement with Aboriginal communities in both regional and urban settings. He has worked in various roles including in an Aboriginal preschool, as an Aboriginal education worker and as an Aboriginal dad's family support worker. Robert is a strong advocate for developing an integrated approach to family support.

ABSTRACT

How can parents and caregivers encourage quality play in the Aboriginal community? This session will look at an initiative to inform aboriginal families about technological advances that have the potential to assist learning outcomes as well as some of the electronic media challenges faced by families and communities. It will consider how we can promote better outcomes for aboriginal through quality play opportunities

Sara Richardson

Is the iPotty really the worst toy of the year?

Sara Richardson works for Early Childhood Australia as SA Facilitator for KidsMatter Early Childhood - a national mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention initiative. She is a passionate advocate for the early years with over 20 years' experience working in early childhood as an educator, leader and trainer.

ABSTRACT

In December 2013 the members of Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood selected the iPotty as winner of TOADY (Toys Oppressive And Destructive to Young Children) Award for the Worst Toy of the Year. Children today constantly encounter and utilize an ever expanding array of technology both at home and in their world. Television, DVDs, video games, the internet, smart phones and tablets – all now play a formative role in many children's development. Babies and toddlers are not immune to this and the iPotty along with the iPad Apptivity Seat for infants are some of the most confronting.

This presentation will explore toddlers' unique place in the world giving a voice to their particular play and development needs in a rapidly changing world. While research detailing the impact of technology on very young children is limited there is a growing interest and need to find out more about the immediate and longer term effects. As we learn more an increasing tension between what we understand to be best for toddlers and the way technology is accessed and utilised by them and by the parents, carers and educators around them becomes apparent. In this interactive presentation participants will reflect on their current thinking and practice. There will be opportunity to engage in dialogue to understand more fully how to balance these seemingly opposed elements and think about ways to work differently.

Victoria Whittington **Television and the attention, play and language of young children**

Dr Victoria Whittington is a senior lecturer in early childhood education within the School of Education at the University of South Australia. She worked in the education field for thirteen years. Victoria currently directs one graduate early childhood program, and teaches in both undergraduate and graduate programs. Her research interests are children's development (cognitive, social and emotional), socio-dramatic play, long day childcare, professional pathways in early childhood field, brain development in the early years, culture and early childhood education and student learning in higher education.