EMPOWERING PEDAGOGY FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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To my late mother, Eileen Lucy Arthurs; my late father, William Christie Arthurs; and my brothers and sisters, who gave me the foundation in my childhood and influenced me to explore, try new paths, take new journeys, and reflect upon those journeys to discover what was learned and how that new learning could support new adventures.

—Beverlie Dietze

To my late father, Gerald Lackman, whose analytical mind and photographic memory influenced my continual quest for knowledge, and to my mother, Reeva Lackman, whose artistic eye and spirit help me stay connected to the heart of teaching and learning.

—Diane Kashin
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Preface

The changing nature of childhood in the twenty-first century has led many provinces and territories across Canada to examine public policies and approaches to early childhood education. Debate continues among professionals about how children learn, the theories and models of programming that meet children’s needs, and the roles and responsibilities of adults in creating rich environments that support children in their experiences and provide opportunities to play. We recognize that there are no clear answers; rather, there is a need for us to collectively engage in authentic debate and discourse so that we collaboratively think about positive ways to influence children’s environments and experiences, which, in turn, will contribute to their development.

Empowering Pedagogy for Early Childhood Education evolved from our desire to advance discussions about what constitutes pedagogy in early learning programs that will empower children and adults to collectively create environments that foster active play; provide space and materials to spark children’s creative, imaginative, and symbolic worlds; and reflect children’s learning, cultures, and family values. The text situates the discussions of pedagogy and how children learn and develop in early childhood in a Canadian and local perspective. We pay particular attention to relevant legislative and policy developments and draw upon international research and field experiences to bring forth programming models of practice that address how children learn and develop. In order to represent the broad base of concepts that are intertwined in early childhood pedagogy, we examine a review of early childhood curriculum materials used nationally and internationally. With more than eight provinces across Canada either in the process of developing or already having developed curriculum frameworks for early learning programs, we wanted to provide up-and-coming early learning professionals with information about theories, beliefs, and practices that empower children’s play and learning and

OUR VISION FOR THIS BOOK

As we began planning for and conducting research for this text, we agreed that we wanted the book to represent early childhood education from a Canadian perspective, while introducing students to international approaches that have influenced or are influencing programming, policies, and directions of early childhood programs. We wanted this book to

■ support early childhood education students in exploring the array of topics that are interwoven in early childhood pedagogy;

■ create opportunities for readers to question, imagine, think about, reflect upon, and determine how their approach to early childhood pedagogy can empower and influence children’s play and learning;

■ highlight new research in order to understand the relationship of environments, approaches, materials, and experiences to children’s sense of wonderment, exploration, and learning;

■ stimulate discussions among early learning professionals and early childhood students as a way to promote meaning making as a visible and meaningful learning experience;

■ reinforce the importance of designing early childhood education programs to stimulate children in both the indoor and outdoor environments;

■ provide early childhood education students with information about theories, beliefs, and practices that empower children’s play and learning and
outline how these areas are foundational for creating a working philosophy;

- offer our readers' stories and photos from the field as examples that can be the impetus for discussions, reflections, and "aha" moments;
- stimulate thinking about how the implementation of empowering pedagogy is influenced by children, families, and communities, and about how it may look different in urban and rural settings; and
- contribute to early childhood education students developing a passion for and commitment to children and families.

**APPROACH TO THE TEXT**

This text is intended to be a user-friendly, valuable resource for early childhood education students during their studies and as they prepare to enter any number of exciting career paths with children and families. Each chapter begins with a story from a child's perspective. These stories are intended to help the reader hear the voices of children and think about how by listening to children, we can develop environments that will empower them to embrace the options and opportunities available. These messages and the application examples in each chapter are intended to support the reader in examining current beliefs and practices, and in embracing new ways of knowing and practising based on current research.

*Empowering Pedagogy for Early Childhood Education* differs from other texts in several ways:

- The chapters provide opportunities for readers to engage in reflective moments related to key messages in the text. The ideas and questions posed are intended to support the reader in thinking about the issues presented in depth so that meaning making occurs and is transferable to working philosophy or practice.
- Research, pedagogical tools, case studies, and ideas are embedded in each chapter to provide opportunities for readers to consider thought-provoking examples and concepts that bring forth multiple perspectives on pedagogy.
- Both Canadian and international content are introduced to the student, including up-to-date information on curriculum frameworks, family structures, and locally appropriate programming.
- The text offers readers opportunities to examine ways to empower pedagogy from multiple perspectives by emphasizing a constructivist and postmodern approach to pedagogy and providing the foundational information that is transferable to a variety of programming approaches and personal philosophies, while maintaining the focus of the child and family as the centre of pedagogy.
- Links are provided that students may use to acquire further information on subjects and help them connect theory to practice, or to expand their sense of curiosity and bring forth more questions and inquiry.
- The text embraces new technologies and the opportunities for professional learning made possible through social media. As early learning professionals worldwide are curating topics of potential interest to our readers, we acknowledge this untraditional source of learning that is revolutionizing and democratizing learning in our profession.

We believe that this text takes a holistic approach that emphasizes listening to the children; creating and using the environment as a "third teacher"; and ensuring that the voices of children, early learning students and professionals, parents, and community are heard and that they all become collective participants in empowering children with rich, inspiring, and unique experiences.

**CONTENT AND FEATURES OF THE TEXT**

The pedagogical features of this text are designed to support both theory and practice in ways that will meet readers' diverse learning requirements. The pedagogical layout of the text is designed to give readers different points of entry to learning through stories, examples, dialogue, technology, and reflection.

The first five chapters of the text lay the foundation for programming and pedagogy for the reader. Following the introductory chapter, we hope the reader sees that the players, including children, their families, and early learning professionals, are key to any early learning environment. Recognizing and supporting the community, culture, and diversity of the players is foundational to programming and pedagogy. Chapters 4 and 5 give the reader background on models, approaches, and frameworks, both Canadian and international, that can be used to build a program that supports all the players.

Beginning with Chapter 6, we address key programming areas and concepts for early learning students and professionals to consider as they develop their own approaches and philosophies, including relationships, politics, ethics, the environment, materials, and the programming, reflective, and research processes.
Each chapter includes the following features:

**Learning Outcomes**—A series of learning objectives to help the reader recognize the content presented in the chapters.

**A Child’s Story**—Stories based on our experiences and children we have known, designed to give a child’s perspective while illuminating the content.

**Opening Quotations**—A quotation intended to offer the reader a starting place for thinking about the particular content of that chapter.

**A Reflective Moment**—Boxes that provide opportunities to pause and reflect deeply on key elements, and to help the reader recognize that the concepts explored in each chapter can be unpacked in a way to expose multiple perspectives.

**Programming Bubbles**—Connections between theory and practice that arise from the content of each chapter.

**Program Design Tables**—Tables in Chapters 6 to 12 that are designed to give practical suggestions for programming appropriate for children in various stages of development, including infancy, early childhood, and middle childhood.

**Featured Research**—Chapter content research that will inspire the reader to continue to explore particular research studies.

**Pedagogical Tools**—Concrete suggestions to help professionals and students use tools to increase awareness of what is possible in their work with children and families.

**Professional Case Study**—Opportunities to view the practice of others and to ponder the ethical decisions professionals are required to make every day.

**Reflection Questions for Self-Learning**—Questions the reader may ponder and reflect on based on the content of the chapter.

**Big Ideas for Dialogic Learning**—Opportunities to socially construct learning that will support and illustrate the importance of dialogue and the learning that is possible when professionals critically examine professional big ideas.

**Vision**—Thoughts of how the ideas expressed within the chapter will inspire future learning opportunities.

**Making Connections**—New technologies in professional practices intended to guide and support the reader to explore the potential for professional learning that is possible when technological connections are made.

**Key Terms**—Terms defined in the margin and graphically represented in a “wordle” at the end of the chapter.

**Summary**—Key points that summarize the core concepts of the chapter and reflect the learning outcomes presented at the beginning of the chapter.

**For Further Thought**—An end-of-chapter feature that provides suggestions for further exploration.

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**SUPPLEMENTS**

**Instructor’s Manual** The Instructor’s Manual includes teaching tips and activities for the classroom. This material is linked to the main sections of each chapter and includes page references back to the textbook. It is available in PDF format from the Pearson Online catalogue to instructors who adopt the textbook.

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We would like to sincerely thank Pearson Education Canada for providing us with the opportunity to write a second textbook together, one that we believe has many possibilities for post-secondary learning communities across Canada. We are particularly grateful to Pearson’s Carolin Sweig for working with us to launch this project. We sincerely extend our thanks and appreciation to Christine Langone, who has worked with us throughout the project to ensure that our text reflects our vision of one that will support educators and students in college and university environments.

We thank a number of researchers and educators, such as Dr. Anna Kirova at the University of Alberta, who...
allowed us to use or adapt their work for our text, and also the reviewers—Melanie Collett, College of the North Atlantic; Cathy Coulthard, Sheridan College; Kath Gradwell, Georgian College; Debra Harwood, Brock University; Heather Hill, Georgian College; Dale Kern, Mohawk College; Barb Mathieson, Capilano University; Lisa McCaie, Centennial College; Donna Mese, Cambrian College; and others who wish to remain anonymous—whose feedback helped us shape the content and the layout of the text. We continue to be grateful to Ingrid Timmermans for introducing us to each other in 2010.

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As a new employee at Okanagan College, I would like to thank the leadership team for encouraging me to continue to write and add new knowledge to the field of early childhood education.

—Beverlie Dietze

My family, including my mother, Reeva; my husband, Lorne; my children, Jeremy, Ben, and Dory; and my nephew Brandon, continue to encourage my work and are first and foremost my greatest champions. When opportunity knocks, it is with the confidence of their support that I can take on new challenges in my life. Aside from my family, Beverlie Dietze has been an unwavering ally who has encouraged my professional growth and development. So much has been possible because of her willingness to mentor, and without Beverlie’s support, I would never have been able to realize my dream of writing and researching.

I would also like to remember my years at Seneca College, where in 1984, I would become an early childhood educator; in 1988, I would teach my first course; and in 1998, I would be hired to teach early childhood education full time. Ten years later, Seneca College launched the bachelor of child development (BCD) degree program, and I had the opportunity to teach at the degree level. I hold these past six years and all the BCD students I have had the privilege to teach close to my heart.

To all the wonderful educators who are part of my professional learning network, thank you for helping me find a way to bring Reggio home.

—Diane Kashin