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

Brief Contents

Chapter 1 Introduction to Programming in the Early Years 1

Chapter 2 The Players 25

Chapter 3 Community, Culture, and Diversity 52

Chapter 4 Programs and Approaches 77

Chapter 5 A Pan–Canadian and Global Review of Curriculum Frameworks 108

Chapter 6 Building Relationships and Rapport in Children's Communities of Play 129

Chapter 7 Examining How Beliefs about Politics and Ethics Influence Professional Practice 150

Chapter 8 The Environment 176

Chapter 9 Materials for Sparking Children's Curiosity and Play 202

Chapter 10 The Programming Process 228

Chapter 11 The Reflective Process 254

Chapter 12 Teacher as Researcher 276

References 297

Index 311

Contents

Preface xi

1 Introduction to Programming in the Early Years 1
Chapter Preview 2
Your Journey Guides 3
Your Professional Role 4
The Early Learning Profession 5
Professional Roles and Contexts 6
Professional Practice 7
The Theoretical Language of the Profession 11
Constructivism 11
Professional Images 11
Professional Habits of Mind 11
Critical Thinking 11
Professional Knowledge 12
Professional Self 12
Professional Responsibilities 13
Collaborative Learning, Practice, and Professional Discourse 13
Social Altruism 14
Professional Skills and Competencies 14
Professional Big Ideas 14
The Professional Landscape 15
Postmodern Perspectives 16
The Evolution of Curriculum Frameworks 16
Models, Approaches, Frameworks, and Theories 17
Featured Research 20
Pedagogical Tools 20
Professional Case Study 20
Reflection Questions for Self-Learning 21
Big Ideas for Dialogic Learning 21
Vision 22
Making Connections 22
Key Terms 23
Summary 23

2 The Players 25
Chapter Preview 26
Focusing on Children 27
Children as Learners 30
Children as Citizens 32
Seven Essential Skills for Children 35
Focusing on Families 36
Families as Learners 39
Families as Citizens 40
Focusing on Early Learning Professionals 43
Professionals as Learners 44
Professionals as Citizens 44
Professional Responsibility 44
Pedagogy of Listening 45
Featured Research 46
Pedagogical Tools 46
Professional Case Study 47
Reflection Questions for Self-Learning 48
Big Ideas for Dialogic Learning 48
Vision 49
Making Connections 49
Key Terms 50
Summary 50

3 Community, Culture, and Diversity 52
Chapter Preview 53
Diversity 55
Examining Diversity 57
Culture 58
Professional Responsibilities 59
How Cultures Influence Early Learning Programming 59
Peer Culture 62
Cultural Competency 63
Narrative Learning 63
Languages and Literacies 66
Community 66
Professional Practices 69
Professional Challenges 70
A Postmodern Perspective 71
Universal Design 72
Featured Research 72
Pedagogical Tools 73
Professional Case Study 73
Reflection Questions for Self-Learning 73
Big Ideas for Dialogic Learning 74
Vision 74
Making Connections 74
Key Terms 75
Summary 75

4 Programs and Approaches 77
Chapter Preview 78
Historical Perspectives 79
The Classical Tradition 80
The Modern Tradition 80
The Postmodern Tradition 84

Ideologies 85
Philosophies 86
Theories 88
Programs 88
Models and Approaches 91
The Unit or Thematic Approach 92
Montessori 93
HighScope 94
The Project Approach 95
Waldorf 97
The Reggio Emilia Approach 98
Outdoor Programs 101
Professional Responsibility 102
Featured Research 103
Pedagogical Tools 104
Professional Case Study 104
Reflection Questions for Self-Learning 105
Big Ideas for Dialogic Learning 106
Vision 106
Making Connections 106
Key Terms 106
Summary 107

5 A Pan-Canadian and Global Review of Curriculum Frameworks 108
Chapter Preview 109
The Purpose of Frameworks 111
The Rationale for Frameworks 111
Survey of Canadian Frameworks 112
British Columbia (2008) 113
Manitoba (2011) 114
New Brunswick (2008) 115
Ontario (2007) 116
Prince Edward Island (2011) 117
Quebec (1997 and 2007) 118
Saskatchewan (2008) 119
Curriculum Frameworks under Development 119
Other Guiding Practices: Nova Scotia 120
Promising Practices for Aboriginal Early Childhood Curriculum Frameworks 120
Survey of International Frameworks 121
Australia 121
New Zealand (*Te Whariki*) 122
Sweden 122
England 122
Scotland 123
Professional Responsibility 123
Implications for Practice 124
Featured Research 125
Pedagogical Tools 126
Professional Case Study 126
Reflection Questions for Self-Learning 126
Big Ideas for Dialogic Learning 127
Vision 127
Making Connections 127
Key Terms 127
Summary 128

6 Building Relationships and Rapport in Children's Communities of Play 129
Chapter Preview 130
The Importance of Relationships and Rapport 132
Attachment Theory 134
Critical Pedagogy 134
The Concept of Relationship Rapport 135
Developing Relationships and Rapport 135
Establishing Rapport 136
Children and Self-Regulation 137
Program Design for Children 139
Program Design for Families 141
The Environment and Program Design 141
Roles and Responsibilities of Early Learning Professionals 142
Building Professional Capacity for Developing Relationships 142
Featured Research 145
Pedagogical Tools: Children's Portfolios 145
Professional Case Study 145
Reflection Questions for Self-Learning 146
Big Ideas for Dialogic Learning 147
Vision 147
Making Connections 147
Key Terms 148
Summary 149

7 Examining How Beliefs about Politics and Ethics Influence Professional Practice 150
Chapter Preview 151
Early Learning Professionals and Politics 152
Ethics 156
Ethics of an Encounter 156
Images and Possibilities 157
Two Programming Examples 158
The Influence of Social Constructivism 159
Philosophy and Theory 160
Wisdom 161
Voice 163

Rights 164
Democracy 164
Listening and Intra-active Pedagogies 165
Social Justice and Ecological Education 166
Program Design for Children 167
Program Design for Families 170
The Environment and Program Design 170
The Roles and Responsibilities of Early Learning Professionals 170
Featured Research 172
Pedagogical Tools 172
Professional Case Study 172
Reflection Questions for Self-Learning 173
Big Ideas for Dialogic Learning 173
Vision 174
Making Connections 174
Key Terms 174
Summary 175

8 The Environment 176
Chapter Preview 177
The Environment as a Third Teacher 177
Physical Space 179
Aesthetics 181
Order and Space 183
Environmental Conditions 184
Specialized Spaces 184
Atelier Learning 185
Piazzas 185
Discovery Gardens 185
Edible Landscapes 186
Indoor and Outdoor Environments 187
Risk-Taking Environments 189
Self-Regulating Environments 191
Environmental Design 192
Universal Design 192
Environmental Design from a Child's Perspective 194
Architecture and Early Learning 194
Roles and Responsibilities of Early Learning Professionals 195
Featured Research 197
Pedagogical Tools 198
Professional Case Study 198
Reflection Questions for Self-Learning 199
Big Ideas for Dialogic Learning 199
Vision 199
Making Connections 200
Key Terms 200
Summary 201

9 Materials for Sparking Children's Curiosity and Play 202
Chapter Preview 203
What Is Curiosity? 204
How Children's Spaces Influence Curiosity 207
The Relationship of Curiosity to Play and Inquiry 208
Strategies for Triggering Curiosity 210
Wonder Walls 210
Trial Balloons 211
A Thinking Lens Framework 212
The Theory of Loose Parts 213
Intelligent Materials 213
Materials as Languages 215
Material-Rich Environments 216
Open-Ended Materials and Flexible Furnishings 217
The Beautiful Stuff of Childhood 218
Material Choices 218
Materials as Thinking Tools 218
The Hawkins Theory of Messing About 220
Outdoor and Indoor Materials 220
Program Design for Children 221
Program Design for Families 222
Roles and Responsibilities of Early Learning Professionals 223
Featured Research 224
Pedagogical Tools 224
Professional Case Study 225
Reflection Questions for Self-Learning 225
Big Ideas for Dialogic Learning 225
Vision 226
Making Connections 226
Key Terms 227
Summary 227

10 The Programming Process 228
Chapter Preview 229
Bringing the Players Together 231
From the Information Age to the Conceptual Age 232
Programming in the Twenty-First Century 233
The Program Design 234
The Programming Process 235
Theory to Practice in Programming 236
Negotiated Learning 237
Progettazione 238
Programming Flowchart 238
Program Formatting and Documentation 238
Roles and Responsibilities of Early Learning Professionals 239

Know Your Vision 240
Enable Children to Recognize Their Knowledge and Learning 241
Create Inclusive Programming 241
Engage in Collaboration 243
Follow Regulatory Requirements 244
Conduct Observations 244
Scheduling the Program 245
Planning Guidelines 246
Program Design for Children 247
Programming Bubble 248
Featured Research 249
Pedagogical Tools 249
Professional Case Study 250
Reflection Questions for Self-Learning 251
Big Ideas for Dialogic Learning 251
Vision 251
Making Connections 252
Key Terms 252
Summary 253

11 The Reflective Process 254
Chapter Preview 255
Spirituality in Children 257
Roles and Responsibilities of Early Learning Professionals 262
Reflection in Programming 264
Pedagogical Documentation 266
Making Learning Visible 267
A Pedagogical Documentation Example 267
Authentic Assessment 267
Program Design for Children 270
Programming Bubble 271
Featured Research 272
Pedagogical Tools 272
Professional Case Study 272
Reflection Questions for Self-Learning 272
Big Ideas for Dialogic Learning 273
Vision 273
Making Connections 274
Key Terms 274
Summary 274

12 Teacher as Researcher 276
Chapter Preview 277
Research Ethics 279
Research Categories 280
The Rationale for Research 280
Professional Knowledge in the Twenty-First Century 281
Narrative Inquiry Research 282
Action Research 284
Teacher as Researcher 287
Continuous Professional Learning 288
Roles and Responsibilities of Early Learning Professionals 289
Featured Research 291
Pedagogical Tools 292
Professional Case Study 292
Reflection Questions for Self-Learning 293
Big Ideas for Dialogic Learning 293
Vision 294
Making Connections 294
Key Terms 295
Summary 295

References 297
Index 311

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 opportunities to become familiar with curriculum frameworks and begin discussion on how the frameworks are used to conceptualize what constitutes effective early learning environments, experiences, meaning making, relationship building, equity, diversity, and active learning options. As well, we wanted to create a textbook that emphasizes the idea that empowering pedagogy in early childhood programs provides children with equal opportunities to explore, discover, and wonder in both indoor and outdoor environments.

In exploring the image of children and environments and thinking about ways in which pedagogy empowers children to be active and inquisitive learners in early learning environments, this book is intended to create dialogue about how learning and development take place. The text introduces the reader to research and perspectives from many disciplines, and attempts to provide a contemporary view of how early learning programs, when designed to support children's authentic interests and embrace their sense of wonder, can empower children to be inquisitive, lifelong learners.

We hope that by reading this text and, more importantly, discussing, debating, and determining what new knowledge to embrace, collectively we will support our most precious resources in our communities—our children, our families, and our early learning students and professionals.

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.

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 thank a number of researchers and educators, such as Dr. Anna Kirova at the University of Alberta, who

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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