

# Collaboration, is proximity enough? A narrative inquiry of preschool and Jr. primary teachers

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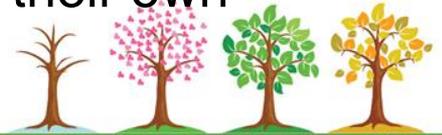


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# Research Focus

## How do preschool and Jr. Primary teachers understand and negotiate their professional identities?

- What challenges and supports do preschool and Jr. Primary teachers face in enacting their understanding of their professional identities?
- How do teachers respond to challenges and author their own identities?



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# Conceptual Framework

	Temporality	Context	Reflection/ Action
<b>Narrative Inquiry</b>	Forward/ Backward	Situated in place	Inward and outward
<b>Freirean Dialogic Encounters</b>	Unfinished process of becoming	In and about participants worlds	Praxis



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Site	Preschool	Junior Primary
Brecksville Community School	Marrienne	Henry Ruby
Parklands Primary School		Goldie
Rainbow Valley School	Christine Jessica	Roseanne
Greenvale Primary School		Antoinette John   Katie
Royal Ridge Primary School	Scarlet	



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# Data Collection

Dimension of space	Dialogic encounters
Forward/Backward	1x Life history
Situated in place	1x Context
Inward/outward	1-2x Follow up (informed by observations)



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# Professional Identity: Collaboration

- **Henry-** “I think the benefit is here that we are working far more close together and seeing each other...preschool can give us ideas for how were they in the preschool and so on, I think there is far more cooperation and knowledge sharing [than before being on same campus].”



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# Collaboration: Is proximity enough?

- **Katie-** “We always talk about how we’d love to do more stuff with the preschool [however we don’t].”
- **Goldie-** “There’s a little crossover, I think people would probably says we’d like to do more. We have always talked about having the children that had come go back for visits and it never happened, which would’ve been nice, but we still have the transition visits.



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# Collaboration: Is proximity enough?

- **Antoinette-** “There’s not a lot of interaction. We have buddy class activities. We have whole school assemblies and sports days and things like this but on a day to day basis, a lot of us wouldn’t even see any of the teachers. We (primary school teachers) go into the pre-school for yard duty but it is separate really. There should be a lot more perhaps older kids working with younger kids, a lot more sharing of experiences and knowledge.”



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# Collaboration: Is proximity enough?

- **Christine-** “Let’s all be one thing so the early years work together and be all one with freedom to use the water play, sand play and all of that which is what they want, so the younger kids get to learn from the older ones.”
- **Ruby-** “We could be doing a lot of work with siblings, we could be doing a lot more group activities. So I think there’s still a long way to go, small steps, but a long way to go.”



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# Barriers to Collaboration

## Structural organisation

- Physical space
- Faculty meetings
- Planning time

## Philosophical perspectives

- Pedagogy
- Assessment



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# Structural Barriers: Physical

**Goldie-** “I think when [the school] was built we had grand plans...to be able to throw those doors open more often, have your kindy kids and school kids cross over... it seems that there’s quite a lot of rules around pre-school and the environment for pre-school children. So they need those fences, they do need those barriers.”



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# Structural Barriers: Faculty Meetings

**Marrieanne** -“I wouldn’t expect the year 7 teacher to be sitting there with us while we’re talking about how we’re going to organise our different environment or those things.”

**Christine** - “We definitely feel part of the whole school but there is a bit of divide because there’s just some stuff that isn’t relevant to use and we have our own staff meetings and so I think it’s similar...it’s a necessary divide.



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# Structural Barriers: Planning Time

**Marriane-** “It’s interesting in the current enterprise bargain for school teachers their teaching hours are being reduced and their planning time is being increased but preschool teachers have...had their teaching time increased.”

**Ruby-** “The way things work on the time that teachers get, NITT time. Pre-school, they don’t get NITT like we get NITT.”



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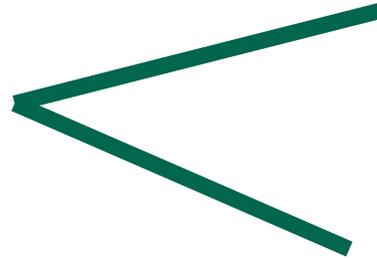
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# Philosophical Barriers

Pedagogy

Assessment



Teacher education

Educational policy



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# Philosophical Barriers: Pedagogy

**Ruby-** “[They have] different views on how children learn. It’s still very much divided.”

**Scarlet-** “I don’t think people value play at all. I’ve had that very thing said to me...so yeah they [preschool teachers] don’t have a lot of respect in the school. In school you’ve got a lesson, a bell, a lesson, a bell you know you sit over here, you do this, you do that- In preschool it’s not like that and they don’t believe that’s how children learn.”

**Katie-** “you think it’s more play days... so I think they think it’s a bit more casual going there... but because it doesn’t match how- like as soon they get to reception it’s bang, sit down, no more playing, well not as much playing you need to sit and learn.”



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# Philosophical Barriers: Pedagogy

**Christine-** “We were emailed and asked did we want readers. [our early childhood coordinator] said, ‘we don’t need to push readers further down’ and that was the end of the conversation but I imagine some preschools that don’t have [a director] there to say that and just have to accept it and here’s your readers and you got to do it.”



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# Philosophical Barriers: Assessment

**Ruby-** “There’s a bit of awkwardness with assessments.”

**Marrieanne-** “[in preschool] it has been observed through in a situation that was the child’s choice but you can’t say the child didn’t do it and you can’t say the child didn’t show their understanding of it. Whether that transfers to [reception] in which measuring is needed to be showing on-demand in the school context is another matter.”



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# Philosophical Barriers: Teacher Education

**Scarlet-** “I think part of that is people come in with their perceptions and their own beliefs from what they’ve learned at University...Its their perception that there should be order, there should be calmness... we don’t discipline them enough so yeah they come in with a very different philosophy so there’s very little respect.”

**Marriane-** “I think there's a difference between people who've had that nought to 8 training and people who've had 5 to 8 training or 5 to 12 training. I still think there's a place for both and to me it's that I see it as the concrete to abstract continuum.”



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# Philosophical Barriers: Education Policy

**Katie-** “The preschool has their own program obviously, their own curriculum...it’s more play... It doesn’t match.”

**Marriane-** “I think that just the difference between the early years curriculum and the Australian curriculum.” Australian curriculum, “[learning] is seen as exponential, it’s seen that in foundation there’s this much to learn, in year 1 there’s this much to learn...it goes up that sliding scale.”

**John-** “The [Australian Curriculum]- there’s so much that’s put on us teachers to get through in so little time and it’s kind of like we rush- we rush through bits and pieces trying to cover all of this.”



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# Philosophical Barriers: Education Policy

**Scarlet-** “When the EYLF came out, the Australian Curriculum came out at the same time, some schools got thousands, I think one school got a million dollars, like they get masses of money in high school, there was a lot of money thrown around in primary schools for the Australian Curriculum; Early childhood for the whole, huge National Quality Standard and EYLF, we got to give every site some curriculum framework books- that’s it.”



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# Discussion: Understanding issues of Power

**Friere** (1993) suggests, “In dialogical theory of action, Subjects meet in cooperation in order to transform the world.” In order to create more equitable worlds Friere (1993) said, we must come together to “name the world in order to transform it...and become “co-authors of liberation action.” (pp.. 167-168)



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# Teacher as Change Agent: Negotiating Collaborative Identities

## Negotiating curriculum, pedagogy and assessment

- Changing physical space
- Working across curriculum documents
- Providing equitable leadership opportunities



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# Negotiating Collaborative Identities: Changing physical space

**Marriane-** “Part of the rationale for flipping the spaces, the childcare and the pre-school spaces is probably around some of the stuff that is going to mean that, if the pre-school is on this side it’s then that more relational stuff that can happen.”

**Ruby-** “So we’ll have the closer affiliation, so we’ll be able to move more smoothly throughout. And maybe even swapping a little. So the children get that cross.”



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# Negotiating Collaborative Identities: Changing physical space

**Scarlet-** “[The plan is to] use that yard to eventually have all the receptions there, knock down the walls and have a great big early childhood hub.”



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# Negotiating Collaborative Identities: Working across curriculum documents

**Rosanne-** “We see connections (between the EYLF and AC) here. One doesn’t stop just because a child has their fifth birthday. So we’re actually seeing the principles of the EYLF go right through the whole school and it doesn’t matter how old you are- the same principles are there.”

**Jessica-** “really focusing on is that child’s learning journey...not asking children to start again, by valuing their previous experiences and moving away from that model of they’re in school now, they don’t play. So we are looking at a really holistic approach to children ...and also looking at a more play-based curriculum.”



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# Negotiating Collaborative Identities: Working across curriculum documents

**Ruby-** “They’ve brought out a document, that shows how the being, belonging, and becoming, which is the preschool document reflects with the Australian curriculum foundation years. As a teacher you’ve just got to make it work. And having a play based philosophy and activity. I’ve already put it into my curriculum, so I already have that in practice.”



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# Negotiating Collaborative Identities: Working across curriculum documents

**Scarlet-** “get a grasp on what they’re doing around the foundation areas of the curriculum, national curriculum, so that I can link our early years learning framework with some of that foundational work...and that we can have connection with the school. And also how we can support the school to do more of a play based approach.”



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# Negotiating Collaborative Identities: Provide equitable leadership opportunities

**Marriane-** “I've got influence in some of the curriculum in the junior primary but I don't have any complete role. It is the quite nice opportunity for me professionally to really see those progressions of the nought to 5 and keep in the loop of what's happening 5 to 8.”

**Ruby** -“the principal actually came in and said, ‘I want change Ruby, I want to see [preschool inspired learning environments]. I said, ‘hallelujah!’ Ruby continued, “I'm trying to get those [jr primary] teachers now to try and do similar.



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# Recommendations: Encouraging dialogic encounters

- Building shared understand and language
- Bringing together Reflection and Action- Praxis
- Following principals of authenticity



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