

# Straddling the Divide



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# Overview of session

- Background and literature to “the divide”
- Methodology
- Major categories identified
  - conditions
  - personal and professional resources
  - application of technical and conceptual knowledge in contrasting environments
- Conclusion and implications
- Questions



(Shellac, 2011) *Katherine gorge*



# Background

- What were the lived experiences of preservice teachers working between two settings: prior to school and school?
- How did they implement the two curricula across the two settings?

# Literature

- Care education divide
- Structural challenges of EYLF and AC
- Overlap points at first year of school
- New space

# Data collection

- Corbin and Strauss' (2008) version of Grounded Theory
- Concurrent data collection and analysis
- Semi-structured interviews

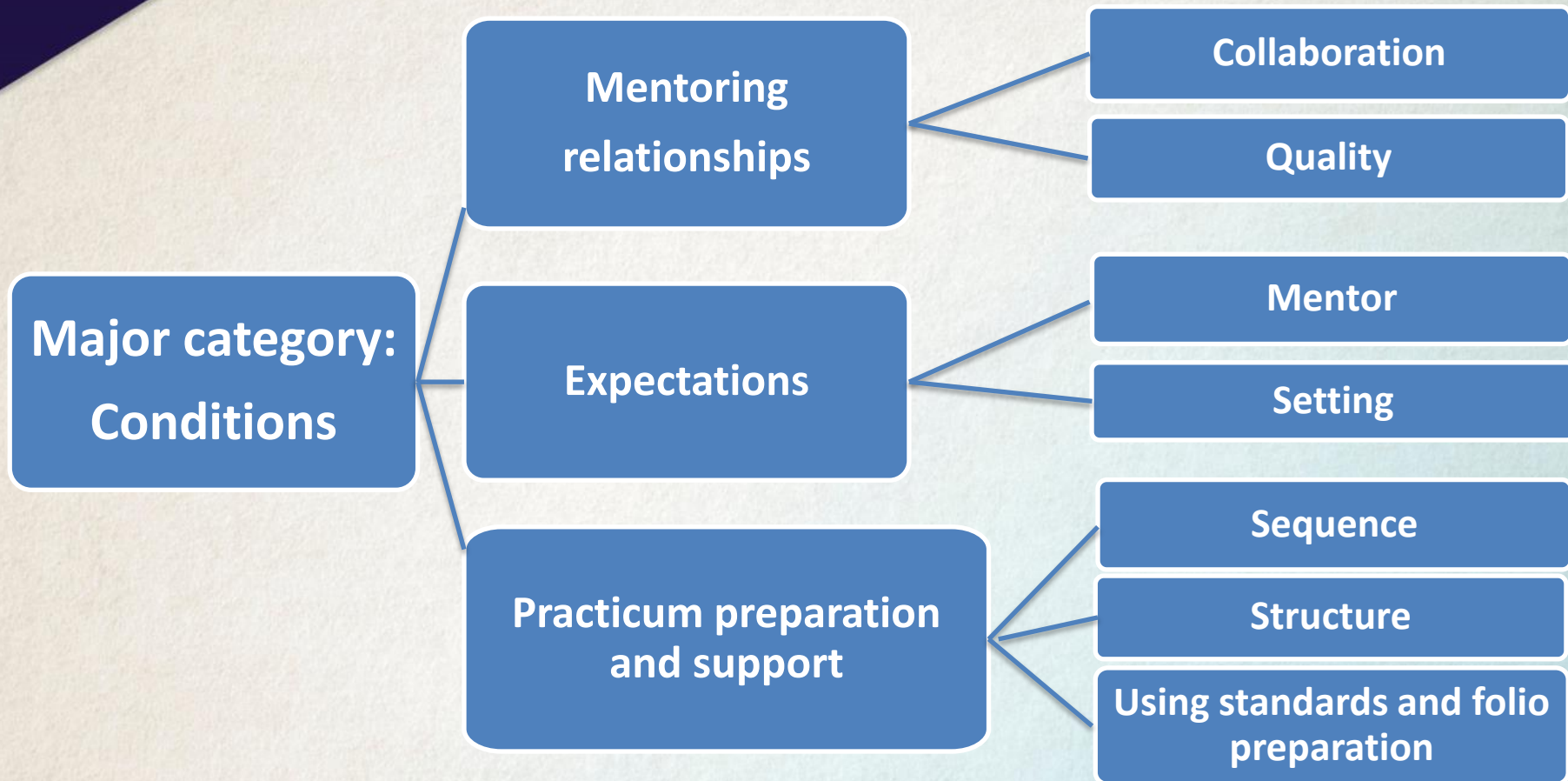
## Participants

- 20 preservice early childhood teachers
- Purposeful theoretical sampling



# Data analysis

- Team of five researchers
- Corbin and Strauss' (2008) three stages of coding
  - Open coding
  - Axial coding
  - Selective coding
- questioning the data, making constant comparisons, examining various meanings of words, the use of language, and drawing on personal experience through researcher memos and diagrams (Corbin & Strauss, 2008)
- “Fit” and “applicability” or usefulness of the research (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 305)



## Mentoring relationships

Collaborative contexts for enhanced learning that reflect ECEC professional standards are valued



Relationship qualities with mentors:  
Communication; mutual respect;  
inclusion / welcoming, and expressed  
interested in preservice teacher's learning  
and development





## Expectations

Some mentors were explicit about expectations of the preservice teacher and their intended approaches to preservice teacher's learning

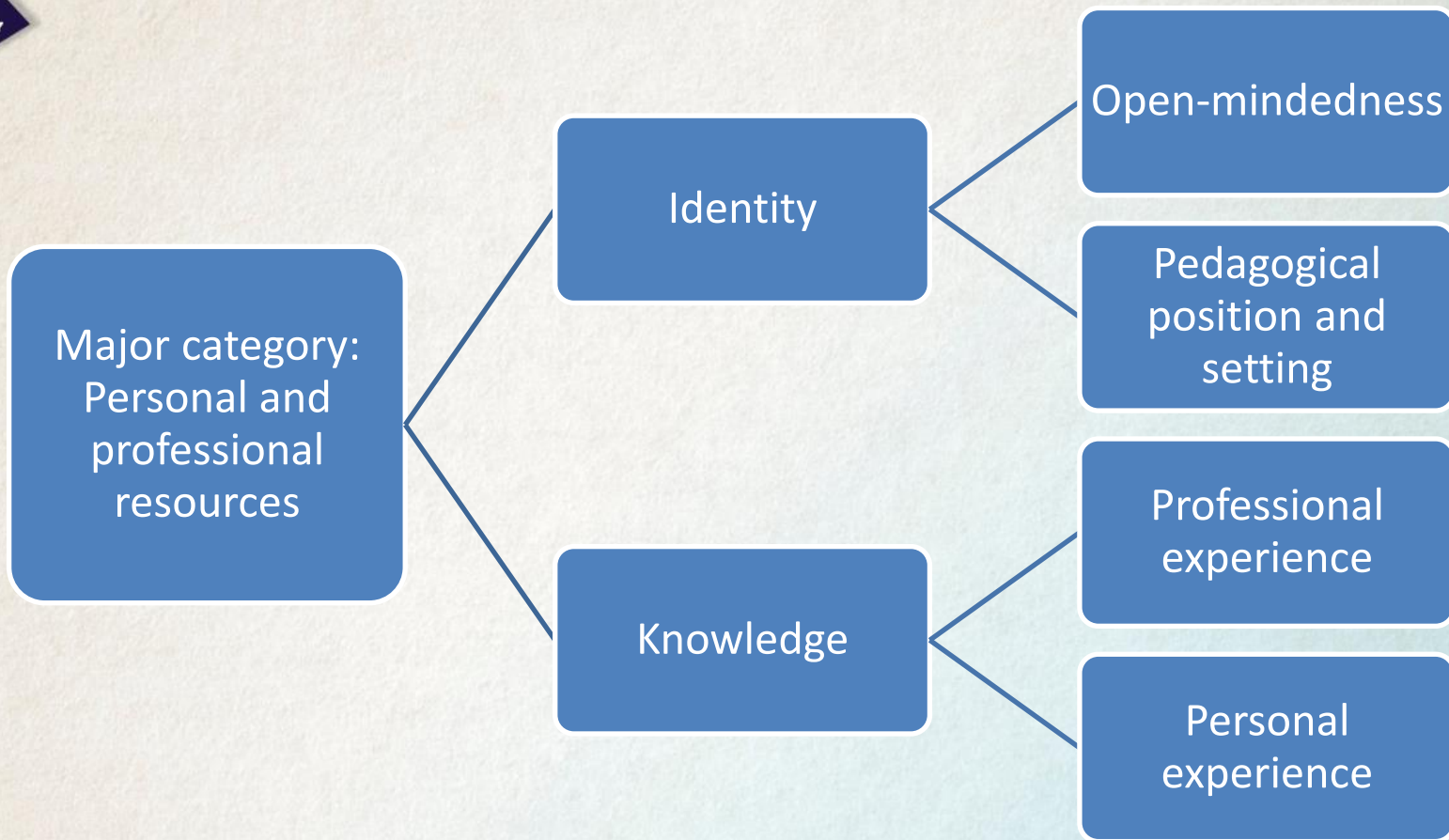
Different expectations were often mentioned in relation to particular settings but not explicitly compared

## Practicum preparation and support

Implications for learning and expectations due to the practicum sequence – related to the value or invisibility of early childhood background

Practicum structure at the unit level or the course level – may unintentionally reinforce some attitudes

Challenges in demonstrating AITSL standards and folio preparation





## Identity

### Open-mindedness

“That open mindedness is a very good attribute to have because once you’re there, as you said, sponge it; let it all come in, some will stay with you and some will move forward. I think that’s a good attribute”(IP: 3).



### Pedagogical position and setting

Preference of pedagogy and setting influenced practice within settings.



## Knowledge

### Professional Experience

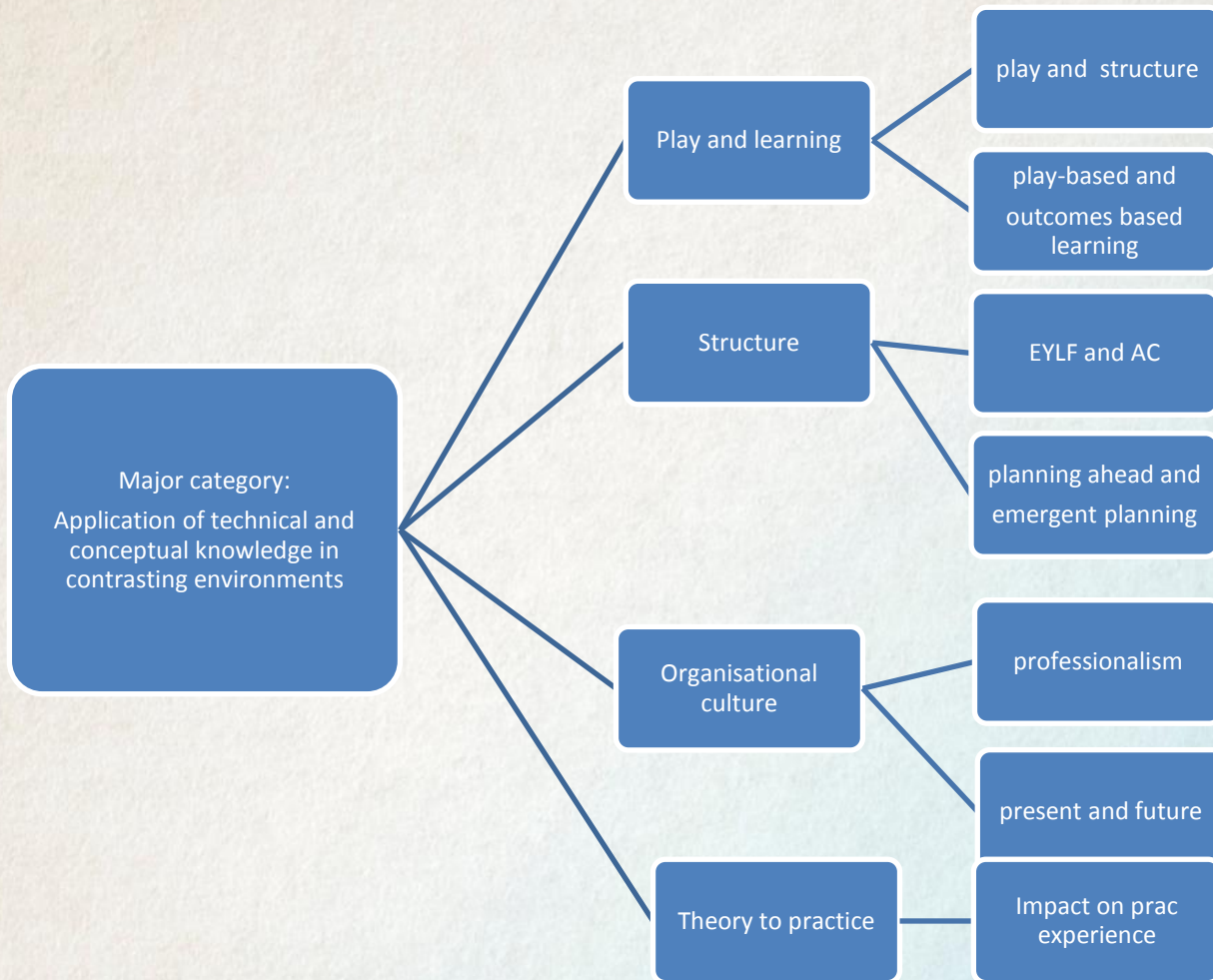
Many of our PST's had child care backgrounds, which influenced the exposure they had to children's development and EC pedagogies.

"I surprised the teachers (on my second prac). The teachers were always commenting that I was able to form a connection and that with the children but because I've been in the industry for a long time, my long day care is what, you know, helped me with the nurturing, connecting and being able to form those relationships with children because I've had that long day care background. (IP: 21)

### Personal Experience

Life experience counts! The PST's highlighted that the experience they've been through have shaped their identity of early childhood education.







## Play and Learning

‘Free’ play in childcare vs ‘structure’ in schools

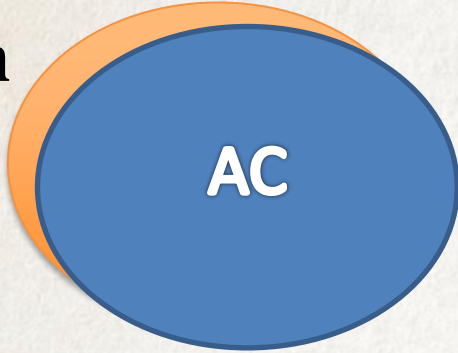


Play-based/Outcomes based  
learning



# Structure

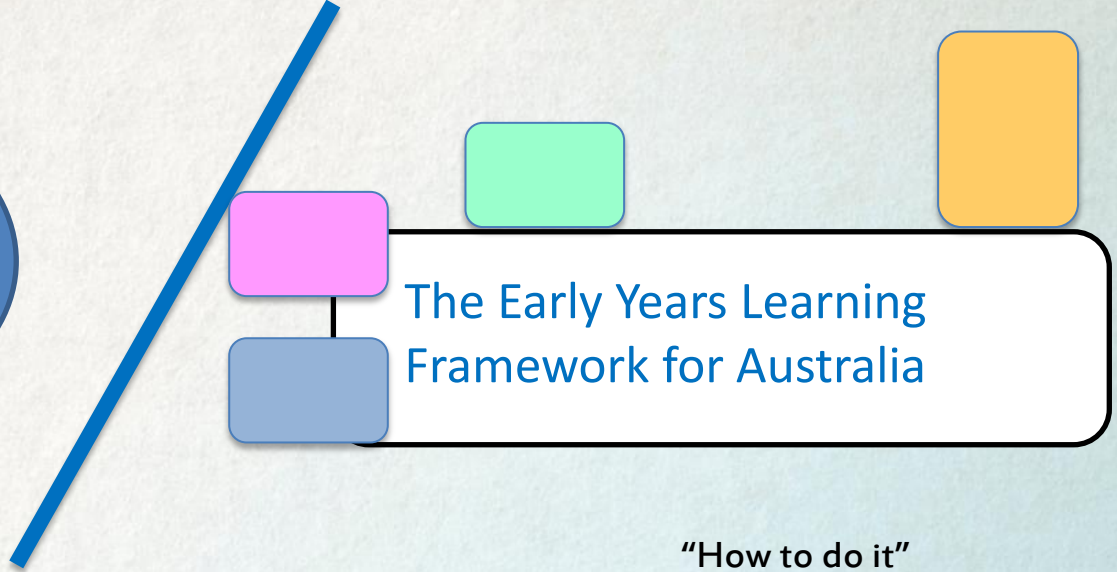
acara



“What to do

What must be done

What children should  
know”



“How to do it”

# Pre-planned vs spontaneity



Structure  
“helps  
chn.  
know  
what  
they’re  
doing”



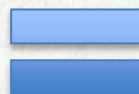
The freedom of the EYLF: “the centre is the child”.



# Organisational Culture



**Teacher (in school)**



**Professional**



# Theory to practice



# Conclusions

- Context has a clear cut divide
- Too early since the introduction of the two curricula for empirical evidence
- More work is needed on the preparation and expectations of mentors and preservice teachers
- Preservice teachers see the two contexts as separate and often unprepared for realities
- Underlying structural demarcations seem to influence some preservice choices and attitudes



# Implications

- increasing number of cross sector degrees (0-5, 0-8, 0-12) why are we doing this?
- Policies are currently not being applied – What are the barriers?
- Identity of pst as ECT – what sets ECTs apart from the rest?
- Readiness of mentors – where do we go from here?

THANK YOU

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