Mentoring in Early Childhood/Primary Pre-service Teacher Education: The Kinda Kinder Program

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Declaration

I, Janette Lorraine Hunt, declare that this Doctor of Education dissertation entitled *Mentoring in Early Childhood/Primary Pre-service Teacher Education: The Kinda Kinder Program* is not more than 60 000 words in length, exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, references and footnotes. This dissertation contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this dissertation is my work.
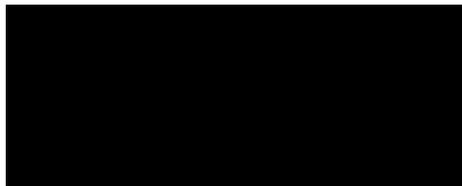
Wednesday, 5 September 2018

Signature	Date

Acknowledgement

I would like to sincerely thank Ian and Andrea for their never-ending patience and support as my supervisors, helping me through each stage of my research. Without you both I would never have completed my study.

Many thanks to the participants in my study who accepted me into the group to work alongside them for the duration of the Kinda Kinder playgroup. Their honesty and openness allowed me to gain a true understanding of the mentoring program. Special thanks to Katie, the group mentor for her enthusiasm and support for my research. I loved attending every playgroup session because of positive attitude and sense of humour.

Thank you also to my family and friends who encouraged me to continue with my study, especially to Jenny and Liz: thanks for your wonderful discussions over lunch.

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Abstract

This study explores the nature of mentoring in a practical preservice teacher project. As part of an early childhood/primary teaching course, students attended weekly playgroups for preschool children and families, in some separate sites within the community. Small groups of preservice teachers worked alongside a mentor as they took responsibility for planning and implementing the program. The research was initiated as there was little known about the way mentors approached their role in this program and there was no information regarding the impact of mentoring on student learning during the program. This qualitative study aimed, firstly, to investigate the nature of mentoring in one playgroup site and, secondly, to explore the student learning taking place within the program.

By using an ethnographic approach to the study that involved an academic year in the field, this research provided detailed, intricate information from the perspectives of the participants. Data was collected from the evaluation/planning sessions which occurred every week of the program following the playgroup, from interviews with the mentor and the group of students, and from student journals. To organise and analyse the extensive collection of data, IDR (Inductive Data Reduction) was used. By using this approach, themes emerged directly from the data that addressed the research questions.

The findings revealed that the qualities of the mentor were paramount in the success of the program. The mentor in this study was a friendly, caring person with moral purpose who created an environment in which the students felt comfortable and supported. Within this environment, the group of students experienced the role of a teacher; they freely reflected on and discussed their teaching practice. As the research study evolved, links to transformative learning, as espoused by Mezirow (1978, 1981), became apparent. A

supportive mentor and a group of students from diverse backgrounds created opportunities for students to be exposed to and discuss different points of view. Transformative learning occurred when their underlying beliefs and assumptions were modified. This study provides significant information for developers of early childhood teacher education programs. It explores how small group mentoring in a teaching environment supports transformative learning. It also gives recommendations regarding selection of and professional development for mentors.

Acronyms and glossary of terms

AAPSCD	Australian Association for Pre-School Child Development
ACECQA:	Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority
DEECD:	Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
ECA	Early Childhood Australia
ECEC:	Early Childhood Education and Care
EYLF:	Early Years Learning Framework
VEYLDF:	Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework
ACECA:	The Australian Children's Education and Care Authority
DEECD:	Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
Family Day Care:	Home-based child care offered in the private home of carers, under the supervision of a coordination unit.
IDR	Inductive Data Reduction
Long Day Care:	A centre-based form of ECEC that caters for children aged 0–6 years
Occasional Care:	A centre-based child care service that provides care for children aged from birth to five years who attend the services on an hourly or sessional basis for short periods or at irregular intervals.
Outside School Hours Care:	A centre-based form of ECEC for primary school aged children (6–12 years) and available before and after school, during school holidays and on pupil-free days. Usually provided on primary school premises but may also be located in child care centres, community facilities or other OSHC centres located near the primary school. OSHC is often provided by parent associations or not for profit organisations.
National Quality Standard:	The national level standard for the provision of high quality early childhood education and care and OSHC services across seven quality areas: educational program and practice; children's health and safety; physical environment; staffing arrangements (including ratios and qualifications); relationships with children; collaborative partnerships with families and communities; and leadership and service management.
National Quality Framework (NQF):	National Quality Framework refers to the overall national quality framework.
Preschool/Kindergarten:	A centre based, early childhood education program, delivered by a qualified teacher, often but not necessarily on a sessional basis in a dedicated service. Available to children from age three until school age.
VET:	Vocational Education and Training
VEYLDF:	Victorian Early Years and Development Framework

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In my professional life as an early childhood teacher and later as an educator of early childhood teachers, there is nothing that I have enjoyed more than working with young children. It is a wonderful experience to be a part of their world as they enjoy investigating even the simplest of activities, learning about the world as they grow and develop. I have also gained great enjoyment in assisting early childhood preservice teachers as they progress through their studies and improve their practical teaching skills working with children. Fortunately, my research study has enabled me to enjoy both aspects of my work as I explore a mentoring program within a yearlong practical teaching placement for pre-service teachers studying a Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood/Primary) at Abbey University.[1]

My research was an ethnographic study which explored the mentoring program that was an integral part of a practical teaching placement. Ethnography is a study of social interactions, behaviours, and perceptions that occur within groups, teams, organisations, and communities (Reeves et al. 2008:512). Over the year I became deeply involved the program and I investigated the role of the mentor and considered the transformative learning that occurred for the students. Transformative learning, as described by Mezirow (2003:58), is the essence of adult education and occurs when assumptions are questioned and underlying beliefs or frames of reference are modified.

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[1] 'Abbey University', used throughout this thesis, is a pseudonym used for ethical reasons.

The placement that comprised of a playgroup project, called Kinda Kinder, was of particular interest for me as I have been involved in some capacity from the very early planning stages. As it has become increasingly difficult to find opportunities in schools and early childhood centres for students to complete their practical placements, my colleagues and I have been involved in ongoing discussions about alternate ways to provide firsthand experiences with children. The Kinda Kinder program playgroup is specifically implemented for the students to gain this firsthand practical experience working with preschool children and their families. It operates in a range of settings including libraries, schools, university sites and community centres. Each site has an assigned mentor working alongside a group of students who plan and implement the playgroup session.

The university staff have always believed that it is a valuable experience for all those involved but there has been no defining evidence to support these feelings, apart from anecdotal reports from mentors and students. The opportunity to conduct a research study about the program is extremely important and exciting for me.

In this ethnography, I will share my experience of a truly inspiring mentor who provides an environment in which the students can transform their learning about early childhood education.

Background

To provide a comprehensive background for my ethnography, and as the research takes place within an early childhood program, I include an explanation of Early Childhood Education and Care in Australia and then, specifically in Victoria. I also provide a background to early childhood teacher education 2008-2017, as my study is focused on this area.

Early Childhood Education and Care in Australia

The development of early childhood programs in Australia has taken place in response to changing ideological and socio-political needs (Elliot 2006:2). In

the late nineteenth century, Australia's first kindergartens opened, having been influenced by European educationalists such as Johann Pestalozzi in the late 18th century and Friedrich Froebel in the early 19th century (Press & Hayes, 2000). At first, these centres, which charged fees, catered for the children of wealthy families; soon, however, early childhood services became regarded as a tool for social reform: they were regarded as being beneficial for the disadvantaged and they had the potential to transform both children and their families (Brennan 1998:17).

In Australia, the Kindergarten Union of New South Wales, founded in 1895, provided services for the poor; by 1911, kindergarten unions had been established in all other Australian states (Brennan 1998:16). The federal government began funding the sector in 1939 by supporting the Australian Association for Pre-School Child Development (AAPSCD); the association was renamed 'Early Childhood Australia' in 2003.[2] Early Childhood Australia was set-up specifically to advocate for young children and to promote quality outcomes in early childhood education and care.[3] Although part-day preschool services became funded in some states, the provision of Early Childhood Education and Care was largely philanthropic; for example, in Victoria, the churches became involved in the provision of kindergarten services.

In the second half of the 20th century, the kindergarten movement grew dramatically. With the Child Care Act 1972, the Commonwealth Government became financially involved with childcare. This act provided 'funding for non-profit organisations to operate centre-based day care facilities for children of working and sick parents. Funding was provided for capital grants…recurrent grants…and grants for research into matters relating to childcare…to be eligible for this funding the centre-based long day care centres had to operate for at least 48 weeks a year and be open for at least eight hours every working day.[4] A federal government investigation into early

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[2] See Press, F & Wong, S 2013, A voice for young children, *Early Childhood Australia*, 6-17.
[3] See Early Childhood Australia, accessed at http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/about-us/ accessed 6Sep17.
[4] See https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/Publications_Archive/archive/childcaresupport, accessed 22/01/2018 10:43 AM.

childcare and education resulted in the Fry Report that recommended funding for preschools and educator training in early childhood education, and the government planned to ensure every Australian child had access to fifteen hours a week for one year of preschool education (Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia 1984). As a response to both the Fry Report and to social change in the community which supported increased participation of women in the workforce, Commonwealth funding was provided for a range of early childhood services designed for preschool children and their families[5]. At the same time, the Fry Report also recognised the need for high quality care for children as well as for qualified teachers in the field.

There has been increased commitment to Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) in recent years as governments have valued its contribution to improving outcomes for children from disadvantaged backgrounds (Theobald, et al. 2013). The Australian government introduced the National Quality Framework (NQF) in 2012 following an agreement between all Australian state governments to work together to provide better educational and developmental outcomes for children; the NQF aimed to improve the quality of education and care in kindergartens and long day care settings as well as family day care and outside school care[6]. Subsequently, the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), an independent statutory authority formed in 2012, worked with state and territory regulatory authorities to guide consistent implementation of the NQF and to offer all Australian children the best possible start in life[7].

Both the EYLF (Early Years Learning Framework 2009) and the NQF (National Quality Framework 2012)[8] focused attention on many initiatives, including relationships with children and collaborative partnerships with

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[5] See Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia 1984. *The history and development of children's services, Education and Welfare Group*, Legislative Research Service Department of Parliamentary Library:3

[6] See Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority 2017, *Guide to the National Quality Standard*, accessed at http://www.acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework/explaining-the-national-quality-framework. 6Sep17.

[7] See ACECQA at www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/department/ndsltacecqa.docx accessed 6Sep17.

[8] Further information regarding the NQF may be found at http://www.acecqa.gov.au/background-to-the-national-quality-framework.

families and communities by stating that early childhood educators need to develop positive, trusting, respectful relationships with children and families.[9]

The NQF introduced higher qualification requirements for some educators, improved adult to child ratios and strengthened the focus on the educational program. Children were recognised as being active and competent learners and this formed the basis for the educational program.

In Australia, there are different services currently operating for children before they attend school. Kindergartens, also known as preschools in some states, are government funded programs for children in the year prior to school. Some kindergarten programs operate within childcare centres and some within schools (Elliott 2006:4). Childcare centres – which are also known as long day-care centres, creches or nurseries – cater for children aged 0-5 years before they attend school. These services may be within work places, schools, university campuses or in independent centres. Family Day Care, which is small group care, is provided in private homes with registered carers and is funded through a Family Day Care Scheme administered by organisations such as local government community services or other not-for-profit community organisations. Outside School Hours Care Services, Vacation Care services. Occasional Care services offer short-term care and are located in shopping centres, schools or community centres.

Kindergarten programs in Australia are available and optional for children before they attend school for fifteen hours per week. Further information about universal access for Early Childhood Education may be found from the Australian Government, Department of Education and Training.[10]

A focus on play has always been evident in the field of early childhood education. This focus remains, but over the last forty years, the shift has been from free-play to play-based learning and while play is relevant for learning, there is a need for high quality intentional teaching to promote children's

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[9] See Council of Australian Governments, National Partnership Agreement on The National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care, accessed 6Sep17.

learning (Theobald et al. 2013:113); the role of early childhood educators is therefore critical. Early childhood teachers are now expected to engage in critically reflective practice and ongoing learning and to develop a strong evidence base on which to make pedagogical decisions (Busch & Theobald, in Pendergast, & Garvis, 2013).

ECEC in Victoria 2008-2107

In 2007, the Office for Children and Early Childhood Development was created within the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD). This office focused on the health, development and wellbeing of children; it coordinated policy and programs in relation to school-community partnerships, early childhood and parent-school partnerships.

In 2010, the Victorian Early Years and Development Framework (VEYLDF) was introduced in response to the EYLF, aiming to ensure quality in children's programs. [11] The framework, which was a guide to educator practice, was based on five Learning and Development Outcomes for young children:

- Children have a strong sense of identity (Identity).
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world (Community).
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing (Wellbeing).
- Children are confident and involved learners (Learning).
- Children are effective communicators (Communication).

In 2010, the VEYLDF consisted of eight practice principles of professional practice which were grouped into three areas: collaborative, effective and reflective, as follows.

- **Collaborative**
  1. Family centred practice

2. Partnerships with professionals
3. High expectations for every child
- **Effective**
4. Equity and diversity
5. Respectful relationships and responsive engagement
6. Integrated teaching and learning approaches
7. Assessment for learning and development
- **Reflective**
8. Reflective practice

In 2016, the VEYLDF was revised with the following changes:[12]

- The eight Practice Principles had been reordered to begin with reflective practice as a defined skill in critical evaluation for all early childhood professionals.

- 'Family-centred practice' had been renamed 'Partnerships with families'.

- The introduction to each Learning and Development Outcome had been strengthened to include contemporary evidence that will inform professionals' practice and advance outcomes for children and families.

The Learning and Development Outcomes had been linked to the first three levels of the Victorian Curriculum F-10.[13]

ECEC teacher training

Teacher training programs for kindergarten teachers were established by the Kindergarten Unions in Sydney in 1896 (Brennan 1998:28) and the union stressed the importance of this training for teachers (Gardiner 1982:5).

Staff employed in early childhood settings include early childhood teachers, early childhood educators and those with Certificate III qualifications. Early childhood teachers hold an approved early childhood

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[12] Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, accessed at www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/earlyyears/index.aspx, 6Sep17
[13] See http://www.vic.gov.au/education/early-childhood/early-childhood-services.html, accessed 6Sep17.

teaching qualification or qualification assessed by ACECQA as equivalent to an early childhood teaching qualification. Under the National Quality Framework, centre-based services must engage or have access to an early childhood teacher based on the number and age of children at the service.

Early childhood teachers generally need to complete at least four years of tertiary study, including at least one year of teacher education study (State of Victoria 2017). The most common qualifications are as follows:

- a four-year undergraduate early childhood teacher qualification (e.g., Bachelor of Early Childhood Education);
- a 'pathways' course allowing those with an approved diploma in children's services to complete a degree in early childhood education.

Early childhood educators need to complete a VET qualification in education and care such as:

- Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care (6 months);
- Certificate IV in School Age Education and Care (one year);
- Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care (18 months-2 years);
- Diploma of School Age Education and Care (one year)[14].

The Victorian Government's early childhood workforce strategy has been developed to achieve a highly skilled, professional early childhood workforce.[15]

Accredited bachelor degrees may be purely for early childhood teaching or may be combined with primary level teaching for dual accreditation, leading to employment opportunities in early childhood, preschool and primary school settings. In Victoria, studies may be completed at a number of universities and vocational education centres and there are opportunities to pathway between

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[14] See Victoria State Government 2017, accessed at http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/road-map/Pages/education.aspx, 06/09/2017 4:40 PM

[15] See Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 2009, *Improving Victoria's Early Childhood Workforce: Working to give Victoria's children the best start in life*. Early Childhood Strategy Division, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Melbourne, November 2009:3.

the two sectors with credits given for previous studies. Postgraduate studies allow for people coming from a range of undergraduate courses to enter the early childhood teaching field.

Early Childhood Teacher education courses in Australia generally include subject areas such as Literacy and Numeracy, Child Development and Creative Arts. Courses also include practical placements, where preservice teachers work with children in a range of school and early childhood settings. Practical experience is valued by educationalists and many theorists have written about the importance of involving learners in meaningful experiences (Kraft & Kielsmeier 1995), the concept linking back to Plato and Aristotle (Kolb 1939). Learning becomes embedded in the practices and relationships of the workplace helping to create significance and meaning for the learner (Wenger in Boud & Middleton 2003). Anderson et al. (in Foley 2000:3) remark that learning should focus upon the learner's involvement. Learning invariably involves the whole person; their senses and feelings as well as intellect and cognition. Darling-Hammond (2010:61) believes that the central issue in all teacher education is related to the question:

> How to foster learning about and from practice *in* practice

Putnam & Borko (2000:10) advance the view that knowledge is socially constructed and state that teacher education researchers need to:

> …identify key characteristics of field-based experiences that may foster new ways of teaching and how these experiences may be created within existing school cultures.

There is a rich variety of ways in which practical experience may be provided for students engaged in early childhood teacher education. As a consequence, there is a growing interest in improving early childhood teacher education and providing alternative ways to engage pre-service teachers in practical placements where experiences are meaningful.

At the same time, universities are being forced to seek suitable sites that will provide a rich range of learning experiences in order to meet the needs of a quite diverse student cohort. In the case of the Abbey University, the students in the study were enrolled, at different levels and stages, in early

childhood/primary Bachelor of Education programs (either at first or second-year level) – some with completed diplomas and placement experience, others with no other qualification and little or no placement experience; two others were enrolled in a second-year Diploma of Children's Services, both with placement experience. Added to this diversity of student backgrounds were two other issues that needed to be faced: the first, meeting the difficulty of finding a suitable site in which to operate the course; the second, to accommodate the young children and their parents in an adequate setting.

It was with this background of issues – the changed commitment to improved outcomes for children from disadvantaged backgrounds; a growing concern with higher qualification requirements and quality outcomes at the national level; the development in Victoria of a Learning and Development Framework designed to guide educator practice; and the need for early childhood teachers to complete at least four years of tertiary study including one year of teacher education study – that I undertook my year-long ethnographic study of the Kinda Kinder Program operating at Abbey University.

Kinda Kinder program

The Kinda Kinder program at Abbey University provides a practical placement for preservice teachers in a real-life setting. It provides opportunities for meaningful, significant teaching experiences, in the early childhood section of the course, where students work alongside a mentor and within a supportive group to enhance their learning. Cornu & Ewing (2008) comment that it is the quality of the placement that is important, rather than the duration.

Learning in the workplace has become a key feature of the courses at Abbey University (Usher 2012), a dual sector institution and incorporates both Higher Education and Vocational Education. Integrated learning is valued as are partnerships with industries and communities, (Abbey University, 2012). Pre-service teachers, who are completing a Bachelor's Degree have been working alongside vocational education students studying a Diploma of

Children's Services to provide enriched learning experiences during a playgroup program for preschool children and their families in local communities, with the goal of promoting the literacy and numeracy skills of children who attend.

University staff, school and library staff, as well as students who have experienced the Kinda Kinder playgroup program have commented that it is valuable for the children and families in the communities in which there is a high level of early school leavers and a low level of literacy and numeracy skills (McLaren, 2005). The goals of the playgroup have close links with the Council of Australian Government's National Reform Agenda (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2007). The Agenda is seen as important to Australia's future social and economic wellbeing and considers improvement of support to young children and their families from before birth to transition to school. It focuses upon improving the outcomes in early childhood and upon improving literacy and numeracy skills.

For Abbey University, the Kinda Kinder program is an innovative way for students to gain practical skills in working with young children. Traditionally, students have completed practical placements in educational settings such as schools, kindergartens or childcare centres, with an assigned workplace supervisor for support. Because of a shortage of these traditional placement opportunities, the Kinda Kinder program began as an alternative in different kinds of venues to provide firsthand experience in the early childhood sector. A procedure of negotiation was instituted, with the university negotiating each year with the intended sites (libraries, schools, community centres, university rooms) to set-up and operate the program for the following year. Sometimes this involves university staff visiting managers of sites, explaining the program and pointing out the potential benefits for all parties concerned. The students, along with the mentor, are entirely responsible for the planning, resourcing and implementation of the program which operates for one hour a week over the academic year. Each week the resources are set-up for the children; they are packed away at the end of the session. The families in the community who

have previously attended the playgroups look forward to them resuming each year. Since its inception in 2005 the program has expanded; in 2010, the year of my study, there were twenty-six venues operating.

In the library site that was the setting for my research, the playgroup resources were set-up at one end of the library with an adjoining separate room and an outside, concreted area as well. The student group were responsible for providing the resources used for the playgroup, although the university did have a resource library which the students were able to access. This collection of resources at the university had items that could be used in an early childhood educational setting; it consisted of puzzles, construction sets and imaginative play resources. The library site also provided funds to be used to buy materials for the program, such as art materials and cleaning items. The students were encouraged to make as many props as possible, e.g., puppets, to use with the children and there was an emphasis on using recycled and natural materials which could be collected from their homes or recycling centres.

Kinda Kinder structure

As the program progressed and expanded, a model was developed, with a view to creating some consistency across the sites regarding the expectations for students, the type of playgroup program provided for children and to provide support for mentors in the field. A model for the Early Childhood Team current in 2010 is contained in Figure 1.1. The Early Childhood Team at Abbey University (the 'university staff') manages the Kinda Kinder project with eight early childhood staff with early childhood qualifications appointed to coordinate three or four sites each. These people are available to support the mentors when issues arise; specifically, these issues related to the following:

- resources;
- library/school staff;
- student performance in the field;

Figure 1.1   The Kinda Kinder Model
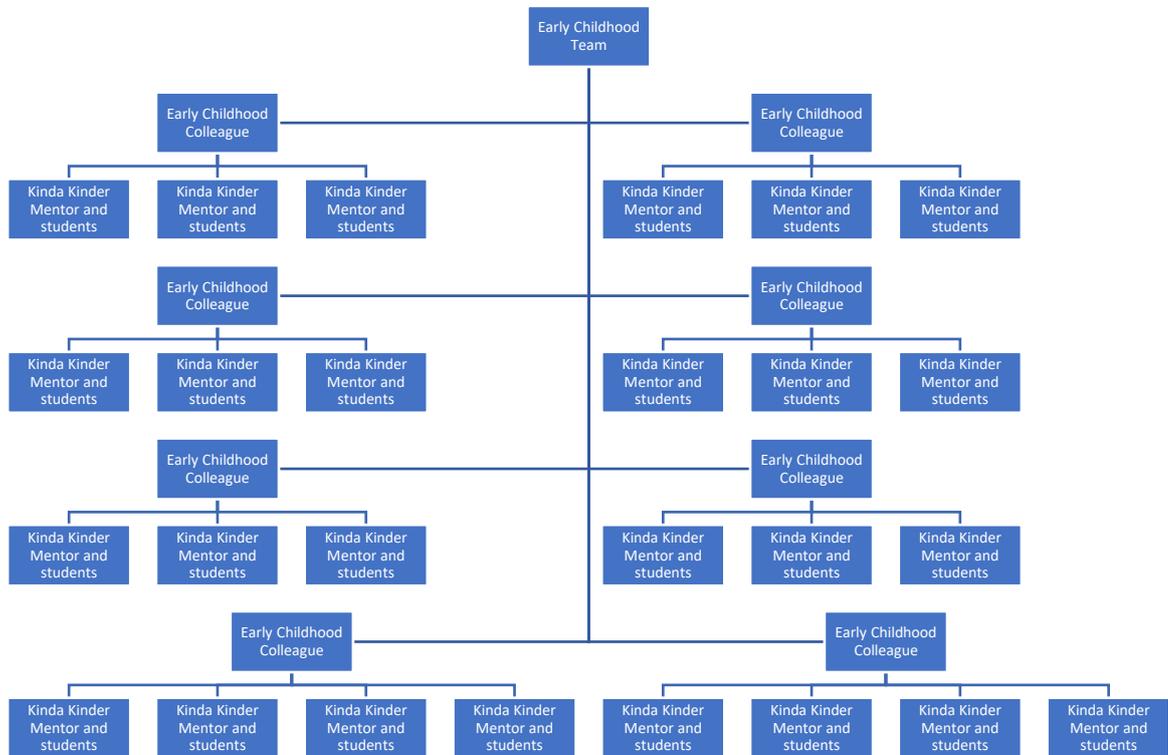
- student attendance;
- mentor/mentee relationships;
- relationships between the students;
- problems with families who may need referral to specialist support.

Ultimately, mentors who join the Kinda Kinder program are selected by the university staff members of the Early Childhood Team. A variety of approaches are employed, as a result of the following:

- satisfactory prior involvement as mentors in previous programs;
- recommendations made by current program staff as a result of their professional activities;
- recommendations received from other university staff engaged in both higher and vocational education.

A necessary prerequisite for all mentors was that they must have early childhood education or primary teacher qualifications.

Prior to meeting with their student group, an introductory meeting is conducted to acquaint them with the Kinda Kinder program. In this introduction, they are informed about the history of the program and provided with a short outline of their role. Later in the year – mid-year and at the end – they are provided the opportunity to meet to share their experiences and talk about issues that have arisen; in particular, they are encouraged to share suggestions that they have to improve the program.

At the beginning of each academic year, the incoming students meet their mentor, together with the other students in their group with whom they will be working for the duration of the program. There are two weeks programmed for planning and preparation before the playgroup actually begins with children and families.

Parent participation

In playgroups operating in Victoria, parental participation is valued: parents are encouraged to spend time playing, having fun and learning together with their children (Njegac et al. 2016). Playgroups operating within schools are desirable as they help families to develop a connection to the school community even before enrolment (Njegac et al. 2016). In accordance with this view and with the VEYLDF (2009), the Kinda Kinder program values cooperative partnerships with the families. Although the parents involved with the student group in my study attended the playgroup with their children each week and were to participate in and to offer suggestions relating to the program, they were not part of my research study.

The mentor

Mentors at Kinda Kinder sites work alongside university students as they plan and implement the playgroup program. The mentor at my study site was Katie who had participated previously in the Kinda Kinder program for four years.

Katie is a perceptive person who loves her work with the students as well as with the children and their families. She has an early childhood teaching background and works with the university as a sessional lecturer; as a consequence, she had considerable experience and insight into the expectations of both her role and that of the students. Working with Katie was a highlight of my ethnographic field work.

The students

The university staff assign the students to a Kinda Kinder site and there are five to seven students in each group with one mentor. As far as possible, each group consists of students from both first and second-year of the Bachelor degree. The students who are in their second-year have completed a Diploma of Children's Services and have been accredited with the first year of the Bachelor degree; for all of these students it is their first year at university. A close relationship has been established between the higher education sector and the vocational education sector of the university and within the Kinda Kinder program there has been particularly close cooperation. The Diploma of Children's Services students have been part of the program over recent years and have joined the student teams at playgroup sites where possible.

The cooperation between university sectors results in the student groups coming to the program with different educational backgrounds and with a differing level of experience in working with children. At the focus site for my study there were three first year Bachelor degree students, two second-year Bachelor degree students and two students studying the Diploma. The diverse backgrounds of the students provide an opportunity for peer mentoring to flourish. As the group endeavours to provide the playgroup program for children, they work cooperatively to make use of their individual strengths, encouraging and supporting each other to improve their teaching practice.

Justification for my research study

The Kinda Kinder program has become an integral part of the early childhood practical placement in the Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood/Primary) and is seen as being a sustainable model because of the symbiotic relationship between the community and the university.

The rapid expansion of the program to twenty-six sites in 2010 resulted in a more diverse group of mentors working in the program; thus, there had developed a mix of primary and kindergarten teachers together with Diploma qualified staff. On occasions, there had also been secondary teachers working as mentors. As a result of this growth in the number of mentors, the level of individual contact with the Early Childhood team from Abbey University had decreased. It became apparent that each site had developed its unique culture and practices, with mentors having individual ideas regarding their role; however, it was unclear precisely what was the nature of these cultures, practices and ideas. If the Kinda Kinder program were to remain as part of a learning-in-the-workplace experience for pre-service teachers, a clear overview of what was happening at the 26 sites is required in order to ensure that the program is beneficial for all children, families, schools, pre-service teachers and Diploma students.

While there had been informal evaluation by mentors and pre-service teachers of class discussions, prior to 2010 there had been no formal, reliable study designed and undertaken to support and improve the program. University staff involved in the organisation of the program needed to make sure that it was a worthwhile practical placement for the students and that it operated in the best possible way. It was expected that a study of the program would inform professional development programs to better meet the needs of all mentors. As a first step, a better understanding of the overall program was required to assist in identifying the nature of mentoring taking place and the learning, if any, eventuating.

I argue, therefore, that an investigation of the Kinda Kinder program, focusing on the views of the mentor and the mentees, is appropriate to ensure its on-going viability.

Aims

Within the program operating in 2010, there were twenty-six mentors working at the Kinda Kinder sites. The mentors had been provided with a brief overview of their role but there was no required professional development for mentors before the program began. Although they came together to share their experiences twice during the program, and they were able to talk with their early childhood colleague, there was little opportunity for university staff to explore the details of each site.

To be manageable, within the restrictions and requirements of a professional doctorate, my research focused on just one of the twenty-six sites to uncover what was happening in terms of the tasks undertaken by the mentor and the student experience and response in light of this. I focused on what the mentor actually did and, in turn, documented and described the student learning that took place over the period of an academic year. Thus, the aims of my research were as follows:

- to identify and document the nature of the mentoring within the Kinda Kinder program, according to the participants;
- to gather and analyse rich, detailed information that would assist me to explore the social and cultural patterns and shifts that are evident within the mentoring program, between the mentor and the students, and between and within the students themselves;
- to identify and document the student learning that, according to the participants, occurred during the Kinda Kinder program;
- to consider the implications for the future of the Kinda Kinder program.

Research questions

In relation to the mentor and the students in the program, there are two major research questions that drive my study; these are:

1. What is the nature of mentoring in the Kinda Kinder program?
2. What learning takes place in the Kinda Kinder program?

There are three sub-research questions that relate to the beliefs and understandings of the mentor and mentees:

- What mentoring strategies are evident within the program?
- What value is given to mentoring within the program by the mentor and the mentees?
- What are the significant program elements that impact on student learning?

Contribution to knowledge

I expected that my research would provide an understanding of the nature of mentoring within the Kinda Kinder program and that it would contribute to the overall research into this experiential learning program undertaken thus strengthening the model. I expected that it would also add to the current understanding of how mentoring might support transformative learning for student teachers. I expected that my ethnographic study would 'explore the beliefs, language, behaviours, and issues of the group' (Creswell, 2007:70); I believed that it would provide descriptions that might be used to 'help administrators ensure that policy development is based on, and directed to, the actual situation rather than to an ideal or imaginary situation' (Burns, 2000:394). I expected that that my study of the mentoring element of the program would inform decisions made about the organisation of practical placements for pre-service early childhood/primary teachers at Abbey University. I looked to making recommendations that would impact on Kinda Kinder programs and which would influence the appointment and professional development of mentors in the program.

Finally, I believed that my ethnography would provide information regarding a specific approach to mentoring pre-service teachers during the implementation of the 'Kinda Kinder' playgroups; in particular, I believed it would illuminate group mentoring and peer mentoring in its close examination of the various roles taken by Katie as an inspirational mentor. Finally, I believed that my study would confirm the importance and value that all associated with the Kinda Kinder place on mentoring within the program and the learning that eventuates throughout its duration.

Significance of the study

I had a strong belief in the significance of my ethnographic study: that it would contribute to the understanding of mentoring in pre-service early childhood teacher education; that it would inform the implementation of transformative learning in practical, authentic settings. Furthermore, I believed that it would contribute to the overall understanding of the Kinda Kinder project and its value for the participants. Finally, as Abbey University has placed an emphasis on learning in the workplace in all of its courses (Usher 2012), I trust that my study might be used as a guide in other mentoring programs within the university to assist in the promoting of best practice.

Chapter Outline

In Chapter One I introduce my research study, with an explanation of the wider setting of Early Childhood Education and Care in Australia and in Victoria. I also include background information about Early Childhood teacher training. I explain a practical placement for preservice teachers at Abbey University, the Kinda Kinder program, which is the focus of my research.

The literature review in Chapter Two positions my research within past and current understandings of mentoring and transformative learning. I provide a background for my research by describing the origins, as discussed in the literature and the use of mentoring, particularly in higher education. I

also outline different approaches to mentoring that are relevant for this study. An area of specific interest for my research is that of relationships within mentoring programs and I discuss the relevant literature.

Transformative learning, as described by Mezirow (1978, 1990), has particular relevance for my research and for preservice teacher education; as a consequence, in this literature review I focus on Mezirow's theory of transformative learning in order to provide the theoretical base for my research. Within the context of transformative learning, I include a background to experiential learning, reflection and discourse.

In Chapter Three, I justify my choice of a qualitative methodology to explore the nature of mentoring and learning at a Kinda Kinder playgroup site. I detail the theoretical perspectives I have employed in terms of ontology, epistemology and my use of ethnography as an appropriate way of gaining specific details about what is occurring in the field. With respect to methods employed in the research, I explain the specifics of the study: the selection of the site and participants; ethical considerations; specific requirements of the university for this study. I also consider the authenticity, trustworthiness and credibility of the study. This chapter concludes with a description of my data collection and how the use of Inductive Data Reduction (IDR) (Ling 2014) leads to the data being synthesised with the findings being presented as a set of major themes.

In Chapter Four, I present a detailed view of the findings as they relate to the research questions. This chapter focuses on the two semi-structured interviews with the mentor and the two semi-structured interviews with the student group. I provide a detailed report, from the perspectives of the participants, including specific quotes from the mentor and students.

In Chapter Five, I continue to present the findings, focusing on the evaluation/planning meetings and the student journals.

In the discussion in Chapter Six, I specifically address the research questions, including links to the literature. I discuss the mentor's approach to her role and the strategies that she used to support the students. I also describe

the students' learning that took place during the program and alignments with the literature about transformative learning.

In Chapter Seven, I bring my research study to a conclusion by reviewing the key findings and commenting on recommendations coming from the study. I report the limitations of the study and suggest future research. My personal reflection about the research is also included.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

In this professional doctorate, I explore the nature of mentoring in a preservice teacher early childhood education program, and I examine the learning taking place as the group of students work alongside a mentor to plan and implement a playgroup for preschool children. The research questions guide my literature review, and in this chapter, I provide an overview of the literature related to mentoring, and transformative learning. As background, I include the origins and the use of mentoring in higher education, an outline of approaches to mentoring that are relevant for this study and I look specifically at mentoring relationships and the desirable characteristics of mentors.

As my study evolved, transformative learning, as described by Mezirow (1978), became evident in the emerging themes. To provide a background and a basis for the discussion in this thesis, I include details of transformative learning in the literature review. Within the context of transformative learning, I include a background to experiential learning, reflection, and discourse.

Mentoring

Origins of mentoring

The idea of mentoring may be traced back to Greek mythology. In Homer's *Odyssey*, when Odysseus left to take part in the Trojan War, he chose his wise and trusted friend 'Mentor' to take care of his son, Telemachus. Mentor was to be responsible for guiding all aspects of his son's development (Miller 2005). Nolan (2007) links mentoring back to the apprentice system in the

Middle Ages; Kerka (1998) also describes the traditional mentoring model as the apprentice learning from the master. She adds that it was during the Industrial Age the focus was narrowed to career advancement.

Interest emerged in mentoring again in the 1970s and 1980s primarily in the business world (Kerry & Mayes 1995:1) and other organisations, such as hospitals and schools, began to recognise it as a valuable tool for staff development. Today, the focus is wider than career advancement and Ragins & Kram (2007:6) note that we recognise:

> the significance of mentoring as an important form of socialisation that changes mentors and protégés in physiological, mental, emotional and perhaps even spiritual ways.

In recent years, there has been a shift to a broader view of mentoring from a hierarchical relationship to a more equitable stance which considers both mentors and mentees as learners and teachers (Kafai et al. 2008). As a result of her most recent research, Nolan (2017:7) observes that:

> mentors were learning from the new teachers who come to the mentoring relationship with fresh ideas, enthusiasm, and a recent engagement with research from their training.

The nature of mentoring

As described in the previous sub-section, mentoring may be seen as complex, social and psychological activity (Roberts 2000:162); there is ambiguity about a definition of mentoring; there is scant information provided about the nature of mentoring (Crisp & Cruz 2009). The term 'mentor' is usually associated with the role of a more experienced person who guides and supports a mentee; it is considered relevant for professionals at different stages of their lives (Enrich et al. 2002). Some authors use the term 'coaching' interchangeably with mentoring (Enrich et al. 2002); however, Megginson & Clutterbuck (2007:4) see coaching as relating primarily to performance in a specific skill area with 'mentoring' relating to the identification and nurturing of potential

for the whole person. Roberts (2000) includes coaching as part of the mentoring role; thus, Roberts (2000:162) defines 'mentoring' as:

> a formalised process whereby a more knowledgeable and experienced person actuates a supportive role of overseeing and encouraging reflection and learning within a less experienced and knowledgeable person, to facilitate that persons' career and personal development.

For Burley & Pomphrey (2011), mentoring is an intentional, nurturing, insightful process with the central aim being to develop professional learning and improve professional practice. It is my perception that 'mentoring' is inclusive of a related set of activities; it is this general aspect in which I am particularly interested.

There are many and varied approaches to mentoring with authors such as Andrew Miller (2005), Ehrich et al. (2002) and Bryan Cunningham (2012) identifying different types of mentoring – for example, peer mentoring and group mentoring – which may take place in a range of settings such as schools and business organisations.

Jones & Brown (2011) perceive the traditional model of mentoring as a hierarchical model that is transmission-based: in this approach, the mentor imparts knowledge, information or support to the mentee. The flow of knowledge is downward from mentor to mentee; the mentor is the skilled person (the 'master') imparting knowledge to the apprentice; the apprentice works alongside the master, gaining firsthand knowledge of real situations from their role model (Kerry & Mayes 1995:18). Hargreaves & Fullan (2000:52) caution against authoritarian models of mentoring that may result in the 'mentor' becoming a 'tormentor'; nevertheless, many benefits of the traditional approach to mentoring have been documented (Clark & Andrews 2009). These include collegiality, networking and sharing ideas, as well as an increase in reflection and reflective practice, and appraisal of beliefs, ideas, and practices. Other benefits of traditional mentoring include personal reward, growth, and satisfaction.

Kram (1985) suggests that mentors generally have two types of functions: career development and psychosocial development. *Career development* functions involve specific mentor behaviours that will directly enhance the likelihood of the mentee becoming successful in their careers. Career development is dependent on the mentor's power and position in the organisation and focuses on promoting the mentee's advancement in the organisation; it may include sponsorship, coaching, protection, providing challenging assignments and increasing exposure and visibility (Kram 1988). *Psychosocial development* refers to more personal aspects of a relationship that enhance a mentee's sense of professional competence and identity. The mentor contributes to the mentee's personal growth; this includes addressing the interpersonal aspects of the mentoring relationships, enhancing the mentee's sense of competence, self-efficacy, and professional and personal development (Ragins & Cotton, 1999:530). Illeris (2011:93) comments that mentoring, through challenge and support from the mentor, contributes to personal growth. Kram (1985) theorises that mentors may provide four psychosocial functions:

- helping the mentee develop a sense of professional self (acceptance and confirmation);
- providing problem solving and a sounding board (counselling), giving respect and support (friendship);
- providing identification and role modelling (role modelling).

Psychosocial functions rely on the quality of interpersonal relationships and the emotional bond that underlies the mentoring relationship. Wilde & Schau (1991) suggest that an extended view of mentoring, combining both functions, is beneficial.

A slightly more inclusive view of mentoring was developed in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; for example, Kerry & Mayes (1995:29) note essential aspects of mentoring to be:

- the process of nurturing;
- the act of serving as a role model;

- the five mentoring functions (teaching, sponsoring, encouraging, counselling and befriending);
- the focus on professional and personal development;
- the ongoing caring relationship.

Consistent with this view, Zachary (2000:1) has pointed out that the focus of mentoring has shifted from a product-oriented model, characterised by a transfer of knowledge', to a process-oriented relationship involving knowledge acquisition, application, and critical reflection. Cunningham (2005) points out that the role of a mentor may include advising, tutoring, supporting, facilitating, modelling, nurturing and guiding; all are key teaching skills. Some authors use the term coaching interchangeably with mentoring (Ehrich et al. 2002). In clarifying the difference between coaching and mentoring, Illeris (2011:66) views mentoring as functioning from the perspective of the mentor and coaching takes place from the perspective of the coachee.[16] The mentoring role may also, at times, involve the counselling skills of listening and empathising. In teacher training, in particular, Nolan (2007: xiv) has suggested that opportunities to discuss and process the learning are essential.

Bashan & Holsblat (2012) argue that modelling by a mentor has a significant impact on teacher training and discuss two aspects of modelling – simple and cognitive modelling. *Simple modelling* is based on the principle of learning through imitation. *Cognitive modelling* is based on a more complex process of the analysis and assimilation of models of teaching that arises from the discussions between the mentor and the mentee.

The complementary approach to mentoring, which has become more popular in recent years, sees the relationship between mentor and mentee as more equal. It recognises that mentoring is a mutually beneficial process; it emphasises the collaborative nature of the mentoring relationship (Jones & Brown 2011). Respect, rapport and emotional ties are important in this

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[16] Coachee 'a person who receives training from a coach, especially in business or office practice'. Accessed at https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/coachee , 23/01/2018 10:50 AM.

approach. Jones & Brown (2011) explain that the mentor is no longer perceived as the person holding the power; instead, power is shared as the mentor demonstrates a willingness to concede authority and the protégé to develop it. When writing about co-mentoring and collaborative relationships, Kochan & Trimble (2000:27) highlight an element of reciprocity; they point out that:

> In the reciprocal approach, both the mentor and mentee benefit from the exchange of information, expanded their sensitivity, reflective skills and communication skills.

When focusing on early childhood teachers, Rodd (2006) considers that mentoring is neither controlling ideas, values nor behaviours of mentees; it is concerned with encouraging mentees to explore possible ideas. Nolan (2007: xiv) considers that opportunities to discuss and process the learning are essential to:

> encourage their ability to resolve challenges and contribute to an attitude of lifelong learning.

In discussing teacher education; Kerry & Mayes (1995:21) emphasise the importance of 'reflection':

> If learning to teach is at the heart of training then reflection on teaching, however it is defined, must be part of that learning process.

The mentor acts as a co-inquirer who promotes critical reflection to help mentees develop a deeper understanding of how children learn and think about their teaching principles and practices. Kerry & Mayes (1995) suggest, however, that preservice teachers are not ready to do this until they have mastered some of their teaching skills. Thus, critical reflection is supported by the application of 'Socratic pedagogy'.

Socratic pedagogy is a collaborative inquiry-based approach to teaching and learning which helps students to learn through questioning and analysing all assumptions (Davey Chesters, 2012). It may be used in the mentoring process to encourage students to think about answers to questions rather than being told the answers. The Socratic mentor encourages students to identify

and challenge their beliefs rather than purely passing on information. Students learn more effectively when they find out for themselves and explain their thinking out loud. In this approach, there is an exchange of dialogue in which the teacher and student examine the information.

My perception is that there is no clear definition of mentoring and mentors that, at this time, emerges from the literature; at best, mentors may choose to take many different approaches to their role and use various strategies to support their mentees.

Phases in the mentoring relationship

Many writers (see, for example, Kram, in Ragins & Kram 2007; Zachary 2000) suggest that there are separate phases to a mentoring program. For example, Kram (1983: 614) recognised four phases in mentoring programs – initiation, cultivation, separation and redefinition – and suggests that mentoring functions may vary across these phases of the relationship. The *initiation stage* involves all parties getting to know each other and the mentor assessing the skills, needs and potential of the mentee. During this time, there are opportunities for interaction around work tasks. Fletcher & Mullen (2012) suggest that, in the early stages of the relationship, it is important for the mentor to be a sympathiser and motivator. In the *cultivation stage*, the participants learn more about each other and emotional ties deepen. It is the primary stage of learning and development when the career and psychosocial functions are at their peak. The career-related function often emerges first when the mentor coaches the mentee on how to work effectively and efficiently. Mentors may assign challenging assignments to the mentee. In the *separation stage*, the mentee becomes more independent and opportunities to work more autonomously arise more frequently: this may include evaluating the learning that has occurred, acknowledging progress, expressing appreciation and celebrating achievement. During the *redefinition stage*, the mentor relationship is no longer needed in the same form and it becomes more a peer-like friendship (Kram 1983).

Zachary (2002) defines four stages of a mentoring relationship, which closely resemble Kram's: preparing, negotiating, enabling and coming to closure. Zachary argues that these phases focus more specifically on the behaviours needed to negotiate each stage. The first stage, *preparing*, is that of preparing for the mentoring relationship by both the mentor and mentee. Here, the participants get to know each other and expectations about the roles and program are clarified. The second stage, *negotiating*, takes place when agreement is reached concerning learning goals; here, the content and process of the relationship are defined. The third stage, *enabling*, is the longest: this is when the most learning takes place. Across this stage, the mentor needs to nurture the growth of the mentee; here, the learning should be monitored and recognised. The fourth stage, *coming to closure*, emerges across the period of the relationship; it culminates when the participants – both mentor and mentees – implement their exit strategy, having ensured that there is an appropriate learning conclusion.

After giving due consideration to the phases and stages discussed above, I chose to apply Kram's four phases of mentoring in my final analysis of the changes in mentoring relationships that occurred during the Kinda Kinder program. I believed that Kram's phases were most closely aligned with my ethnographic observations and conclusions.

Mentoring in higher education

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in mentoring in education; this includes areas such as policy, practice and research (Burley & Pomphrey 2011:33); it has been shown to be beneficial in educational settings (Ganser 1996). Formal mentoring in initial teacher education emerged in the early 1990s (Burley & Pomphrey 2011:34); it came about because of the development of partnerships between schools and higher education institutions (Arthur et al. 1997:1) when experienced teachers supported preservice teachers during their school-based work experience. Mentoring was seen as a way to deal with the high rates of attrition and to improve the quality of teaching in

the field (Hine et al. 2000). The term 'supervisor' was replaced by the term 'mentor' when reflective practice became the focus of practical experience and preservice teachers were encouraged to take more responsibility for their learning (Cornu & Ewing 2008).

Mentoring programs have contributed to improving the retention rates for students at all levels (Kochan & Pascarelli 2003) with mentors not only supporting students in their transition to a new environment but encouraging them to continue with their courses.

Mentoring in higher education supports individual learning and promotes positive student outcomes. Mentoring supports students in their study for exams, improves their results (Kochan & Pascarelli 2003) to the extent that they often excel in their study (Fleck & Mullins 2012: ix). Luna & Cullen (1998) found that ninety per cent of the students in their study indicated mentoring was an essential factor that contributed to their graduate student success. Other benefits for mentees in higher education relate to an increase in empathy, and the offering of encouragement and counselling; finally, mentees appreciate the importance of developing (Ehrich et al. 2002).

Mentors may help mentees choose what they want to do in the future and decide on career paths (Fleck & Mullins 2012: ix). They may also help prepare graduates for the demands of professional life (Hine et al. 2000) and foster career advancement (Kochan & Pascarelli 2003).

Mentoring during preservice teacher practical placements has particular benefits. Mentees may experience and discuss ideas about professional competency as well as classroom management and events, supporting the link between theory and practice (Clifford and Green 1996:73). It may provide opportunities for mentors and mentees to take part in discourse about pedagogy and may encourage reflective thinking (Hudson 2007:201). Cherian (in Lassonde et al. 2008:95) notes that the literature consistently found that preservice teachers reported that having a mentor was beneficial, saying:

> Having a mentor who was emotionally supportive and accepting was crucial to help them meet their personal teaching goals and allowing them to successfully make connections with what they were learning at university.

Finlay & Green (1996:80) suggest that there are considerable benefits to be gained by establishing long-term relationships between mentor and preservice teachers:

> programs designed to include long-term placements of preservice teachers with mentor teachers in public schools could result in beginning teachers who are better prepared to enter the profession, and who have a stronger belief in their ability to be successful as teachers and to bring about positive changes in their students' lives.

Mentors are in a position to help preservice teachers see the implications of working in different ways and to support them as they begin to form concepts about practical work (Kerry & Mayes 1995). Jonson (2008:8) comments:

> Mentoring relationships are critical for developing professionals in higher education as mentees in universities learn risk taking behaviours, communication skills, political skills and specific professional skills from their university mentors.

Bashan & Holsblat (2012:208) state that modelling by teachers has a significant impact on teacher training. This results in preservice teachers improving their teaching skills (Kochan & Pascarelli 2003). Hansford et al. (2004:9) found that both mentors and mentees felt that their mentoring program allowed opportunities for sharing ideas and knowledge. Cunningham (2005:63) adds that there is a connection between the stage of professional development of the mentee and the nature of the mentoring that is most appropriate.

Benefits of mentoring programs for mentors are also numerous and include renewed interest and enthusiasm for teaching, collegiality, networking and reflection (Hansford et al. 2004:9). Ehrich et al. (2002) also found that mentors viewed increased reflection as a benefit from mentoring relationships as it assists them to clarify their ideas regarding pedagogy and practice.

Overall, the research evidence for the positive benefits of mentoring in the preservice training of preservice teachers is strong.

Peer mentoring

Across the literature, there are different terms used to describe peer mentoring activities, such as peer mentoring, peer tutoring, peer assisted learning and peer relationships. Clark & Andrews (2009) suggest that the literature may compound this confusion. McDaugall & Beattie (1997:425) define peer mentoring as:

> A process where there is mutual involvement in encouraging and enhancing learning and development between two peers, where peers are of similar hierarchical status or who perceive themselves as equals.

Kram & Isabella (1985) clarify the differences between peer mentoring and peer relationships, saying that the clearest distinctions between mentoring and peer relationships are found in the functions provided and the quality of the exchange. Their view is that mentoring relationships involve a one way helping dynamic while peer relationships involve a two-way exchange. Ragins & Kram (2007:280) point out that peer mentoring may develop over time from peer relationships and is characterised by:

> increasing amounts of intimacy, vulnerability, and authenticity that span both work and personal domains.

Peer relationships have the potential to support development at different career stages and provide a range of career enhancing and psychosocial functions.

Raggins & Kram (2007:288) suggest that that peer mentoring programs may help socialise new students in the academic programs and institutions. They comment that research has shown that mentees have reported receiving more psychosocial than career support from their mentors. Colvin & Ashman (2010) found that peer mentors enjoyed forming friendships and helping others to become successful. Peer mentoring allowed them to:

> reapply concepts into their lives and helped them become even better students themselves.

They also found that peer mentoring was beneficial as it helped students in university become involved in campus life, to succeed in class tasks, and it

promoted retention. Peer mentoring programs provide beginning students with early access to university information and resources.

Preston et al. (2014:12) acknowledge the value of peer mentoring programs, considering them to be an under-utilised resource with great capacity to foster human and social capital. They say:

> In enabling peer mentorships to thrive, postsecondary institutions may potentially receive high academic returns on a limited investment of finances, a point that is especially relevant during modern times where financial restraints and budget cuts are common.

A study by Bunting (2014:102) found that peer mentors gained an increased sense of responsibility towards their education as well as a commitment to supporting the growth of others in their learning community.

Peer relationships may offer opportunities for mutual exchange and the sharing of information and may also provide support in handling personal problems and retaining professional growth. They appear to last longer than most mentoring relationships (Kram & Isabella 1985). It may be that conventional mentors are most important in the early stages of a career while peers seem to be important at all stages (Ragins & Kram 2007:294). In discussing peer relationships, Saltiel, Sgroi & Brockett (1998:1) comment that it is more than simply learning from each other, it means learning *with* each other.

Eisen (2001:10) provides seven defining qualities in a peer partnership:

1. Trust (feeling safe).
2. Non--evaluative feedback.
3. Non-hierarchical status of partners.
4. Voluntary participation and partner selection.
5. Duration and intensity of partnership (leading to closeness).
6. Mutuality (common goals and reciprocal learning).
7. Authenticity (openness, honesty).

The feeling of trust is of primary importance and Eisen (2001:11) notes that power needs to be equalised for this trust to develop. Eisen further points out

that although peer learning partnerships do not guarantee success in promoting learning, they do provide opportunities for rational discourse. She notes that learning may also be stimulated by unwanted outcomes such as dissatisfaction with peer interactions.

The recommendations made by Eisen (2001:) include 'shining a light on the peer learning partnerships, experimenting with variations of the peer learning partnership model and developing training on receiving feedback'. She suggests making use of small groups of peers working together in a learning partnership model. As my study is based in a group of students working together to provide a playgroup program for children, this has relevance for my research.

Preston et al. (2014:63) described their peer mentorship experiences and found that peer mentoring has the potential to reduce graduate student attrition rates; they report:

> Peer mentorship emerged from the organic needs, the diverse potential, and individual strengths of our student group as well as from the administrative scaffolding of the PhD program. In turn, these characteristics were responsible for the creation of a microcosm of transformational learning for our student cohort.

Preston et al. (2014) conclude that to promote peer mentorships and transformative learning, post-secondary institutions should plan courses and facilitate activities where students are encouraged to voice their individualised and collectively lived experiences.

There is strong evidence that peer mentoring is highly likely to provide benefits for students who participate. They may enhance a sense of belonging, and promote a transition into university life, helping to ease stressful situations.

Group mentoring

The importance of the social environment in learning is acknowledged. Kram (2008) recognises the value of social interaction suggesting that supportive group mentoring is likely to be more successful than individual mentoring. In

Communities of Practice Etienne Wegner (1998) considers that learning is a social phenomenon and considers communities of practice align closely with this belief and are therefore a valuable approach. Members of the group learn from each other's skills, knowledge, beliefs, and strengths and can accomplish more collectively than they could achieve individually (Gardiner 2010:234).

In the teacher education arena, Darling-Hammond (cited in Anfara & Stacki 2002:213) acknowledges that beginning teachers benefit from working in teams:

> [They] get a richer, more coherent learning experience when they are organised in teams to study and practice.

The need for communities within the teaching field as a path to learning and improving practice is now widely accepted, with Cornu & Ewing (2008) suggesting that there has been a recent trend in teacher education towards the implementation of learning communities to support professional growth. It is underlined by the constructivist viewpoint of Heirdsfield et al. (2008:111) who suggest that preservice teachers can exchange ideas, learn with others and co-construct meanings. Rather than an individual focus, there is a shared focus, acknowledging the collaborative nature of the teaching profession and a commitment to reciprocal learning relationships. Gardiner (2010:234) supports this idea and comments that peer placements with two preservice teachers and one mentor, are significantly better than the traditional one student–mentor teacher model for learning to teach. Cochran-Smith (2003:24) concludes that there is a need for 'generative ways' that can be provided for preservice teacher training through the application of group mentoring:

> In order to work for social change, what we need in teacher education are not better generic strategies for teaching but generative ways for prospective teachers, experienced teachers and teacher educators alike to work together in communities of learners – to explore and reconsider their assumptions, understand the values and practices of families and cultures that are different from their and construct pedagogy that takes these into account in locally appropriate and culturally sensitive ways.

Southern (2007:332) is confident that learning communities are positively supportive of transformative learning:

> They may share different perspectives through inquiry, story, and dialogue.

This may lead to group members questioning assumptions and seeing the limitations of old thinking and new possibilities. Ogenchuk et al. (2014:63) agree, suggesting that students should be encouraged to voice their individualised and collective lived experiences.

Cornu & Ewing (2008:1809) consider that teacher educators have the responsibility to develop social and intellectual skills of preservice teachers to enable them to participate in ethical and socially responsible ways in learning communities. Furthermore, taking part in learning communities, enables preservice teachers to enhance their teaching skills, becoming aware of and take some responsibility for the learning of others in the group. For a learning community to be successful, the members need to be able to work collaboratively to explore differing perspectives and to question, construct and negotiate meaning from their experiences (Cornu & Ewing 2008).

This research literature indicates that there is strong support for the benefits to be gained from group mentoring, particularly when it is applied in preservice educational programs.

Mentoring and relationships

According to Hine et al. (2007), mentoring is based upon encouragement, openness, mutual trust, respect and a willingness to learn and share. Many researchers have recognised the importance of the mentoring relationship (see, for example, Megginson & Clutterbuck 2007; Nolan 2007; Ragins & Kram 2007). Research suggests that both mentors and mentees recognise the emotional nature of the relationship (Peterson et al. 2010). Furthermore, Clifford & Green (1996) advise that empathy is an important quality that particularly supports preservice teachers and builds the mentor-mentee relationship.

Kram (in Ragins & Kram 2007) has identified 'good relationships' as a crucial part of mentoring. Friendliness, confidence and trust between participants are essential and confidentiality is also important. From the beginning there should be unconditional positive regard and respect for the other human beings engaged in the mentoring relationship.

Personality characteristics of the mentor and the mentee/s influence the effectiveness of the relationship making each mentoring relationship having unique, specific dynamics (Nolan 2007). Evidence advanced by Ragins & Kram (2007:34) suggests that individuals who have a pro-social personality are more likely to get involved in mentoring relationships and it becomes most effective when both mentor and mentee can openly share thoughts about themselves. The roles taken and played out by the participants in a mentoring relationship may differ as a result of the 'chemistry' in the relationship, the mentees' needs and the context in which the mentoring occurs (Ambrosetti & Dekkers 2010; Ragins & Kram 2007).

The beginning of a formal mentoring program is critical particularly as, at this time, many participants feel anxious and awkward. It is a time when goals should be negotiated; as well, a shared view toward the program should be established (Blake-Beard et al., in Ragins & Kram 2007:620). Blake-Beard et al. further suggest that how mentoring partners are selected and placed together is critical; however, there is no one way to ensure success.

In the field of education, Southern (2007:331) emphasises that teaching is a relational act. If the relationship with the mentor is a positive one, there is more likelihood that the mentee will have a change in perspective. When preservice teachers are supported by a mentor who connects with them on both a personal and professional level, they can join theory and practice (Elliott 2004). Clifford (1999) has reported that both mentors and mentees felt that long-term placement was useful in providing an opportunity for the relationship to develop. This, they believed, contributes to the mentee's teaching confidence and competence.

Mentoring is an intense interpersonal relationship (Kram 1985). According to Kram, the success of mentoring programs is reliant on the formation of positive relationships between the participants. Taylor (in Mezirow & Taylor 2009:13) has commented that such a relationship must be 'authentic'; he writes:

> Authentic relationships also allow individuals to have questioning discussions, share information openly, and achieve greater mutual and consensual understanding.

In their research, Nolan & Molla (2016:7) report that:

> Many mentors viewed a respectful relationship with mentees as a vital condition for effective learning.

More recently, Nolan & Molla (2017:13) re-identify positive relationships between mentors and mentees as being critical:

> Once a respectful relationship is established between mentors and mentees, sharing knowledge and experiences take centre stage. The notion of sharing highlights commitment to the advancement of the interest of the other.

A concluding comment from Southern (2007: 329) is pertinent; she said:

> I have come to understand that my relationship with students is critical to creating the conditions that support transformative learning. The nature of the relationship may establish a context of openness and trust that both challenges students and supports them in being vulnerable to explore in ways that create the possibility for transformative learning.

The literature unreservedly emphasises the importance of establishing positive group relationships between the mentor and mentees.

Characteristics of successful mentors

Researchers such as Darling-Hammond (2005), Jonson (2008), Cunningham (2005) and Nolan (2007) agree on the preferred qualities of mentors, suggesting that they should have good interpersonal and communication skills; that they be amiable, patient, compassionate, trustworthy, flexible and empathetic. Being approachable, a good listener and being willing to learn are desirable characteristics of a mentor (Nolan 2007:5). Mentors should be active

listeners and should have open and honest discussions with mentees, without being judgemental (Hudson 2016:34).

While researchers, such as Doughty & Dreher (in Ragins & Kram 2007:83), feel that mentors should have had experience in the relevant field, strong subject knowledge and kept up to date with the latest information, others, such as Pask and Joy (2007), do not feel that it is essential that the mentor should have had experience in the field. Miller (2005:39) suggests that teacher mentors, who are 'experts in learning', are probably best placed to offer students advice in 'learning to learn' or study skills where there is a learning-skills objective.

Mentoring may be a deeply personal and emotional experience and therefore mentors need to be genuinely interested in the mentees, becoming familiar with their personalities and interests beyond the classroom (Stephens 1996). They should be aware of similarities and differences in cultural values and beliefs held by mentees (Brewer, 2016). The notion of moral purpose is discussed by Michael Fullan (2001); he explains that moral purpose arises from the values that a person holds and means acting with the intention of making a positive difference in the social environment. Fullan (2001:4) says:

> Mentors who evidence moral purpose, display emotional intelligence, and foster caring relationships and norms of reciprocity for knowledge sharing, show the way.

Johnson (2003) has developed a triangular model of mentor competence, which includes three essential components: mentor character virtues (integrity, caring, prudence); mentor abilities (cognitive, emotional, relational); and mentor competencies (knowledge and skills); this complements Fullan's concepts of moral purpose. Carr et al. (2005) conclude that those with moral purpose are steadfast, trustworthy and have moral conviction. Effective mentors are those with moral purpose who care about the other people in the mentoring relationship (Pask & Joy 2007).

Focusing on mentoring preservice teachers, Rowley (1999:20) suggested that high quality mentors need to be:

- committed to the role of mentoring;

- accepting of a beginning teacher;

- skilled at providing instructional support;

- effective in different interpersonal contexts, adjusting theory communication to suit individual mentees;

- a model of a continuous learner;

- communicators of hope and optimism.

The literature on mentoring suggests that there are many desirable characteristics; overall, Johnson (2002:89) summarises these as follows:

> Excellent mentors are kind, healthy and competent.

Summary

The literature that I have reviewed has provided an outline of current ideas in the field of mentoring. The approaches used in mentoring programs are varied. Kram (in Ragins & Kram 2007:9) points out that often there is a gap in the bridge between research and practice: programs are often developed without the guidance of empirical research. A better understanding of unique processes and outcomes of mentoring programs is essential and Wallace et al. (2000) point out that researchers need to continue to add to our theoretical understanding by unpacking how mentoring is personally experienced and constructed by students. Thus, Kram and Wallace et al. have given me confidence to proceed with empirical research that is based on the personal experiences and constructions of the mentor and the students engaged in the Kinda Kinder program.

Transformative learning

Transformative learning theory had its origins, in the 1978 research of Jack Mezirow who studied women returning either to post-secondary study or the workforce. He found that the women experienced perspective transformation, resulting in greater autonomy, control and responsibility for their lives; later, he refined his ideas to include the broader field of adult education.

During childhood, formative learning occurs through socialisation and is shaped by language, culture and personal experience; for Mezirow (1991:1), this forms the basis for the interpretation of experiences. Mezirow (1991:12) argues that adult learning is somewhat different; he defines 'adult learning' as:

> …the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or a revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience…to guide future action.

Essential elements

Instrumental and communicative language

Mezirow (2011) used the work of John Dewey, Paulo Freire, Jurgen Habermas, Harvey Siegal and Roger Gould's theory of transformation to confirm his theory (Mezirow 1991:11) that making meaning is central to learning and that the validation of knowledge is crucial to adult learning. In particular, Mezirow (1978) acknowledged Freire's 'conscientization' which involved learners experiencing a shift in perspectives, specifically in the way they saw themselves and their relationships. Mezirow recognised Freire's view of problem-posing dialogue as a way of transforming frames of reference; he was interested in Jurgen Habermas's distinction between different domains of learning (Habermas 1971) and his theory of communicative action (Habermas 1984, 1987); in particular, he distinguished between 'instrumental learning' and 'communicative learning'. *Instrumental learning*, which is related to the acquisition of skills and knowledge, focuses on learning through task-oriented problem solving and cause-and-effect relationships. *Communicative learning* involves how individuals communicate feelings, needs and desires and it involves understanding purposes, values, beliefs and feelings. Mezirow (1991:80) Most learning involves both instrumental and communicative learning and 'transformative learning' may take place in both domains of learning when learners are critically reflective of the underlying assumptions. In this context, Mezirow (2003:58) defines transformative learning in the following manner; it is:

> …learning that transforms problematic frames of reference – sets of fixed assumptions and expectations (habits of mind, meaning perspectives, mindsets) – to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change.

Construction of meaning

Mezirow's transformative learning theory aligns with constructivist ideas where meaning is constructed within ourselves, in social contexts and is validated through communication with others. Mezirow (1998a:185) recognised that past emotional experiences involving non-cognitive learning factors influence goal formation; he writes:

> Another important non-cognitive factor in transformative learning is the disposition and emotional stamina to believe that one has both the will and the way to reach his or her reflectively redefined goals.

Originally, Mezirow (2000:18) had formally explained transformative learning as a developmental process, pointing out that it is:

> …essential for a learner to deal with deep feelings that accompany a point of view or a perspective before transformative learning can take place.

Mezirow and his colleagues (see Mezirow et al. 2009:28) subsequently emphasised the importance of 'expectations' in transformative learning, acknowledging that 'expectations may influence how an experience in construed'. Taylor & Cranton (2013:37) identified the deep feelings associated with 'empathy' as a crucial element of transformative learning, arguing that:

> [Empathy] provides the learner with the ability to identify with the perspectives of others; lessens the likelihood of prejudgment; increases the opportunity for identifying shared understanding; and facilitates critical reflection through the emotive valence of assumptions.

Mezirow's view of transformative learning is that it is more than simply acquiring skills or knowledge, it occurs when there is a significant change in personal 'meaning structures' (Mezirow 1990). Mezirow proposed that meaning structures consist of both 'meaning perspectives' and 'meaning schemes'. *Meaning perspectives* are the general frameworks used in creating

an individual's view of the world and involve criteria for making value judgments and for belief systems (Mezirow 1990:5). *Meaning perspectives* originate from personal upbringing, life experiences, culture or education: he explained this term, thus (1991:42):

> I have chosen the term *meaning perspective* to refer to the structure of assumptions within which one's past *experience assimilates and transforms new experience*.

Meaning perspectives

Mezirow (1991:43) extended his original concept of meaning perspectives to include three types of meaning perspectives: epistemic, sociolinguistic and psychological. *Epistemic perspectives* relate to the way people know and the uses they make of knowledge. Sociolinguistic perspectives refer to the way society and language shape and limit perceptions and understandings. Psychological perspectives relate to the way people view themselves. *Meaning schemes* are smaller components made up of specific knowledge, beliefs, value judgements, and feelings that constitute interpretations of experience. Meaning schemes translate general expectations into specific ones that guide actions. A number of meaning schemes work together to generate a meaning perspective.

Mezirow (1997) claimed that people have difficulty changing because their perspectives become unconscious frames of reference and some ideas may become so ingrained that it is difficult for them to change. When possible, new experiences are assimilated into existing structures; however, if there is a dilemma and they cannot be incorporated, they are either rejected or the meaning perspective is transformed to accommodate the new experience. This is the essence of transformative learning. Educators who aim to foster transformative leaning need to support learners to be aware of their assumptions as well as the assumptions of others (Mezirow 1997). They need to provide a comfortable environment in which learners participate in discourse to validate their understanding. Mezirow (1997:10) explained:

> Education that fosters critically reflective thought, imaginative problem solving, and discourse is learner-centred, participatory, and interactive, and it involves group deliberation and group problem-solving.

Psycho-critical perspective

According to Taylor (in Merriam 2008:7), Mezirow takes a psycho-critical perspective when considering transformative learning; but, Taylor adds, it could also be addressed through a psychoanalytic, a psycho-developmental or a social emancipatory perspective. A psychoanalytic perspective views transformative learning as a lifelong journey of coming to understand oneself through reflecting on psychic structures that make up a person's identity. It involves gaining confidence and a deeper understanding of one's inner self and discovering new talents. A psycho-developmental view of transformative learning is also a lifelong journey, reflecting on continuous, incremental, and progressive growth. This view considers a change in how we make meaning, not just change in behaviour or knowledge and there is appreciation for personal contextual influences, and holistic ways of knowing that have been often overlooked in Mezirow's rational emphasis on transformation (Taylor, in Merriam 2008:7). The social emancipatory perspective values the context and social change in transformative learning.

Phases of transformative learning

Mezirow (in Mezirow & Taylor 2009) described 'ten phases of transformative learning' from his original study:
1. Experiencing a disorienting dilemma.
2. Undergoing a self-examination.
3. Feeling a sense of alienation from traditional social expectations.
4. Relating discontent to similar experiences of others.
5. Exploring options for new ways of acting.
6. Building competence and self-confidence in new roles.
7. Planning a course of action.

8. Acquiring the knowledge and skills for implementing a new course of action.

    (Renegotiating relationships and negotiating new relationships)

9. Trying out new roles and assessing them.

10. Reintegrating into society with the new perspective

In 1991, Mezirow added an additional phase, 'renegotiating relationships and negotiating new relationships' (Mezirow, 1994:222), between the original phases 8 and 9. He clarified that it is not essential that all phases be experienced to achieve perspective transformation. This list provides a useful framework to investigate the learning evident in the Kinda Kinder program.

Core elements

Mezirow identified three core elements as part of transformative learning: individual experience, critical reflection and discourse. Individual experience is the starting point of transformative learning; critical reflection focuses on underlying assumptions; critical discourse leads to clarification of beliefs, intentions, values and feelings.

Individual experience

The value of experience in learning has long been acknowledged. It stems from John Dewey's extensive work. Dewey (1933) drew attention to the link between quality concrete experiences and abstract concepts and the use of reflection.

Mezirow (2000:31) saw experience as the starting point for critical reflection, discourse and transformative learning. He saw experience as creating a lens from which learners perceive, interpret and make meaning of their world; and the stimulus for examination of assumptions underpinning the learner's value judgements. Transformative experiences need to be understood in their particular context. Mezirow (1991:146) says:

> Experience strengthens our personal category systems by reinforcing our expectations about how things are supposed to be.

Cunningham (2005:57) comments that experiential learning, 'is probably the one single theoretical perspective likely to be of special utility to mentors'. He considers that experiential learning, with the support from a mentor, provides opportunities for preservice teachers to enhance their skills in dealing with the realities of the classroom and that mentors may assist in this area.

Transformative learning may be stimulated by critical events as they may lead to learners questioning their assumptions (Tanaka et al: 2013:46). Critical incidents may occur during firsthand practical experience and Cunningham (2012:117) identifies critical incidents as being useful in mentoring programs.

> A critical incident can be viewed as an event in one's professional life that has special significance for one or more reasons.

When mentors discuss critical issues with students their skills and understanding will be enhanced. Burley & Pomphrey (2011:22) comment that teacher learning in the workplace requires high levels of autonomy and ownership of the learning process.

Firsthand experience is recognised as a valuable part of education and the starting point for transformative learning. This is significant as an underpinning aspect in my study of the mentoring and learning in the Kinda Kinder program.

Critical reflection

Mezirow (1990:5) stresses the importance of critical reflection in transformative learning; he and found Dewey's definition of reflection useful: 'assessing the grounds [justification] of one's beliefs'. Mezirow explains that critical reflection is more than drawing on what is already known; it involves a critique of the underlying assumptions on which beliefs have been built and it may support changes to these beliefs. Mezirow (1998:195) explains:

> Critical reflection may be either implicit, as when we mindlessly choose between good and evil because of our assimilated values, or explicit, as when we bring the

process of choice into awareness to examine and assess the reasons for making a choice. When the object of critical reflection is an assumption or presupposition … a different order of abstraction is introduced, with major potential for effecting a change in one's established frame of reference.

Mezirow (1997:6) emphasises that the goal of adult education is to facilitate reflection rather than acting on the purposes, beliefs, judgements and feelings of others. Reflecting on prior learning to determine whether what has been learned is justified is central to adult learning (Mezirow 1990). It often occurs in response to a contradiction in thoughts and feelings. Mezirow et al. (2009:9) point out that writing a journal may assist critical reflection by creating artefacts of ideas of mind and requires learners to externalise their reflections.

For transformative learning to take place, critical reflection is essential; however, critical reflection does not necessarily lead to transformative learning. Ideas may be questioned without being changed. Underlying perspectives develop over time as a result of experiences, family and community values and increasing knowledge. They are often difficult to articulate and it is often difficult to see alternatives. Changes do not come easily and sometimes beliefs are confirmed. For transformative learning to occur, adults need to be able to critically self-reflect and to exercise reflective judgement (Mezirow 2003). Existing assumptions, values and perspectives need to be questioned and there needs to be a fundamental change in perspective. It is the interdependent relationship between experience and critical reflection that potentially leads to a new perspective (Mezirow et al. 2009:7).

Mezirow (1991:101) discusses Dewey's consideration of reflection in his 1991 text – that reflection is concerned with validity testing; Mezirow comments:

For the purposes of understanding how to facilitate adult learning, educators will gain insight by confining the concept of reflection to Dewey's definition: '*Reflection means validity testing.*'

Mezirow (1991) points out that while Dewey saw reflective thought to be the process of examining assumptions and validating assertions, he (Dewey) did not distinguish between the function of reflection on the *content* of a problem and the *process* of problem solving. Mezirow (1991:104) clarifies by pointing out that:

> …reflection is the process of critically assessing the content, process, or premise(s) of our efforts to interpret and give meaning to an experience.

Content reflection considers the situation or problem and process reflection considers the strategies and procedures of problem solving. *Premise reflection* examines the premise or the basis of the problem, raising questions regarding its validity: through premise reflection, learners may view themselves and the world differently. Mezirow (1991) advises that educators need to differentiate between these two types of reflection.

Mezirow (1990) also distinguishes between non-reflective action and reflective action. Non-reflective action involves action that is thoughtful but does not examine the validity of prior learning, whereas reflective action is action predicated on a critical assessment of assumptions. Mezirow (1990:6) says:

> Thoughtful action is reflexive but is not the same thing as acting reflectively to critically examine the justification for one's beliefs.

Mezirow argues that reflection is an integral part of thoughtful action.

Mezirow's ideas about critical reflection were of particular interest for my study of the learning taking place within the Kinda Kinder program as during my data analysis, it became evident that the students' ideas and practice were changing; also, it clearly evident that the mentor was using clear strategies to supported these changes. Mezirow's views therefore provided a scaffold for the exploration of transformative learning evident within the Kinda Kinder program.

Discourse

The third core element of Mezirow's transformative learning theory is discourse. Mezirow (1979:6) clarifies his position:

> Discourse is a dialogue devoted to assessing reasons presented in support of competing interpretations, by critically examining evidence, arguments and alternative points of view. The more interpretations of a belief available, the greater the likelihood of finding a more dependable interpretation or synthesis. We learn together by analysing the related experiences of others to arrive at a common understanding that holds until new evidence or arguments present themselves.

According to Mezirow (1991:70), there are three main types of discourse, theoretical, practical and therapeutic. *Theoretical discourse* relates to challenging our knowledge about the world. *Practical discourse* is about social norms, ideals, values and moral decisions. *Therapeutic discourse* involves feelings or intent and it attempts to determine if these are authentic. Discourse helps identify the learners 'edge of meaning' (Mezirow 1991:70), a transitional zone, of knowing and meaning-making.

The role of the adult educator is to foster transformative learning that results in the learner making an informed decision to take effective, appropriate action (Mezirow 1998). Mezirow (in Mezirow et al. 2009:10) suggests that educators need to be aware of the nature of the discourse, that is, what the participants are discussing. Educators need to encourage rational critique and Mezirow (1981) suggests the use of Socratic dialogues in small group settings, involving learners who face common dilemmas. It is also helpful if the educator does not take an authority role of information giver or activities director but rather limits his or her response to that of a resource person. Later, Mezirow (1991:206) observed:

> The educator is an empathetic provocateur and role model, a collaborative learner who is critically self-reflective and encourages others to consider alternative perspectives, and a guide who sets and enforces the norms governing rational discourse and encourages the solidarity and group support that is necessary when learners become threatened because comfortably established beliefs and values have been challenged.

Furthermore, Mezirow (1991:77) has pointed that to be able to participate fully in discourse, people need a reasonable minimum of personal security, health, and education. Educators need to create communities which take part in critical discourse in safe, respectful authentic environments.

Mezirow's theoretical stance, involving the three core elements of transformative learning, experience, critical reflection and discourse, suggested these were issues to be considered in my research.

Mentoring and transformative learning

Within the literature, there is evidence to support the notion that mentoring has the potential to promote transformative learning. Martin & Trueax (1997:42) provide evidence to support the concept of transformation for both mentor and mentee in their professional and personal development:

> The process of mentoring acts as a powerful change agent transforming both mentor
> and mentee.

Tanaka et al. (2013:44) argue that a positive relationship between mentor and mentee provides a setting in which transformative learning may occur; furthermore, the maintain that, in a respectful, trusting environment, learners may see that they may hold a different point of view, that they may learn, and that they may change their ideas.

In teacher education, Martin & Trueax (1997:49) found that in mentoring programs, both mentors and mentees gained increased self-confidence and self-esteem and improved their practice. Southern (2007:330) notes that teachers who are mentors have the ability to connect their life-worlds with the life-worlds of their students, creating opportunities to reinterpret their life experience through an expanded horizon. Nolan & Molla (2016:9), similarly, found links between mentoring and transformative learning:

> Learning through mentoring can facilitate a transformation of existing perspectives
> and…the acquisition of new ones.

Tanaka et al. (2013:46) comment on the importance of 'critical events':

> Transformative learning can be stimulated by critical events as they can lead to learners questioning their assumptions.

In exploring the potential for undergraduate peer mentoring to contribute to transformative learning, Bunting (2014) found that Mezirow's view of transformative learning was helpful in understanding and describing the types of transformations experienced by peer mentors in their work. Amongst other things, Bunting (2014:120) concluded that:

> transformative learning should not be assumed to be a natural outcome of any and all PM [peer mentoring] experience. Rather, transformation is made possible when institutions attend to the key elements of a holistic PM learning environment. Specifically, transformative PM learning environments include intentional efforts to provide
> - trigger events that can be leveraged to induce questioning of assumptions;
> - focused reflection on experience;
> - relationships and community practices that support and encourage PMs as they explore new meaning and adopt modified practices; and opportunities to articulate and act upon new understanding.

In a recent study of peer mentoring, Bunting & Williams (2017:178) found that being mentored by others enabled mentees to adopt a new orientation towards learning; they concluded:

> For the PMs [peer mentees] in our study, the mentors provided the support needed to face challenges, do unfamiliar things, and then reflect on how they were being transformed.

Conclusion

Mezirow's theory of transformative learning is supported by the philosophy and work of Freire, Habermas, and the definitive concepts of Dewey. Mezirow's theory provides useful underpinning for my research. Transformative learning is the essence of adult education; it is a deeply personal experience in which learners critically reflect on, and take part in discourse about their experiences, assumptions and underlying beliefs. When assumptions are questioned and underlying beliefs or frames of reference are

modified, transformative learning occurs and learners become more inclusive in their perceptions of the world and open to other points of view. A positive relationship between mentor and mentee provides a setting in which transformative learning may occur (Tanaka et al., 2013:44). In a respectful, trusting environment, learners may see that they may hold a different point of view, that they may learn; that they may change their ideas (Tanaka et al. 2013).

In this professional doctorate, I explored the nature of mentoring in an early childhood education program for preservice teachers. I examined the learning taking place as the group of students work alongside a mentor to plan and implement a playgroup for preschool children.

My research questions have guided my literature review; in this chapter, I have provided an overview of the literature related to mentoring and transformative learning. As background, I have included the origins and the use of mentoring in higher education, an outline of approaches to mentoring that are relevant for this study and I have addressed mentoring relationships and the desirable characteristics of mentors.

Transformative learning, as described by Mezirow (1978), has particular relevance for my research and for preservice teacher education; therefore, in this literature review I focus on his theory. Mezirow's theory of transformative learning provides the theoretical base for my research. Within the context of transformative learning, I include a background to experiential learning, reflection and discourse.

In Chapter 3, I justify my choice of a qualitative methodology to explore the nature of the mentoring and the student learning that occurred in a single Kinda Kinder playgroup site. I detail the theoretical perspective that I employed and discuss, in detail, the location and details of the participants, the methods that I employed in my study including a description of my inductive data analysis.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology and Methods

In this chapter, I explain how I navigated through the stages of my research to justify my choice of a qualitative methodology to explore the nature of mentoring and learning at a Kinda Kinder playgroup site. I detail the theoretical perspectives I have employed concerning ontology, epistemology and my use of ethnography. Concerning the methods that I applied, I explain the details of the study: the selection of the site and participants; my role as a participant observer; my collection of data. Finally, I describe the steps taken in my inductive data analysis (IDA).

Qualitative research methodology

At the beginning of my investigation, I knew only a little about qualitative research but very soon, I discovered much more. Qualitative research emerged in the 1960s and involved an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world (Denzin & Lincoln 2011:3). It is concerned with interpreting behaviour and understanding perspectives (Ary et al. 2006:490, 452) and is used in studies that involve a verbal description of real-life situations (Silverman 2015:4). Strauss & Corbin (1990:19) explain that some areas of study naturally lend themselves more to qualitative types of research:

> [In] research that attempts to uncover the nature of persons' experiences...qualitative methods can be used to uncover and understand what lies behind any phenomenon about which little is yet known.

With a lack of information about mentoring at various playgroup sites, there was no doubt that my study required a qualitative approach: it was implemented in context, within a playgroup setting involving teacher trainees, academics and young children and their parents. There were no hypotheses to test. Bogdan & Biklen (2003:2) point out that this is a determining element of 'qualitative research'.

Qualitative research aims to understand how people give meaning to their life experiences. Qualitative researchers believe that human behaviour is reliant on the context in which it occurs and attempts to uncover the meaning that is constructed by the participants.

> The researcher can only understand human behaviour by focusing on the meanings
> that events have for people involved (Ary et al, 2006:25).

Bogdan & Biklen (2003:4) indicate that there are five elements of qualitative research:

1. **Naturalistic**: Qualitative research has actual settings as a direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument.
2. **Descriptive data**: Qualitative research is descriptive.
3. **Concern with process**: Qualitative researchers are concerned with process rather than simply outcomes or products.
4. **Inductive**: Qualitative researchers tend to analyse their data inductively.
5. **Meaning**: Meaning is an essential concern of the qualitative approach. Researchers who use this approach are interested in how different people make sense of their lives, they are concerned with participant perspectives.

My research study was concerned with each of these five elements.

Colley (2003) provides further support that my study on mentoring should be qualitative rather than quantitative in nature, suggesting that quantitative surveys, while being valuable in providing a background picture of the mentoring *movement*, have failed to provide insight and understanding into the mentoring *process* itself. Colley (2003:179) points out that qualitative methods provide opportunities for participants to:

> tell their stories and express more fully their experiences, sentiments and beliefs. This
> is particularly important if young mentee's voices are to be heard.

Burns (2000:11) has argued that reality should not be taken for granted and that consideration should be given to the multiple realities and socially constructed meanings that exist within every social context. Furthermore, Burns (2000:12) points out that qualitative researchers aim to form context bound conclusions

> …that could potentially point the way to new policies and educational decisions, rather than towards scientific generalisations that may be of little use at the coal face.

Bogdan & Biklen (2003:2) conclude that qualitative researchers tend to collect their data through sustained contact with people in real-life settings as participant observers using in-depth interviewing.

Methodology

Crotty (1998:2) suggests that we come to a research project with beliefs and assumptions and that we should clarify these assumptions and justify our choice of methodology.

> Justification of our choice and particular use of methodology and methods is something that reaches into the assumptions about reality that we bring to our work.

The key elements of these assumptions in qualitative research relate to ontology and epistemology. In the following sub-sections I address the elements of each that relate to my research.

3.2.1 Ontology: Relativism

Ontology is the study of being; it is concerned with the nature of reality (Crotty 1998:10). The idea that underlies my current thinking aligns with Crotty's relativist view of the world: that meaning comes from human beings and therefore a world without human experience is without meaning. Furthermore, Cohen et al. (2011:15) argue that there is no one truth inherently within a phenomenon waiting to be discovered: the social world may only be understood from the perspective of the individuals who are part of the experience.

Relativists believe that there are multiple realities which are socially and experientially based; in particular, Guba & Lincoln (1994:110) point out that multiple realities 'can be shared among individuals and across cultures'. These realities may change as people learn more about the world and their experience widens.

Epistemology

Epistemology is the study of the nature of knowledge and how this knowledge is created; it is closely linked to the nature of reality. Crotty (1998:10) comments that:

> Ontological issues and epistemological issues tend to emerge together and that conceptually it is difficult to keep them apart.

In the next two sub-sections, I will consider key elements of ontology and epistemology as they related to my research.

Constructionism

Burns (1995:7) proposes that constructionism takes the view that human beings actively construct their knowledge as they experience the world in their particular way; my stance supports this paradigm. Crotty (1998) further explains that meaning is not created by the person but is constructed by them from their experience; thus, all knowledge is dependent upon human beings' conscious experience and interaction with the world. According to Papert (in Harel & Papert 1991:23), the construction of knowledge is effective when the learning is particularly meaningful for the individual.

Schwandt (2007:39) argues that we may construct meaning about different aspects of the world: objects, ideas and facts. From a social constructionist point of view, Crotty (2007:54) argues that ideas are constructed by conscious experience and interaction with the world, all reality is socially constructed. This position is underpinned by Guba (1996) who points out that people differ in the way that they construct their meaning; this results in their being multiple realities which are dependent on individuals. Crotty (2007:53) concludes that

culture is important in creating meanings: a person's culture supports them to make meaning of their experiences rather than culture being a result of human thought and behaviour.

Interpretivism

Interpretivism is consistent with relativist ontology and the constructionist viewpoint that individuals construct their meaning about what is going on in the world. Interpretivists aim to explore the nature of these meanings and explain how people make sense of their social world. Differing perspectives are acknowledged. Gall et al. (2005) suggest that when collecting qualitative data, interpretive researchers do not use traditional ways to ensure validity and reliability but instead value credibility and trustworthiness.

My approach to this study aligns with the relativist ontology, constructionist epistemology and interpretive perspective. I consider the subjective experience of the participants in the program to inform my research about the nature of mentoring in the Kinda Kinder program.

Ethnography

Ethnography originated in early nineteenth-century anthropology when it was simply a description of a community or culture, usually located beyond western civilisation (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007:1). In the twentieth century, cultural anthropologists such as Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown and Margaret Mead began investigating primitive cultures by collecting data, firsthand, by living with existing social groups (Creswell 2007:69). At the University of Chicago in the 1920s and 1930s, sociologists adapted methods used in anthropology to study the daily lives of particular groups within the United States (Neyland 2008:5). Contemporary ethnography encourages a focus on the study of *any* identifiable group or groups (Westbrook 2008:8); it is able to focus on particular aspects of culture (Gall et al. 2005).

From the early stages of my research study, I was convinced that an ethnographic study would be the most appropriate approach as it aligns with

my aims of studying social interactions, behaviours, and perceptions that occur within groups, teams, organisations, and communities (Reeves et al. 2008:512) and is consistent with an interpretive perspective (Burton & Bartlett 2009). Ethnography is appropriate if the researcher is studying the naturally occurring behaviours of a culture-sharing group (see, for example, Ary et al. (2006:458; Creswell, 2007:95) and when aiming to describe how the cultural group works and explores the beliefs, language, and issues of the group as Creswell (2007:70) points out:

> The literature may be deficient in actually knowing how the group works because the group is not in the mainstream, people may not be familiar with the group, or its ways are so different that readers may not identify with the group.

Another reason that I became interested in ethnography is that in recent years, it has become popular in the field of education as it enables depth of study; it gives a complete picture of the context; it is seen as being appropriate for answering educational questions and developing theoretical ideas (see, for example, Payne & Payne 2004; Kervin et al. 2006; Burton & Bartlett 2009). Pole & Morrison (2003: xi) comment that ethnography has become:

> if not the dominant, then certainly one of the most frequently adopted approaches to educational research in recent years.

Neyland (2008) considers that ethnography has been useful in understanding the process of schooling and it has been used by teachers to improve educational practice.

When considering ethnography as a path forward in my research study, the specific characteristics of the approach meshed with my task of exploring the nature of mentoring at a Kinda Kinder program. Spindler & Hammond, 2000:459) suggest that the characteristics of 'a good ethnography' are as follows:

- It has required extended participant observation.
- It has meant a long-time engagement at the site.
- It has resulted in the collection of large volumes of materials such as notes, artefacts audio and videotapes.

- It is characterised by 'openness' which means having no specific hypothesis or even highly specific categories of observation at the start of the study.

My study used all of these aspects and I address now each in turn.

Extended participant observation

Ethnographers typically gather participant observations, requiring direct engagement and involvement with the world they are studying (Reeves at al. 2008:512). Initially, I was perplexed by my role as participant observer: I was unclear about what that role might involve; I was unsure about the degree to which I would be participating in the program. Reading about this role was helpful. Payne & Payne (2004:73) suggest that:

> Entry into, and involvement in, the chosen social setting is eased by the researcher adopting a role that is naturally part of that setting, facilitating observation.

Bogdan & Biklen (2003) suggest that field workers should stay between the extremes of purely observer and complete participant and that their roles may change during the study. They (Bogdan & Biklen 2003:83) suggest that at the beginning, the researcher should remain detached, 'waiting to be looked over and, hopefully, accepted' and that, as time goes on, they may become more involved in everyday occurrences. Bogdan & Biklen (2003:83) also point out that each situation is different; each needs to be addressed individually, according to the needs of the study.

Murchison (2010) points out that to learn about society and culture in action, an ethnographer needs to become involved at a personal level. Wiersma (1995) suggests that, as ethnographic research is conducted from the inside-outward, it is appropriate for researchers to become participant observers to become involved in the everyday lives of the group. Denzin & Lincoln (2011:103) suggest that because we construct knowledge from our experiences and interactions with others, researchers need to participate in the research process with the subjects involved in the research to make sure that 'we are producing knowledge that is reflective of their reality'. Hammersley &

Atkinson (2007) argue that the role of the researcher may legitimately be incorporated and acknowledged within the research focus. They suggest that social researchers are always part of the world they study, that they are shaped by socio-historical factors, and that reflexivity is part of all social research. Hustler (in Somekh & Lewin (2005:16) go so far as to say:

> For some researchers, it can only be a 'proper' ethnography if the researcher is a *participant observer* in the *everyday* lives of whichever society or *group* s/he is studying.

Being a participant observer means that the ethnographer becomes part of the research being undertaken. The literature confirms my approach as a participant observer. By attending the playgroup session every second week I became 'one of the group' and after a couple of sessions I was able to relax a little more to interact with the children and families who attended.

Extended time at the site

Extended time is a necessary part of ethnography as significant time is needed to develop a deep understanding of the phenomenon under study (Murchison 2010:88). To capture an insider's viewpoint and collect detailed documentation about how people live their lives; prolonged time immersed in the natural setting is essential; it involves observing and having conversations with members of groups (Kervin et al. 2006:66).

O'Reilly (2009:19) confirms that extended time at the research site is needed as it allows opportunities to build rapport with research participants and to gain their trust and confidence. Time also enables a deeper understanding of what the participants say and what is happening in the field.

Time in the field is valuable concerning observing change. O'Reilly (2009:20110) points out the following:

> A wonderful by-product of spending enough time in the field is that rather than focus on static and unconnected elements of people's lives, it is possible to witness first-hand the complex interweaving of events, interactions, and interpretations; their role in the gradual process of the construction of events and their subsequent incorporation into the culture of the community.

Collection of large volumes of materials

As ethnographers spend extended periods of time with the group, they collect large quantities of data which is collected in a variety of ways such as observations, conversations with individuals and groups, interviews, audio-audio-tape recordings and an assortment of documents and artefacts.

Kervin et al. (2006:83) lists collection and analysis of artefacts as a data gathering technique used in ethnography. Wall (2015) comments that document analysis is regarded as classic features of ethnography. Nolan et al. (2013; 96) point out that using documents is valuable to:

> verify, contextualise or clarify the data collected from interviews and observations.

Interviews are part of the data collection process in ethnographies (Kervin et al. 2006, Wall 2015, O'Reilly 2009). Kervin et al. (2006:83) indicate that interviews provide detailed information and that they may be structured, unstructured and semi-structured. It is important for researchers to always make the participants feel relaxed and power relationships between the interviewer and interviewee are neutralised (Kervin et al. (2006:83).

O'Reilly (2009:180) points out that ethnography involves asking questions and listening to the answers and that, as the research progresses, more pertinent questions may be asked. During interviews, the researcher needs to be flexible in the questions asked (Kervin et al. (2006:89).

Openness: Having no specific hypothesis or specific categories of observation

Many authors suggest that ethnologists come to their research with an open-ended approach, having no preconceived hypotheses (see, for example, Kervin et al. 2006; Hammersley, 2007; Cohen et al, 2011). Hustler (2005, in Somekh & Lewin, 2005:18) reports that much ethnographic work emphasises the role of theory-generation, rather having a positivist focus on the testing of theory; however, they agree that 'it is silly to imagine that you should (or could) enter the field with a blank mind'. Hammersley & Atkinson (2007:2) suggest that most ethnographers come to the research with an interest in some aspect of

social life and the study becomes more focused as it progresses. Burton & Bartlett (2009) believe that the researcher should take into consideration the wider cultural context of the group; ethnography must present a sociocultural interpretation of the data. Merriam (2002:8) notes that ethnography:

> is not defined by how data are collected, but rather by the lens through which the data is interpreted.

Kervin et al. (2006:67) point out that ethnographic researchers should keep an open mind when they are observing; as well, they should have no preconceptions. They add that such researchers should also recognise that the participants may have different perspectives on the phenomenon being studied.

Analysis of data collected during my ethnography was undertaken in an inductive thematic manner with no preconceived ideas. During my analysis of the data, I keep in mind the research questions and focused on the nature of mentoring and the learning taking place during the program. Themes emerged and were identified through the careful analysis of the data. (Reeves et al. 2008 513).

Other ethnographies

To support the use of ethnography in my research, I investigated recent use of the approach. I found that, in recent times, ethnography has been used successfully in research in a range of different fields, including sociology, medicine and education (see, for example, Thompson et al. 2013; Manninen et al. 2014; Hopwood 2014; Gerdin & Pringle 2017).

Manninen et al. (2014) explored patient-student encounters concerning students' learning in a patient-centred health-care setting. In their ethnographic study, they made use of observations and field notes as well as follow-up interviews with each patient and each student.

Thompson et al. (2013) used ethnography to study young people in northern England who had been officially classified as not in education, employment or training. In their research, they explored how young people comprehend, use and encounter places and spaces relating to residence, work

and learning, and the role of spatialities in reproducing or interrupting aspects of social exclusion and marginality.

Hopwood (2014) conducted an ethnographic study of parenting education and pedagogic practices in a child and family service in a child and family health service. Observations, documents and photographs were collected to inform the research.

Gerdin & Pringle (2017) used ethnographic data, including observations, video-recordings, focus groups and individual interviews, collected over a year-long study, to examine the working of power within a physical education model.

Goldbart (in Somekh & Lewin, 2005:20) conducted an ethnography exploring the appropriacy of Western approaches to early intervention in families in urban India. She reported positively on her using ethnography for her study; she reported:

> We gained a rich insight into the lives and beliefs of the parents participating in the program.

Ethnography has been used successfully in a wide range of studies (Hustler in Somekh & Lewin 2005:16) and it is an appropriate approach for my research.

Methods

In this section relating to the methods that I employed to conduct this ethnographic research, I describe the following: how the site for the study was chosen; who the participants were and their background; how the data was collected and analysed. A summary of my research and the methods that I employed is contained in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1   Summary of methodology and methods

Preparation for Study

- **Choosing the site**

- **Ethics approval**

- **Agreement of participants**

Collection of data

- **Semi-structured interviews: mentor**

- **Semi-structured interviews: student group**

- **Evaluation/planning sessions**

- **Student journals**

Analysis of data

- **Transcribing audio recordings**

- **Entering data in Xcel**

- **Using Inductive Data Reduction (IDR)**

- **Making judgements and identifying themes and emergent themes**

Presentation of Findings

- **Documenting the analysis of data**

- **Addressing the research questions**

- **Making recommendations**

Preparation for the study

In preparation for my year-long ethnographic study, I first had to meet operational requirements as follows:

- choosing the site which included the selection of a mentor;
- developing and meeting the rigorous ethical requirements of Abbey University as a preliminary to gaining the acceptance of a set of allocated university students to participate in my ethnographic study of mentorship.

Choosing the site

The coordinator of the Bachelor of Education course at Abbey University assisted me in the choice of the Kinda Kinder site for my research study. The playgroup at this site was well established as it had been operating for four years. It was implemented in a community library where the staff had, in the past, been enthusiastic about the program; at the time of my study, only a few of the 26 sites were located in community libraries. The library supported the program financially and cooperated with the Kinda Kinder mentor and student team with storage and operating spaces.

The families attending the playgroup were from a mixed demographic, with varying social, cultural and economic backgrounds. The children were between three to five years of age and were accompanied at each session by at least one family member. On average, about twenty children attended the playgroup every week.

I attended the playgroup and the evaluation/planning session that followed every two weeks of the twenty-four-week program; this enabled me to remain immersed in the mentoring program, as a participant observer, for the whole year.

The participants

The mentor, Katie,[17] had been working in this program for the previous four years and was therefore completely familiar with the library surroundings and she knew the staff at the site quite well. Katie had also been employed by the university as a sessional lecturer for several years, teaching in many subject areas including child development. She originally qualified as an Early Childhood teacher and had previously worked in kindergartens and schools before joining the university.

The university students in the group allocated to this Kinda Kinder site came from diverse backgrounds. Three first-year and two second-year preservice teachers from the Early Childhood/Primary course were joined by two students in their second-year of a Diploma of Children's Services course; these courses operated as part of the undergraduate program in Education at Abbey University.

The students came to the program with a range of previous experiences. Two of the first-year preservice teachers had no experience working with young children; the third preservice teacher had worked for twelve months part-time in an Early Childhood Long Day Care Centre before beginning her studies. Both of the second-year preservice teachers had already completed a Diploma of Children's Services; one of them had been employed in an Early Childhood Long Day Care setting, completing the diploma on a part-time basis. When they began their course, the two diploma students had no previous experience of working in the early childhood field; however, their course placements in long day care settings had already provided them with some opportunities for contact with pre-school age children and their family members. A list of the students' pseudonyms, their course details and experience in the early childhood education field is contained in Table 3.1.

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[17] The names of the mentor and the enrolled university students are all pseudonyms.

Table 3.1   Student details

Student Name	Course/Year level	Experience in field
Katrina	Bachelor of Education Primary/Early Childhood Second-year Completed a Diploma of Children's Services part-time	Employed in Long Day Care two years Placements within Diploma course
Cindy	Bachelor of Education Primary/Early Childhood Second-year Completed a Diploma of Children's Services part-time	Placements within Diploma course
Jeanne	Bachelor of Education Primary/Early Childhood: First Year	Employed in Long Day Care one year
Jacinta	Bachelor of Education Primary/Early Childhood: First Year	No previous experience
Jeanne	Bachelor of Education Primary/Early Childhood: First year	No previous experience
Renata	Diploma of Children's Services: Second- year	Placements within Diploma course
Sebastian	Diploma of Children's Services: Second-year	Placements within Diploma course

Merriam (2002:31) suggests that purposefully seeking variation or diversity in sample selection allows for a greater range of application of the findings by consumers of the research. In this sample, diversity occurred serendipitously: courses, year levels, and prior experience of the student participants.

Ethical considerations

During my research study, I was constantly aware of my ethical responsibility to the participants. I followed general ethical considerations and those specifically required by my university[18], namely, that research students

> uphold the values and principles of ethical conduct when designing, conducting and reporting research findings.

Nolan et al. (2013:74) make the following recommendations to aid responsible researchers:

- That [the participants] will be fully informed of the research process before …deciding on their involvement.
- That participation is voluntary (they have the right to withdraw without penalty or ill-effects).
- That different views about the issue/topic are appreciated.
- That different cultures and values will be acknowledged…respectfully.
- That the diverse needs of participants will be addressed.
- That participants' rights will be upheld.
- That information will be treated confidentially.

Although the study took place within the context of a children's playgroup, I did not take observations or recordings of children: the focus, exclusively, was on the pre-service teachers, the Diploma students and the mentor.

Information sheets (Appendix 1 and 2) and a consent form (Appendix 3) were distributed to the mentor, the Diploma students, and the pre-service teachers; all were signed and returned. The library manager was supplied with information regarding my research study and provided a permission to proceed letter as this was requested by library staff at the site. I also distributed an information sheet to the library staff and families attending the Kinda Kinder playgroup.

Throughout my research, I was continually aware of acting ethically towards all the participants – the mentor, the seven students. I was also aware

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[18] Accessed at https://www.vu.edu.au/researchers/research-lifecycle/conducting-research/human-research-ethics, 10 October 2017.

that I needed to take into account the children and families who attended the playgroup as their needs were a priority for the program.

Authenticity of the study

Unlike quantitative research, in which the validity of the study is vital, in qualitative research, Cohen et al. (2011) argue that the notion of *authenticity* is more appropriate. Strauss & Corbin (1990:42) suggest that the background of the researcher, the literature on the subject and professional and personal experience in the research focus may influence how the researcher gives meaning to the data. Cohen et al. (2000) also point out that there may be multiple interpretations of the same data. Different researchers are likely to produce findings which are not identical and which have non-overlapping components. Golafshani (2003:601) explains that:

> Although reliability and validity are treated separately in quantitative studies, these terms are not viewed separately in qualitative research. Instead, terminology that encompasses both, such as credibility, transferability, and trustworthiness is used.

Trustworthiness

Merriam (2002:30) advises that evaluating a qualitative study means raising questions about all aspects of the process and the write-up. Lincoln & Guba (1985) consider that *trustworthiness* in a research study is important; their five components of trustworthiness are as follows:

- **Credibility**: confidence in the truth in the findings.
- **Transferability**: showing that the findings have applicability in other contexts.
- **Dependability**: showing that the findings are consistent and could be repeated.
- **Confirmability**: a degree of neutrality on the extent to which the findings of a study are shaped by the respondents and not researcher bias, motivation, or interest.

Cohen et al. (2011:181) suggest that qualitative data does not aim to generalise; rather, it aims 'To represent the phenomenon being investigated, fairly and fully'.

Credibility

Lincoln & Guba (1985) have outlined ways of establishing *credibility*, as follows: prolonged engagement, persistent engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, referential adequacy and member checking. My research took place over the extended time frame of two university semesters; thus, the duration was an academic year. I had adequate time spent collecting data such that, as described by Merriam (2002:31), the data became 'saturated': I stayed with the group for the duration of their experience in the Kinda Kinder program and I was a participant observer every second week for a year.

Triangulation is recognised as a technique to enhance credibility and dependability (Lincoln & Guba 1985, Tuckett 2005). To triangulate, I used many sources for my data collection: audio-tape recordings of evaluation and planning sessions, mentor semi-structured interviews, student group semi-structured interviews; a collection of student journals that were maintained across the year. In addition to the data that was analysed from these sources, I made field notes and maintained written observations; I also kept notes of informal discussions with the mentor and the students that occurred during the year. This written data was used to guide my interview questions for the mentor and the students. Tuckett (2005:3) notes that confirmability of research may be supported by the use of field notes; they provide an 'audit trail', should any auditing be required. In my research, transcriptions of formal recording sessions provided a significant and reliable audit trail. By using audio-tape recordings, I was able to develop thick descriptions within the reporting of the data, thus supporting transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Tuckett, 2005).

Collection of data

Every second week of the university year, it was a pleasure for me to attend the playgroup for a whole day; this enabled me to take part in the session with the children and the following evaluation/planning session. The data collected came from evaluation/planning sessions, semi-structured interviews with the mentor, semi-structured interviews with the student group, and from the students' journals. Following each session, I wrote a reflection on the day; I also spoke informally with everyone each day throughout the year the essence of which I captured in field notes. I used these field notes to provide me with background for the semi-structured interviews with the mentor and the student group. For example, during the mentor interview, I was able to clarify observations that I had made of her role. I said:

> I notice that you do let them have a go at things. If they suggest something you will
> say 'have a go and see how it goes' so they learn from doing it, what works and what
> doesn't.

This provided an opportunity for the mentor to clarify her role.

Evaluation/planning sessions

When the children and families left the centre at the end of each playgroup morning, the mentor and student group participated in a debriefing session during which they evaluated the program, reflected on their roles as teachers and planned the program for the subsequent session.

I attended and audio-taped every second week of the program, a total of ten sessions over the two semesters of the program. Tuckett (2005) suggests that using audio-tape recordings helps to avoid any bias in what is recorded in the data. After the sessions, which lasted approximately an hour each, I transcribed the conversation. I discussed these transcriptions informally with the mentor.

Semi-structured interviews: mentor

Two semi-structured interviews were conducted with the mentor: the first at the twelve-week mark – the end of university's Semester One; and the second at the end of Semester Two (end of the program). Silverman (in Cohen et al. 2000:268) notes that interviews may gain information on the following: to access beliefs about facts; to identify feelings and motives; to collect comments on the standards of actions (what could be done about situations); to present behaviour and elicit reasons and explanations. My interviews with the mentor were audio-taped and then transcribed.

The questions designed for the mentor set out to provide information to answer the research questions. I wanted to explore the program from her perspective and for her to identify different aspects of her role. I also wanted to focus on her thoughts about the students in the program, if they supported each other's learning and any learning that eventuated for the students. For example, I asked the mentor:

> What strategies have you seen the students help each other to improve their practice?

She replied:

> I think they have improved their practice by listening to each other and watching each other so I think they have paid attention to each other's ideas,

During the semi-structured interviews, as well as asking planned questions, I also responded to the comments made by the mentor and encouraged her to continue talking. For example, when she commented about a student supporting others, I was able to seek clarification by asking:

> So, do you think by doing that he was modelling for the first-year students?

She replied:

> Yes, yes, yes, yes, and I commented too because I noticed it.

During the second mentor interview, I was able, once again, to focus on specific aspects of the program. For example, I asked:

> Do you think that your role changed over the year as a mentor?

Katie gave a clear answer:

> Yes, it did from the very beginning when we had to organise the sessions there was
> a lot of planning, and I guess what I did early on was to figure out what people's
> strengths were, so I tried to get to know them and to find out what they were good at.

I was also able to ask open-ended questions to allow Katie to add anything that she felt was valuable:

> Is there anything else you would like to add about the mentoring program at Kinda
> Kinder?

The flexibility of the semi-structured interviews allowed me to discover the mentor's ideas about her role and the students' learning that occurred.

Semi -structured interviews: student group

I conducted two semi-structured group interviews: the first was after twelve weeks of the program, at the end of Semester One, with the pre-service teachers and diploma students together at the site; the second was at the end of Semester Two. The diploma students were not a part of this second group interview as they were not in attendance on this day.

Group interviews are useful as they may bring together people with varied opinions and it may provide a cross-check that may lead to a more complete and reliable record (Cohen et al. 2011: 432). These group interviews were audiotaped and then transcribed.

During the semi-structured group interview with the students, I wanted to find out their feelings about the Kinda Kinder program generally, and if they saw any benefits in being a part of the program. I set out to explore their feelings about the Kinda Kinder program. For example, I asked:

> What do you think are the benefits of the program for you?

One of the students identified her learning:

> For me, I think it is programming, learning how to program and plan.

During the interviews, I aimed to discover how the students saw the mentor's role and their perspective on the way that she had supported them in

improving their practice. I was interested in hearing their ideas about specific ways she had provided this support and in what areas their practice had changed over the first semester. I also wanted to find out how they would like the mentor to support them in the following semester. Another question that I had planned was related to working with the other students in the group. I wanted to find out if they had supported each other during the first semester and if so, how this had happened.

During the first semi-structured group interview, as well as asking planned questions, I responded to the students' comments. For example, when a student commented that Katie asked questions, I asked:

> How do you feel when she asks questions?

I also allowed students to add their own comments by asking:

> Is there anything else that you would like to add?

In the second student group semi-structured interview, I asked questions to discover the changes that had occurred over the duration of the program, changes they had made to their practice and learning that had occurred. For example, I asked:

> Do you think your practice has changed over the year?

To encourage the students to share their ideas about how they had supported each other's learning, I asked obvious questions such as:

> What do you see are the benefits of working as a team?

When there was hesitation about responding to questions, I added specific questions. For example:

> Have you been able to see how social interactions can support children's learning?

This encouraged comments such as:

> I think so because heaps of the kids have opened up since they have been coming.
> From the beginning like a lot of them didn't even participate that much.

During the semi-structured interviews with the group of students, a flexible list of questions allowed me to respond to their comments; furthermore, this encouraged them to share their ideas more comprehensively.

Journals

Individual written journal comments were made by the students after each playgroup session to record their thoughts about the day, including reflections on their role as teachers. These journals were part of the requirements for the Bachelor of Education students but not for the Diploma students. Some of the group had previous experience writing journals; others had no previous experience. The mentor collected and read the journals at various times throughout the year; a final reading by the mentor took place at the end of the year. She gave feedback on their entries and followed up with them when necessary. For example, this included personal problems they were experiencing; they were also able to address, privately, program issues about which they were worried or upset. After the mentor had read and responded to the journals at the end of the year, the students kindly gave them to me to become part of the data set for this study. The Diploma students did not record journals as it was not a requirement of their course.

Analysis of data

During my doctoral studies, I became familiar with Inductive Data Analysis (IDA) and as I discussed this approach with my supervisor, I became confident that this was the most appropriate way of analysing the data. Somekh & Lewin (2005:346) define induction as:

> the process of constructing theories from empirical data by searching for themes and seeking to make meanings from the evidence.

Thomas (2003:2) comments that the primary purpose of the inductive approach is:

to allow research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant or significant themes inherent in raw data, without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies.

To confirm my thoughts, I read further about analysis in ethnography. Murchison (2010:175) advocates writing *from* the research data and argues that ethnographic research is 'necessarily inductive' because ethnographers build their ideas from the research data, moving from the specific to the general or abstract. Thomas (2003:2) lists the purposes underlying inductive data analysis, as follows:

1. To condense extensive and varied raw text data into a brief, summary format.

2. To establish clear links between the research objectives and the summary findings derived from the raw data and to ensure these links are both transparent (able to be demonstrated to others) and defensible (justifiable given the objectives of the research).

3. To develop a model or theory about the underlying structure of experiences or processes which are evident in the text (raw data).

These steps are consistent with the aims of my data analysis in exploring the nature of mentoring and the learning occurring in the Kinda Kinder program. The steps taken in my data analysis followed the steps noted by Thomas (2003) and detailed by Ling, Heasly & Ling (2014:14) in a process described as 'Inductive Data Reduction (IDR)'. The IDR steps, derived from Ling (2014) involved the following:

1. Initial reading of the many pages of text in order to become familiar with and immerse myself in the data. At this point I had fifteen sets of transcriptions: three evaluation/planning sessions, two mentor interviews, two student group interviews and one set of student journals.

2. Within each set of data, transposing each piece of data within a dedicated separate Excel spreadsheet so that each comment was recorded separately and uniquely.

3. Carefully scrutinising each comment to identify a construct or a single issue within each comment. As Ling (2014: 10), points out:

> various elements are deconstructed in order to produce a new subjective construct; the new construct is entirely a matter of interpretation: the new construct is a product of post-modern thinking, done 'on the spot' within the confines of a cell in a spreadsheet.

4. Reflecting on, and evaluating each construct, by means of inductive analysis, in order to identify a set of recognisable concepts.

5. Reconstructing the emergent concepts into themes which involves data synthesis; according to Ling (2014: 13), this results in:

> a very high order of thinking, and hence one of the most difficult steps and requires us to bring to bear our knowledge, experience and deep understandings of the issue under consideration.

6. Further reflection in order to identify broader themes, drawing on both 'praxis'[19] and theory as a matter of judgement on my part, as the researcher

7. Finally, sorting each of the emergent themes on the basis of, first, themes; then concepts, with their related comments and constructs by using the Excel 'Sort' function.

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[19] Definition of 'praxis': the practice and practical side of a profession or field of study, as opposed to the theory. Accessed at http://www.dictionary.com/browse/praxis, 25/01/2018 12:55 PM.

Classifying the data involved deconstruction, reflection and reconstruction to arrive at broader concepts and broader themes; reflection was the critical aspect of the inductive data reduction process. In discussion with my supervisors, I chose three evaluation/planning meetings to include in the data analysis; because of space and time restrictions, as well as to avoid unnecessary repetition or duplication, it would have proved to be an impossible undertaking to deal with all such meetings.

This part of my research was quite challenging as there was so much data and I often felt that I was getting nowhere: I was drowning in the data. After spending quite some time reflecting on constructs, concepts, themes and emergent themes, I encountered a quote from O'Reilly (2009:108); it said:

> Ethnographers find themselves immersed in and living amongst a mass of confusing data which they attempt, often unsatisfactorily, to logically consider while simultaneously trying to live. Just when they seem able to detect some patterns or consistencies, something happens to cast doubt on it all.

This resonated with me; I immediately felt reassured.

I pressed onwards and with the support of my supervisors, I returned to the research questions and, keeping this focus, I resumed my analysis. Thomas (2003:3) notes that:

> The findings are shaped by the assumptions and experiences of the researchers conducting the research and carrying out the data analyses. In order for the findings to be usable, the researcher (data analyst) must make decisions about what is more important and less important in the data.

This is exactly what I did and after many months of analysis, I found that there were several themes emerging. Some themes related to the nature of mentoring and others related to the learning that was occurring within the group. From here, with the use of Excel spreadsheets, I was able to group these emergent themes and then the sub-themes to form a structure within which to write my findings. I addressed the findings under each set of data: the evaluation/planning sessions, the mentor semi-structured interviews, the student semi-structured interviews and the student journal entries. I was then

able to synthesise and bring the findings together and come to conclusions. Nolan et al. 2013: 141) comment:

> an ethnographic research report tends to be organised around themes that are generated from the fieldwork and data analysis.

From this position, I was able to present my findings directly from the data in the Excel spreadsheets. At this stage, it became apparent that I had far too much data to report and after discussion with my supervisors, I chose to include three of the evaluation/planning sessions, rather than the original ten. I chose to include the first session, a session later in Semester One and then a session nearing the end of Semester Two as this gave possibilities for identifying changes in mentoring and student learning during the year. It was clear that the evaluation/planning sessions that were omitted contained the same themes and emergent themes and did not add value to the data. Within my findings, I included direct quotes from the participants. This provided a richness to the data; as Merriam (2002:31) points out, that:

> will enable readers to determine the extent to which their situation matches the research context, and hence, whether findings can be transferred.

Within my research, I use inductive data analysis to organise and gain meaning from the data. Through the use of this method, I was able to provide answers to the questions that initiated my research. The findings appear from the significant themes within the raw data, resulting in a trustworthy study that will be significant in the field of Early Childhood Education.

Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have discussed qualitative research methodology, addressing the theoretical perspectives that underpin my research. I have provided a detailed account of the methods, procedures, and decision points in carrying out the study to promote 'reliability in the research' Merriam (2002:31). In Chapter 4, I present Part 1 of my Data Analysis.

CHAPTER 4

Data Analysis: Part 1

In Chapter 4, I present the detailed findings of the first and second mentor interviews, together with the first and second student interviews. An example of an Inductive Data Reduction spreadsheet used in my analysis of the first mentor interview data is contained in Appendix 4.

Mentor interview 1

In an informal environment, over coffee, I spoke with Katie about the playgroup organisation and her role as a mentor. She offered her perspective on Kinda Kinder and I was struck by her genuine enthusiasm for the program and its value for the community and by her sensitivity to the feelings and capabilities of the students. She showed an acute awareness of her role in supporting their learning and development during the program. The major emergent themes detected in the data were firstly related to her mentoring role, and secondly to student learning and development.

Mentoring

Generally, the Kinda Kinder mentors were experienced Early Childhood Educators; however, as mentioned in Chapter 1, Katie, as well as being a university lecturer at Abbey University had the additional role within the program of being an Early Childhood Colleague. Because of her connections with the university and her experience as a mentor, she was aware of

expectations of the university; nevertheless, she naturally preferred her role as mentor, saying (M1.006):

> But the mentor is more important to me because it's about helping and guiding the students in their learning and their practice.

When discussing benefits of the program, she commented (M1.042) that she gained personal satisfaction from the mentor role:

> And it benefits me because I like it.

Katie summarised her work as guiding the students in their learning and their practice. After considering her role, she her overall approach (M1.066):

> I guess my main strategies would be questioning, trial and error, so get them to try things that they want to try with a bit of guidance and perhaps suggesting a few things or a few variations.

Within the emergent theme of mentoring, Katie spoke of her role in more detail: five distinct themes emerged (see Appendix 4, IDR Sample: Mentor in semi-structured interview):

- Experiential learning
- Advising
- Role modelling
- Dialogue and discussion
- Working with families.

Experiential learning

Katie believed that the students needed to learn from their experiences and as the year progressed, she allowed more opportunities for this to happen. Her mentoring was contextually relevant. Although to begin, she gave plenty of advice; she wanted the students to learn from their mistakes (M1.079):

> But I still want them to find their way. I want them to set things up and find out; sometimes I have to bite my tongue because I know it's not going to work, but they need to figure that out for themselves.

Katie (M1.082) felt that it was important for students to have their personal experiences:

> By having someone tell you something all the time, it's not going to make a difference until you have a turn at trying and then you find your way and you find that doesn't work.

She gave an example of students of setting up water play (M1.080):

> They put a full bucket of water outside near the finger paint, and the children got soaking wet, and the next week Jane said we only need to put a little bit of water in that.

As the year progressed, Katie allowed the students to try things for themselves and by experiencing success and failure, they were able to improve their teaching practice.

Advising

Katie was clear that her role involved a traditional mentoring strategy of advising the students about their teaching practice. She explained that she gave advice based on her experience with children and in the Kinda Kinder program but she was aware that sometimes the students took it on board and sometimes they didn't. Early in the year, she gave more advice then more than she did later (M1.117):

> I have provided ideas for ways of doing things because they don't know.

Katie was concerned about setting up a secure environment for the children and advised on specific ways of presenting learning experiences, for example, story and music experiences. Practical aspects of teaching practice, including safety issues, were areas of advice (M1.069):

> Last week, for example, they left a big pair of scissors out on a table, and I talked about being safe and needing to move the scissors.

Katie pointed out links between the students' practice and their university classes (M1.064):

> I try to talk with them about observations, following up things from class; we talked about linking it to the play that we have talked about, the sensory play and the dramatic play.

The students were urged to respect other people including the children, parents, library staff and each other:

> as well is so taking everybody's idea on board (M1.084). I like them to think about respecting each other so the strategies of respecting children…and parents (M1.083). Respecting needs to start within the group.

Katie observed the students during the playgroup session and insisted that they always participate in the activities. She strongly advised the students about involving themselves in the program (M1.106):

> So, I have had to ask her (Katrina) sometimes to put that away and to come and be involved in the play.

Advice given by the mentor focused around program choices and the presentation of children's learning experiences with awareness of safety issues. Katie also advised on practical teaching practice, and made links with university classes. She encouraged students about being respectful of other people in the environment and involvement in the program.

Role modelling

Katie was very clear about how she used role modelling to support student learning and development. She spoke about role modelling interaction with parents (M1.055):

> I probably try to role model a fair bit, especially when I'm talking to the parents because that's … an area where they feel uncomfortable.

When Katie worked as a member of the team in the playgroup session, she provided a role model for the students by setting up children's learning experiences in a safe manner, taking music time, and interacting with children and families.

Discussing

Engaging students in dialogue was another strategy that Katie knowingly used to support student learning and development. During the reflection session, she asked questions to encourage involvement and to encourage the group to reflect on their practice (M1.060):

> I probably ask them to reflect each week on how things went and that works sometimes, and it doesn't work on others, but I want them to think about why things have been successful or not successful, and sometimes they talk more about that than others.

Katie was conscious of the fact that sometimes the students were not happy about being questioned, but she was satisfied if they just listened to the dialogue (M1.062):

> …even if they don't answer them I like them to think that they thinking about it. Whether they respond to it or not, maybe they can think about it rather than just talking about what happened they can think about things themselves.

Within the reflection session, Katie posed problems regarding the program for the students to discuss. Although she advised students directly when it came to safety issues, there was opportunity for discussion about options, about options and there and there was discussion about ways to improve the program. Katie consistently encouraged the students to be involved in the discussion during the reflection session. Even though the students did not like it, she asked many questions to encourage individual students to share their ideas about how to improve the learning experiences for the children.

Work with families

Katie was not only mentor for the students, she also supported families who attended the Kinda Kinder program, particularly parents who were lonely and without support. Katie commented (M1.043):

> I spend a lot of time talking with the parents because I think that's important.

Providing a safe area for parents was something that Katie took very seriously (M1.046):

> The parents who are on their or look like they are struggling or look like they are uncomfortable in the setting, I make sure I spend a lot of time talking with them and making them feel comfortable.

She could see that supporting parents was a part of her mentoring role and noticed parents who needed extra support (M1.048):

> One family last year I had to get some legal advice for them, so I guess my role as a mentor teacher is also to give information and support.

Katie was able to provide informal support for families in difficult circumstances (M1.143):

> I had a family who came for the last two years in a row with a lot of significant issues with physical abuse, some unpleasant things going on and we needed to get support for that family, and they kept coming back because they felt comfortable. She said, "I like to come and talk to you, I like to come and be here with you".

Working with families was important to Katie and was part of the reason that she worked to keep the program operating in the library setting. She provided advice for families needing support.

Concluding comments

Katie used a range of mentoring strategies to support the students' learning and development. Throughout the implementation of the playgroup, she allowed the students to learn from trial and error. Katie took part in the playgroup session as a member of the team; at the same time, she also acted as a role model, interacting with children and families and leading some music and story groups. As the group moved into the reflection session, Katie encouraged the students to contribute to the dialogue, reflecting and planning for the following week. She advised on the practical aspects of teaching practice and she drew attention to links between practice and theory. As well as supporting the students during the program, Katie provided support for the

families who attended and she referred parents to support agencies when necessary.

Student learning and development

During the first mentor interview, Katie identified how the students had changed during the first half of the Kinda Kinder program. She commented on specific learnings (M1.041):

> The students benefit because they learn to interact with parents, they get to interact with children they learn how to play appropriately with children, they learn how to communicate with each other and they learn how to communicate with and get on with the library staff.

Student learning and development was addressed under the themes which were evident in the data: collaborative learning and teaching practice. These are discussed below.

Collaborative learning

While the students worked together as a team to implement the program, to reflect on the day's events and to plan for the following playgroup session, collaborative learning was evident. Katie confirmed that the students had positively supported each other through peer mentoring and dialogue and that this had resulted in improved teaching practice and increased confidence.

Peer mentoring

The team members became peer mentors for each other as they gave feedback and role modelled for each other. Feedback from the team encouraged the students to reflect on their practice and improve the setup of the environment. Katie was adamant that feedback received from members of the group was valuable (M1.093):

> …I think it's really valuable getting feedback from other students.

As the team prepared the room for the children, they gave and received feedback about the presentation of the learning experiences. Following the

playgroup, the feedback also included comments about the way students interacted with children and families and the way the group time had been implemented.

Role modelling undertaken by students was another way collaborative learning came to life. Not only did the more experienced second-year students role model for the first-year students but at times, they all became role models. Sebastian, a Diploma student, role modelled how to interact with children. Katie commented (M1.100):

> Sebastian was role modelling for the first-year students and I noticed it. He was very good, very interactive, he got down low so we talked a lot about getting down to their level and using eye contact, listening, not talking all the time, just being part of what's going on.

Katrina and Cindy had also noticed this interaction; they told Sebastian how good he was with the children. Of the first-year students, Jeanne showed particular strength in setting up the environment for the babies; in doing this, she acted as a role model for Cindy and Renata. Katie explained (M1.090):

> Jeanne does a lot of the setting up for the babies in that big room in the library area, and I know that Renata wanted to help her do this one day when I arrived. She was asking Jeanne what the best way to do things was and she said to Jeanne I like the way you do things because it looks good.

It was beneficial for students to observe others in the group as they set-up learning experiences and as they interacted with children and parents. The second-year students were confident in their role modelling; as a consequence, the first-year students were able to learn from the particular strengths of the second-years.

Discussing

Collaborative learning occurred as students took part in the shared dialogue during the playgroup and evaluation/planning sessions. Katie recalled the benefits of working together, noting that the group supported each other in a positive way (M1.089):

> I think they have improved their practice by listening to each other and watching each other…I think they have paid attention to each other's ideas.

Discussion in the reflection session resulted in improvement in teaching practice; Katie commented (M1.078):

> When we had our evaluation session they're listening and paying attention.

Students had also learned about setting up the environment through discussion and working together. They had developed their understanding of the planning process by taking part in the discussion in the evaluation/planning meeting.

> Jeanne did the planning last week so the first years have discussed it by email through the week and they formulate it themselves and it links to the framework (M1.085). It is still quite basic but it is okay. At least they are thinking and we try to show that there is a link by discussing the experiences and the observations and trying to link it (M1.087).

The team improved their teaching practice by engaging in dialogue each other. They learned about setting-up and implementing learning experiences and have developed their understanding of the planning process.

Confidence

Katie was particularly aware of students' feelings and spoke about their developing confidence. The students worked together, supporting each other to develop confidence in themselves as teachers. Some of the students lacked confidence in particular situations, in particular, when they were working with parents. They were also nervous and hesitant when taking the children for a group session of singing, dancing and stories (M1.052):

> Jane finds that very difficult, she's very shy but I think she is becoming more confident and she's become more familiar with new faces and the setting. I think that when she feels comfortable enough in the setting she'll feel more confident.

As the students shared the implementation of group time they could feel supported as they practiced telling stories and implementing music groups (M1.120):

> They are increasing their confidence with the parents and the group time well it's a
> slow process with the group time.

Katie encouraged Katrina to take a leading role by asking her to be the contact person for the group; Katrina readily agreed and responded by getting resources and offering to write up the planning; however, Katie was surprised to read her true feelings in her journal (M1.104):

> Katrina was freaked out about that and she said in her reflections that she was quite
> nervous because she didn't know what she was going to have to do even though I
> thought that I had explained it. She said she felt the pressure of trying to have to do
> the right thing, she didn't know what that quite was and she said she felt unnerved by
> being seen as the person who knew things when she didn't think that she did. So that
> was very interesting because that's not evident when you see her in front of her peers.

As time progressed, Katrina did develop her confidence and, at times, appeared as if she were overseeing the playgroup rather than working with the children; Katie said (M1.105):

> I think that she is quite confident with her peers, not necessarily parents or children
> that with her peers she stands up more, she stands up tall, she takes the written things
> around, she organises the pictures. It's almost like she sometimes seems to be the
> person who doesn't need to play with the children.

As the students worked alongside each other to implement the program, they provided a supportive environment in which they developed their confidence in themselves as teachers.

Collaborative learning occurred as the group worked together; as an outcome, individual strengths were recognised. The students became peer mentors, role modelling and providing feedback about teaching practice. Being part of the team resulted in students improving their teaching practice, developing an understanding of the planning process in early childhood education and increasing their confidence as teachers.

Teaching practice

Katie affirmed that the Kinda Kinder setting supported students in improving their teaching practice. By planning and implementing the playgroup the

students could put theory into practice and thus were able to learn through their praxis. Katie expected that the students would make a concerted effort to learn through their practice. She expected that they should know what the guidelines and expectations were for their written work and that they should (M1.009:

> …put into practice what they learn at uni – their theory, and they need to put into practice what they know.

Areas of teaching practice that showed improvement were taking observations, interacting with others, time management and setting the environment for children's learning experiences.

Observing

Katie made a point of saying that she was pleased that the students had developed skills in observation; she said (M1.123):

> They have become keener observers, that is the main thing and I was pleased today because we had talked last week about using observation, how can we do this after our class, how can we do this properly.

By providing a shared exercise book and encouraging the students to contribute, the group managed to collect a 'whole page' of observations on which to base the planning for the following week's playgroup session.

Interacting

Over the first semester, students improved the quality of their interactions with children, families and each other; Katie commented (M1.013):

> The student learning is about getting along with each other. So, it's about interactions, practising interaction skills.

Katie also noted that the students had become more aware of working with library staff; she said they were (M1.114):

> …being very careful to tidy up and being aware of the environment, aware of expectations of the library.

The group had been able to come together as a team and work cooperatively to provide the playgroup program and to clean up (M1.114):

> They allocate themselves, one washes up, they fold all the blankets and put them on the table, one stands up and they pass everything. It is a very organised outfit.

Katie acknowledged that interactions were a major aspect of teaching practice and this was an area where the students had shown improvement.

Time management

Although the group often appeared to be rushed, as time went by the students were able to manage their tasks more efficiently. Katie believed (M1.108):

> …students have become much more efficient in organising their time while they are there. So, they all come in at eight-thirty and they get on with it.

Time management was an issue for the entire team as many comments had been made about the lack of time to complete tasks; Katie valued this improvement.

Setting the environment

Setting up the learning environment for children was an area of teaching practice where there were obvious improvements (M1.110).

> They have become efficient at setting up, they know how they want things to be in advance because we have talked about it the week before.

Katie had observed that it was not the second-year Bachelor of Education students who had shown initiative in this area but the first-year students – Jacinta, Jeanne and Jane – who had done more setting up and had 'just got on with it'.

During the first half of the year, the students developed their skills as teachers. They had improved their skills in observing, interacting with others, time management, and setting the environment for the children.

Overall, The Kinda Kinder program had been valuable in promoting the learning and development of the students. The team environment, along with

a perceptive, caring mentor, provided a supportive atmosphere in which students were able to learn collaboratively. Opportunities were also plentiful for students to learn and develop their skills and to improve their teaching practice.

Reflection on mentor interview 1

Within the first mentor interview Katie spoke enthusiastically about the Kinda Kinder program, including her belief in the mentoring role as well as the students' learning and development. The Kinda Kinder program had been valuable for all involved with the location of the playgroup being beneficial as it was a comfortable, non-threatening environment for all those involved. Katie spoke passionately about her role in supporting the families who attend the playgroup.

Katie identified the strategies that she used to support students in their praxis and explained how her role had changed over the year. She began by forming positive relationships with the students, becoming familiar with their strengths, and supporting them to feel comfortable both in the environment and with each other. Early in the year, Katie gave direct instructions and advice to students and role modelled for them. As the year progressed, she observed as the students learned from their experiences and then promoted reflection and group discussion as a way of changing practice. She gave feedback when this occurred.

The value of praxis was evident as the students worked directly with children and families and then reflected on this practice and participated in the related dialogue. Collaborative learning was evident with students from diverse backgrounds learning together and from each other, at times becoming peer mentors. During the year, the students' confidence grew as the quality of their interactions developed and their teaching practice improved.

Mentor Interview 2

My final mentor interview with Katie took place two weeks after the last Kinda Kinder playgroup for the year had concluded. Katie took this opportunity to reflect, overall, on her role as group mentor and the student learning and development that she had witnessed; thus, the major emergent themes, identified by using the IDR methods applied in Chapter 3, were:

- Mentoring;
- Student learning and development.

I discuss these and related sub-themes in the sub-sections, below.

Mentoring

Katie's reflections on her mentoring role have been grouped into eight themes, as follows:

- Relationships
- Comfort zones
- Advising
- Experiential learning
- Feedback
- Dialogue and discussion
- Role modelling
- Changes in the mentoring role

Relationships

Throughout the year, forming positive relationships with the students and being part of the team had been a priority for Katie (M2.034):

> I want to think that they thought I was reliable and they thought we could work things out together if they had a problem.

When the playgroup was in action with children in attendance, Katie successfully worked with the students as though she, too, was a member of the

team. One of the parents did not even realise that Katie was the mentor, believing that she was one of the students; Katie pointed out (M2.033)

> One of the parents said: "Oh you're the teacher, eh?" So that was good: because I didn't want to be seen as someone who was separate because I think I should be seen as someone who is part of the team not separate from the team (Katie, M2.033).

Even though Katie successfully became a member of the team during the playgroup session, she was aware that the students continued to see her differently, reporting (M2.050):

> I still think that even though I tried to make myself part of the team they always saw me as the teacher. They saw me as not approving which I don't like: I don't think that's the mentor's role.

She commented (M2.051) on the difficulties she, as mentor, experienced initially when forming relationships with the group:

> It depends on how you put your ideas across to them. It's hard to find a way, when you make suggestions to not sound like the teacher or the mother, suggesting to them without them thinking that she's just telling me what to do all the time.

The journals provided Katie with insights to the feelings of the students and she was particularly concerned when she discovered that Katrina believed that Katie had shared something from her journal with the group. Katie reassured Katrina that her journals were confidential and that her comment had been a general one, not related to the journal entry.

Ultimately, Katie had formed positive relationships and at the end of the year students acknowledged her caring manner; she reported (M2.037, M2.038):

> They wrote a lovely card at the end which was surprising, and they said deep things. They said "Thank you for your support, thank you for your encouragement, thank you for being kind".

The students appreciated Katie's encouragement and kindness and although they continued to see her as the teacher, she had been able to work alongside them as a member of the team.

Comfort zones

Although Katie was aware of the students' feelings, on occasions she deliberately pushed them outside their comfort zones. Jacinta felt most comfortable in the art and craft area but Katie encouraged her to work in different areas; Jane was not comfortable talking with the parents but Katie asked her to approach them. Katrina was increasingly pressured to take responsibility within the team; Katie reported (M2.003):

> Katrina found that a bit uncomfortable when I put that responsibility on her but I think that was what was required and I think she did a good job.

By reading the journals Katie also knew that the students sometimes felt uncomfortable when they were asked questions in the reflection session; she recognised their discomfort (M2.058):

> Some of them said in their journals that they didn't like talking in front of the group. They said: "I couldn't think of anything and I felt a bit on the spot". I don't mind about that.

Katie continued asking questions and felt that this strategy was successful, reporting (M2.060):

> I think by the end, though, they were quite comfortable doing that. At the end, they were quite comfortable answering questions and talking amongst each other.

Katie worked to enhance students' confidence and to develop their leadership skills by encouraging them to engage in new experiences where they needed to move outside their comfort zones. She followed up with providing positive feedback when there were changes in practice.

Advising

Katie offered advice in response to the students' comments and questions. She gave practical advice about resources and ways to improve the organisation and implementation of group time; Katie recalled the assistance she offered to one student (M2.046):

> I provided her rhymes and I gave her books and resources; then we talked about finger plays and songs and we practiced a few of those. I offered her resources and I tried to get her to feel comfortable.

Some students found just talking with parents challenging so Katie suggested ways to do this professionally. Early in the year when Katrina was observed spending too much time with parents, Katie intervened during the session to ask her to be with the children; she said (M2.029):

> Katrina was in a mood that she wanted to go around and talk to the parents so I encouraged her to be outside and have you talked to so and so today?

Guiding children's behaviour had been a particular concern for the students; (Katie, M2.048):

> Probably the most frequent question was, "I don't know what to do if the children are being naughty," so that was interesting.

Early in the year Katie made suggestions to the students during the playgroup to encourage their participation but as the year progressed, there was less need for immediate advice. Later in the year, advice was given in response to questions from students and was related to specific teaching practices and guiding children's behaviour.

Experiential learning

Although early in the year Katie had directed the students during the playgroup session, she was ultimately, quite happy to allow the students to use their initiative and to learn through their experiences; she recalled (Katie, M2.015).:

> In the middle and then at the end I was quite happy to let them get on with it, really

Katie intentionally allowed students to experiment themselves and learn through their experiences, which had been both positive and negative. parents in view of students

Feedback

Feedback was given at the end of the session rather than during the playgroup session as Katie tried to open the reflection session with something positive; she reported (M2.018):

> I tried to praise them for changing their practice.

Katie used positive feedback to assist in forming positive relationships with the students; this was undertaken in order and to promote their confidence and to increase their enthusiasm for their teaching role in early childhood education.

Dialogue and discussion

Katie acknowledged that she asked the students many questions to guide the discussion in the evaluation/planning session. To begin, the questions were related to practical resources and how children used the equipment; Katie reflected (M2.050):

> At the beginning of the session I would probably ask more direct questions like do you think that that area has enough resources in it or do we have enough paint.

Rather than making statements, Katie encouraged reflection by asking open-ended questions and posing problems for the team to work through; she provided examples (M2.055):

> I asked a lot of open-ended questions. I probably asked questions more than make statements about things, …. "but how could we improve on…?": that sort of thing.

In her interactions, Katie took a Socratic approach: she asked open-ended questions to encourage thought about how to improve practice. As time progressed, students became more comfortable contributing to group discussions and helping solve problems.

Role modelling

Katie consciously role-modelled aspects of teaching practice for the students. From the beginning of the year she interacted with parents so that students

could observe her approach, and attend to her conversations; she recalled (M2.023):

> I would role model that from the beginning of the year probably, about talking with the parents and feeling comfortable with the parents.

Katie implemented little music and story groups for children; however, on reflection, she felt that new role modelling in this area would have supported their development further, reflecting of this deficiency (M2.072):

> Maybe next time I might, because they were so nervous about the small group thing, they didn't want to do it, maybe I should do it more often…. so maybe a bit more role modelling and using techniques with groups.

Role modelling had been successful in improving the students' interaction with parents; in future, Katie would pay closer attention to musical and story-telling interactions with the children.

Changes in the mentoring role

On reflection, Katie could see that she had experienced a considerable change of focus in her mentoring role during the year; she reflected (M2.002):

> My role changed from the very beginning when we had to organise the sessions. There was a lot of planning and I guess what I did early on was to figure out what people's strengths were, so I tried to get to know them and to find out what they were good at.

Katie was able to identify how her mentoring strategies had changed during this time; she recalled (M2.009):

> The first bit was about planning and organising and finding strengths and as we went through the year I was interested in seeing how they interacted with parents and with the children.

Early in the year Katie had directed the students during the playgroup session, making sure that they were involved with the children and families; she recalled her strategy (M2.031):

> I would say Jane, "Can you go and give that form to that parent…" or whatever, to get them feeling comfortable about approaching the parents.

As the year progressed, Katie encouraged the group to work as a team; she became increasingly interested in the students' interactions with the attendees; Katie was interested in (M2.014):

> …seeing how they interacted with parents, with each other and with the children.

By the end of the year the students were allowed free rein in their teaching practice with feedback, advice and problem solving occurring in the reflection session following the playgroup session; she reported (Katie, M2.021):

> At the end, I was quite happy to let them get on with it.

The changing role of the mentor reflected her understanding of the students' feelings, their ability to work as a team, and their professional growth needs.

Concluding comments

Katie's mentoring role changed during the year. Initially she formed positive relationships with the students and directed their movements during the playgroup session. She acted as a role model for teaching practice and provided valued opportunities for experiential learning. As the year progressed the students were encouraged to venture out of their comfort zones and these experiences were used as a basis for Katie's feedback and advice. The group was encouraged to take part in active dialogue with fellow students to reflect, and to problem solve together. There was active growth of the concept of 'teaming'.

Student learning and development

When Katie reflected on the year, she identified areas in which the students had changed personally as well as professionally. Within this theme, the sub-themes to emerge consisted of the following;

- Collaborative learning;
- Confidence;
- Teaching practice.

Collaborative learning

The diversity within the team enabled the students to learn from and with each other. Katie explained that the students worked well in teams; she reflected (M2.081):

> …it's good for them. Having a mixture is good.

Sharing thoughts during the reflection session following the playgroup was seen as a significant part of praxis; she said (Katie, M2.051):

> The reflection session is valuable, to sit down and talk about it, when they think about it then it's really valuable and when they verbalise ideas then it's really valuable.

Teamwork and peer mentoring were new students had all clearly developed building aspects of collaborative learning, these are discussed below.

Teamwork

Working cooperatively and learning as part of a team was a valuable aspect of the Kinda Kinder program. Although it took a little time, the group became cohesive and the students shared reflections and ideas for planning; Katie said M2.067):

> I think they learnt the value of teamwork, and the value of being a group and having the same goal.

Being conscious of the value of collaborative learning encouraged teamwork; Katie observed (M2.013):

> We probably addressed everything as a team, what could we do, what other ways could you …., or what could we do instead?

To assist the team to share information and work together, Katie set-up a shared observation book in which students recorded their observations; she reflected (M2.027):

> They would talk about that at the end and it seemed to be useful.

Throughout the playgroup session the students worked together, implementing the program and making decisions together.

Peer mentoring

The more experienced second-year students acted as role models for the less experienced students; Katie reflected (M2.078):

> So, I think the second-year students…I tried to use them as role models for the first years.

Katie (M2.080) recognised that this was a valuable approach:

> They did add something else for the first years…[someone] to look to for support, encouragement and leadership.

After gaining confidence with parents in semester two, Katrina even became a role model for Cindy, another second-year student; Katie commented (M2.077):

> [Katrina] was a good role model for the other students, especially for Cindy.

From the initial stages of the program, the importance of working as a team was emphasised by the mentor. Collaborative learning occurred as the students worked cooperatively; they made decisions about the program together. Students became peer mentors for each other; not only did the second-year students support and assist the first-years but there were opportunities for collaborative learning within year-level groups.

Confidence

Confidence was the second sub-theme to emerge within the main theme of student learning and development. Katie observed the students had all developed growing confidence across the year; she had read in their journals that they were pleased with themselves. The students' teaching practice had changed significantly; nevertheless, they still did not see themselves as teachers during the Kinda Kinder program; Katie commented (M2.062).

> Their practice changed but I think they couldn't see the link, and when I talked to
> them they saw themselves as teachers in the primary placement. However, they didn't
> see themselves as teachers in the Kinda Kinder placement, so I think they can't link,
> they can't see that their identity is different in the different settings, and I don't know
> if maybe that's because they're not up to that maybe they think the setting is different.

Katie (M2.064) reflected on this situation:

> So perhaps, I think it's the setting. They [can] see themselves as the teacher in
> primary school because they have a different name; they are called Miss…and it is a
> structured more formal environment and I think that school goes with teaching. So, I
> don't think they see the link between early childhood and their identity as
> teachers…not yet.

The students all developed in confidence over the year. While working in
the Kinda Kinder program, some students were much slower to grasp their role
as 'teachers', seeing themselves as caregivers rather than teachers, whereas in
the school setting they were quickly able to identify with the role of the teacher.
This differential is worthy of further attention.

Teaching practice

During the year, the students developed their teaching practice in many ways;
Katie reflected on the areas of change (M2.066):

> When you look at things like confidence, [you see them] being able to articulate the
> benefit of the program. Being able to talk about the value of play, being able to play
> with children and, to feel confident to get down to their level. Being able to sing some
> songs, to look at a group of children and see how you can maintain some attention;
> what you can set-up that is appropriate for their ages; how you speak with them and
> communicate with the parents.

Katie had expected more from the second-year students and noted how
Katrina, in particular, had progressed in her teaching practice; Katie was able
to be both general and specific (M2.079):

> I also push them a little bit. See I expect more in their planning, more detail, more
> analytical thought in their reflection. Katrina's plan was excellent. She put lots of
> detail, lots of work into her observations so her preparation and her observations were
> excellent.

To support changes in teaching practice, Katie encouraged students to use their journals to reflect on their practice; she read these journals to help understand the students' perspectives commenting (M2.053):

> Writing a journal is useful in getting them to think about their practice.

Every week the students had worked on their skills in making observations; Katie noted (M2.107:

> My group were really good as far as individuals and observations; they seemed to improve on that. They were much more aware of what everyone was doing. That was something that was good.

Students changed their practice during the year of the Kinda Kinder program: interactions with children and parents had improved; they could now articulate the value of a play-based program; they had developed their skills in planning and implementing learning experiences for young children.

Concluding comments

Katie, as mentor, highlighted the importance of group reflection on practice and dialogue as a means of changing practice. Being part of this Kinda Kinder team enabled students to develop their skills as early childhood teachers. The diverse backgrounds of students promoted an understanding of pedagogies and praxis elements valued in early childhood education. Towards the end of the program, peer mentoring opportunities had boosted team members' confidence to work with children and families.

Student Interview 1

Half-way through the year I met with the student group, without the mentor, to gather their impressions of the Kinda Kinder program. As with the reflection sessions and mentor interview, I used IDR to move forward in the inductive analysis of my data. The information gained was grouped into two emergent themes, as follows:

- Mentoring;
- Student learning and development.

Mentoring

The group spoke to me about their relationship with the mentor and her role in the program. Within this emergent theme of mentoring, I organised the data into three sub-themes:

1. Relationships;
2. Comfort zones;
3. Advising.

Relationships

Katie, the mentor formed positive relationships with the students and they spoke about her in a caring manner; Jane commented (S1.002):

> I think she's good, I think she's great. She gets into what you're thinking and involved.

Jane particularly liked the way that Katie approached her mentoring role, as part of the team; she said (S1.016):

> She goes about it in a good way – that's not a bossy sort of thing.

Relationships were a priority for Katie and early in the year she strove to get to know the students well.

Generally, the group appreciated the non-authoritarian approach to her role and her immediate response to their queries. Katie's kindness successfully

encouraged the students to be involved as members of the team and to improve their teaching practice.

Comfort zones

Katie took interest in how the students were feeling and checked with them throughout the session; Renata valued her caring approach (Renata, S1.020):

> She always asks how everyone is, even if you come in late or if she has already said hello to you she'll say how are you going, how are you going with the experiences, how are you feeling today. Just in the one-hour session she might ask you that 2 or 3 times, how are you going.

The students acknowledged that Katie did push them out of their comfort zones at times, especially when she asked questions; some mild discomfort was felt by Katrina (S1.008):

> Sometimes it's a bit annoying.

During the playgroup session with children, Katie pushed them to be involved with parents and children, not allowing them to sit back from the action; Cindy appreciated her positive approach; she noted (S1.014):

> If she sees you are kind of in the corner and you want to have that two minutes, she'll say, "Get in there!".

Cindy also found Katie to be proactive and specific in her encouraging involvement with the family groups; Cindy reported (S1.015):

> She'll point out a child or a parent that's not doing an experience and she'll be, "How about you, can you help them do something else?" (Cindy, S1.015).

On the other hand, Katrina felt that Katie expected more from her than the others in the group, making her feel uncomfortable and even nervous; she commented (S1.071):

> I was the only second year, and when I found that they were in first-year, I thought that she was going to expect a lot from me. She talked to me, and she said you don't have to do it. Then I got nervous thinking because I had to more of it to show them and give an example. She said, do what you would normally do, don't overdo it or anything and don't get put back by it.

Katrina admitted to feeling anxious she discovered that she was the person with the most experience in the group; however, Katie reassured her by asking everyone to contribute; this was greatly appreciated by Katrina (S.1.081):

> But then she placed a really big emphasis on everyone having to have an input, which was good. I mean for me even like just before she was asking for people to make the play dough (Katrina, S1.081).

Katie pushed the students out of their comfort zones to the point where they sometimes felt anxious, nervous, even panic-stricken; however, she did support and guide them through these times by encouraging them and by advising on improving their practice.

Advising

Katie advised students on their teaching practice after observing them in action with the children and families and when they asked questions. The students valued the advice and they acknowledged that it encouraged them to reflect on their practice.

Katrina was grateful when Katie suggested different strategies for the implementation of experiences; Katrina acknowledged that this approach encouraged reflection (S1.019):

> In group time if we plan something, say if we say we want to do things, like a number of songs, she'll go, "What do you think about having the same number and just get to the point and not have the children and parents linger around": she makes you think.

Cindy also appreciated advice from Katie and asked for help regarding planning elements of the program for children. Although the group made use of email correspondence, they agreed that they preferred to receive feedback and advice through personal communication. Katrina suggested that extra time with Katie on a one-to-one basis would be beneficial.

Katie ensured that the students were involved and expected that they worked to improve their practice. She provided support to achieve success; Jeanne (S1.011):

> She pushes you in the right direction with prompts.

A key strategy used by Katie as a mentor was to provide advice about teaching practice. The students recognised that this was invaluable as it encouraged them to reflect on their practice.

Concluding comments

Katie created a positive rapport with the students by getting to know them and working as a member of the team. Even though Katie encouraged the students to venture outside their comfort zones, creating some feelings of uncertainty, they valued her support and recognised that she had assisted them in improving their practice.

Student learning and development

Within the emergent theme of student learning and development, there were two main themes identified, one relating to teaching practice and one relating to collaborative learning.

Teaching practice

During our first student discussion session, the students spoke of how they had improved their teaching practice over the first half of the year. They felt that they had improved in their interactions with parents and children and they now knew more about planning the program and extending the children's learning experiences. Communicating with parents was often a challenge for the students; Cindy explained (S1.089):

> I've got the children down pat but it's just the parents who scare me because I haven't had the experience. I know, from one of my [earlier] placements- one of the things that was brought up – you've got to be able to learn to interact with the parents, and it's a different thing.

A common perception was that the students had benefited from working with families in this setting. Through her praxis, Jacinta had been able to boost her communication skills with parents: she pointed out (S1.051):

I have learnt how to communicate with the parents and over the last few weeks, actually, I have been speaking with them more than I used to. I guess I'm shy, so I didn't communicate with [the parents]. It's more the children that I used to speak to; but now, even today, I was speaking with Josie's mum.

Cindy pointed out that it was an advantage to observe children with their parents; she points out that it was a different setting, (S1.058):

It was very much different from a normal placement. In a normal placement, I am seeing carers interacting with the children, whereas here I am seeing parents interact with their child themselves. The children are more comfortable because they are with their parents, and not with a caregiver where they might have only started one week, so that is a positive.

Across the first half of the year the students became much more at ease with children and by mid-year, they were more knowledgeable about early childhood education; this was a key focal point for Cindy (S1.032):

For me, I think the benefits are programming, learning how to program and plan. In my final placement last year, I was supposed to run a room but [the managers] wouldn't allow me to do so. [Kinda Kinder has] allowed me to understand a bit better about programming and planning, and how we go about it, about what we do and about how it has got to relate to frameworks. It has to relate to observations of the children, and you've got write it all down. That's what I've learned.

The students reflected on the way they prolonged children's interest in activities: Cindy commented on extending activities (S1.065):

I think it is learning to extend stuff as well, say you put out a painting experience, it is learning to extend it and make it better every week… Teaching you how to extend and how to use it better.

Katrina recognised the value in seeing parents' reactions to the program and she acknowledged that their insights could assist her in improving her teaching practice; she commented (S1.066):

Seeing what the parents think of the experiences as well rather than just having you and your colleagues, you might think is an awesome idea because you came up with it but if the parents say, "What is this?", or they aren't as impressed as you thought they were going to be, then you think, "Why aren't they impressed or [why] don't they see the benefits?". So, it's having their insights as well.

The Kinda Kinder program provided unique opportunities for working with both children and parents. As a result, the students became comfortable working with children; what is more, they valued the parents' participation and contribution. They were proud of the changes they had made in their teaching practice.

Collaborative learning

Although there was a time of considerable adjustment at the beginning of the year, by midyear the group were working together as a team, creating an environment for successful collaborative learning. The diverse background of students in the team was an advantage and individual strengths were valued; Cindy reflected (S1.125):

> I think it is good because you get experiences from everybody.

Cindy also commented favourably on the way that the group worked cooperatively; she said (S1.003, S1.073):

> It's like a team environment, you know that's the way I see it. We put in all together to get everything done.

The group worked as a team, supporting each other to provide an educational program for young children. The more experienced students considered that their role in the program included providing support for the team members. Katrina supported the other students in their teaching practice by helping them to get started with music and story group activities; she said (S1.094):

> With the group times, I feel confident in getting the [children's] attention and then I will let [the students] do the group time and I'll walk away from it.

Cindy also saw that a valuable part of her role in the program lay in supporting others and this boosted her confidence; she commented (S1.132, S1.134):

> I think my role is helping others in the group. I can help with suggestions about things.

Generally, the group supported each other; Cindy enjoyed being part of the process, saying (S1.130):

If I can try and help somebody in some small way, then that's fantastic. They can go away and use it and vice versa.

Sebastian made the point that the students should have equal authority within the group; he valued the opportunity to offer suggestions (S1.135):

You can explain that this is a suggestion, you don't have to take it on board. I'm not telling you to change but I'm giving you the option – not just say you need to do this, or you are not allowed to do that.

It was important to the group that there was no hierarchy and that other students did not tell them what to do in their practice.

Students with strengths in particular areas provided peer mentoring for others; Katrina recognised that she often provided support (S1.080):

I thought: I could lead by example, and that if I did something she'd use it as an example.

Katrina regularly acted as a role model when she took responsibility for planning for the playgroup session (S1.100):

I just did it initially because in the first few sessions no one else had done planning and Katie wanted an example of it so I just used the one that I had always used and put it in a table and made adjustments.

Jane viewed Katrina as a role model confirmed this perception; she respected her in being able to do this (S1.087):

I kind of envy the way that she can talk to the parents, and I'm still shy to talk to the parents. I don't know how to do it yet, whereas I see Katrina go up and go da-da-da…

Communicating with the parents was difficult for Cindy; she recognised that Katrina did this well and valued her experience (S1.091):

So that's something I've got to learn and Katrina does that so well. You've done it for years but I haven't had that experience.

Collaborative learning blossomed during the first half of the year. The students used their particular strengths to become non-hierarchical peer mentors for other members of the team.

Reflection on student interview 1

The students expressed their overall appreciation of the work of their mentor, Katie. They were grateful for her concern about their feelings but realised that she deliberately tried to extend them, pushing them outside their comfort zones. They were aware of her work as a member of their team, and believed that, as one student commented (S1.012): 'She's very good at what she is doing'

Over the first half year of the program the students had become a team and they provided a supportive environment in which collaborative learning flourished. The diversity of the students' backgrounds enhanced their learning experience as they became non-hierarchical peer mentors for each other. The students had extended their knowledge about early childhood education and had changed their practice.

Student Interview 2

Following the final session of the Kinda Kinder program, I met with the student group for the second time, without the mentor. The entire discussion focused on their learning and development; I identified this as the single emergent theme. The sub-themes associated with student learning and development are addressed in the sub-sections, below.

Student learning and development

The sub-themes identified in the data were as follows:

- Collaborative learning;
- Teacher identity;
- Teaching practice;
- Theory-practice links.

Collaborative learning

The students considered themselves to be part of the team which had operated cooperatively throughout the year. Jeanne recognised that the team was non-hierarchical and that the members had worked cooperatively and efficiently to implement the playgroup program; she commented (S2.082):

> I think that we didn't need to tell each other what to do; it just got done.

Cindy was pleased that relationships within the group had built during the year and interactions were courteous; she was very positive about relationships (S2.084):

> There is no bitchiness which is good.

As the year progressed the students became more sensitive to the feelings of the other group members and they supported each other to provide the playgroup program. Consolidation of the group created an environment in which collaborative learning occurred. The students took advantage of each other's strengths and valued individual contributions. Katrina pointed out that the team members brought different strengths to the program (S2.081)

> Each of us has different strengths, like Jacinta with the craft and Jeanne can make play dough and I can't. Jane created a lot of things that she brought in.

Peer mentoring was recognised as part of the collaborative learning taking place. Cindy was proud that she role modelled for the less experienced students; she said (S2.076):

> I helped others with group time, taking a lead at group time, going out there and interacting with the children and joining in with the parents and the kids.

Katrina used her experience to become a peer mentor in the planning process; others improved their teaching practice through using the examples that she provided; Katrina clarified her situation (S2.079):

> In the beginning of the year I feel that I helped out with planning to give them an example and they have taken it on board and used it as a template and then working it out for themselves and this whole semester. That's how I learn, I was given an example when I started working.

The group developed into a cohesive team which set the scene for a collaborative learning environment. The students learnt from each other by observing and reflecting on teaching practice, listening to suggestions from other students and taking part in discussion when planning the program.

Teacher identity

Although the students regarded themselves as teachers when they were in the school placements, they did not see themselves as teachers in the Kinda Kinder environment. One of the reasons for this was that they were introduced as teachers when, initially, they had attended their school placement; Cindy explained:

> Because you have a letter of authority there. You're called Ms X… not, by your first name, you are treated like the teacher.

In the Kinda Kinder environment, the students introduced themselves informally to the children and parents and they were addressed by their first name; there, they saw themselves as carers. Katrina explained differences in school and Kinda Kinder pedagogy; the main difference was that the Kinda Kinder program, a so-called 'playgroup program', was play based; Katrina explained (S2.028, S2.027):

> This is learning through play. I think here it's more like child care. It's kind of like your outside at a childcare centre like playing in the playgroup.

Others in the group agreed; however, there were differences of opinion regarding the relevance of structure in the program. Jacinta thought that structure of the school program helped to feel like a teacher; she explained (S2.023):

> I don't think there's structure here compared to at school.

On the other hand, Jeanne believed there did not need to be structure; she said (S2.029):

> I think it's just that you're playing, but I don't think it needed to be structured.

Jeanne saw herself as a teacher at Kinda Kinder when she was working with some of the children whose parents allowed them be independent. It was, however, more challenging when the parents did not move away from the children. Katrina went as far as to say that she thought that the parents should not attend the playgroup with the children. She felt that it was difficult to act like a teacher when the parents were watching.

Teaching practice

The students agreed that their teaching practice had changed during the year. In the latter stages of the year the students were able to identify the value of children's play and suggested appropriate learning experiences for children, based on their observations and children's interests. They easily added ideas for extending children's interest in experiences.

Students were able to put into practice some of the strategies that had been discussed during their classes. Cindy, for example, enjoyed being able to use open-ended questions with children; she said (S2.067):

> It's good when you have a chance to sit down and talk and it was good to be able to use open-ended questions.

Taking children for a group time had been difficult at the beginning of the year but through practice and discussion the students had improved their practice. Jeanne pointed out that implementing a story group or music group time in front of parents was challenging. The students had been very nervous about leading the group time but by the end of the year they were much more confident.

During the year, the students formed positive relationships with the children; although interaction with families, initially, had been more difficult they did improve their practice in this area. Jeanne valued the opportunity to get to know families and recognised her improved practice; she said (S2.041):

> I became quite close to Kale's mum, so if they come a bit more often you can form a relationship with them.

Although this was a challenging aspect of teaching practice, the students were able develop their communication strategies with children and families.

Students acknowledged the progress that they had made in their teaching practice during the year. They had clarified their ideas regarding the value of children's learning experiences and improved the implementation of these experiences. Teaching strategies and communication with children and adults had developed during the year.

Theory-practice links

The students acknowledged that they had learnt about children through their first-hand experiences in the playgroup program. They were able to link some of their learning through practice with the theory studied at university in the areas of child development and pedagogy. Through spending an extended time (March to November) in the same centre, the students observed children's development and reflected on their observations. During the evaluation/ planning meetings, and in university classes, they discussed planning experiences based on their observations of children. Extended time allowed to observe child development first hand; for Jeanne, the year-long experience had been most valuable (S2.045)

> Development things – I think I've learnt a lot more because you've got a whole year with children.

Practical experience with children supported learning in university classes and assignments. Katrina learnt that children develop at different rates but valued the opportunity to see real-life examples; she said (S2.044):

> We already know that they all develop at different rates; here we've got twins with one walking and one crawling.

Students used their observations to provide examples for their learning. Jeanne had first observed children; then, when she studied social development, she was able to relate her experience to attachment theory; she commented (S2.048):

> I think that when we studied the social development and the attachment [theory] and we were learning about it in class, I automatically thought of kids here who always need to be in with their mum or ones who do not care, who just walk in, then run off.

Temperament was another issue that students could relate to their study of child development. Jeanne (S2.050) and Katrina (S2.052) commented on two differences in individual temperaments that they had observed:

> Some children won't even play. I always notice Julie's temperament, how she is so demanding Then you've got Zara, she's calm and quiet.

Differences were identified in language development and students considered possible reasons for this difference. Observing children with their parents enhanced student understanding of the influence of nature and nurture and discussion during reflection sessions promoted this understanding; Cindy (S2.074) and Katrina (S2.068 and S2.071) shared different examples:

> He's way above the others in his language development (Cindy).

> You can tell the children whose parents interact with them at home (Katrina). The ones that spend good quality time with their parents at home have a wider language development (Katrina).

Firsthand experience with children over an extended period allowed students to observe changes in development and relate these observations to university classes. During the discussion, the students recalled some of their classes at university and they formed links diverse fields such as philosophy and pedagogy:

> What's the teaching philosophy where children learn through freedom and creativity? We did it in philosophy do you remember (Jeanne, S2.059)? Like their environment things like that, that helps them to develop (Jeanne, S2.064).

School placement provided a further contrast in early childhood pedagogy. For Jeanne, this contrast clarified perspectives:

> I think from going to the school, I hate the way they teach because they do colouring in every day and sheets that's all I've ever seen my teacher do, is hand out sheets (Jeanne, S2.002).

> When I saw her do that I thought that's exactly what I don't want to be as a teacher. She's got troubled kids in her class, and she even said to me 'I just give them worksheets because I can't handle them' Jeanne, (S2.004).

During the year of the program, observation, reflection and discussion promoted an understanding of child development. Links between the theoretical and the practical ('praxis') could be identified; links were less evident in the area of pedagogy as students found these links difficult to articulate.

Reflection on student interview 2

As part of the Kinda Kinder program – where shared practice, reflection and discussion were regular occurrences – the students were able to extend their knowledge about early childhood education and improve their teaching practice.

CHAPTER 5

Data Analysis: Part 2

In Chapter 5, I present the detailed findings of the three evaluation/planning meetings, and the student journals; a sample of a relevant spreadsheet is attached as Appendix 5.

First evaluation/planning session

Today there was great excitement as the first playgroup session swung into full action with the room crowded with noisy children and parents. There had been a busy start to the day with the students arriving early to set-up a section of the library with exciting learning experiences. As the children and families rushed to join the program, the library became a hive of activity with all the team interacting with the children to involve them in the events. After an exciting morning, when the last of the families had left the Kinda Kinder space, the students continued to rush around, cleaning up and packing away the resources in the crowded storage area in the library. As we gathered in the meeting room to discuss the day we all breathed a sigh of relief that we had survived the first session with children. The mentor took the lead, asking the students to reflect on the day and to plan for the following week's playgroup.

The data in this section originated from the discussion that took place during this meeting. Following the IDR, the data was analysed to identify the constructs, concepts and themes, and central emergent themes.

At this, my first visit, it was immediately apparent that Katie had used a variety of strategies throughout the day to promote the students' learning and

development. She began by creating a comfortable team environment in which all members could work together and for most of the day she worked as part of the team. As the group worked quickly to set-up the environment, Katie took on a 'teacher's role', watching and then changing some of the learning experiences. Showing awareness of their feelings, she explained why she had intervened.

In the data collected from the first evaluation/planning meeting, there were two emergent themes: mentoring and collaborative learning (see Appendix 5).

Mentoring

Within the emergent theme of mentoring the issues identified were as follows:

- Comfort zones;
- Reflection;
- Advising;
- Dialogue and discussion; and
- Feedback.

Comfort zones

At the outset of the first evaluation/planning session, Katie explained the format. She informed the group that they should talk about the interests of the children but, to begin with, they would focus on their general feelings about the session. Katie asked the group to share their opinions about the day; she asked (R 1.001):

> How do you think it went today? Renata: What are your feelings on how it went?

As the students were reluctant to share their thoughts, Katie had nominated individuals to respond. Appearing a little self-conscious, Renata replied (R 1.002):

> I think it went well. I didn't expect there to be that many children here straight away.
> It was a little overwhelming but once you got into it.

Body language indicated general agreement within the group that the first session had been quite a success.

During the first playgroup session, Katie was primarily concerned with the feelings and comfort zones of the students. She encouraged and reassured them to help them feel part of the team.

Reflection

Reflection on practice was a central aspect of praxis for Katie and she guided the students to participate by just asking them to think about their observations. She focused attention on views of the environment, encouraging individual students to contribute to the conversation and reflect on the learning experiences that had been set-up for children. The group were then asked to consider their observations of children; she enquired (R 1.023):

> Did you think, did you have a look around and see what was going on during the group? Did you know who was listening, who was talking? Who wasn't attending? Who could see, who couldn't see?

Katie focused on the planning process to the students by using observations as a starting point; she enquired (R 1.080):

> What did we see before we start thinking just about altering the experiences? What did you observe from the children today?

She involved the students further by directing their attention to specific events of the day and asking them to reflect on children's behaviour (R 1.223):

> I was watching Catherine throwing the books today. How do you feel about that?

Katie encouraged the students to participate in the evaluation/planning session by focusing on reflection. She gradually drew them in by firstly asking general questions about how they felt about the day and then moving to ask more specific questions about the set-up of environment, the learning experiences, and then how the children used the experiences and specific events of the day.

Advising

Katie's voice was dominant in the conversation as she provided extensive advice to the group in response to their comments about program planning, learning experiences and the students' role.

Initially, Katie reinforced the overall purpose of the play-based program that underpinned the Kinda Kinder program (R 1.051):

> We need to reinforce that we're here to implement a play-based program in which parents and children play together.

Katie then summarised the process of planning as a result of observations made by the students (R 1.131):

> Observations are what we're talking about and we talk about how we can extend and plan from that.

Katie reinforced the program's overall purpose and the rationale for planning by using the observations provided by the students to enable them to plan for the next playgroup session.

During this reflection session, Katie gave the students advice regarding the choice of learning experiences for the children. She discussed the suggestions that the students made and offered her suggestions for possible experiences. She also provided general suggestions about the presentation of activities and offered specific suggestions for music at group time and how to involve parents (R 1.034):

> What we're looking to do is to encourage parents playing with their children. So, I would be concentrating on some more nursery rhymes. It's always good to start with something that they're familiar with. It settles people down. They feel comfortable.

Katie gave further advice about the students' role in respect of engaging with the parents – 'breaking the ice' (R 1.049):

> There did seem to be a lot of people and you were only watching. It's good to be moving around, talking to the parents about how their week is. I always find that's reassuring for parents: 'How's your week been? What's been happening?' Because parents feel a bit uncomfortable too, because they don't know what to do. They're unsure about what to expect so it is a way of breaking the ice.

During the first evaluation/planning session Katie led the discussion and offered advice to the students, focusing predominantly on practical aspects of the program. She advised on planning and suggested learning experiences for the children. She also reminded of including parents in the program. Katie often emphasised the importance of the students' observations and she repeatedly role modelled the planning process by using these observations as a basis for planning.

Dialogue and discussion

Katie created a relaxed environment for dialogue and discussion as the group partook of lunch and coffee in the meeting room; as the reflection session progressed, the students appeared to be a little more comfortable. Katie made it quite clear to the students that they needed to be involved in the planning process (R 1.038):

> Look, you people need to make the decision. I'm just here to suggest things. What do
> the rest of you think?

Throughout the discussion Katie urged the students to contribute to the planning, asking individual students to comment, but she did this in a non-threatening manner and she was always a part of the planning process herself (R 1.169):

> There'll be books... in the library…. There are some firefighting costumes in there.
> We could put some chairs in a row. We could find some long cardboard tubes to
> pretend as hoses or something like that.

When students shared their observations, Katie extended discussion based on these observations. When a student had observed children using the cars, Katie encouraged further discussion by asking (R 1.206):

> How did they *use* the cars?

Katie posed issues of detail relating to the program; although they were minor issues, they were relevant for consideration by all members of the group (R 1.166):

> Do you want to use the dress-up firefighting stuff?

Other issues related to the learning environment and room set-up were also discussed.

Some students were more comfortable than others when contributing to the discussion; however, more were content to listen and learn from the conversation. Planning decisions were often difficult for some students as they had limited experience on which to base their decisions. Katie extended the dialogue by asking questions in a non-threatening manner and adding her suggestions. Katie did not pressure students but allowed time for them to consider and discuss options. My perception was that Katie was seeing value in both active and passive dialogue at this early stage.

Feedback

After the playgroup with children, and before the evaluation/planning meeting, Katie and I chatted about the day and she told me how pleased she had been with the way everyone had contributed to the program. During the reflection session, she (R 1.016). spoke candidly with the group:

> I thought everyone worked well as a team today, I can't believe that you people here hardly know each other. Some of you have more experience than others but you just got on with it together. Excellent cleaning up, I think you're the best cleaners I've ever seen. You were very efficient as a team, you worked well and the planning was organised. Everyone knew what they were going to do, everyone turned up, it makes a big difference. So, well-1.0done everyone!

In response, there was a great deal of laughter with all the group members appearing pleased with themselves.

To reassure students who felt overwhelmed, Katie commented that with practice they would feel more comfortable and she offered practical ways to set-up the environment to help them feel less overwhelmed. She gave specific feedback to Sebastian about his work with one of the children (R 1.061):

> You did an excellent job with him, because his mother was a little bit concerned about where he was and what he was doing. So, it was good.

Katie gave honest and clear positive feedback to the students, showing concern for their feelings and reassuring them to help them feel at ease. She was careful to both reassure the group and to give advice. This pattern was established from the outset: first reassuring, then offering alternative possibilities.

Concluding comment

During the first evaluation/planning meeting, Katie demonstrated concern for the feelings and emotional concerns zones of the students. She provided reassurance, positive feedback and advice, endeavouring to create a comfortable environment in which they could contribute, both actively and passively, as part of the team. Katie dominated the conversation in this session, guiding the students to reflect on their practice and to contribute to the planning of the next playgroup.

Collaborative learning

As I moved around the library environment on the first day of the playgroup, I observed the students enjoying their work with children. Those with experience in the field appeared a little more comfortable in their interactions compared with those who were newcomers to the field. The students had opportunities to observe Katie, the mentor, and other students working with the children and parents. There were further opportunities to observe and listen to others during the evaluation/planning session when the team planned for the following playgroup session. The sub-themes that were detected within the emergent theme of collaborative learning were reflection, dialogue and peer mentoring.

Reflection

As Katie urged the group to reflect on the playgroup session, the students shared their thoughts about the day in various of ways. Some students merely relayed their observations of the children and the parents. Jacinta added

positive comments regarding the team's organisation; she commented (R 1.019):

> I thought we were really organised. Sometimes we were a little bit scattered, but other than that I think we all, like, separated and went in different little groups and it was good I reckon.

Some students explored more deeply to find reasons for the way the playgroup progressed; for instance, Katrina considered why the room felt crowded; Jeanne considered improvements that could be made.

Group reflection enabled students to discover different levels of reflection. Some students shared observations of children or described events, whereas others evaluated the team's performance or reflected on their practice with a view to making improvements.

Dialogue and discussion

This was my favourite part of the reflection session as I enjoyed observing the team becoming enthusiastic about the planning. Katie, of course, was always part of the discussion dialogue – that was her role; interestingly, the students became talkative, posing their questions for the group, offering suggestions to each other and volunteering to bring resources. It was fascinating to see every student being indeed part of the planning team as they addressed problems about keeping the program exciting and choosing appropriate learning experiences.

Discussion also included solving problems about the environment and improving the music group. As the discussion moved along, the students asked one another for their ideas for the proposed plan; one student enquired (R 1.079):

> Did we maybe want to change, instead of having the car thing have something else and the books related to it as well?

Katrina (R 1.182) suggested ideas for the craft experiences:

> We could even put the coloured paper when we're setting up, just cut up little bits of it and they could stick it on.

The lively discussion during the first reflection session facilitated collaborative learning. In the process, the team decided upon learning experiences for the following session and addressed problems with the program. Through discourse, they were able to clarify their ideas for improvements to their practice.

Peer mentoring

During the first playgroup session, the students with experience in the field were more relaxed when interacting with children and parents. The most experienced student, Katrina, took a prominent role, talking with parents and leading the group-time music activity; in so doing, she provided a valuable role model for other students in the team. During the reflection session, Katrina again provided a role model as she suggested learning experiences for the program. Katrina offered to take responsibility for recording the program plan and encouraged the others to contribute to the team tasks (R 1.130):

> I might type up the actual plan, I'd like it if everyone could take a turn evaluating.

Cindy also became a peer mentor, replicating the way Katie asked questions and responding to comments made by other students; She asked the group to share their observations of children and involved the group in planning for the following session (D1.04.6):

> So, should we keep that for next week?

The students who had worked with children prior to the Kinda Kinder program acted as role models and became peer mentors for the beginning students. They did so both during the implementation of the playgroup and during the following reflection session.

Concluding comments

As the students worked together during the first playgroup session, they learned from each other; from this early stage, the more experienced students became peer mentors for the newcomers. The evaluation/planning session

provided opportunities for all the students to develop their skills in observation and reflection. Group dialogue enabled students to hear from others and to clarify their ideas and beliefs about early childhood education.

As the students left the library site, heading off to school sites or university classes, I reflected on the day: I had observed the astute strategies of an experienced mentor in action; in a most caring manner, Katie had introduced the students to a supportive environment where they could experience a children's program; the students had had a most positive opportunity to become members of a team empowered to learn together. I looked forward to the next Kinda Kinder session.

Second evaluation/planning session

This evaluation/planning session took place half-way through the year and with everyone now familiar with the format and expectations of the program, there was a notably light-hearted atmosphere. There was often laugher as the discussion again focused on planning for the next playgroup session. There were two emerging themes identified in the data: mentoring and collaborative learning. [20]

Mentoring

The sub-themes to emerge on this occasion were more tightly focused than those in the first evaluation/planning session: they consisted of the following sub-themes

- Reflection;
- Dialogue and discussion;
- Advising;
- Feedback.

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[20] Because of space restrictions, no samples of the second and third evaluation/planning sessions are appended; nevertheless, quotes are identified by using the recorded code numbers.

Reflection

Katie guided the students to reflect on their practice by asking them to look back on their day and share their experiences and their observations of children. She probed deeper, asking them to reflect on their teaching practice and to consider the reasons for how the day progressed; Katie encouraged the students to think about how they could improve their practice (D 3.005):

How do you think we could make things easier for ourselves next time?

Katie prompted the students to reflect through asking them to recall what they had seen. She deepened their reflection by asking more focused questions about their observations of children and about their teaching practice.

Dialogue and discussion

The discussion was led by the mentor, assisted by the two second-year students, Cindy and Katrina; these two students were more experienced than first year and diploma students; thus, they were better prepared and able to contribute more frequently than the others. All the students responded to the mentor's questions and readily shared their ideas with the team. Katie saw participation in shared dialogue as a valuable pathway to learning and she encouraged the students to participate in the planning process by sharing their observations and choosing learning experiences for the children in a collaborative manner; Katie (D3.102) initiated the discussion:

So, what do you want to do next week based on those observations?

Katie asked individual students to contribute and specifically asked questions about group time as this was a topic of interest during the reflection session (D 3.136):

Let's think about the group and how we can expand on that. What are your thoughts?

Katie made suggestions about the resources but asked the students for their opinions. In linking university coursework with the practical work, Katie (D 3.062) asked the students about children's learning at group time:

What sorts of skills might they learn from group time?

When a student replied that children learnt social skills, Katie encouraged the students to think more deeply by asking (D3.067):

What sort of social skills?

Katie led the discussion and involved the team members by asking questions about the program. She explored links between the practical theoretical understandings from university classes.

Advising

Throughout this reflection session Katie continued to give advice to the students about their teaching practice. She suggested techniques to use when working with children, adding that they mainly need to practice implementing group time (D3.047):

There are different ways you can get children ready: say 'all eyes to me' or speak really quietly or get everyone to come and sit close to you or sit on the floor yourselves if you prefer.

Katie advised the group to be organised so as to appear professional. She suggested displaying the plan and following through with plans. She also reminded the students that all members of the team shared the responsibility for preparation and implementation of the program. Katie continued to provide advice about planning and students were encouraged to consider contingency plans (D 3.007):

So maybe we need consider in our planning for outside, and what we are going to do if it rains.

Suggestions were offered for extending experiences and to assist in providing resources (D 3.032):

Measuring cups, whisks, any kitchen things, anyone who lives at home pulls out the second drawer or opens the cupboard and pulls out something.

If students made inappropriate suggestions for activities, Katie advised about the value of learning experiences (D 3.110):

> The marble painting is not any value, it doesn't do anything creatively and marbles
> for little children are quite dangerous.

When the students were frustrated because the parents were talking amongst themselves during group time, Katie advised them to provide information to parents (D 3.060):

> It wouldn't hurt to have some literature to say about the importance of group time.

Katie's advice stemmed from the students' experiences and comments. She advised them about their professionalism and their responsibility to the team. She also gave practical advice about choosing and implementing children's learning experiences.

Feedback

During the second evaluation/planning meeting Katie continued to give positive feedback to the group about their work (D 3.041):

> You did an excellent job with the group today.

The students responded positively and appeared to be pleased with this feedback.

Concluding comments

Within a relaxed environment where the students laughed and chatted, Katie led the second reflection session and guided the students to plan for the next playgroup session. The mentoring strategies that she used included prompting students to reflect on their practice, promoting dialogue, providing advice for students and giving positive feedback.

Collaborative learning

Collaborative learning was evident within the second evaluation/planning session and related to reflection and dialogue.

Reflection

Reflections that were shared with the group began with observations taken during the playgroup session, and went on to include the students' thoughts about the learning experiences and teaching practice.

In response to the mentor's questions, the students shared observations of children and families and specific details of children's participation in experiences. Katrina (D3.048) reflected on participation at group time:

> Three or four families just left before group time or they start putting them in the prams.

When the group reflected on an art activity, Katrina (D 3.125) shared her thoughts:

> It wasn't very popular; I think that the children didn't think there was much to do with it. They scribbled in one spot and then walked away.

Jeanne (D3.043) commented on what she had seen and addressed specific issues with the program experiences:

> I think the Hokey Pokey was a little long like putting too many body parts in it so they were standing there.

Cindy's (D 3.004) commented on the team's disorganisation:

> Because we were trying to get everything done in such a short time and we didn't have the plan up and we were constantly having to refer to it.

Students also reflected on how they felt about the parents gossiping during the group times. Cindy and Jane were both annoyed with the parents and Cindy (D3.059) demonstrated that she was unsure of how to gain cooperation from the parents:

> You can't really say anything like you move over there. You can't separate them, can you?

The group found this amusing and there was considerable laughter in response to Cindy's comment.

By sharing their reflections on the day's events, the students gained a shared understanding for developing a plan for the following playgroup session. As the discussion evolved, the students learned about the children in the group and developed their ideas regarding teaching practice. By listening to the thoughts of others, the students developed their ideas about early childhood education and particularly about using reflection in planning the program.

Dialogue and discussion

The second evaluation/planning session focused on dialogue and discussion. The two second-year students, Cindy and Katrina, took a leading role in the discussions which focused on planning. Cindy reiterated the mentor's comments that the plan should be displayed; she also questioned Jeanne about her suggestion for gaining the children's attention at group time (D 3.055):

> Will that work? Will they pay attention to what we're trying to do which is sing songs?

Cindy suggested ways of improving the team's performance; she commented on valuable aspects of the program (D 3.137):

> I think that group time is really important and to have it every time.

Katrina involved the other group members by asking their advice about experiences and initiating discussion in relation to aspects of 'group time' (D 3.052):

> Do you think that would be a bit distracting, sitting there with all the toys?

She also suggested ideas for children's experiences and resources (D 3.089):

> I think that it went well but could we change it – with real cutlery.

Jacinta, Jeanne, Renata and Jane made brief contributions to the planning discussion, suggesting ways to improve practical aspects of the program; one such comment was (D 3.051):

> We could start group time at twenty pasts and do it for ten minutes and then start
> packing up after group time.

The dialogue in this reflection session involved planning with the students sharing their ideas about how to improve their teaching practice and how to extend learning experiences for children. With Katrina and Cindy the major contributors to this discussion, the less experienced students were guided by the these two; nevertheless, all members appeared to benefit from the dialogue.

Collaborative learning

Collaborative learning was evident within the second evaluation/planning session and related to reflection and dialogue; it was particularly evident during the group discussion. Working together, the students experienced, first-hand, the planning that was necessary for early childhood education, using observations and reflection as the starting point. Discussion about the value of children's learning experiences supported this planning.

Reflection on the second evaluation/planning meeting

During this evaluation/planning meeting the group appeared relaxed and comfortable with each other. All students were now familiar with the format of the evaluation and planning meetings and contributed in a light-hearted and friendly manner. By focusing on praxis elements, Katie continued to support the students by involving them in personal reflection and by sharing experiences in dialogue. Collaborative learning occurred as students worked enthusiastically together and becoming peer mentors for each other.

Third evaluation/planning meeting

With the sun shining throughout the morning we had spent most of the playgroup session outdoors. The children and parents enjoyed participating in the interesting learning experiences including art, construction and physical play. This was the penultimate playgroup session for the year. Our team had come so far since the first playgroup day when they had been nervous about

their teaching role and their interactions with children and parents. As I reflected on the year, I was impressed by the leap in confidence that the students have shown in their teaching role.

During the evaluation/planning meeting, the team planned for a celebration on the final day, sharing ideas about experiences that would be fun for the children. Unfortunately, the Diploma students were not present this week. By using inductive data reduction (IDR) I was able to identify three emergent themes, as follows:

- Feelings and comfort zones;
- Mentoring;
- Collaborative learning.

Feelings and comfort zones

At the commencement of the Kinda Kinder program Katie had been keenly aware of the students' feelings; during the first session, she had provided positive feedback; on this occasion, she did not specifically inquire about their feelings. It was obvious that they felt comfortable and confident in the playgroup setting and with the other members of the team. Laughter could often be heard as the group worked together. Cindy felt so comfortable by now that she joked with the group. When the team were discussing creating an area for children as a beach scene with buckets, spades and beach towels, Cindy had another suggestion (R3.029, R3.030):

> We could come in our bikinis and put zinc on our noses.

The group loved this and they all laughed loudly.

When I asked the students if they were worried about how to involve parents, Katrina shared a level of frustration in relation to unchanged parent behaviour (R3.107):

> Not so much "worry about" – a lot of the parents have started to become more involved in it; but it is just the initial gathering that bugs me: the parents keep doing what they are doing.

At the risk of appearing rude, Katrina had ignored two parents who weren't following instructions (R3.109):

> I felt a bit rude but Zana and her dad were sitting down…I came to read a book and said "We are going to have the group time outside" and there were two parents who weren't paying attention. So, I thought well if you aren't going to listen. I'm not going to bother with you.

I imagined that, in the future, Katrina would be able to apply successful strategies to gain full attention from all parents; she was, in fact, still learning.

The students confidently took part in both the implementation of playgroup and the discussion during the reflection session, working within their comfort zones and enjoying the experience. Without doubt, they now felt more comfortable working with parents.

Mentoring

The sub-themes that became evident within this emergent theme were as follows:

- Advising;
- Discussion;
- Feedback.

Advising

Throughout this evaluation/planning session, Katie led the discussion. The advice she gave originated in the comments made by the students and was, for the most part, related to planning the experiences for the following week. When Cindy suggested following up on children's interests by adding measuring utensils, Katie added her suggestions for extensions. When discussion focused on the music and story group time, Katie gave specific advice (R3.104).

> With group time, we need to make it go a little bit longer. You can do the same song three or four times and that can be the lesson, but add to it and extend it. They do like

> the physical movement because most of them are toddlers so repetitive rhymes that
> they know, some dancing.

The final decision, however, about the program was always left with the team unless special considerations for the children had been overlooked; for example, Katie stressed that all the children should receive a gift on the last day.

When Katrina spoke of her annoyance with parents because they did not listen at group time (see (R3.109) above), Katie emphasised her awareness of this situation (R3.108):

> I've tried to talk to individuals in the last few weeks to say we are going to have a
> group time so they are aware of it but maybe having it outside gets away from
> everyone sitting around on the chairs.

At this stage of the year the mentor gave far less advice than in earlier sessions: when she did advise, it was now in the form of suggestions; however, she continued to give advice when children might have been adversely affected. Her suggestions arose from the students' discussion and she allowed the students to make final decisions about the program.

Discussing

All the students were now comfortable and enthusiastic about contributing to the group conversation without being asked individually. Katie encouraged participation by taking part in the discussion as part of the team and as always, she began by focusing attention on the planning (R3.039):

> OK, so we need some inspiration for planning everybody.

Within the discussion, Katie posed problems for the students to solve. Following the students' lead, the problems addressed specific decisions about children's learning experiences. When the students shared their observations with the group Katie prompted follow up (R3.056):

> What do you want to do about following up on those observations?

In this last planning meeting, Katie kept the students on track by asking the group generally about the plan. Once the students had completed the draft plan, Katie, this time, took part in the discussion as part of the team.

Feedback

During this session Katie gave positive feedback to the students regarding improvements that they had made in the children's learning experiences (R3.054):

> They loved the painting, that was really good.

She gave simple, relevant and brief responses about the students' work; now, however, she no longer offered continual reinforcement as she had done earlier in the year; now, it seemed, she knew that the students were sufficiently confident to rely on their judgment.

Concluding comment

In response to the students' increased confidence, Katie outwardly showed less concern about students' feelings and comfort zones; however, she continued to give positive feedback when it was appropriate. Katie led the evaluation/planning meeting; she no longer needed to press the students to be part of the dialogue. Although she generally gave less advice, the students were always encouraged to discuss the planning for playgroup sessions but as they gained experience, Katie did not ask individual students and she asked questions that now were more general rather than more specific as had been the case earlier.

Collaborative learning

During this evaluation/planning session there was evidence of collaborative learning. Learning occurred as students worked as a team to implement the playgroup to reflect on the day together, and discuss the plan for the following week. During this session peer mentoring was also evident.

Working as a team

The group, at this stage of the year, were working as Katie suggested 'like a well-oiled machine'; they were sharing the necessary tasks to implement the program. They listened respectfully to each other and accepted individual contributions about the learning experiences. Jacinta confidently volunteered to record the plan and when resources were needed for experiences, there was no shortage of help. When planning for gifts for the children on the last day of Kinda Kinder, the students worked together and shared the preparation. The students were clearly relaxed in each other's company and worked together in a cooperative manner to plan and prepare for the following week.

Reflection

Although Katie led the discussion, the students readily reflected on the day. Katie only needed to say 'Let's think about the planning for next week' (R3.002), and the students began to relate their observations of the children. The group reflected on how children interacted with the experiences and how a child used the materials; Katrina commented (R3.021):

> I saw Liam and he was putting the shell to his ear and listening.

Subsequently, Katrina reflected on her teaching practice focusing, in particular, on getting the children involved (R3.114):

> I was pleased I got the props, the cars and everything and I asked who was going to be my special helper and a few of them put their hands up and I gave them all one of the animals and as I read the book I got them to bring them out.

During the year, the students had gained confidence in reflecting on children's involvement in experiences and on their teaching practice. They appeared to enjoy being part of this conversation. Collaborative learning occurred as the members of the team listened and contributed to group reflection.

Discussion

The students readily shared their ideas about the playgroup in the evaluation/planning session. It seemed to me, in fact, they could have run a successful session without the mentor. The discussion centred on the planning for the last Kinda Kinder playgroup for the year and everyone participated in the dialogue. The students confidently shared their suggestions for learning experiences and for the setup of the environment. There was no shortage of ideas and suggestions were always offered in a cooperative, supportive manner. Katrina suggested linking to a child's interest in shells (R3.025):

> Well in the sand we could have the other seashells that we've got.

The students actively participated in discussion about the final playgroup, adding their individual thoughts about children's learning experiences and room set-up. By listening to, and taking part in the dialogue, the students were encouraged to extend their ideas about ways to implement and extend children's learning experiences.

Peer mentoring

Peer mentoring was evident during this evaluation/planning meeting. The students with more experience became peer mentors as they shared their understanding of appropriate activities to provide for children.

At times during the conversation, Cindy took on a role of mentor, imitating a mentoring strategy used by Katie to involve students and to extend their thinking. Cindy asked Jacinta and Jane to clarify their observations of children using the materials at the water tray:

> But what were they doing with it, were they actually pouring or were they playing with the animals?

Cindy also questioned the group on learning experiences for the following week (R3.074):

> Are we going to do art and craft?

When the group discussed the music group format, Cindy asked them to clarify their intentions (R3.127):

> What are we going to do with the musical instruments, how are you going to incorporate that?

Finally, Cindy focused on aspects which she observed in earlier sessions; she asked the group about extending the range of resources that might be used (R3.016):

> What about shells and stuff? What about some measuring stuff because they liked the pouring?

Katrina also acted as a peer mentor as she implemented and then talked about a successful music group, as mentioned previously. The group gained from observing and then reflecting on her success in using props to involve the children. Katrina also gave positive feedback to the group for their set-up of the environment (R3.055):

> We had the sand set-up with the trucks, it was an awesome set-up.

The two second-year students, Cindy and Katrina, had been nervous at the beginning of the year; now, they had emerged as peer mentors, often imitating the mentoring strategies used by Katie. To a lesser extent, the first-year students, too, acted as peer mentors as they shared their reflections and ideas for planning.

Concluding comments

A supportive team environment set the scene for collaborative learning. By working, reflecting and planning within this environment, the students learnt from each other, developing their confidence and improving their teaching practice. As their confidence developed during the year, the students became peer mentors for each other.

The week following this reflection session was to be the last Kinda Kinder session for the year. During the year, the mentor, Katie, had created a happy and supportive learning organisation in which the students changed their

teaching practice. As the students developed confidence in their roles as teachers, they were more frequently able to work within their comfort zones enabling Katie to step back and allow them to learn from their experiences; nevertheless, Katie continued to give support and guidance as and when it was required.

As I worked with the team across this year of the Kinda Kinder program my respect for Katie had grown immensely: she demonstrated commitment and enthusiasm for the playgroup within the community and for her role as mentor; she was justifiably proud of the successful outcome of the program. It had been a wonderful experience for me to have been able, as a participant observer, to work alongside Katie and the students as part of the team.

Student journals

The first year Bachelor of Education students began the year with no previous experience in writing journals: they had not been fully informed about using it for reflection; they predominantly documented their work rather than expressing their feelings about their experiences or reflecting on their practice. The second-year students, who had written journals previously, included more detailed information. There was no formal requirement for the diploma students to write a journal. Inductive data reduction was used to code and sort the information gathered from the journals. Two emergent themes were identified during the analysis as follows:

- Students' feelings;
- Student learning and development.

Students' feelings

The journals provided an insight into the feelings of some students. Initially there were mixed feelings about participation in the program but all were nervous to some degree. In particular, Cindy (J.098) was apprehensive about the planning aspect of the program.

> Before I started this KK, I was very worried about the planning of the program as I have not done a lot of this).

Katrina (J.009) was apprehensive as she felt that Katie expected her to take a leading role because of her greater experience in the field.

> I felt as though there was a slightly higher expectation on my role as I was the only second-year.

She (J.010) also felt the there was pressure on her from the others in the group.

> I felt as though the other three girls were relying on me to lead them in some ways.

Katrina (J.018) was nervous about how others perceived her.

> I felt somewhat nervous when speaking to the group, I didn't want the others to feel as though I was dominating in the discussions we had, however I also didn't want Katie to feel as though I was not contributing to the group.

Later, Katrina (J.019) wrote of her annoyance with new students belatedly joining the team as they would benefit from the work that had already been done.

> This upset me a little as I felt as though we had already begun to gel as a group and had been working on some ideas and that these other students would waltz in and reap the benefits.

When Katrina (J.020) met the new members of the team she wrote of her concerns with one particular member:

> One of the new members to the group had joined us. This student I knew prior to the session. I had met her in my professional working career and have had conflict with her in the past. I wasn't too pleased to see her and was hesitant at the thought of having to work with her for the rest of the year.

She reflected (J.022) that she had approached this situation in a professional manner:

> I am aware that we do not always get to work with friends and that personal conflict would need to be put to the side while conducting our placements.

Katrina (J.032) felt overwhelmed when trying to cope with the amount of work involved in the Kinda Kinder program and university classes:

> I'm finding it hard to manage everything at this stage.

Overall, however, Katrina was grateful to Katie, the mentor, for providing advice with plenty of suggestions for learning experiences for children.

As the year progressed other feelings emerged about working with members of the team and about the work within the program. Cindy (J.050) was excited about her learning.

> I am really excited about this placement, as I think I will get a lot out of it.

As the group became a teamworking together, awareness of the contribution of others became apparent. At times, this resulted in disappointment and sometimes annoyance.

> This week was very annoying as both Jane and Jacinta were late. Jacinta did not arrive
> until nine o'clock with no explanation When we are setting up they both stand around
> and talk about uni work leaving me to set-up most things. I do not feel in the position
> where I can communicate to them how unhappy I am with it either (Jeanne J.127).

By the end of the year students felt happy about their attendance and achievements.

> I was really happy with our performance, everyone turned up and on time, we set-up
> in time and very smoothly, all the experiences looked fantastic (J.119)

At the beginning of the year the students had experienced feelings of nervousness and anxiety about adapting to an unfamiliar situation, accommodating a new set of work demands, and relating and adapting to new members of the team. As the year progressed there were some feelings of annoyance with others because of their lack of commitment to the team, however, the students enjoyed their experience with the children in the program and were generally pleased about their participation.

Student learning and development

Within the emergent theme of student learning and development the data was grouped into five themes: collaborative learning, teaching practice, theory-practice links, experiential learning and reflection.

Collaborative learning

In the early days of the program members of the team noted in their journals that the group discussed the diversity in their backgrounds and considered how they could all contribute to the team. Cindy (J.080) acknowledged her learning thus far.

> I am really enjoying this experience with the children in Kinda Kinder. I have learnt so much and cannot wait until next week.

The sub-themes to be identified in the journals were teamwork, group reflection, dialogue and peer mentoring.

Teamwork

Early in the year the group perceived themselves as a team. Cindy, Jane, Jeanne and Katrina all wrote about team membership in their journals. To implement the program during the first playgroup session the students worked together to set-up the environment for the playgroup. Cindy (J.072) was surprised that the group worked together.

> What surprised me was the fact that we really did work together as a team and get all the things down from the cupboards and started to set-up straight away.

Jeanne (J.110), however, found it challenging to work with some members of the team.

> I have been finding it very difficult with Jacinta and Jane moving around too much, resulting in a whole room or the outside area left unsupervised.

Jane (J.085) believed that the playgroup session with children had been a success because the group worked together, even during the group time with music and storytelling.

> We did what was needed to get the job done and we succeeded together. we all pitched in setting up and packing up and participated as a group during group time.

The planning process was of particular interest for Cindy (J.056) and she took note of how the team approached this task.

> What I found interesting is how we set it up and how we decided as a team of what
> it should look like and what should be in it and that the frameworks be incorporated
> into it.

Katrina (J.034) noted how the team discussed ideas and learned from each other.

> We worked exceptionally well as a team and bounced ideas back and forth.

She considered that she was part of the team (J.036), seeing the first-year students as part of her responsibility.

> I was quite proud of the first-year students who did an excellent job at interacting
> with the parents and children).

Diversity in the group allowed the students to contribute to the team in different ways and Katrina (J.003) commented:

> We spoke about what knowledge and experience we could all offer to the team.

Although there were times, particularly early in the year, when there was an undercurrent of tension within the group, this was only evident within the journal writing and in practice, the students regularly saw themselves as part of a team that worked harmoniously to provide exciting and engaging playgroup sessions for the children.

Group reflection

The reflection session after the playgroup program provided a venue for the team to discuss the day's activities. Cindy (J.096) felt that this was helpful in clarifying ideas and promoting skills in observation and reflection.

> At the end of every session of Kinda Kinder we all sit down together as a team group
> and discuss what went on during the session, this has been very helpful in what we
> all think worked and what didn't.

During the reflection session, the students discussed the planning process first hand. Jacinta (J.066) learned about reflection and planning from this discussion.

> During the evaluation, we discussed crucial elements that worked well and other's that didn't, which enabled us to decide what to continue next week and what to discontinue.

Group reflection was a valuable aspect of the program that promoted students' skills in observation and improved their teaching practice.

Dialogue

During the reflection session, the learning experiences were discussed and planned for the following week. Katrina (J.002) noted:

> In this session, we talked about what types of experiences we would like to set out for the children who may attend our sessions.

Cindy (J.097) recognised the value of engaging in these dialogues:

> I think talking about what we are going to do the week before helps as it establishes what we have to do and makes it clear for the programming and planning (J.095). …So, we can re-establish and sit down, discuss, plan and talk over things. To me this is what it is all about, as this helps in doing the planning.

The group discussed ways of improving aspects of their teaching practice. Cindy (J.104) reflected on the story group:

> At the end of the session we did group time. …This again was very successful although I think a couple of the children did get a bit bored with the books that were being read but we discussed this and …we will see how it goes next.

The group also acknowledged that they were able discuss problems in a collaborative manner; Jane commented (J.123):

> We all seem to get along great and talk to each other about problems, concerns, questions and suggestions.

During the team discussion with the mentor, the group explored ideas and clarified their thoughts about planning and implementing children's learning experiences. They were able to solve problems regarding aspects of teaching practice and implement improvements.

Peer mentoring

The diversity of the students' backgrounds provided support for the students in the Kinda Kinder learning environment. Katrina (J.017) saw herself as a leader as she had the most experience in working with children.

> Because I have had three years' experience working in childcare and two working as a team leader, I offered the group my ideas.

She volunteered for a leading role within the group, providing a role model for others.

> As a group, we spoke about selecting a group leader, and when no-one in the group spoke, I volunteered myself (Katrina, J.007).

To solve the problem of planning format, Katrina offered suggestions and then worked with the group as they discussed possibilities. They made some adjustments and eventually decided upon a format to be used.

From the very beginning of the year, Katrina was aware that she was the most experienced person in the group and she volunteered to take a leading role in the program. She took on the role of peer mentor for the other students, role modelling for them and suggesting ideas about various aspects of the program.

Summary of collaborative learning

Collaborative learning within the group was clearly evident. The students became part of a team early in the year and worked cooperatively to plan and implement the playgroup program. Group reflection and dialogue provided opportunities to explore a range of ideas, to clarify individual thoughts and to solve problems. Students supported each other while they worked together and becoming peer mentors for each other.

Teaching practice

The Kinda Kinder environment offered the students opportunities to improve their teaching practice. The students consistently worked with children of

different ages; from young babies to preschool-aged children. Cindy (J.102) reflected on the benefits.

> The children we have had in the session so far have been of all ages. It has been a real mixed age group which is good as it lets us plan and implement for all ages of the spectrum.

From the beginning of the year Cindy was particularly interested in the planning cycle and she learnt from the team discussion. Jacinta (J.125) was also interested in planning the learning experiences and made improvements by extending the experiences that the children enjoyed.

> Within today's session I further expanded on last week's implementation of the stick puppets.

Jane (J.082) improved her teaching practice and particularly commented on her improved ability to set the environment for the younger babies.

> Today I set-up the baby corner, putting down blankets, pillows and lots of toys. The tent and tunnel were also used in today's session along with some cardboard boxes for the children to crawl in and out of which they loved.

Jeanne (J.088) recognised improvements made to taking the group time and valued parent participation.

> This week it was pleasing to see the improvement within the group time, I found it became so much easier once the parents were involved.

Jeanne (J.089) also improved in her interactions with children and received feedback from a parent about her support for children.

> It was also nice to hear from Zoe's mum that I have helped out a lot with Zoe as she explained to me the amount of time I spend specifically with her has been comforting and enabled her to depend on her mum less.

Students recognised the changes that they had made in their teaching practice in the areas of planning and extending experiences, working with children of mixed age groups, interacting with children and implementing group times.

Theory-practice links

During the program, the students made links to university classes. By observing the children's participation in the program,

Cindy could see evidence of play-based pedagogy and acknowledged that she had observed this being implemented in class (J.076):

> It is encouraging to know and having studied this already in our classes that children really do learn through play and to know that what we have been setting out each week, they are really interested in, and in this, it is more likely that they will become more confident and competent learners, and better able to deal with the day to day challenges that confront them.

Cindy clearly saw the role of the teacher and learning alongside the learner (J.077):

> The thing that I have gotten out of this so far is that the role of the teacher is first and foremost to be that of a learner alongside the children.

When students talked in their university classes about the value of children's learning experiences, they had related this to the learning taking place in the activities that they were implementing at Kinda Kinder. Cindy, for example, saw the immediate value of concrete examples/thinking (J.111):

> Today we set-up water play. To me this is a great experience as it teaches children about half empty/half full concept. Water play improves their fine motor and eye had coordination. This experience has a lot of maths concepts as well, as it teaches children about sinking, floating, volume. brings up other interesting concepts like wet, dry, sopping to the table.

Links were made between theory and practice when students recognised the value of play-based learning and considered the role of the teacher in early childhood education.

Experiential learning

The students acknowledged that they learnt from their first-hand experiences with children and families. Jane had discovered that some learning experiences worked well for children while others weren't as successful (J.122):

> Some things worked well, like the balls and hoops and hopscotch with chalk, and
> some things didn't run as well like water play (J.121). We learnt from our mistakes.

The value of experiential learning within the Kinda Kinder program had been recognised by the students. They used firsthand success and failure as a basis for reflection on practice; this had led them to the consideration of modifications that would improve the experience.

Reflection

The students used their journals in different ways. For most students, it was a way of merely documenting the program that was provided for children. For Cindy, however, this had provided a means of reflecting on her practice (J.081):

> I am particularly enjoying learning about planning and how to write up the plan from
> the observations that we are taking of the children. This is what it is all about.

Cindy had also documented her deeper thoughts and learning about early childhood education and pedagogy (J.079).

> Not only do we view each child as an individual and support each child's growth and
> development journey, but myself as a future teacher, to watch over the children
> playing and also to observe what the children are doing. In this way, the observations
> are used for future planning and programming (J.078). In doing this we can see
> children's particular strengths, talents and skills as well as areas that need further
> evaluation.

Cindy used journal writing to reflect on her practice and to clarify her thoughts about her underlying belief in the value of early childhood education.

Summary of student journals

The year began for some students feeling nervous and being overwhelmed because of perceived expectations; however, as the year progressed, they became more comfortable within the Kinda Kinder environment. The early uneasiness within the team to begin had soon changed to an atmosphere of cooperation in which students learned and developed in a collaborative

manner. They were consciously part of the team environment and noted how reflection, discussion and peer mentoring supported their learning. Within this supportive environment the students learned through firsthand experience, reflected on their experiences, made links between theory and practice and improved their individual teaching practice.

The journals provided insights into the learning and development of the students. They acknowledged that cooperative learning had taken place as a result of being part of the team and they had become peer mentors for each other. The students learnt from their firsthand experience with children and families and the group reflection and dialogue enabled them to clarify their ideas and solve problems related to planning experiences. Links between practice and theory enhanced students' learning and some students changed their underling beliefs about early childhood education.

Katie demonstrated qualities of being a compassionate mentor who was concerned for the students' wellbeing. It was evident that she had come to know the students individually and she was committed, in her role as mentor, to supporting and guiding them in their praxis. She had created an environment of trust in which the students could learn and develop personally and professionally.

In her mentoring role, Katie used specific strategies to support the students and to promote their learning and development. She began by creating positive relationships with all the students in the group and by making them feel comfortable. As the year progressed she moved them out of these comfort zones by asking them to face challenging situations. Traditional mentoring strategies such as offering advice, providing feedback and role modelling were used with the students. Extended mentoring strategies included encouraging involvement in reflection and dialogue. A major aspect of Katie's work was with the families who attended the playgroup. She was a valuable resource for the families and when necessary, referred them to agencies for necessary support.

The Kinda Kinder program enabled the students to learn about early childhood education. Support from the mentor and the opportunity to work in a team environment with people from diverse backgrounds resulted in collaborative learning within the team. As the students learned to reflect on their practice and as they took part in shared dialogue, they developed their confidence and improved their teaching practice.

The IDR process that I had employed allowed me to engage in close analysis of all the extensive amount of data. I found this approach very useful in enabling the identification of themes and overall emergent themes without preconceived ideas leading the analysis.

In the next chapter, I specifically link my Data Analysis, Parts 1 and 2, to responses to my research questions.

CHAPTER 6

Research Question Responses

While studies have previously looked at mentoring programs, in a range of settings, I began this doctoral study to provide specific information about the Kinda Kinder program that would provide a basis for future decisions regarding its implementation. In this section, I address the research questions:

- What is the nature of mentoring in the Kinda Kinder program?
- What learning has occurred in the Kinda Kinder program?

I will address each of these questions in the following sections.

Nature of mentoring in the Kinda Kinder program

The mentoring within this program, while showing similarities with many approaches identified in the literature, has its complexities and unique characteristics. Although at times, the mentor enacted some of the traditional mentoring roles (as explained by Jones & Brown 2011) of imparting knowledge, information and providing support to the mentee, she predominantly used a more collaborative approach, where mentors and mentees co-construct learning (Nolan 2017:3). This approach also aligns with Zachary's (2000:1) view that in recent times, mentoring has become a process-oriented relationship involving knowledge acquisition, application, and critical reflection.

Figure 6.1   **Aspects of mentoring in Kinda Kinder**

This program took place in a group mentoring setting where the mentor was more experienced than the students in the group; however, during the implementation of the playgroup, she successfully worked as a member of the team.

The essential aspects of the mentoring in this study, depicted in Figure 6.1, were as follows:

- Group mentoring
- Positive relationships
- Peer mentoring
- Contextual relevance
- Mentoring Functions:
  - **Career functions**, promoting professional development, included teaching, advising, role modelling, challenging and facilitating reflective practice and shared dialogue.
  - **Psychosocial functions**, promoting a sense of professional competence and identity, included reassuring, encouraging, supporting, providing feedback.
- The changing role of the mentor

Group mentoring

This ethnographic study confirms the value of social interaction in the learning process (Kram 2008). Within a group mentoring setting, acting as part of a team, the students observed and listened to each other as they worked with children and parents.

The value of group mentoring was evident as the students themselves acknowledged the benefits of being part of a team; this aligns with the viewpoint of Heirdsfield et al. (2008), as discussed in the literature review, that preservice teachers can exchange ideas, learn with others and co-construct meanings.

As noted in the literature review, Southern (2007), particularly values sharing different perspectives within learning communities as a path to transformative learning. The diverse nature of this group of students with differing levels of experience with children in early childhood education programs provided increased opportunities for transformative learning to occur. As the team members became comfortable in their environment, they reflected upon and discussed their individual and shared experiences. Ogenchuk et al. (2014) agree that this process should be encouraged. The students exchanged ideas as they learned with others, developing confidence in their teaching role, increasing their knowledge of early childhood education and improving their teaching practice. Katie's mentoring was based on the group's shared experience in the Kinda Kinder program.

As the students worked together as a team, they became aware of the strengths of individuals within the group. They shared pleasure in working cooperatively to implement the playgroup, and they wanted everyone on the team to succeed. In doing so, they took some responsibility for the learning of others in the team, and as they supported each other's learning, they also enhanced their teaching skills. Cornu & Ewing (2008) agree that this is a benefit of group mentoring.

Positive relationships

The mentoring approach within this study was based on caring, compassionate relationships instigated and developed by the mentor and it is consistent with the literature that considers positive relationships are an essential aspect in the success of a mentoring program. Rogers (in Pask & Joy 2007: 19), comments that:

> from the beginning, there should be unconditional positive regard and respect for the other human being.

Mentor Katie's concern for the students' feelings was consistent throughout the study. She was a perceptive, sensitive mentor with moral purpose. As noted in the literature review, moral purpose as defined by Fullan (2002) is a social responsibility to others and the environment. Crowther et al. (2002) comment that moral purpose is essential; if, as a leader, one does not treat others well and fairly, the result will be 'a leader without followers'. Katie demonstrated social responsibility for both the students and the families at the Kinda Kinder site. She genuinely cared for the children and families and considered her role included being a listener, advisor and support person for them. She was naturally interested in the students and provided individual attention and assistance to them. Clutterbuck (2004; 117) points out:

> Clearly, every mentoring relationship is unique, just as every individual is unique.

At times relationships were complex but Katie adapted her interactions with and expectations of the students as the year progressed. After a settling-in period, the students came to feel confident interacting with and around Katie, forming trusting relationships with her as the year progressed. This is in accord with Daloz (2012) who suggests that engendering trust is a fundamental concern for mentors. Boud et al. (2005: 11) expand this, pointing out that it is relationships that influence student learning:

> Positive feeling and emotions can greatly enhance the learning process, they can keep the learner on task and can provide a stimulus for new learning…External influences to validate the worth of individual learners and groups of learners are often needed.

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Over the period of this study, Katie, formed positive relationships with the students in the group. When discussing Katie's characteristics, the student group acknowledged that she was a kind person who was aware of their individual comfort zones. Katie had formed a trusting relationship with the team and she hoped (M2.034):

> …that they thought we could work things out together if they had a problem.

Katie demonstrated consistent concern for the feelings of the students and gave positive feedback when it was merited. The students acknowledged Katie's caring approach and spoke of her in a kindly manner. Even though it was difficult for the students not to see Katie as the teacher, they commented that it was important to them all that she did not become authoritarian and that there was no hierarchy within the student group; Jane, for instance, commented (S1.016):

> She goes about it in a good way that's not a bossy sort of thing.

In creating a supportive environment, Katie was able to set the scene for the students to gain the most from the Kinda Kinder program.

Peer mentoring

The diverse nature of the group supported the learning process within the Kinda Kinder program. Including students in different levels of their course and students with different past experience in the early childhood education field provided opportunities to discuss a wide range of ideas and to consider new perspectives. Although, at the beginning of the program, there was some discontent, the group quickly settled and generally the students worked as a team throughout the year, providing a supportive environment in which learning flourished.

The diverse group of students in the Kinda Kinder team provided opportunities for cross-year informal peer mentoring. Fletcher & Mullen (2012: 385) point out that peer mentors may be able to provide support for task-motivated needs of students, as well as helping them meet psychosocial

needs; peers are able to draw upon their recent experiences in order to offer empathetic, emotional support. Colvin & Ashman (2010) report that university students see wide-ranging benefits in peer mentoring, ranging from individual gains to helping students become connected to the campus as a whole.

Very early in the program, the more experienced students quickly stepped up to support those less experienced; although she was a little nervous, Katrina, for example, often provided support (S1.080):

> I knew that I could lead by example and that if I did something she'd use it as an example.

Without a formal requirement, the students with more experience in the early childhood field adopted the role of supporting others. They helped the newer students with planning; they role modelled interactions with parents and with children. The less experienced students acknowledged the value of the role modelling and assistance and the students who helped others gained confidence. This is consistent with comments from Topping (in Fletcher & Mullen 2012: 388) who notes that:

> In the university context, peer mentors gain confidence in facilitating small group learning, a deeper understanding of subject matter, and enhanced problem-solving skills.

As the year progressed and the students became aware of individual strengths within the group, the less experienced students also became peer mentors. They role modelled for each other as well as giving informal feedback and taking part in discussions about the program. Same-year peer mentoring became evident. Overall, the non-hierarchical nature of the program was valued by the team.

Although peer mentoring was not formally part of the Kinda Kinder program, it was a feature that emerged, partly with the encouragement of the mentor and partly because of the initiative of the students themselves. Peer mentoring, involving both cross-year students and same-year students, operated successfully to promote improved teaching practice within the group. With increased confidence, the students often became peer mentors for others.

Katie (M2.078) realised that the second-year students could provide support, encouragement and leadership for the first year and diploma students.

> So, [with] the second-year students…I tried to use them as role models for the first years.

Both Cindy and Katrina were proud of the fact that they were able to provide this support. They often role modelled when interacting with children and parents and when leading the group music and movement sessions. They also imitated the mentoring strategies used by Katie, asking the group specific questions to extend reflection.

The entire group, including the first year and diploma students, became peer mentors for each other. As they implemented the playgroup and contributed to the evaluation/planning meeting they drew on their particular strengths to support each other; Cindy commented (S2.076):

> I helped others with group time, taking the lead at group time, going out there and interacting with the children and joining in with the parents and the kids.

Self-confidence grew during the year as did the students' ability to communicate with others and to be part of a collaborative learning team. The students developed an increased understanding of early childhood education and the related underlying beliefs and values. Students had an increased understanding of appropriate children's learning experiences and were better equipped to articulate the value of play. Professional teaching practice had progressed in various ways. Students were more competent in setting up the learning environment and presenting activities in inviting ways. They had improved their teaching skills when interacting with children and parents, achieving the educational goals that they had set out to achieve.

The students became peer mentors as they provided feedback, offered suggestions and role modelled for each other; significantly, the group recognised and made use of the particular strengths of individuals. The more experienced students consciously provided support for others; however, all the students, at times, became peer mentors and it was important for them that there was no hierarchy within the group.

Contextual relevance

In this study, Katie followed a constructivist approach (Piaget, 1970) [21] involving all of the students in the planning and implementation of the playgroup for the children. The value of experiential learning is recognised (Dewey 1938, Kolb 1984). In this program, the students had opportunities for first-hand experience, working with children, families and each other. Katie wanted the students to learn from their achievements and challenges:

Following the weekly experience, Katie based her feedback on the day's events. Daloz (2012: 148) points out:

> In our work with the developing student, it is important to know when to move in and when to step back, when to support and when to challenge."

Katie intuitively recognised these times as she deliberately stepped back to allow opportunities for individual and group experiences but followed up with encouragement, advice and discussion to support the students' learning and development

First-hand experience in teaching children occurred every week of the Kinda Kinder program; throughout, Katie reminded the student group that they were responsible for the planning and implementation of the playgroup. Her mentoring role was focused around this practical experience and she became a source of support and information for them during this time.

Mentoring functions

The mentor in the Kinda Kinder program provided both career functions and psychosocial functions; this is consistent with Kram's (1988) contention that mentors provide career mentoring functions that enhance the likelihood of the mentee becoming successful in his or her career and psychosocial functions

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[21] 'Piaget's constructivist stances are seen in his belief that our understandings of reality are constantly being revised and re-constructed through time and with respect to exposure to new experience "What remains is construction as such, and one sees no ground why it should be unreasonable to think it is ultimate nature of reality to be in continual construction instead of consisting of an accumulation of ready-made structures" (Piaget, 1970, pp. 57-58)'. Accessed at http://ac-journal.org/journal/vol5/iss3/special/jones.pdf , 29/01/2018 11:41 AM.

that enhance a mentee's sense of professional competence and identity and contribute to the mentee's personal growth. Each function is outlined below.

Career functions

These functions are involved in promoting professional development and improving teaching practice. This involves the following:

- teaching;
- advising;
- role modelling;
- questioning;
- challenging;
- initiating; and
- supporting reflective practice and shared dialogue

Psychosocial functions

These functions are involved in promoting personal development. This involves the following:

- respecting;
- encouraging;
- supporting; and
- providing feedback

Kram's Phases

This study identified changing phases in the nature of mentoring as the program progressed. Changes were evident in both the mentor's approach to her role and the experiences of the mentees.

The nature of the mentoring in the Kinda Kinder program changed during the year in response to the students' experiences and development. Specifically, I have aligned the mentoring evident in the Kinda Kinder program with the phases described by Kram. As discussed in the literature

review, Kram (in Ragins & Kram 2007: 35) recognises four phases in mentoring programs – initiation, cultivation, separation and redefinition, as shown in Figure 6.2.

My study identifies evidence of Kram's phases in mentoring. In the first phase, *Initiation*, the mentees and the mentor became familiar with each other, the setting and their role within the program. In the second phase, *Cultivation*, the mentees faced challenges and reflected and discussed their firsthand experiences. As the mentees moved further into the program, they gradually moved into the third phase, *Separation*, in which they became more independent and in doing so, faced challenges and dilemmas. In the final phase, *Redefinition*, the mentees celebrated the program and acknowledged the learning that occurred. As the program progressed, the mentor changed her approach to her role in response to the change in the students' confidence and competence.

Figure 6.2   Kram's Phases in mentoring (1983)

Initiation

All parties getting to know each other and the mentor assessing the skills, needs and potential of the mentee.

Cultivation

The participants learn more about each other and emotional ties deepen. It is the primary stage of learning and development when the career and psychosocial functions are at their peaknd discuss their firsthand experiences

Separation

The mentee becomes more independent and opportunities to work more autonomously increase

Redefinition

The mentor relationship is no longer needed in the same form and it becomes more a peer-like friends

Initiation Phase

During this Initiation Phase, the mentor, Katie, and members of the Kinda Kinder group got to know each other and became familiar with the setting. The mentor ensured that the students became aware of their role within the program and what was expected from them; also, she introduced them to reflection and shared dialogue as part of the professional role of a teacher.

Building relationships

From the outset, Katie focused on getting to know the team members and building a nurturing, trusting relationship with individual members of the group. She showed concern for the students' feelings and she regularly reassured them to put them at ease; she explored the students' strengths and observed their comfort zones. As a result, Katie created a safe, comfortable environment and promoted team membership and cooperation.

Katie understood that during the playgroup with the children, the students were feeling nervous and she provided support by quietly approaching individual students to ask if they were feeling comfortable. She reassured them, telling them that they were doing well and she worked alongside them, introducing herself and others to the parents and children.

In the early evaluation/planning meetings, Katie realised that the students were still unsure about themselves and some were nervous about talking in front of others. She supported them by creating a relaxed, light-hearted atmosphere in which they could feel comfortable. It was reassuring to the group that the format of this session remained constant, with students firstly sharing their observations and thoughts about the day's playgroup and then using this information to plan for the following week. Peterson et al. (2010: 171) note that forming positive relationships and providing emotional support are key undertakings for mentors who aim to support mentees to change their teaching practices.

> Early childhood educators may benefit from mentoring that explicitly supports their social and emotional needs.

Role clarification

During this early settling-in stage, Katie clarified the students' role for them. She did this by advising on practical issues in the early childhood program and at times by directing and telling them what to do. With students initially reluctant to take part in discussion, and with most of them unfamiliar with reflective practice, Katie initiated a step-by-step process to develop the students' skills in this area. She introduced reflection as a tool for developing professional practice, focusing on content reflection as discussed in literature review (Mezirow 1991). She asked students how they felt about the day and prompted them to recall their observations and the students shared observations of children and parents. Katie also focused attention on specific incidents, asking detailed questions about the learning experiences that had been set-up for the children and the way the environment had been organised. Observations of children were scrutinised. To assist the students to understand the types of observations that were useful, Katie shared her observations of the day, particularly sharing her comments about how children interacted with the learning experiences. In phase one, the students became comfortable to share reflections with others in the group.

Katie also clarified the role of the students in the Initiation Phase by encouraging them to participate in shared dialogue. The weekly evaluation/planning meeting with Katie and the group provided a relaxed venue in which students discussed their ideas. Katie encouraged the students to take part in the conversation by becoming a Socratic mentor (Davey Chesters, 2012). She used questions in a non-threatening manner and by basing her comments around their experiences during the playgroup, she ensured the conversation was relevant for them. Some students were uncomfortable when they spoke in front of the group and Katie was aware that it was quite difficult for them to contribute because they lacked experience in the field. Every student was encouraged to be part of the conversation but some were content to listen to and learn from the conversation. Katie was satisfied with this in the initial stages of the program, as it still helped them to clarify their ideas. Other

students were enthusiastic about sharing their ideas and the discussion became lively as they addressed problems, posed their questions for the group, offered suggestions to each other and volunteered to bring resources. Both students and mentor recognised the value of this collaborative dialogue. Discussion in this Initiation Phase addressed problems and decisions about learning experiences for the children.

During the first evaluation/planning meeting Katie made it clear to the students that she was not responsible for writing the plan for the playgroup and that their role included being involved in the planning process. She provided support for this role by sharing some of her experiences and offering suggestions.

Cultivation Phase

During this second phase, Katie, the mentor, continued to demonstrate respect for others and to develop a trusting relationship with the students. The students became comfortable working with the mentor and each other as members of the team. As they took part in the program, Katie provided encouragement and feedback. She continued to explore the students' strengths and she recognised when they faced challenges, responding to their needs in a sensitive, supportive manner.

In this Cultivation Phase, Katie saw that at times, the students needed direction during the playgroup; as a consequence, while she appeared to work as part of the team, Katie took a prominent role in the program. She followed up by providing positive feedback to the students.

Experiential learning

During the early Cultivation Phase, Katie allowed the students opportunities to experiment for themselves and to learn from their firsthand experiences. Even when she doubted their teaching strategies would be successful, she recognised that the firsthand experience was valuable; Katie commented (M1.079).

> But I still want them to find their way. I want them to set things up and find out,
> sometimes I have to bite my tongue because I know it's not going to work but they
> need to figure that out for themselves.

However, before the children arrived at the playgroup, Katie checked the way the students had set-up the environment, assuring that it was safe and inviting for children. She justified making changes, saying that as it was early in the year, the students did not know what to do. On the occasions that she intervened and changed the physical setup of the learning experiences before the children arrived, she explaining her reasons to the students. Katie also offered advice regarding pedagogy in early childhood education (R 1.051):

> We need to reinforce that we're here to implement a play-based program in which
> parents and children play together.

Advising

Later, in the Cultivation Phase – both during the playgroup and in the following evaluation/planning meeting – Katie offered advice on many practical aspects of the program. Advice was provided in a respectful manner, when she felt it was needed. Motley (2008: 153) supports this approach by confirming that advice should:

> …be given in ways that are respectful of the recipients' autonomy and competence
> and, should attempt to recommend actions that are useful, feasible, efficacious, and
> not undermined by limitations.

Katie made suggestions regarding their teaching practice but promoted confidence levels by using encouragement, positive feedback and by pointing out that the final decisions about the program for the children were the responsibility of the students.

Providing advice aligns with the traditional role of mentors in higher education (Angouri, in Limberg, 2012:122):

> In higher education, advising students has always been a core practice.

Initially, Katie offered advice that was valuable for the students who were beginning in the early childhood field: taking observations, planning a play-

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based program, choosing appropriate learning experiences and resources and presenting the environment in inviting ways as well as their general organisation. She supported the students' learning and development by linking their practice with their theory classes and they took the opportunity to ask Katie about their written tasks for university.

Role modelling

Role modelling, as part of the Cultivation Phase, was a valuable feature in this study, aligning with previous research that confirms that role modelling has traditionally been accepted to be a part of the mentoring role (Anderson & Shannon 1988). Katie consciously role-modelled as she worked with the children and parents, being particularly aware of aspects of teaching practice that the students found challenging.

Both simple and cognitive modelling were evident, (as discussed in the literature review and described by Bashan & Holsblat 2012). Simple modelling, based on the principle of learning through imitation, was a strategy used when Katie demonstrated friendly, professional interactions with the parents. This was an area in which some students lacked experience; as a consequence, the students sought to improve their interpersonal skills. Katie also role-modelled interactions with children, in particular taking groups for stories and music. Cognitive modelling, based on a more complex process that arises from the discussions between the mentor and the mentee, was evident when discussion in the evaluation/planning meeting when the day's events were recalled and scrutinised. One of the strategies that Katie consistently applied was to emphasise the importance of questioning.

> At the beginning of the session I would probably ask more direct questions such as
> do you think that that area has enough resources in it? are there enough dolls? or do
> we have enough paint?

Reflection

Later in the Cultivation Phase, Katie introduced the notion of reflection to the students and she continued to support them as they developed their reflective skills. This mentoring strategy is consistent with that of Chu (2012: 26):

> The mentoring process can help teachers reflect on their daily practices and interactions for the purpose of improving children's development and learning. Skilled mentors facilitate teacher inquiry into routine teacher questions, dilemmas, and problems.

As a starting point for reflection, Katie created a relaxed, friendly environment for the team to discuss the day and plan for the following week. The students were now much more confident to contribute to the discussion, but Katie recognised that even if the students did not actually contribute to the discussion in the evaluation/planning meeting, it was valuable for them to listen to the conversation between the other members of the group (M1.062):

> Whether they respond or not, maybe they can think about it, rather than just talking about what happened they can think about things themselves.

Katie began by asking the students to recall their observations of the day. To encourage the group to take observations, Katie set-up a shared journal for the students to discreetly record their observations during the playgroup session. When the group shared these observations in the evaluation/planning meeting, Katie used this information as a basis for discussion of the plan for the following week. As the students became comfortable with the planning process, Katie (D 3.005) extended their learning and involvement and, over time, encouraged them to reflect on a deeper level about their teaching practice. Schön (1983: 5) recognised that learning to use reflection takes time:

> Reflection is an integral part of practice and students need time to develop this skill. It is not a process that can be rushed, but neither is it a process that has to occur at a particular time

By sharing observations and thoughts, the students in this Cultivation Phase learned, first, to engage in observation and then to engage in reflection on practice as well as the process of planning in early childhood education.

Shared reflection enabled them to make meaning from their experiences and led the way to improved teaching practice. Even students who did not feel confident enough to share their reflections were able to benefit from just listening to others.

Katie consistently encouraged reflection by asking many questions and she began to encourage them to venture out of their comfort zones by directing questions to individuals: this was a crucial aspect of improving the students' teaching practice. The group of students were responsible for planning the children's learning experiences and Katie supported them by enthusiastically including them in the process every week.

Boud et al. (2005: 8) acknowledge that experience alone is not the only stimulus to learning.

> Comparing notes, roundtable discussions, carrying out a post mortem (metaphorically speaking), having an informal group discussion are all used to describe activities with which we are familiar and which have some relation to 'reflection'.

Boud et al. (2005: 11) make the following three points about reflection:

- Only learners can learn and only they can reflect on their experiences.
- Reflection is pursued with intent: a purposive activity directed towards a goal.
- The reflective process is a complex one in which both feelings and cognition are closely related and interactive.

Katie demonstrated awareness of, and consistency with, each of these points as she encouraged the students to reflect on their individual and group experiences; specifically, she supported them to use their reflections in the on-going planning of the Kinda Kinder program.

Dialogue

Following each playgroup with the children, there were consistent, opportunities for dialogue centred around the planning for the program; this was a feature of the Cultivation Phase. The group anticipated this dialogue and

quite quickly included this as a matter of course during the evaluation/planning meetings. Nolan (2017:14) acknowledges the importance of dialogue:

> Creating spaces where respectful and reciprocal dialogue about teaching and learning can take place was vitally important for the professional learning of the teachers involved in this mentoring programme.

During the second half of the year Katie continued to provide a comfortable environment in which she worked as part of the team; at the same time built on the skills developed in the Cultivation Phase. She encouraged the students to learn for themselves, at times directing them to particular tasks, and providing feedback based on their specific experiences. Her mentoring role included role modelling, providing advice and asking questions. Reflection and dialogue were a consistent element in the program.

Separation Phase

In the Separation Phase, which developed in the latter stages of the year, Katie continued to be a sensitive, nurturing mentor. By this time, the students were very relaxed with each other and often joked and laughed together. The relaxed environment helped the students to feel comfortable and to be enthusiastic in their contributions to group discussions and problem-solving.

Promoting independence

First-hand experience was consistently used during the mentoring program as the basis for the mentoring strategies that Katie used as she responded to the team and to individuals. As the students grew stronger in their professional practice, Katie did not need to direct them at all during the playgroup sessions. She no longer directed the students to do specific tasks, allowing them to use their initiative. Katie (M2.015) continued to allow the students plenty of time to develop their teaching practice through their experiences.

> In the middle and then at the end I was quite happy to let in them get on with it really.

Katie considered that the group knew about the type of experiences appropriate for the early childhood playgroup and the way they should be

presented. She intervened less to change the setup of the environment before the children arrived and she generally waited until after the playgroup to provide feedback. It was an expectation that the students participate fully in the evaluation/planning meetings and share their observations, reflections and ideas with the group. It was also expected that they offer suggestions for the program and bring/make resources to use with the children.

Katie was familiar with the strengths of the students and created opportunities for them to extend their learning and experience. She increasingly encouraged the students to move out of their comfort zones particularly in areas that they saw as challenging, but she continued to be available to provide reassurance and support. Pelliccione & Albon (in Atkinson et al. 2004:770) acknowledge that raising expectations can be difficult:

> Encouraging students to go beyond their comfort zone is also a challenge for educators.

Katie continued to provide support through these challenging experiences by role modelling, giving reassurance and offering suggestions for their teaching practice. She gave positive feedback for changed practice. However, Katie did not need to give continual feedback and reassurance as the students were sufficiently confident to rely on their judgments. She did acknowledge when changes had been made:

> I tried to praise them for changing their practice (M2.018).

In the Separation Phase, Katie was confident in allowing the students to learn through their experiences and she provided opportunities for students to reflect and discuss these experiences.

As the program progressed, Katie gave advice less frequently and it was given to the students, based on their specific experiences or questions. When it became evident that there were some areas of teaching practice that students found particularly challenging, this provided a focus for the mentor's support and advice. Areas of difficulty included working with parents, implementing group story and music groups with children and guiding children's behaviour.

In response to her observations, Katie also advised students about professional behaviour, particularly in regard to interacting with parents.

During the evaluation/planning meetings, the students evaluated the group's organisation and performance, commenting on how the team worked together, and how they interacted with children. During the Separation Phase, the group began to delve deeper into reflection by considering reasons for children's behaviour and improvements that could be made to their practice.

Questioning

Rather than making statements, Katie (M2.055) encouraged reflection by asking open-ended questions.

> So, I asked a lot of open-ended questions. I probably asked questions more than make statements about things, …. "but how could we improve on…?": that sort of thing.

The students sometimes felt nervous and even became annoyed when they were asked questions, however, Katie (M2.060) saw that this strategy was eventually successful. The students with previous experience in reflection and journal writing documented their reflections more deeply.

Advanced dialogue

Throughout the year, Katie had continued to promote the students' involvement in the weekly evaluation/planning meetings. The dialogue provided opportunities for 'more developmentally advanced meaning perspectives' (Mezirow, 1991, 78) and even if there was a shortage of time, Katie insisted that discussion should take place following each playgroup session. Mezirow (2009: 10) confirms that dialogue supports learning:

> Research had revealed that dialogue helps identify the leaners "edge of meaning", a transitional zone, of knowing and meaning making.

Katie ensured that all the team members took part and as the year progressed the discussion flowed more readily. To keep the discussion relevant, Katie based her remarks on the comments made by the students. To encourage involvement Katie posed problems and created challenges related to teaching

practice. When reflecting on her mentoring strategies, Katie (M2.055) commented:

> I asked a lot of open-ended questions. I probably asked questions more than making statements about things [such as] "But how could we improve on…?": that sort of thing.

During such discussions, Katie focused the group's attention on more complex issues underlying their teaching practice. Katie encouraged the students to think about their ideas regarding guiding children's behaviour as she recalled incidents from the day's playgroup. She asked for the group to share their ideas about possible ways of working with the children. For example, when a child threw books around the room, she followed up during the evaluation/planning meeting by asking the group how they thought they could gain the child's cooperation. This was very challenging for all students. When Katie observed students working successfully with the children, she shared this observation with the other students.

While Katie led the evaluation/planning meetings, she also took part in the discussion as a member of the team: not enforcing her ideas but offering suggestions. She continued to ask questions in a non-threatening way, allowing time for thought; over time, the students became more comfortable about engaging in the dialogue. On one occasion, when Katie was unable to attend a session, the students successfully undertook to conduct the sessions by themselves.

Shared dialogue

Katie saw dialogue as an essential element of praxis: it provided a pathway to deeper reflection; it encouraged higher level thinking and learning. During the discussion, Katie explored links between the theory studied in university classes and practice, thus enabling students to make meaning from their experiences. By setting the scene for shared dialogue, Katie created opportunities for transformative learning to occur. Mezirow et al. (2009:9) acknowledge that dialogue is invaluable in promoting transformative learning:

> Dialogue becomes the medium for critical reflection to be put into action

This position is supported by Daloz (2012: 9) who has noted that:

> We need to *give the student a voice*.

Katie helped the students to clarify their ideas and implement their practice to reflect their new understandings. Katie's mentoring represents a contemporary view of mentoring in which mentors offer support, create a challenge and facilitate a professional vision (Ambrosetti & Deckers 2010: 158). It represents the ultimate element of the Separation Phase.

Redefinition

As the Kinda Kinder program drew to its completion, the team addressed practical issues and celebrated the year's program. Practical tasks included cleaning and organising resources. The students and mentor thoroughly cleaned the Kinda Kinder area within the library and the storage areas and they tidied the cupboards and discarded anything that would not be needed in future programs. Resources that they had provided were taken home.

Celebrating

Celebrations involved the team as well as the children and families who had attended the playgroup during the year. The last day of the playgroup was a party day that included the usual learning experiences for the children and food for all the family. Each family received a photo of the group of children, the team of students and the mentor together.

Letters of appreciation

The students showed their gratitude for the mentor's help and support in different ways. Some gave gifts and some gave cards with messages of appreciation, acknowledging how much she had helped them throughout the program. In bringing the program to a close, the mentor gave positive feedback and encouragement to the students about their teaching role in early childhood education.

The changing role of the mentor

The role of the mentor changed over the year's implementation of the Kinda Kinder program. The diagram in Figure 6.3 summarises progressive changes in the mentoring role outlined by Kram.

Figure 6.3   Changes in the Kinda Kinder mentoring role
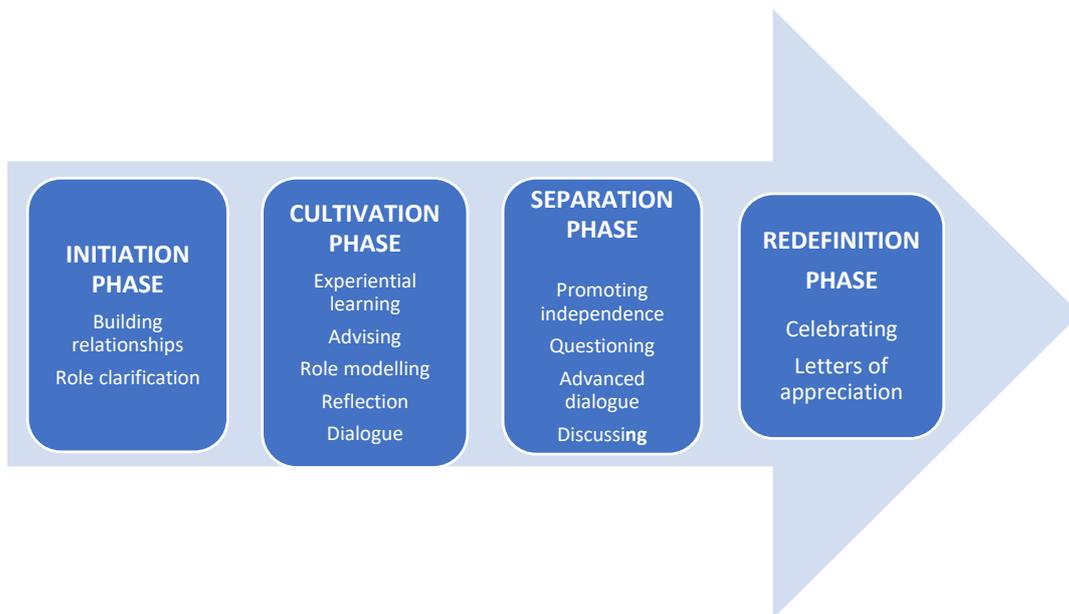
For the duration of my year-long Kinda Kinder study, I noted that Katie supported the students in a caring yet professional manner. As the year progressed, she perceptively adapted her role to assist the students develop as early childhood educators. The changes emerged in response to the students' changing feelings, abilities and needs. Katie's perceptive nature enabled her to provide continued, appropriate support for the student team as they developed in their role as early childhood educators.

Katie initially focused on forming positive relationships with the students and on creating a comfortable, respectful environment in which they could all work and learn cooperatively and in which they could reflect and discuss the program plan. She was a perceptive, sensitive mentor who was passionate

about early childhood education and about helping the students in her team to improve their teaching practice, treating them kindly and respectfully. From the parents' point of view, she successfully worked as a part of the team when providing the playgroup for the children, however she understood that it was difficult for the students not to see her as the teacher. The students acknowledged that Katie had undoubtedly helped them in their roles as teachers. By providing continued opportunities for reflection and dialogue, Katie set the scene for transformative learning to take place.

She worked to help the students feel comfortable and part of the team and she then raised her expectations and provided opportunities for firsthand experience, reflection and dialogue. This environment allowed challenges and dilemmas to arise, and the students clarified and developed their understanding of early childhood education and changed their teaching practice within the Kinda Kinder program. Transformative learning took place.

Learning in the Kinda Kinder program

The Kinda Kinder program, with a supportive mentor and team members from diverse backgrounds, set the scene for students to learn collaboratively and for transformative learning, as introduced by Mezirow (1978), to take place. Being part of a working team for an extended period enabled the students to learn from each other. Although during the year there were some instances of disharmony within the group, both the mentor and students recognised the value of the diverse nature of the group. As discussed in the findings, the Katie noted that it was valuable to have a mixture of people in the group (M2.081). Specifically, she welcomed the attention paid to different ideas (M1.089):

> I think they have improved their practice by listening to each other and watching each other so I think they have actually paid attention to each other's ideas.

The students agreed that they benefit from different people and that see different experiences; Cindy reflected (S1.125):

> I think it is good because you get experiences from everybody.

As the year progressed, they worked, in Katie's words, 'like a well-oiled machine'. Being part of this team had enabled collaborative learning to take place in a number of ways. Together, the students developed their skills in reflection and their understanding of using reflection to improve practice. Being part of the shared dialogue with the mentor and other members of the team supported their professional growth and changed practice; as Katie observed (M2.013):

> We probably addressed everything as a team, what could we do, what other ways could you …., or what could we do instead?

Transformative learning

As discussed in the literature review, Mezirow's transformative learning theory (1978), relating to adult learning, comprises of three aspects: experience, reflection and dialogue. From the beginning, these three aspects were an essential part of the Kinda Kinder program. Katie provided opportunities for the students to learn through their firsthand experience, by expecting them to be actively involved in the playgroup. This was followed every week with reflection on practice and dialogue about the day's program and improvement and extensions for the following week.

Transformative learning, as defined by Mezirow, can clearly be identified within the student group. Katie set the scene for this to occur as she provided opportunities for shared experience, reflection and dialogue for the group of students as they planned and implemented the playgroup program.

As reported in Chapter 4, the students recognised that firsthand experiences were valuable and that they did indeed learn from their mistakes. Consistent with Mezirow's ideas, Cranton (1996:76) has acknowledged the value of experiential learning and agrees that more is needed for transformative learning to take place. It involves:

> …moving beyond the acquisition of new knowledge and understanding, into questioning our existing assumptions, values and perspectives.

Mezirow et al. (2009: 19) identified ten phases of transformative learning (see Figure 6.4). Through this sequence of events, changes in 'meaning structures' and transformative learning occurred. These phases correspond to my observations of the students' transformative learning during the Kinda Kinder year.

Figure 6.4   Mezirow's phases of transformative learning and Kinda Kinder findings

Mezirow's phases	Kinda Kinder findings
1. **Disorienting dilemma**	First-hand experience provided dilemmas
2. **Self-examination**	Consistent reflection on practice (group evaluation/planning meetings and journals writing) occurred weekly
3. **A critical assessment of assumptions**	Continued participation in group dialogue: students exposed to alternative approaches to teaching practice and they clarified their ideas
4. **Recognition of a connection between one's discontent and the process of transformation**	Acknowledgement that alternative approaches to teaching practice were possible
5. **Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and action**	Discussion of possibilities for changed teaching practice
6. **Planning a course of action**	Students planned changes to be made for implementation the following week
7. **Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plan**	Katie supported the students learning with suggestions and advice, linking with university class work
8. **Provisional trying of new roles**	Implementation of revised ideas
9. **Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships**	Students gained confidence through implementation of new ideas. Positive feedback from Katie and other students
10. **A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective**	Students accepted new approaches in teaching practice

Disorienting dilemmas

As the group implemented the playgroup for children and they experienced, first hand, the role of an early childhood teacher, disorienting dilemmas arose.

As I have pointed out in previous chapters, Katie, the mentor, created a relaxed atmosphere in which the students felt comfortable. Nolan & Mola (2017) explain that a sense of comfort and safety enables participants to build trust and freely share their experiences and ideas and to ask questions and seek clarifications on issues that matter. They contend (2017: 8) that there are two elements, namely, comfort and dilemma:

> The condition of comfort assists participants to freely and reflectively express and confront their dilemmas.

As the students in the Kinda Kinder program were required to plan and implement the playgroup program, they continually found themselves in situations that were challenging. At times during the program, they found difficulties in interacting with children and parents, with taking group times with the children, and with promoting learning during play.

Self-examination

Self-examination was evident each week as the students recalled the day's activities and clearly developed their skills in reflection. Individual self-examination also occurred weekly as the students recorded their thoughts in their journals. Mezirow (1997:7) comments:

> Self-reflection can lead to significant personal transformations.

Shared reflection during the evaluation/ planning meeting was a particularly valuable learning experience for the group. Katie included reflection in the group evaluation/planning meeting every week; consequently, the students came to understand that it was an essential part of the planning process. The group reflection enabled the students to gain a shared understanding about the children in the playgroup and about the possible learning experiences to provide for them. After discussion during the evaluation/planning meeting and

later informal discussion, the group developed their plan for the following playgroup session.

As the year progressed, the students reflected more readily on the day's events. To begin they shared observations of children and later they described and evaluated their teaching practice and they clarified their understanding of early childhood education and pedagogy; Cindy explained in her journal (J.079):

> Not only do we view each child as an individual and support each child's growth and
> development journey, but I, as a future teacher, watch over the children playing and
> also observe what the children are doing. In this way, the observations are used for
> future planning and programming

The students learned by sharing thoughts during the evaluation/planning meeting; Katie commented (M2.051):

> The reflection session is valuable to sit down and talk about it, when they think about
> it then it's really valuable and when they verbalise ideas then it's really valuable.

Mezirow (1990: 5) distinguished between simple reflection and critical reflection, using Dewey's definition to clarify 'critical reflection'; he saw this as:

> …assessing the grounds [justification] of one's beliefs.

The students in my study began the year with simple reflection, reporting on their observations and recollections. They moved to critical reflection as they considered other points of view and alternate approaches to practice.

Critical assessment of assumptions

Consistent, weekly discussion allowed opportunities for the group to hear the opinions of the others students and to share their ideas. At first, not knowing what to share with others, the students were uncomfortable taking part in this discussion, but with reassurance from the mentor, they soon settled in and eagerly contributed to dialogue. By using a Socratic questioning approach, Katie guided them to share the important aspects of their observations, for example, details about the children's development and how the play

experiences promoted children's learning. planning. Cindy recognised the value of engaging in these dialogues; she observed, as previously reported (J.095/097):

> I think talking about what we are going to do the week before helps as it establishes what we have to do and makes it clear for the programming and planning. So, we can re-establish and sit down, discuss, plan and talk over things. To me this is what it is all about, as this helps in doing the planning.

Shared dialogue was a catalyst for improvement in teaching practice, allowing students to clarify their ideas, for example, the value of appropriate children's learning experiences and practical aspects of teaching. Dialogue enabled students to hear alternative points of view and by explaining and justifying their ideas, the students were able to critically assess their assumptions about teaching and early childhood education. For example, students had differing ideas about the involvement of parents in the program. By discussing this they were able to clarify their individual thoughts and beliefs and to consider why they thought this way.

As they became more involved and animated in the evaluation/planning meetings, they clarified and extended their ideas about early childhood education and they developed their understanding of the planning process. At first, the students with more experience in the field contributed more to the discussion than the less experienced students; however, everyone benefited from sharing problems, questions and suggestions.

The group acknowledged that they were able discuss problems in a collaborative manner; as Jane observed, previously (J.123):

> We all seem to get along great and talk to each other about problems, concerns, questions and suggestions.

The students were able to proceed with the evaluation/planning meeting without the mentor being present.

Discontent and transformation

Mezirow's phase four, recognition of a connection between one's discontent and the process of transformation, occurred in this study when feelings of annoyance or dissatisfaction with the day's events were shared and ideas for improvement or change were considered.

Feedback from the other group members encouraged them to think about their practice and consider improvements in the children's learning experiences they set-up for the children to make them more interesting and beneficial for the children.

Exploring new roles, relationships, and action

Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and action and planning a course of action were evident as the evaluation/planning sessions progressed and the group shared the tasks for preparing for the playgroup sessions.

Acquiring knowledge and skills

Students acquired knowledge and skills as Katie and other students provided advice, suggestions and role modelled for improved teaching practice. As they considered links with their university classes, the students widened their understanding of children's development and behaviour. Mezirow (1997: 5) explains that when transformative learning occurs there is a change in the learner's frame of reference; he says:

> When circumstances permit, transformative learners move toward a frame of reference that is more inclusive, discriminating, self-reflective, and integrative of experience.

Trying new roles

Following the discussion about changes to the program, and the research into new possibilities, the students implemented the new ideas in the following playgroup sessions. For example, some of the group were very unsure about leading the group times with the children for stories and music. With the

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support of the mentor and the other students, they tried different approaches to gain and retain the children's interest. Both mentor and students were able to identify areas in which revised ideas were implemented.

New roles and relationships

Increased confidence was evident in all aspects of the program, during interactions with children and families, during the implementation of the children's learning experiences and during the team evaluation/planning meetings. The students' belief in themselves as teachers became apparent.

Developing new perspectives

New approaches to teaching in early childhood were accepted as the group planned, implemented and discussed the program.

Transforming learning about early childhood education

As Katie led the discussion following the playgroup, the students made links between the concepts related to early childhood education studied in university classes and practice. Cindy (J.076) could see evidence of play-based pedagogy and acknowledged that she had heard this in class; she commented:

> It is encouraging to know and having studied this already in our classes that children really do learn through play.

This approach to the children's learning was role modelled by Katie and discussed with the team every week of the program.

Katie consistently spoke about suitable play experiences for children and she was quick to comment when obviously inappropriate activities such as colouring sheets were suggested by the students. She clearly explained her underlying beliefs to support her approach and allowed time for discussion with the group. Katie brought in her personal resources for use in the playgroup and asked the students to make and share their resources. Reflection and discussion also highlighted the presentation of the environment. Students always shared ideas for gaining children's interest and considered extension of

experiences. Over time, with consistent hands-on experience, critical reflection and dialogue, the students transformed their ideas about appropriate learning experiences for preschool children.

Students' approach to planning the program for children changed during the year. In the early stages of the program, Katie was aware that the first-year students had no experience in planning and even Cindy, a second-year student, lacked an understanding of the planning process. Every week, Katie involved the team in the planning method by firstly asking for students to report their observations of children and then to reflect on their practice. They also considered how to extend experiences to retain interest. They then used this information a basis for planning for the following week. Over time, they became so comfortable with this occurrence that they continued to engage in this planning process even if Katie was not present. Mezirow (1997: 10) sums up:

> Education that fosters critically reflective thought, imaginative problem posing, and discourse is learner-centered, participatory, and interactive, and it involves group deliberation and group problem-solving. Instructional materials reflect the real-life experiences of the learners and are designed to foster participation in small-group discussion to assess reasons, examine evidence, and arrive at a reflective judgment.

Later in the Kinda Kinder program, the students had developed their communication skills with children and parents and had improved their ability to plan and implement learning experiences for preschool children of different ages. They confidently used children's interests to extend their learning and although it had been difficult at first, they had become confident in taking a group of children for music and story sessions.

Students had clarified their ideas regarding the value of children's learning experiences and could now articulate the value of a play-based program; however, some students were still unclear about their teacher identity. While they saw themselves as teachers when in the school environment, they did not see themselves as teachers when working in early childhood education. Katie (M2.064) reflected on this situation.

> So perhaps, I think it's the setting. They [can] see themselves as the teacher in primary school because they have a different name; they are called Miss…and it is a structured more formal environment and I think that school goes with teaching. So, I don't think they see the link between early childhood and their identity as teachers…not yet.

Transformative learning (Mezirow et al. 2009) was evident; the students developed their skills in observation; they improved the quality of their interactions with children, families and each other; they became more efficient in managing their time. The first-year students, in particular, improved the way in which they presented the children's activities.

Students developed their skills in planning and implementing learning experiences for children. It was clear to me that Cindy (S1.032) had changed her underlying beliefs about the process of planning.

> For me, I think the benefits are programming, learning how to program and plan…what we do and about how it has got to relate to frameworks, and obviously it has got to relate to observations of the children and you've got write it all down and that's what I've learned.

Transformative learning had taken place as changes had occurred in Cindy's personal meaning structures (Mezirow 1990). She could clearly articulate the changes that had occurred in her understanding of planning and of extending children's learning experiences.

During the implementation of the program, the students gradually demonstrated an awareness of providing appropriate learning experiences and planning an interesting program for young children. Transformative learning was evident.

Transforming ideas about working with children

During the evaluation/planning meetings, Katie focused on positive ways to work with children. She recalled specific incidents of children's behaviour during the playgroup, for example, when a child was observed throwing books around the room, Katie asked the students for ideas about gaining her cooperation. By the end of the Kinda Kinder program, the students had become

more confident in working closely with children and gaining their cooperation in a positive manner. Katie offered positive feedback as and when this became evident. Some students found that teaching during group times was challenging. At times, Katie role modelled appropriate practice, as did the students who felt comfortable in this area. In the evaluation/planning meetings, the group talked about how they felt about these times and how they could make improvements. By the end of the year, the students had grown in confidence in this area and they all took part in taking group stories and music.

The challenging experiences experienced by the students became critical incidents for them, contributing to transformative learning. During phase two, transformative learning had occurred with changes in students' teaching practice evident. They had learnt to choose appropriate learning experiences for children and had improved the implementation of these experiences. Group members had clarified their understandings of the planning process and the value of play in children's learning, and some students had clarified the role of the teacher. Although challenging, some students had improved their work with parents.

Transforming ideas about working with parents

Changes were apparent in the way the students in my study approached their work with parents. As reported in Chapter 4, the students changed the way they valued parent participation. Early in the year, working with parents was challenging for the majority of the group, some students even believing that the parents should not attend the playgroup session. However, as the year progressed and Katie demonstrated her concern for and appreciation of family involvement, they began to see the benefit of observing interactions between children and families and to value parent participation.

Mezirow (1997: 7) has discussed the impact of learning which occurs when a point of view is transformed:

> We can have an experience in another culture that results in our critically reflecting
> on our misconceptions of this particular group. The result may be a change in point

of view toward the group involved. As a result, we may become more tolerant or more accepting of members of that group. If this happens over and over again with a number of different groups, it can lead to a transformation by accretion in our governing habit of mind.

As Katie, consistently role-modelled concern for the families attending the playgroup and they discussed this as a team, the students' points of view were transformed and their practice in this area changed.

Working with parents was a challenging area for the team and was often discussed during the group meetings. It was an advantage in the Kinda Kinder program to be able to observe the children with their parents. Some changes appeared in the way the students interacted with families and valued their participation. Katrina recognised the value in seeing the reactions of the parents to the program, acknowledging that their insights could assist her to improve her teaching practice; repeating what has already been reported, she said (S1.066):

> Seeing what the parents think of the experiences as well rather than just having you and your colleagues… so it's having their insight as well.

Once she had changed her beliefs about involving parents, Jeanne (J.088) improved her teaching practice at group time and valued parent participation. Although this was a change for Jeanne, for other students working with parents continued to be challenging and remained a focus of both informal discussion and within the evaluation/planning sessions.

Students were able to make links to the theories being developed in formal university classes. By observing the children's participation in the program, Cindy (J.076) could relate to play-based learning. At the same time, Cindy had understood the role of the teacher as 'learning alongside the children' (Vygotsky 1978); Cindy said, as previously reported (J.077):

> What I have learned out of this so far is that the role of the teacher is first and foremost to be that of a learner alongside the children.

Experience, reflection and dialogue had clarified Cindy's understanding of the role of the teacher in early childhood education.

Teacher identity

Aligning with Mezirow's 'theory to practice' (1997: 7) – relating to the concept of 'transforming a point of view' – many in the student group changed the way they saw themselves as teachers, increasingly seeing themselves as being capable in the role.

The students developed confidence in the teaching role, acknowledged that they had changed their teaching practice in a number of ways, and that, along with this, came an increase in confidence; Katie, as previously reported, said (M2.068):

> And in the end at some sessions they were really pleased with themselves, you could tell and when you read their reflections they were really pleased with themselves.

There were, however, for some of the students, aspects of the teacher's role that remained unchanged when they were in the early childhood environment. Some students saw themselves as teachers when they were in a school environment but as childminders when working with younger children. During the year, the students also began to see themselves as peer mentors. They became increasingly confident to be role models and provide support for each other.

Transformative learning, change and Kinda Kinder

It is overwhelmingly clear that, for the students, transformative learning occurred during the Kinda Kinder program. Changes were evident in the students' understanding of early childhood education and of providing appropriate children's learning experiences. Changes could also be seen in how the students worked with children, interacting confidently with them as well as guiding their behaviour in a positive manner. Working with parents, even though it was a challenging experience, was an area of learning that the students eventually acknowledged and appreciated; ultimately, they all valued the participation of parents in the program. Students' perceptions of themselves as teachers changed as their confidence grew during the year.

Towards the end of the program, one of the students commented, casually, that they had 'learnt heaps' during their year in the Kinda Kinder program.

The support of Katie, as mentor, was a vital element which enabled transformative learning to take place. Katie sensitively responded to the students throughout the program, providing opportunities for the group to have a wide-range of first-hand experiences, followed by consistent opportunities to reflect on their practice and discuss their ideas within a comfortable environment. The support of peer mentors in the Kinda Kinder program considerably strengthened the learning of individuals within the group.

In the final chapter, I review the findings of my research, make recommendations that emerge, report on the study's limitations and suggest possible avenues for future research.

CHAPTER 7

Kinda Kinder Project:
Findings, Recommendations and Reflections

This ethnographic research study provides significant information for developers of early childhood teacher education programs and provided answers to my research questions:

- What is the nature of mentoring in the Kinda Kinder program?
- What learning is taking place during the Kinda Kinder program?

In this chapter, I review the key findings and formulate a set of recommendations that emerge from my study. I also reflect on the limitations of my study and suggest possible avenues for future research. Finally, I have written a short personal reflection about my research journey.

Key findings and recommendations

The key findings and recommendations are relevant for mentoring and for promoting transformative learning. Through this research, I found that the support provided by Katie, the program's mentor, was of paramount importance to the success of the program. The supportive role of the mentor was fundamental to enabling transformative learning to occur.

Situating the mentoring within a firsthand experiential program was vital for the success of the program. The mentoring was contextually relevant, based on the students' work with children and families. As Katie worked closely with the students in the group, she was able to observe their successes and difficulties as they interacted on a continuing basis with children and families

and shared the responsibility for the planning and implementation of an early childhood, educational program. The location and set-up of the Kinda Kinder playgroup in a community setting provided benefits for preservice teachers and families from the local area, creating a valuable link between the university and the wider community.

The mentor in this study, Katie, possessed well developed interpersonal skills. She had moral purpose, being committed to the professional development of the mentees and she responded to the mentees' emotional and professional needs. From the beginning of the program, she promoted positive relationships and created a comfortable atmosphere in which the group could work.

The diverse nature of the small group of seven students in the Kinda Kinder team at the study site, although creating some initial tension, overall, proved to be beneficial, with peer mentoring unexpectedly emerging as a significant element. At the completion of the program it was clear that the students had successfully supported each other's learning and emotional needs.

Changing phases of mentoring were identified as the program progressed. As time went by, the mentor intervened less and allowed the students to experiment and face challenges for themselves.

The Kinda Kinder program, with a supportive mentor, supported transformative learning. The continued use of reflection and discussion enabled students to consider other viewpoints and address their underlying beliefs.

This study highlighted the positive outcomes of the mentoring program within the Kinda Kinder experience. As a consequence, I recommend the following:

The group mentoring program should:

- be continued as an early childhood practical placement within the Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood/Primary);
- include students from diverse backgrounds;
- provide opportunities for shared reflection and dialogue.

Mentors should:

- have well developed interpersonal skills;
- form positive, trusting relationships with mentees;
- use a range of mentoring strategies appropriate to the mentee's learning and development;
- support students by providing a balance between comfort and challenge.

Professional learning for mentors should:

- include details about roles and responsibilities of mentors;
- focus on transformative learning and the mentor's role in promoting this learning.

This research study has a significant place amongst the literature regarding mentoring and transformative learning. It confirms the view that mentoring is beneficial for preservice teachers (Jonson 2008, Raggins & Kram 2007, Kochan & Pascarelli 2003, Hansford et al. 2004, Nolan 2017) and it sits within the literature that acknowledges the benefits of peer mentoring programs (Ragins & Kram 2007, Bunting 2014).

This study adds to the literature regarding mentoring for transformative learning, highlighting the importance of the changing nature of mentoring in response to the student's learning and development (Southern 2007). The study confirms that group mentoring, with students from diverse backgrounds, supports transformative learning (Southern 2007).

Reflections

Limitations of this research

This ethnographic study took place at one site which the coordinator of the overall program had identified as representing a typical Kinda Kinder group. As with any ethnographic study, there were inevitable limitations; such as the focus being limited to only one site, however, without doubt, the ethnographic

approach to this study was advantageous as it provided highly detailed and, valuable insights into mentoring and transformative learning from the mentor's and the participating students' point of view.

Each Kinda Kinder site was unique in its way with mentors coming to the program with their specific individual experiences and approach to the mentoring role. The mentor in this study had been in the program for four years and as she was a lecturer at the university, she had additional insight into the running of the program and the expectations for the students.

This Kinda Kinder playgroup was situated within a library and although there were other playgroups in libraries, most were positioned within schools. These sites may provide additional information. The nature of mentoring may also be influenced by the particular children and families attending the playgroup. The students themselves and the group dynamics may also impact the nature of mentoring and the learning occurring at each site.

Future research

As this ethnographic research provides a detailed description of one Kinda Kinder site, it paves the way for a broader investigation into the approach taken by the program mentors to their role. Further research would do well to focus on the understanding of specific ways professional development could support mentors to promote transformative learning. Some questions that come to mind are: Do all the Kinda Kinder mentors understand transformative learning? Do they aim to promote transformative learning? Do they use similar strategies to promote this learning?

A personal reflection

This research journey has been a roller coaster ride. At times, I was clear about my research and the findings, and at other times I was very uncertain about the direction the data was taking. I had collected and analysed enormous amounts of data and after discussions with my mentor, I included three

evaluation/planning sessions instead of ten as this was more manageable and appropriate for the length of my thesis.

It took me some time to complete the data analysis using the IDR approach with many discussions with my supervisor. I realised that the data could be interpreted in a number of different ways but once I refocused on the research questions, the analysis clearly emerged.

The information gained from this research has been extremely valuable for the university. It confirms that the mentoring within the Kinda Kinder program has promoted preservice teachers' transformative learning.

This journey has been a truly emotional one that, overall, was a great pleasure. The social learning was significant and included both the study itself and discussions with supervisors and study partners. The learning curve was a steep one and it has been a most valuable experience. If I repeated the study, I would be much more efficient using the IDR approach and I would be careful to collect a manageable amount of data.

Summative statement: A 'Last Hurrah'!

For me, this ethnographic research has provided valuable details about the mentoring program that has been a part of an early childhood/primary teacher education course. It will offer information on which to base future changes to this course and information for the wider field of mentoring within early childhood teacher education.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

INFORMATION TO THE PARTICIPANTS (THE COORDINATOR, THE EARLY CHILDHOOD COLLEAGUE AND THE MENTOR) INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

You are invited to participate

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled Mentoring in Early Childhood/Primary Pre-service Teacher Education: The Kinda Kinder Program. This project is being conducted by a student researcher, Jan Hunt, as part of a Doctor of Education study at Victoria University under the supervision of Dr Andrea Nolan and Dr Ian Ling, from the Faculty of Arts, Education and Human Development.

Project explanation

This project will identify and document the nature and benefits of the mentoring taking place in the Kinda Kinder program. It will focus on the beliefs, values and practices that relate to mentoring and the relationships that form between the members of the group. It will involve observations of the actions of the mentor, the pre-service teachers and the Diploma students during the playgroup session and the audio taping of the debriefing meetings which follow the playgroup. Interviews will be held with the Coordinator, the Mentor and the Early Childhood Colleague and pre-service teachers and Diploma students will also be involved in two focus groups.

What will I be asked to do?

You will be asked to sign a consent form so that observations can be recorded of mentoring activities you are involved in during the Kinda Kinder program and debriefing sessions which will be audio recorded with your permission. The coordinator will be invited to take part in one semi-structured interview and the Early Childhood Colleague and Mentor will also be invited to take part in two semi-structured interviews (one at the end of Semester One and one at the end of the 2001 academic year). During the interviews you will have the opportunity to give your opinion about aspects of mentoring in the Kinda Kinder program.

What will I gain from participating?

If you participate in the program you will have the opportunity to reflect on the mentoring that occurs within the Kinda Kinder program with the aim of using the findings from the research to improve the organisation and quality of the mentoring program.

How will the information I give be used?

The information that you give will be recorded and analysed to identify themes and consistencies. Mentoring strategies that have been observed will be recorded in written notes and ideas and beliefs regarding mentoring that have been expressed in debriefing sessions, focus groups and interviews will also be part of the written data. The information that you provide will be used to document the nature of mentoring in the Kinda Kinder program and it will help to form recommendations for the improvement of this program. All information

provided will be kept confidential and non-identifying criteria will be used in the collection, analysis and reporting of the data.

What are the potential risks of participating in this project?

It is not anticipated that there will be any risks or burdens to participants as participation is voluntary. All names will be changed to ensure that the data cannot be tracked back to any individual. The research results will be in the form of exploration of the themes identified in the data, with participants allocated pseudonyms in any publications arising from the research. In the event that the participants are distressed, they will be able to consult with Ms Anne Graham, a trained psychologist (anne.graham@vu.edu.au: Tel 9919 2159).

How will this project be conducted?

Jan Hunt will attend the playgroup session every second week writing observations of the mentoring strategies used by the members of the Kinda Kinder team. The debriefing sessions will be audio taped. Focus groups and interviews will take place at the end of Semester One and at the end of the academic year 2011.

Who is conducting the study?

Principal Researcher: Dr. Andrea Nolan
Email: andrea.nolan@vu.edu.au
Phone: 9919 7579

Student Researcher: Jan Hunt
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Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the Principal Researcher listed above.

If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics and Biosafety Coordinator, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, telephone (03) 9919 4148.

Appendix 2

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS (VICTORIA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS) INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

You are invited to participate

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled Mentoring in Early Childhood/Primary Pre-service Teacher Education: The Kinda Kinder Program. This project is being conducted by a student researcher, Jan Hunt, as part of a Doctor of Education study at Victoria University under the supervision of Dr Andrea Nolan and Dr Ian Ling, from the Faculty of Arts, Education and Human Development.

Project explanation

This project will identify and document the nature and benefits of the mentoring taking place in the Kinda Kinder program. It will focus on the beliefs, values and practices that relate to mentoring and the relationships that form between the members of the group. It will involve observations of the actions of the mentor, the pre-service teachers and the Diploma students during the playgroup session and the audio taping of the debriefing meetings which follow the playgroup. Interviews will be held with yourself, as the Course Co-ordinator, the Mentor, the University Colleague and student focus groups.

What will I be asked to do?

You will be asked to sign a consent form so that observations can be recorded of mentoring activities you are involved in during the Kinda Kinder program and debriefing sessions which will be audio recorded with your permission. As a Pre-service teacher or Diploma student you are also invited to be part of two focus groups (one at the end of Semester One and the other at the end of the 2011 academic year) when you will be asked your opinion about aspects of the mentoring program such as how mentoring can support your practice.

What will I gain from participating?

If you participate in the program you will have the opportunity to reflect on the mentoring that occurs within the Kinda Kinder program with the aim of using the findings from the research to improve the organisation and quality of the mentoring program.

How will the information I give be used?

The information that you give will be recorded and analysed to identify themes and consistencies. Mentoring strategies that have been observed will be recorded in written notes and ideas and beliefs regarding mentoring that have been expressed in debriefing sessions, focus groups and interviews will also be part of the written data. The information that you provide will be used to document the nature of mentoring in the Kinda Kinder program and it will help to form recommendations for the improvement of this program. All information provided will be kept confidential and non-identifying criteria will be used in the collection, analysis and reporting of the data.

What are the potential risks of participating in this project?

It is not anticipated that there will be any risks or burdens to participants as participation is voluntary, however as a Victoria University student you may be anxious that your participation may affect your academic results as some of the

participants may be taught by the researcher. Pre-service teachers and Diploma students may also be concerned that their participation may affect the quality of their relationships with staff and other students.

All names of participants will be changed to ensure that the data cannot be tracked back to any individual. The research results will be in the form of exploration of the themes identified in the data, with participants allocated pseudonyms in any publications arising from the research. The researcher will endeavour to arrange that the pre-service teachers are not in a class that she teaches but if this cannot be avoided she will ensure that another staff member assesses their work. In the event that participants are distressed, they will be able to consult with Ms Anne Graham, a trained psychologist (anne.graham@vu.edu.au; Tel: 9919 2159).

How will this project be conducted?

Jan Hunt will attend the playgroup session every second week writing observations of the mentoring strategies used by the members of the Kinda Kinder team. The debriefing sessions will be audio taped. Two Focus Groups will be held, one at the end of Semester 1 and one at the end of the year

Who is conducting the study?

Principal Researcher: Dr. Andrea Nolan
                Email: andrea.nolan@vu.edu.au
                Phone: 9919 7579
Student Researcher: Jan Hunt
                Email: jan.hunt@vu.edu.au
                Phone: 9919 7460

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the Principal Researcher listed above.

If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics and Biosafety Coordinator, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, telephone (03) 9919 4148.

Appendix 3

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

INFORMATION TO THE MENTOR:
You are invited to participate in a study entitled: Mentoring in Early Childhood/Primary Pre-service Teacher Education: the Kinda Kinder Program.
This project will identify and document the nature and benefits of the mentoring taking place in the Kinda Kinder program. It will focus on the beliefs, values and practices that relate to mentoring and the relationships that form between the members of the group. It will involve observations of the actions of the mentor, the pre-service teachers and the Diploma students during the playgroup session and the audio taping of the debriefing meetings which follow the playgroup. Interviews will be held with yourself, as the Course Co-ordinator, the Mentor, the University Colleague and student focus groups.
CERTIFICATION BY SUBJECT
I, _____of _____(Suburb)
certify that I am at least 18 years old and that I am voluntarily giving my consent to participate in the study:
Mentoring in Early Childhood/Primary Pre-service Teacher Education: The Kinda Kinder Program being conducted at Victoria University by: Dr. Andrea Nolan, Dr Ian Ling and Jan Hunt.
I certify that the objectives of the study, together with any risks and safeguards associated with the procedures listed hereunder to be carried out in the research, have been fully explained to me by Jan Hunt and that I freely consent to participation involving the below mentioned procedure:

- Observations being taken and written of mentoring strategies used within the Kinda Kinder session
- Being part of debriefing sessions which will be audio taped and written notes will be made of these sessions
- Taking part in semi-structured interviews with Jan Hunt to discuss mentoring in the Kinda Kinder program

I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way.
I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept confidential.
Signed:
Date:
Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to Dr. Andrea Nolan (03) 9919 7579. If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics & Biosafety Coordinator, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, telephone (03) 9919 4148.

Appendix 4

Inductive Data Reduction Sample: Mentor in semi-structured interview 1

	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
M1.133	I try to pass that on to the students, and tell them you need to be respectful of other people using the space.	I tell them to be respectful of other people using the space.	Katie informs students about respecting community staff	Advice	**Mentoring**
M1.049	I try to make them aware of situations, like today I meant to talk with them about a little boy whose mother came in with a club foot. I forgot to talk with them about that because that might help them be more aware of interacting with him and providing experiences that will be beneficial for him and for her because that might make her feel that she is supported and they could talk to her, they are probably a similar age, but to make her feel comfortable and that might help him enjoy himself, so she can feel comfortable enough to come again and again.	I try to make students aware of family situations,	Advising students to be aware of family situations	Advice	**Mentoring**
M1.050	I always try and say when I remember to try and tell and them that I spoke to so and so today, about something, I spoke to so and so today about, you know that mother felt very uncomfortable, maybe it would be a good idea to. or something like that	I always try and say when I remember to tell them that I spoke to someone today, about something, that mother felt very uncomfortable,	Advising students to be aware of family situations	Advice	**Mentoring**
M1.056	I say to them just go up to the parents and say how has your week been? How's D been this week, what's happened, how was your weekend, just make it a casual informal introduction. Then people might feel more comfortable speaking or make a comment to you and at least you've made an effort to try to involve the parents in what's going on	I say to them just go up to the parents and say how has your week been? How's D been this week, what's happened, how was your weekend, just make it a casual informal introduction.	Katie tells students what to say to parents	Advice	**Mentoring**

	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
M1.059	I try to give advice from experience sometimes that's taken on board and sometimes it isn't.	I give advice from experience	Katie gives advice based on her experience	Advice	**Mentoring**
M1.064	And I think they do because I try to talk with them about observations, following up things from class, we talked about linking it to the play that we have talked about, the sensory play and the dramatic play and try and talk about observing individuals and talking to parents and gaining information about children and their experiences and their life and put them into the program	I think they do because I try to talk with them about observations, following up things from class, we talked about linking it to the play that we have talked about, and about observing individuals and gaining information about children and their experiences and their life and put them into the program	Katie advises students to link their practice to the theory by discussing observing children and gaining information about them	Advice	**Mentoring**
M1.068	Sometimes I may suggest setting things up in a different way or adding things, or being aware of how things look aesthetically, whether they are safe.	Sometimes I may suggest setting things up in a different way or adding things, or being aware of how things look aesthetically, whether they are safe.	Katie gives advice about setting up of experiences	Advice	**Mentoring**
M1.069	Like last week for example they left a big pair of scissors out on a table and I talked about being safe and needing to move the scissors.	last week they left a big pair of scissors out on a table and I talked about being safe and needing to move the scissors.	Katie gives advice about safety issues	Advice	**Mentoring**
M1.070	. Also setting up the environment in a certain way	. Also setting up the environment in a certain way	Katie gives advice about setting up of experiences	Advice	**Mentoring**
M1.071	. Last week we had the tables a bit too close to the sink. So, we talked about it and I said we have to move it.	. Last week we had the tables a bit too close to the sink. So, we talked about it and I said we have to move it.	Katie advises about safety issues with students	Dialogue	**Mentoring**
M1.076	So, we talked about that and what we could do for this week and they actually took the feedback on board	we talked about what we could do for this week and they actually took the feedback on board	Students took feedback on board	Dialogue	**Mentoring**
M1.077	I talked about having an area where they could start and that they needed to think about having a longer experience, stretching it out and using some action songs. So, they have incorporated that. They need also to introduce what they were doing rather than just starting. They needed to think about some strategies about getting things going.	we talked about having an area where they could start and that they needed to think about having a longer experience, stretching it out and using some action songs.	Katie gives advice about teaching practice	Advice	**Mentoring**
M1.117	or I have given ideas for ways of doing things because they don't know.	or have given ideas for ways of doing things because they don't know.	Katie has given students ideas	Advice	**Mentoring**

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	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
M1.083	The other thing that I want to say is that the other strategies in my role as a mentor where I like them to think about respecting each other so the strategies of respecting children, respecting the parents because sometimes, not so much with this group but in previous years there have been a few judgemental comments made about certain parents so we are looking at respecting	in my role as a mentor where I like them to think about respecting each other how to respect children, parents	Katie encourages thought about respect for others	Advice	**Mentoring**
M1.106	It sometimes a sense that I get that she feels she's a bit beyond that, she feels like she is the organiser and that's the role she's taken on. So, I have had to ask her sometimes to put that away and to come and be involved in the play	I have had to ask her sometimes to put that away and to come and be involved in the play	Katie advises students to interact with children	Advice	**Mentoring**
M1.003	I am the Early Childhood Colleague and the mentor, I have a combined role so I am able to...well it's a combined role so it's tricky really.	I have a combined role	Having a combined role of ECC and mentor is tricky	Connections	**Mentoring**
M1.004	I guess consider myself more as a mentor than an Early Childhood Colleague with being able to negotiate with and talk to the university staff about what's going on.	I consider myself more as a mentor	Being mentor is my main role	Connections	**Mentoring**
M1.005	So, because I actually teach at the university I know what the expectations are and the guidelines so that's probably more the early childhood colleague part so I can discuss ideas with my peers	I teach at the university so I know the expectations and the guidelines,	Teaching at the university assists mentor to understand expectations and the guidelines	Connections	**Mentoring**
M1.137	Because I find that I am the person who does that but I have had a few years now and I sort of know what the expectations are.	Because I find that I am the person who does that but I have had a few years now and I sort of know what the expectations are.	Katie experience helps in knowing expectations	Connections	**Mentoring**
M1.122	In previous years I have helped with the group time but then I have felt that I am the one doing it. Even though I am role modelling they just sit back and do nothing so I actually prefer to get them, to give them some ideas and see how they go and then I ask them would you like me to and they are happy to try things on their	In previous years I have helped with the group time but then I have felt that I am the one doing it.	I am wary of taking over	Experiential learning	**Mentoring**
M1.058	I don't do that as much as I used to because as well as role modelling I think they need to have the time to trial their	I don't do that as much as I used to because I think they need to have the time for trial and error of their practice	Katie allows students time for trial and error	Experiential learning	**Mentoring**

	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
	their, a bit of trial and error and to see what things work and what things don't work, on their.				
M1.067	But I still want them to find out for themselves whether things work or not.	But I still want them to find out for themselves whether things work or not.	Katie allows students to discover for themselves	Experiential learning	**Mentoring**
M1.073	last week another example when they did the musical statues and it wasn't very successful at all because we had talked about what was appropriate for certain ages and how it might be a good idea to gather them all in because they just sort of got them all out there and they stood there	last week the students did the musical statues and it wasn't very successful	The students do not always succeed in their practice	Experiential learning	**Mentoring**
M1.074	and Katrina and Cindy, Katrina was the one talking but she didn't introduce it, she just stood there and said we are all going to play musical statues when the music stops you all need to stop and luckily there were few older children who knew want to do.	Katrina just stood there and said we are all going to play musical statues when the music stops you all need to stop	Students did not explain appropriately to children	Experiential learning	**Mentoring**
M1.079	But I still want them to find their way. I want them to set things up and find out, sometimes I have to bite my tongue because I know it's not going to work but they need to figure that out for themselves.	I still want them to find their way. Sometimes I know it's not going to work but they need to find that out for themselves.	Students need to learn from experience	Experiential learning	**Mentoring**
M1.080	Another example might be putting a big bucket of water, like a full bucket of water outside near the finger paint one time and all they did was just get soaking wet and then the next week S5 said we only need to put a little bit of water in that	Another example might be putting a full bucket of water outside near the finger paint the children just get soaking wet and then the next week Jane said we only need to put a little bit of water in that	Students learn from experience	Experiential learning	**Mentoring**
M1.081	So, I think you need to practice and find out for yourself. They learn through their practice.	So, I think you need to practice and find out for yourself	Students learn from experience	Experiential learning	**Mentoring**
M1.082	By having someone tell you something all the time you're not going to. It's not going to make a difference until you have a turn at trying and then you find your way and you find that doesn't really work.	By having someone tell you something all the time it's not going to make a difference until you have a turn at trying	Just telling students does not work	Experiential learning	**Mentoring**
M1.066	I guess my main strategies would be questioning, trial and error, so get them to try things that they want to try with a bit of guidance and perhaps suggesting a few things or a few variations	so, I guess my main strategies would be questioning, using trial and error with guidance and giving suggestions	Katie's strategies include questioning, allowing trial and error with guidance and giving suggestions	Katie questions, gives advice and allows for experiential learning	**Mentoring**

	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
M1.060	. I probably ask them to reflect each week on how things went and that works sometimes and it doesn't others but I want them to think about why things have been successful or not successful and sometimes they talk more about that than others.	I ask them to reflect each week on how things went and that only works sometimes but I want them to think about why things have been successful or not successful	Katie asks students to reflect	Reflection	**Mentoring**
M1.061	Ask them questions, lots of questions and that's successful sometimes. Sometimes they're happy, they are not big talkers in that way.	Ask them questions, lots of questions and that's successful sometimes.	Katie asks questions to support student's growth	Dialogue	**Mentoring**
M1.062	But even if they don't answer them I like them to think that they thinking about it. Whether they respond to it or not, maybe they can think about it rather than just talking about what happened they can think about things themselves	But even if they don't answer them I like them to think that they thinking about it.	Katie asks questions to encourages students to think about their practice	Dialogue	**Mentoring**
M1.116	I think they didn't used to, they have improved a lot and I'm hoping that I had tried to support them and role model	I think they didn't used to, they have improved a lot and I'm hoping that I had tried to support them and role model	Katie has role modelled setting up experiences	Role modelling	**Mentoring**
M1.055	I probably try to role model a fair bit, especially when I'm talking to the parents because that's a problem, not a problem just an area where they feel uncomfortable so if I make it a casual sort of how you're going.	I try to role model, especially when I'm talking to the parents	Katie role models talking with parents	Role modelling	**Mentoring**
M1.057	I probably role model setting up.	I probably role model setting up.	Katie role models setting up	Role modelling	**Mentoring**
M1.072	I try to be demonstrative about moving things that are unsafe or perhaps dangerous	I try to be demonstrative about moving things that are unsafe or perhaps dangerous	Katie demonstrates safe practice	Role modelling	**Mentoring**
M1.075	I was doing the music so I was trying to get everyone dancing and lift the level of enthusiasm through a bit of role modelling because they were just standing there like dummies really, there were 5 of them just standing there and at the end that was it, they didn't close it, they didn't finish it, they didn't complete it.	I was doing the music and trying to get everyone dancing and lift the level of enthusiasm through a bit of role modelling because they were just standing there like dummies really, at the end that was it, they didn't close it, they didn't finish it	Katie role-models enthusiasm during music experiences	Role modelling	**Mentoring**
M1.006	But the mentor is more important to me because it's about helping and guiding the students in their learning and their practice.	the mentor is more important to me because it's about helping and guiding the students in their learning and their practice.	The mentor's role is to guide the students in their learning and their practice	Guiding	**Mentoring**

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	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
M1.144	I referred her for support so I hope that was helpful but I think for the community to have a resource like that where for that family in particular and other families, even today with some new families, single mothers in particular who are young, who feel very conscious and feel like that there are either on show or they don't understand or they are not sure what happens<	I was able to refer her to obtain support,	Parent accessed support services through Katie	Work with families	**Mentoring**
M1.043	I spend a lot of time talking with the parents because I think that's important, to make them feel comfortable and feel welcome when they come and I guess I am kind of casual so they feel comfortable to come on a regular basis because they don't take any preconceived ideas about what the expectations are.	I spend a lot of time talking with the parents making them feel comfortable and welcome	Katie provides a casual environment to make parents feel comfortable	Work with families	**Mentoring**
M1.044	So, they feel comfortable and they can talk to others or they can sit down and play with their children. It's a safe place	they can talk to others or they can sit down and play with their children.	Parents can join in with children or talk with others	Work with families	**Mentoring**
M1.045	and I spend a lot of time, I guess I notice who needs some extra time to talk to.	and I spend a lot of time, I guess I notice who needs some extra time to talk to.	Katie show awareness of parents needs	Work with families	**Mentoring**
M1.046	So, may be the parents who are on their or look like they are struggling or look like they are uncomfortable in the setting, I make sure I spend a lot of time talking with them and making them feel comfortable.	parents who are on their or look like they are struggling or uncomfortable, I make sure I spend a lot of time talking with them and making them feel comfortable.	Katie spends time making sure parents are comfortable	Work with families	**Mentoring**
M1.048	One family last year I had to get some legal advice for them so I guess my role as a mentor teacher is also to give advice and support.	I had to get some legal advice for a family so my role as a mentor teacher is also to give advice and support.	Katie role is to give advice and support to families	Work with families	**Mentoring**
M1.142	But I think that out ways the real value for the parents who are lonely, who have no support or who have no one to talk to,	the real value is for parents who are lonely, who have no support or who have no one to talk to,	KK is valuable for parents who have no support	Work with families	**Mentoring**
M1.143	I had a family who came for the last two years in a row with a lot of significant issues with abuse, physical abuse, some really unpleasant things going on and we needed to get support for that family and they kept coming back because they felt comfortable. She said I like to come and talk to you, I like to come and be here with you	I had a family who came for the last two years in a row with a lot of significant issues of physical abuse, we needed to get support for that family and they kept coming back because they felt comfortable.	KK provides support for families with significant issues	Work with families	**Mentoring**

	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
M1.107	The first week I asked who would like to initially welcome the parents and S6 volunteered so S6 then had a chance to talk to the parents and sort of be the face of the welcoming person	The first week I asked who would like to initially welcome the parents, that's what it was originally, an initial welcome to the parents,	Katie asked students for volunteers to welcome parents	Experiential learning	**Student learning and development**
M1.040	The students, it benefits the students because they learn to put theory into practice	it benefits the students because they learn to put theory into practice	Students put theory into practice	Theory practice links	**Student learning and development**
M1.041	the students benefit because they learn to interact with parents, they get to interact with children they learn how to play appropriately with children, they learn how to communicate with each other and they learn how to communicate with and get on with the library staff	the students benefit because they learn to interact with parents, children they learn how to play appropriately with children, communicate with each other and library staff	Students learn to interact with children, parents, each other and library staff	Interactions	**Student learning and development**
M1.091	So, she was actually taking advice, and that was really good for S5 because S5 has been taking on board and still practicing that.	she was actually taking advice, and that was really good for S5	Feedback - Students benefit from the positive feedback from other students		**Student learning and development**
M1.093	: yes, I think it's really valuable getting feedback from other students. she was quite chuffed about that so she has taken that on board.	it's really valuable getting feedback from other students.	feedback from students encourages reflection improves practice	Collaborative learning	**Student learning and development**
M1.094	She sets out the puzzles and the books and she thinks a bit more carefully about how things look now and to make them a little bit more inviting. Like she set-up the dolls and the home corner and she said there's not a lot out there but I have tried to set things up by put ting the dolls in the baths and dressing them.	She thinks a bit more carefully about how things look now and to make them a little bit more inviting	feedback from students encourages reflection improves practice	Teaching practice	**Student learning and development**
M1.098	But S5 just keep going, she had been following advice that we had been discussing earlier. She's a quiet achiever, she absorbs it and she just gets on with it and its really pleasing	S5 had been following advice that we had been discussing earlier.	Feedback -Students give each other positive feedback	Collaborative learning	**Student learning and development**
M1.096	. I know that S6 was saying something about setting something up and S7 was part of it so she said oh I like that S7, I really like that, I'm going to take a photo of it.	S6 said oh I like that S7, I really like that, I'm going to take a photo of it.	Feedback -Students give each other positive feedback	Collaborative learning	**Student learning and development**
M1.099	Other strategies – coming up with good ideas, we talked about planning together from the beginning, so what needed to happen in the planning, so they had about four or five different goes at it, so they took turns and S6, S7 had one go I think but he didn't come as consistently though. But when he	there was one session when S1 and S4 said to him you were really good with the kids today so they were using a lot of positive reinforcement. They noticed and they told him	Feedback -Students give each other positive feedback	Collaborative learning	**Student learning and development**

	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
	was there he was very hands on with the children he got down to their level, he used a lot of eye contact and actually there was one session when S1 and S4 said to him you were really good with the kids today so they were using a lot of positive reinforcement. They noticed and they told him				
M1.089	I think they have improved their practice and it is a bit hard, I am thinking about the diploma students because it has been a little while since they have been there but I think they have improved their practice by listening to each other and watching each other so I think they have actually paid attention to each other's ideas,	Students have improved their practice. diploma students have improved their practice by listening to each other	Students improve their practice by listening to others	Collaborative learning	**Student learning and development**
M1.087	. It is still quite basic but it is OK. But at least they are thinking and we try to show that there is a link by discussing the experiences and the observations and trying to link it.	Planning is basic but it is OK. we try to show that there is a link by discussing the experiences and the observations.	Students improve their practice by listening to others	Collaborative learning	**Student learning and development**
M1.119	the other changes, they listen to each other pretty well,	they listen to each other pretty well,	Students improve their practice by listening to others	Collaborative learning	**Student learning and development**
M1.100	Sebastian was role modelling for the first-year students and I noticed it. He was very good, very interactive, he got down low so we talked a lot about getting down to their level and using eye contact, listening, not talking all the time, just being part of what's going on	Sebastian role modelled for the first-year students	Students role model for others	Collaborative learning	**Student learning and development**
M1.092	Some of them, I would say S4 is very slap dash at the way she sets up, she chucks things out and S5 is becoming a lot more careful. We have talked about putting soft toys and incorporating them into the play by having a book with them, setting it up so that it looks fun and inviting rather than chucking out babies' toys. So, I've seen S5 go and change things around after S4 a has set things up	S4 is very slap dash at the way she sets up and S5 is becoming a lot more careful	Students role model for others	Collaborative learning	**Student learning and development**
M1.090	for example, I know that one time, S5 does a lot of the setting up for the babies in that big room in the library area and I know that S6 wanted to help her do this one day when I arrived and she was asking S5 what was the best way to do things and she said to S5 I like the way you do things because it looks good	S5 does a lot of the setting up for the babies and S6 wanted to help her she asked S5 the best way to do things	Students role model for others	Collaborative learning	**Student learning and development**

	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
M1.095	So, I think listening to each other asking for advice, I think that working together –they have taken photos of each other's set-ups	Students have been listening to each other and asking for advice	Students take advice from other students	Collaborative learning	**Student learning and development**
M1.097	So, they respond quite well to each other and support each other in a positive way	So, they respond quite well to each other and support each other in a positive way	they support each other in a positive way	Collaborative learning	**Student learning and development**
M1.024	I think that the Diploma students were all welcomed, I felt that they felt were there that they had even time, or the same sort of chance to contribute ideas and to use their experience and talk about what they wanted to do and evaluate the children.	They had the same chance to contribute ideas and to use their experience and talk about what they wanted to do and evaluate the children	Th students all had the same chance to be involved in the program	Collaborative learning	**Student learning and development**
M1.051	Some of them are more comfortable talking with parents, the second-years are, Katrina and Cindy. Jeanne too. S2 is getting more comfortable with that.	Some students are more comfortable interacting with parents	Developing confidence interacting with parents	Confidence	**Student learning and development**
M1.052	S5 finds that very difficult, she's very shy but I think she is becoming more confident and she's become more familiar with new faces and the setting. I think that when she feels comfortable enough in the setting shell feel more confident.	S5 is becoming more confident and more familiar new faces and the setting	Developing confidence interacting with parents	Confidence	**Student learning and development**
M1.101	when I read S1s reflections they weren't as I expected. I expected, she seems quite confident I think in the setting with her peers, not necessarily with the parents or the children but with her peers she has got to that point.	S1 seems quite in the setting with her peers, not necessarily with the parents or the children's	Student confident among peers	Confidence	**Student learning and development**
M1.102	I asked her early on if she could be someone who could take a little bit, you know did she feel confident in taking charge because I talked to S4, I talked to everyone and she seemed to say ok I'll do it	I asked her early on if she could take charge and she said ok I'll do it	Katrina agreed to take a leading role	Confidence	**Student learning and development**
M1.103	as being the contact person and she seemed quite happy to do that and then she got some resources and I'll work here and I'll get that I'll do the planning this week but can you do that so she took that role on board	as being the contact person and she seemed quite happy to do that and then she got some resources and I'll work here and I'll get that I'll do the planning this week but can you do that so she took that role on board	Katrina agreed to take a leading role	Confidence	**Student learning and development**
M1.104	Katrina was freaked out about that and she said in her reflections that she was quite nervous because she didn't know what she was going to have to do even though I sort of thought that I had explained it. She said she felt the pressure	S1 was freaked out about the leading role and she said in her reflections that she was quite nervous because she didn't know what she was going to have to do	Katrina was worried about taking the leading role	Confidence	**Student learning and development**

	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
	of trying to have to do the right thing, she didn't know what that quite was and she said she felt really unnerved by being seen as the person who knew things when she didn't think that she did. So that was very interesting because that's not evident when you see her in front of her peers				
M1.105	. I think that she is quite confident with her peers, not necessarily parents or children that with her peers she stands up more, she stands up tall, she takes the written things around, she organises the pictures. It's almost like she sometimes seems to be the person who doesn't need to play with the children	S1 is quite confident with her peers, not necessarily parents or children that with her peers she stands up more	Katrina is confident in front of her peers and takes on responsibility	Confidence	**Student learning and development**
M1.120	they are increasing their confidence with the parents and the group time well it's a slow process with the group time.	they are increasing their confidence with the parents and the group time	Students have increased in confidence with parents and group time	Confidence	**Student learning and development**
M1.121	They are trying, I think compared with other groups they are probably hesitant to try things and they are a bit nervous because I think they feel quite judged by the parents.	they are hesitant to try things and they are a bit nervous because I think they feel quite judged by the parents.	Students are hesitant as they think that they are being judged by parents	Confidence	**Student learning and development**
M1.086	I think some people like s1 wanted to do it because she liked to have control over it	some people like Katrina wanted to do it because she liked to have control over it.	Katrina likes to take control	Confidence	**Student learning and development**
M1.053	They have talked about the group and feeling like they're being watched and they all, as a group find that very tricky, especially at group time because they all feel unsure of what they are doing	They feel like they're being watched at group time and they feel unsure of what they are doing	Lack of confidence in taking group time	Confidence	**Student learning and development**
M1.084	Respecting needs to start within the group as well is so taking everybody's idea on board, listening to the diploma students because they were outsiders so listening to what they had to say and making them as involved and getting them to bring resources and balancing at the jobs and tasks so I think that's something that's really important and just making sure that you take a turn at something whether it be the planning or the washing, the setting up inside, the setting up outside, taking responsibility for getting the broom. So, they all take turns	respecting needs to start within the group through taking everybody's idea on board, listening to others and taking turns	Respect begins with listening to others	Collaborative learning	**Student learning and development**
M1.139	The library setting is much more valuable than in a school placement because just from students at Uni they talk very	the library setting is much more valuable than in a school placement	Library site is better than a school setting	Site	**Student learning and development**

Appendices

	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
	openly about mentor teachers never being in the room, some of them have not met the mentor teacher, they run it all on their.				
M1.009	the role of preservice teachers is to participate in the partnership. So, what they need to do is to make sure they learn from their practice and put into practice what they learn at uni their theory, and they need to put into practice what they know.	students need to make sure they learn from their practice and put into practice what they learn at uni their theory, and what they know.	Students put theory into practice and learn through praxis	Teaching practice	**Student learning and development**
M1.010	Preservice teachers should follow the guidelines and expectations of the uni put out. So, I think that's important that they know what they are meant to be doing as far as the written expectations and guidelines	Students should follow the guidelines and expectations of the uni and know the guidelines and written expectations.	Students should know and follow the guidelines and expectations of the uni.	Teaching practice	**Student learning and development**
M1.011	The students' role is to learn through their practice.	The students' role is to learn through their practice.	Students learn through praxis	Teaching practice	**Student learning and development**
M1.012	Th students also learn through interacting with parents and children	Students learn through interacting with parents and children	Students learn through interacting with parents and children	Teaching practice	**Student learning and development**
M1.013	The student learning is about getting along with each other. So, it's about interactions, practicing interaction skills.	Students role is about practicing interaction skills	Students learn to get along with each other	Teaching practice	**Student learning and development**
M1.014	So, the students' role, yeah, I don't know, I think it's just about participating in the partnership programme really	Students role is about participating in praxis	Students learn through praxis	Teaching practice	**Student learning and development**
M1.123	They have become keener observers, that is the main thing and I was really pleased today because we had talked last week about using observation, how can we do this after our class, how can we do this properly.	They have become keener observers,	Students have improved in observation	Teaching practice	**Student learning and development**
M1.124	. I just want them to write something and to think about the links and I'm going to get some exercise books and we have to talk about confidentiality and not leave the books around anywhere but I left one up on the fridge and it was under something and we had a whole page of observations today. So, I was really pleased	I left a book on the fridge and we had a whole page of observations today.	Students have improved in observation	Teaching practice	**Student learning and development**
M1.125	S5 remembers things really well and she contributes on a lot to the group. Whereas the others they just wrote and it was only a sentence and that's all it needed to be, that's what we talked about.	S5 remembers things really well and she contributes on a lot to the group. Whereas the others they just wrote and it was only	Students contributions vary	Teaching practice	**Student learning and development**

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	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
		a sentence and that's all it needed to be, that's what we talked about.			
M1.126	I was really pleased, they have been keener observers. I have been very happy about that. So, there is a major Point I reckon.	I was really pleased, they have been keener observers. There is a major Point I reckon.	Students have improved in observation	Teaching practice	**Student learning and development**
M1.063	sometimes I think they link what they do with in class not enough because I think they see it as something they have to do before they go to school, the school placement in the afternoon	students link their practice with their classes but not enough	Students do not always link their practice with the theory	Teaching practice	**Student learning and development**
M1.088	M: wave tried to link with the frameworks but we probably haven't had enough time to talk about that	M: I've tried to link planning to the frameworks but haven't had enough time to talk about that	No time to talk about links to frameworks	Teaching practice	**Student learning and development**
M1.112	They allocate themselves, one washes up, they fold all the blankets and put them on the table, one stands up and they pass everything. It is a very organised outfit. They get the broom, they get the vacuum, no other groups have got the vacuum cleaner, ever, that's all from them, I've just let them go, I've wanted them to figure things out. We've had to leave it clean but previously we might just sweep under the table	They work together to complete the tasks together	Students organise themselves to complete tasks as a team	Teaching practice	**Student learning and development**
M1.113	So, I would say the use of time, knowing how things are set-up in advance	So, I would say the use of time,	Students have improved in time management	Teaching practice	**Student learning and development**
M1.114	being very careful to tidy up and being aware of the environment, aware of expectations of the library. So, making sure we put things that we they were, making sure we put the keys away in a safe spot, making sure that we don't put things in the garage in the way, being careful, not leaving the garage open and being careful with the keys	being very careful to tidy up and being aware of the environment, aware of expectations of the library staff.	Students have improved in their awareness of the library expectations	Teaching practice	**Student learning and development**
M1.085	S3 did the planning last week or the week before so the first years have been doing it, they have discussed it, they discuss it by email through the week and then they send it through on a Monday night but what they put on the plan, they formulate it themselves and it links to the framework.	the first years have been planning and they discuss it by email and then they send it through on a Monday night	The first year's plan together before the playgroup	Teaching practice	**Student learning and development**
M1.054	at group time they do, yes, that's something we talked about last week. Because we talked about changing our approach	The group said we feel very nervous because we feel like they are looking at us	Students have made group time more valuable	Teaching practice	**Student learning and development**

	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
	and about making it more valuable and they said we feel very nervous because we feel like they are looking at us				
M1.078	And that's what S3 did today, she said this is what we are going to do today, were going to play musical statues, remember from last week, we stop the music and were going to do that three or four times and then were going to do some songs. She took that advice on board so when we had our evaluation session they're listening and paying attention.	Jeanne took that advice on board.	S3 improved group time	Teaching practice	**Student learning and development**
M1.108	Students have become much more efficient in organising their time while they are there. So, they all come in at 8.30 and they get on with it.	They have become much more efficient in organizing their time	Students have improved in time management	Teaching practice	**Student learning and development**
M1.109	So S1 and S4 aren't as good as that but the girls who were there today, S5, S2 and S3, the reason that they didn't miss the others is that they probably do more of the setting up and they just got on with it.	S1 and S4 aren't as good as the girls who were there today, S5, S2 and S3, the reason they didn't miss the others is that they probably do more of the setting up	First year students got on with setting up	Teaching practice	**Student learning and development**
M1.110	They have become efficient at setting up, they know how they want things to be in advance because we have talked about it the week before and the plan, one of them has done the plan and emailed it had on Monday or Sunday night so they all have a copy of it.	That have become efficient at setting up and know how they want things to be in advance because we have talked about it the week before and they all have a copy of it.	Students are efficient at setting up as they are prepared before hand	Teaching practice	**Student learning and development**
M1.111	. So, I would say they are efficient in their use of time, they are all organised in their cleaning up, the cupboards are getting a bit messy again but they're a very good group and they organise themselves to tidy up very quickly.	they are efficient in their use of time, they are all organised in their cleaning up	Students are organised and efficient in use of time	Teaching practice	**Student learning and development**
M1.115	they are becoming much better at setting up experiences.	they are becoming much better at setting up experiences.	Students are becoming better at setting up experiences	Teaching practice	**Student learning and development**
M1.118	I would have hoped from our second-years that they would have had a bit more insight into different aesthetic ways of setting things up but I don't think they do actually at all, not really, not compared to other years.	I would have hoped from our second-years that they would have had a bit more insight into different aesthetic ways of setting things up but I don't think they do actually at all, no really, not compared to other years.	2nd years do not have insight into setting up the environment aesthetically	Teaching practice	**Student learning and development**

	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
M1.025	Because I know that Renata and Sebastian were very… they comfortable enough to do that and they were welcomed by the group I felt.	S6 and S7 were very comfortable and they were welcomed by the group I felt.	Th Dips were welcomed by the group	Team membership	**Student learning and development**

Appendix 5

Inductive Data Reduction Sample: Evaluation/Planning Meeting 1

	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
R 1.001	M: How do you think it went today? What are your feelings on how it went? S6 what do you think?	The mentor enquired as to how the students thought the day's session went: what were the feelings of individual students.	Identifying individual student perceptions and feelings	Mentor explores feelings	Mentoring
R 1.002	S6: I think it went really well. I didn't expect there to be that many children here straight away. It was a little overwhelming but once you got into it...	One student thought it went well although with so many children there it was overwhelming at the beginning. It was overwhelming to begin but it went really well.	Overwhelming at first but then OKS6 it went well with a lot of children	Comfort zones	Feelings
R 1.003	M It is a little overwhelming too because that area even though it looks not so small, when it's crowded by parents you feel it. So, it's really helpful when we have the outdoor, because then there is more of a flow through so the children and the adults are spread out. So, I think we'll try and make a good effort. We open this door. This door is trickier to keep open because it's heavier and it's a bit funny with chairs keeping doors open because it's a bit of a hazard, but this one we can leave open, but again in the winter it gets quite cold.	While accepting that it was overwhelming when there was a large number of parents and children present the mentor suggested ways of opening up the space.	Reassuring first, then offering alternative possibilities	Reassurance	Mentoring
R 1.004	M: So, you were surprised but pleased about the number. What about you S5? How did you feel about it?	The mentor enquired as to how the students thought the day's session went:	Identifying individual student perceptions and feelings	Mentor explores feelings	Mentoring

	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
		what were the feelings of individual students.			
R 1.005	S5: Good. I didn't expect that many kids, but it was really good.	Jane thought that the playgroup session went really well.	Students have positive feelings about the session.	Comfort zones	Feelings
R 1.006	M: Yeah, we've had thirty. That's why last week I was sort of a little surprised that there weren't as many because normally... I think normally, in previous years (Well this is the fourth year) we've had about between so that was really good for the first week. Fantastic. Fifteen to eighteen children every week. And it is a bit overwhelming at the start too because everyone comes in. We have parents who aren't sure what the story is and aren't sure what you're doing and aren't sure what they're doing and not even sure what the children can do and what they can't do. But when everyone settles in to what's meant to happen they feel more comfortable, but you did a really good job.	The mentor told the students that it is a bit overwhelming at the start because everyone attends and the parents aren't sure what to do but they will settle in and feel more comfortable.	Reassuring with reasons for feeling overwhelmed	Reassurance	Mentoring
R 1.007	S6: I think it went really well. I didn't expect there to be that many children here straight away. It was a little overwhelming but once you got into it...	S6 thought it was overwhelming to begin but it went really well.	Overwhelming at first but then OK	Comfort zones	Feelings
R 1.008	M What about you S2. How did you find the whole thing?	The mentor asked S2 how she found the whole thing.	The mentor asked individual students about their overall feelings for the day	Mentor explores feelings	Mentoring
R 1.009	M: Excellent. Okay. So, what about you S1? How do you feel about how it went today?	The mentor asked S1 how she thought it went today.	The mentor asked individual students about their overall feelings for the day	Mentor explores feelings	Mentoring
R 1.010	M: How do you think it went today? What are your feelings on how it went? S6 what do you think?	The mentor asked S6 for her feelings about the day.	The mentor asked individual students about their overall feelings for the day	Mentor explores feelings	Mentoring
R 1.011	M: Yeah. So how did you feel about, I mean I don't normally to be honest have a lot to do with group time. I sort of feel like it's not really for me to...I think it's really good for you	The mentor commented that it is good for the students as a group to take leadership of the Kinda Kinder.	The mentor told the students to leadership of KK	Advice	Mentoring

	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
	people as a group to take leadership of the Kinda Kinder. Because for me...				
R 1.012	M: Why was that do you think?	M: Why was that do you think?	The mentor asked for reasons for thoughts	Problem solving	Mentoring
R 1.013	Okay S5 what do you think about the space?	The mentor asked S5 what she thought about the space.	The mentor asked S5 for her ideas about the space	Mentor encourages reflection	Mentoring
R 1.014	M: Did you feel happy about how the equipment was set-up? Was that okay?	The mentor asked if the students were happy about how the equipment was set-up?	The mentor asked the students how they felt about the room set-up	Mentor encourages reflection	Mentoring
R 1.015	M: We should at some point have a good look through them and talk about their ages and their interests. But I think first we'll just have a general chat about how we felt about it.	The mentor commented that the group should talk about the ages and interests of the children but to begin they would focus on their general feeling about the sessions.	The mentor explained about the reflection session	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.016	M: I thought everyone worked well as a team today. I said to Jan, 'I can't believe that you people here hardly know each other. Some of you have more experience than others. Just got on with it together and Very good cleaning up. I think you're the best cleaner upper-errs I've ever seen. No, it is very important. Yeah so well done. You were very efficient as a team. So, you worked really well. The planning was organised. Everyone knew what they were going to do. Everyone turned up. It makes a big difference. So well done everyone.	The mentor thought the group worked well as a team today and that they were organised.	Positive feedback about working as a team	Feedback	Mentoring
R 1.017	M: It's actually the adults that take up the space, not the children. And I think though the outside helps with that because you have more of a flow through, so you haven 't got sort of everyone mostly there and some of the parents with the younger children don't want them painting or there a bit, you know, they sort of like the carpeted area. And it was very busy out there. We had a lot of dress up. There was a lot going on out there. So, I think sometimes you feel a bit, overwhelmed anyway, but it was the first time so I know what you mean. I think sometimes too we'll need to sort of allocate people to certain areas and they can sort of rotate or	The mentor suggested allocating students to certain areas and rotating the activities as a way of getting to know children.	The mentor made suggestions about organising the students in the environment	Advice	Mentoring

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	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
	you can get to know what certain children like to do because some children always come in and it's a settling thing, they always do a painting or they all they want to sit at the play dough or they always want to read a book first. Alright. So that's important. We can talk about delegating positions and areas in the room as well.				
R 1.018	S4: I thought like S1 said it was very...claustrophobic at times, but I think other than that it went really well. I mean we all found a place, which I think was really important, and we were all interactive with the children, which is very important and the group time went well.	Cindy agreed that initially the room felt claustrophobic; eventually, however, the students all found a place in the room and interacted with the children.	S4 reflected on the way the students worked in the environment	Reflection	Collaborative learning
R 1.019	S2: I thought we were really organised. Sometime we were a little bit scattered, but other than that I think, we all like separated and went in different little groups and it was good I reckon.	Jacinta thought that, while sometimes a little bit scattered, the group was really well organised. They had all separated and had clustered into different groups which was good.	The group though scattered was well organised	Reflection	Collaborative learning
R 1.020	S2: I thought it went well.	S2: I thought it went well.	The session went well.	Reflection	Collaborative learning
R 1.021	S5: Yeah, it was good.	S5 felt that the room set-up was good.	The student reflects on the room set-up	Reflection	Collaborative learning
R 1.022	S1: It went okay. As you said it sometimes felt like it was a bit... Almost cluttered. One of us will be standing here, but there will be like no one behind us but if you do turn around it's almost like there's not enough space with the number of adults we had. Because we take up so much room ourselves...	Katrina thought that there was insufficient space for the number of adults in the room.	There was insufficient space.	Reflection	Collaborative learning
R 1.023	M: Did you think, did you have a look around? Actually, that's what I meant to say to you. Did you have a look around and see what was going on during the group? Did you see who was listening, who was talking? Who wasn't listening? Who could see, who couldn't see?	The mentor asked the students if they had looked around to see what was going on during the group activities.	The mentor asks the students about what they observed during group time	Mentor encourages reflection	Mentoring
R 1.024	S3: There were a lot of kids who couldn't sit there so the parents ended up just going.	Jeanne noted that there were a lot of children who couldn't sit there so the parents ended up just going.	Jeanne shared observations about group time	Reflection	Collaborative learning

	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
R 1.025	M: Okay so maybe for next week then...	The mentor asked students to plan for the following week.	Mentor provides opportunity for students to contribute to planning	Encourages discussion	Mentoring
R 1.026	S4: DO more songs.	S4: We could do more songs.	Students planning together	Problem solving	Collaborative learning
R 1.027	S2: And change the books. They just want to sit still. I noticed that three mums just left.	Jacinta suggested changing the books.	Students planning together	Problem solving	Collaborative learning
R 1.028	M: Okay well perhaps then, how do you feel for next week, um for the group time.	The mentor asked students to plan for the following week.	M asks students to plan	Encourages discussion	Mentoring
R 1.029	S1: Even um. You don't necessarily have to do just singing. You can do kind of body movements. Just things like that.	Katrina said that they don't necessarily have to do just singing but can do body movements [as well].	Students planning together	Problem solving	Collaborative learning
R 1.030	M: What the previous years, the students have found, because generally the age of the children mostly from previous years, and it could be similar here. They're mostly toddler-ish. You know, between two and four. Generally, most of them. So, I think the movement thing...	The mentor supported S1s suggestion of movement experiences and gave justification	Mentor supported student suggestion	Feedback	Mentoring
R 1.031	S1: It also gets the parents involved.	Katrina added that movement gets the parents involved.	Students planning for parents' involvement		Collaborative learning
R 1.032	M: That's it. So, circle games are good. You know, Hoky-poky, Dingle dangle scarecrow, row row row your boat. All those sorts of action things. So, you can get children and parents together.	The mentor suggested that circle games are good, action thing, so you can get children and parents together.	M gives direct advice about the program	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.033	S1: You know J and his mother. Obviously English isn't her first language. While we were doing incy-wincy spider I saw her trying to do it. She was watching us and going off and trying to learn how to do it as well.	Katrina commented that she noticed a parent who does not have English as her first language trying to do Inky Wincey Spider.	Katrina shares her observations about parent taking part in the program	Reflection	Collaborative learning
R 1.034	M: Perfect. That's what we're doing here isn't it. What we're looking to do is to encourage parents playing with their children. And that's fantastic that she got something out of it today. That's fantastic. So, I would be concentrating, from what we saw today, (the rhyming) so some more nursery rhymes. I feel like it's always good to start with something that they're familiar with. It settles people down. They feel comfortable.	The mentor agreed with Katrina: they should encourage parents to play with their children.	M gave advice about using nursery rhymes	Advice	Mentoring

	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
R 1.035	S6: I reckon do that first because then...	Renata agreed with doing songs first	Students planning together	Problem solving	Collaborative learning
R 1.036	S4: It gets everyone involved...	Cindy agreed that doing songs gets everyone involved.	Students planning together	Problem solving	Collaborative learning
R 1.037	S6: Yeah and by the songs it kind of calms them down.	Renata commented that songs calm the children down.	Students planning together	Problem solving	Collaborative learning
R 1.038	M: Yeah look, you people need to make the decision. I'm just here to suggest things. I think it's a time for you to try and see what... What do the rest of you think? How do you feel about that?	you people need to make the decision	Mentor gives students responsibility for planning	Encourages discussion	Mentoring
R 1.039	M: Or something like. Or even. Wouldn't need to be in a circle. Just get everyone standing up. *Everybody jumping, jumping, jumping. Everybody jumping just like me.*	The mentor suggested songs to sing.	M gives suggestions	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.040	S7: We can play some music if you want.	Steve suggested that they could play some music;	Students planning together	Problem solving	Collaborative learning
R 1.041	M: That's right, there's some music, yep.	The mentor agreed with Steve's suggestion to play music.	M gave positive feedback about student suggestions	Feedback	Mentoring
R 1.042	S6: I've got some kids CDs at home I can bring in.	Renata thought that she could bring in some of her CDs.	Sharing resources	Problem solving	Collaborative learning
R 1.043	M: Yep. Let's bring them in. They've got a tape recorder here that we can use. If someone has a good one at home we could bring that in as well. We've done that before. Had music outside. There've been scars, there've been instruments, there've been small groups. So small groups sorts of music experiences because that's the other thing. If it gets too much in one group we can do two small groups. One inside and one outside. Because parents to be honest, like that formality at the end. They like that getting together, sitting down, experiencing something a little bit more as a group. Um. I mean I think depending on the age, you'd have to be thinking about what sorts of, ah, circle thing that you might like to do. Individual things, um, you might need to some searching. I used to *I can run as fast as you, I can run as fast as you, I can run as fast as you* on the spot. Its' a	In conclusion, the mentor advised the group to have one or two small groups of music experiences at the end because parents like that formality.	Mentor gives direct advice about the program	Advice	Mentoring

	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
	(inaudible) song. *I can jump as fast as you, I can jump as high as you, I can jump as high as you, jumping on the spot. I can hop as high as you.* You know, those sorts of things because then you don't have everyone moving around and falling over. Or dingle, dangle scarecrow. *When all the cows are sleeping.* So, it's more of an individual space thing rather than a group thing. *Row, row, row your boast.* It's up to you. They're just a few ideas, but maybe we won't worry about the book for next week.				
R 1.044	M: What they've done in the past, the students have actually made an area where the kids can sit. So, they've put some of the mats out, some pieces of fabric, some cushions around the bean bag have been like a boundary. So, to get everybody. Or when you start say 'Welcome everyone. Hope you've enjoyed Kinda Kinder. Maybe if you could come up. Just slide on your bottom or come up a little bit closer so you can all, so you can here. That sort of thing. Those sorts of strategies are good. So, we can practice working on those. Again though, I think with the book, it needs to be something short and not too small for everyone to see, but that's always really tricky. That's why we've done in the past small, small groups. So, they've done often a smaller group reading experience maybe outside. And especially when the older children really enjoy that. And then do the music in the end.	The mentor gave advice about organisaton of the group time to help identify with 'Kinda Kinder': a sit-in area with defined boundaries; students sliding in close; books that are short and large enough for everyone to see. These strategies are effective, but they need to be practiced.	Mentor gives direct advice about the program	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.045	And what about you S3. How did you feel	The mentor asked individual students about their thoughts.	Identifying individual student perceptions and feelings	Mentor explores feelings	Mentoring
R 1.046	S3: Yeah, I thought it went really well. There were like some points where I looked around and there were a few activities where the kids were just sitting there and they didn't really know what to do. So maybe if we could try and...	Jeanne thought the session went really well but that there were a few activities where the children didn't really know what to do.	Student shares observations	Reflection	Collaborative learning
R 1.047	M: Have someone at each table. So which tables were they.	The mentor suggested having a student at each table.	Mentor suggests student participation	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.048	S3: Um like down in the sand, When I was down there. But the parents went down there in the end. Yeah like over here	Jeanne thought that one of the students could have helped the children.	Student reflects on student participation	Reflection	Collaborative learning

	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
	at the drawing there was like three people so maybe one of us could've gone over there.				
R 1.049	M: Okay, so we'll think about that. So, looking... Part of being a teacher actually, is sort of finding the place where you need to be. Or and also working with your team to be delegated, or delegate others to positions. Alright because I said to S6 and S5 there for a while, because there did seem to be a lot of people and you guys were just sort of watching and observing. But I think it's good to be moving around.	The mentor informed the students that part of being a teacher is finding the place where you need to be and working with your team.	Mentor advises students about their role as teachers	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.050	M: Even if you're standing or hovering, talking to the parents about how your week is. I always find that's really reassuring for parents, 'How's your week been? What's been happening?' Just to sort of make, because parents feel a bit uncomfortable too, because they don't know what to do. They're unsure about what to expect so sometimes just a general "How's your week been?", that kind of thing is a good way of breaking the ice. Yeah, that sort of thing.	The mentor suggested ways of talking with the parents to make them feel comfortable.	Mentor gives direct advice about interactions with parents	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.051	M: we just need to reinforce though the play basis, um idea of the program. That we're here to implement a play base program which parents and children play together. That's what we're looking at okay.	The mentor commented that they need to reinforce that they are implementing a play-based program in which parents and children play together.	Mentor reinforces the program goals	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.052	Right-o. So generally, people are quite happy with things. Alright, okay. What about our planning? How did you feel about our planning?	The mentor asked the students how they felt about the planning.	Mentor asks students to reflect on planning	Encourages discussion	Mentoring
R 1.053	S3: I think we did well like time wise. Especially...	Jeanne thought that the program went well timewise.	S3 evaluates program implementation	Reflection	Collaborative learning
R 1.054	M: I thought you were very organised. Okay so you're happy as in when you talk about time wise that you actually got everything done.	The mentor commented that she thought the group was very organised.	Mentor gives positive feedback	Feedback	Mentoring
R 1.055	S3: In time to spare.	Jeanne agreed that the group had time to spare.	Student reflects on organisation	Reflection	Collaborative learning
R 1.056	M: And I think it's important that we have that five minutes at the end that we as a group that we can think okay and I think it's important to, um, check around and make sure that things are safe. Even if you're standing or hovering, Like, I like the	The mentor commented that it's important at the end that as a group they check around and make sure that things are safe.	Mentor advises on safety	Advice	Mentoring

	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
	way that when I asked you Jess about having more chairs here, you said 'It's too close to the sink.' So, you thought about that. So that was really good. Sometimes you don't think, oh I've left my bag there or the hot tap is on. You know you don't think. So as a group it's good to look at everything together. So, the painting, you know the painting. I think we need to have it a bit away from the wall actually.				
R 1.057	S3: Yeah, we've got newspaper underneath.	S3: Yeah, we've got newspaper underneath.	Student evaluates program implementation	Reflection	Collaborative learning
R 1.058	M: Yeah or we have it outside.	M: Yeah or we have it outside.	Mentor gives suggestions	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.059	S4: Have it outside if there's more room.	S4: Have it outside if there's more room.	Student gives suggestions	Problem solving	Collaborative learning
R 1.060	M: Yeah. So, the experience. What does everyone else think about how the experiences went. What about you S7 what do you think?	M: What does everyone else think about how the experiences went.	M asks students for their opinion about how the program went	Mentor encourages reflection	Mentoring
R 1.061	M: And E. You did a really good job with him. Yes, because his mother was a little bit concerned so that was really good because she was concerned about where he was and what he was doing. So, it was good. You could have T and E and um she spent time with Oliver so that was really helpful. Yeah, so what else?	The mentor told Steve that he did a really good job with one of the children when his mother was concerned about what he was doing.	M gives positive feedback to individuals.	Feedback	Mentoring
R 1.062	M: C's mother is a teacher by the way and she is into it. She loves it. So yeah. Some really positive interactions. Okay, well we'll follow that up. We'll follow that up for next week I think. We'll continue on with that with our planning. Fantastic. That's great. Alright.	We'll follow that up for next week I think. We'll continue on with that with our planning.	M tells students to follow up in next week's planning	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.063	M: What about everybody else? What about the experiences because we've got to... I'm looking at the time. Were there any experiences that you though were set-up that were not utilised, not used as you thought they might be?	The mentor asked if there any experiences that were not utilised.	M asks for reflection on program	Mentor encourages reflection	Mentoring
R 1.064	S4: Did anybody, did any of the kids play in the tent?	S4 asked if anybody played in the tent.	Student asks the group to share observations	Collaborative learning	Collaborative learning

	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
R 1.065	S6: Yeah. I think C, she grabbed all of the books out of one side and put them all in the tent. And then she was going to read them and got back out...	Renata shared her observation of a child putting books in the tent.	Student shares observations	Reflection	Collaborative learning
R 1.066	S4: So that was utilised. What about the dress ups? Were they? They weren't utilised very much.	Cindy asked if the dress ups had been used.	Student asks the group to share observations	Reflection	Collaborative learning
R 1.067	S5: Lucas was really into it.	Jane said that one of the children used the dress ups.	Student shares observations	Reflection	Collaborative learning
R 1.068	S4: So, should we keep that for next week?	S4: So, should we keep that for next week?	Students planning together	Problem solving	Collaborative learning
R 1.069	S6: I didn't see a lot of children playing with the puzzles.	S6: I didn't see a lot of children playing with the puzzles.	Student shares observations	Reflection	Collaborative learning
R 1.070	S4: So maybe we can change the puzzles...	S4: So maybe we can change the puzzles...	Students planning together	Problem solving	Collaborative learning
R 1.071	M: You change or you change the position or you make sure someone sits there. Can I just say about the dress ups, I think there were a few too many of them. I think sometimes it's helpful to have maybe things sort of um, perhaps separated a little bit or clear, or not so many choices. Because sometimes it's tricky. You know there's all this great stuff, you just don't know what to choose. And also, too it reduces the feeling of claustrophobia I think so it probably didn't need as many outs. But that's okay. That's okay. They might have been used less, they might have been used more. We don't know. So maybe just choose maybe a little bit more of a cross section of things. We could change the way we set them up a bit, perhaps.	M: You change or you change the position or you make sure someone sits there. Can I just say about the dress ups, I think there were a few too many of them. I think sometimes it's helpful to have maybe things sort of um, perhaps separated a little bit or clear, or not so many choices. Because sometimes it's tricky. You know there's all this great stuff, you just don't know what to choose. And also, too thee it reduces the feeling of claustrophobia I think so it probably didn't need as many outs. But that's okay. That's okay. They might have been used less, they might have been used more. We don't know. So maybe just choose maybe a little bit more of a cross section of things. We could change the way we set them up a bit, perhaps.	Mentor gives specific advice about room set-up	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.072	S1: So, are we planning for next week?	S1: So, are we planning for next week?	Students planning together		Collaborative learning

	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
R 1.073	M: Yes, we are. We're going to do it right now. On that note though, S3 said about the sand. You didn't think that was...	M: S2 said about the sand. You didn't think that was...	Mentor asks for students to reflect on the materials	Encourages discussion	Mentoring
R 1.074	S3: No, it was used by the children. There was just no one really down there, so they just kind of sat there. They didn't really know how to get into it.	S3: There were no students to support the children's involvement in the experience.	S3 shares observations about student's and children's involvement	Reflection	Collaborative learning
R 1.075	S4: Okay, so...Z. Do we move that, or do we put it up higher or do we leave it there and just make sure that...	S4: Do we move that, or do we put it up higher or do we leave it there	Students planning together	Problem solving	Collaborative learning
R 1.076	S6: I think someone just needs to be around.	S6: I think someone just needs to be around.	Students planning together	Problem solving	Collaborative learning
R 1.077	S3: Yeah because when I was down there with O like if I moved a car then he moved a car then he'd move a car, but he wouldn't do it by himself.	S3: Yeah because he wouldn't do it by himself.	Students planning together	Problem solving	Collaborative learning
R 1.078	S4: Yeah so someone needs to be there.	S4: Yeah so someone needs to be there.	Students planning together	Problem solving	Collaborative learning
R 1.079	S1: Did we maybe want to change, instead of having the car thing have something else and the books related to it as well.	S1: Did we want to change, instead of having the car thing have something else and the books related to it as well.	Students planning together	Problem solving	Collaborative learning
R 1.080	M: I think so. Can I just interrupt you again? What did we see before we start thinking just about altering the experiences. What did you observe from the children today? Let's think about some observations.	The mentor interrupted to remind the students that they should base any planning on their observation of children in the Kinda Kinder setting.	Mentor asked students to recall observations of children	Mentor encourages reflection	Mentoring
R 1.081	S1: Well a lot of them wanted to go outside.	S1: a lot of them wanted to go outside.	Students sharing observations about children's involvement	Reflection	Collaborative learning
R 1.082	M: Okay, so who wanted to go outside.	M: Okay, so who wanted to go outside.	Mentor asked students to recall observations of children	Mentor encourages reflection	Mentoring
R 1.083	S4: O, C, J,	S4: O, C, J,	Students sharing observations about children's involvement	Reflection	Collaborative learning
R 1.084	M: And do we know, was there anything that they wanted to do out there?	M: was there anything that they wanted to do out there?	Mentor asked students to recall observations of children	Mentor encourages reflection	Mentoring

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	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
R 1.085	S3: Oliver's mum said that he loves big things so that's why he had those hoops in the corner.	S3: O's mum said that he loves big things	Students sharing observations about children's involvement	Reflection	Collaborative learning
R 1.086	M: Right so we need to... These are recording observations. So, we record that P had said that (P is O and E's mum) that she said that O likes big things. So, let's jot this down. We follow this up for next week. Big things and enjoyed the hoops, right? Okay. You also so said that she said he enjoyed unusual things.	M: These are recording observations. P likes big things. We follow this up for next week.	Mentor gives advice about planning from observations	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.087	S3: He doesn't really like the play dough and so he wanted to do his things, like the hoops. He just went and grabbed them from the corner and I think he kind of liked being by himself.	S3: Yeah, he doesn't really like the play dough and so he wanted to make up his things.	Students sharing observations about children's involvement	Reflection	Collaborative learning
R 1.088	S4: We've got chalk in there. Can we take chalk outside for next week and maybe...	S4 asks the group if the chalk should be taken outside next week	Students planning together	Problem solving	Collaborative learning
R 1.089	S3: Yeah and you were looking for a ball, weren't you?	S3: Yeah and you were looking for a ball, weren't you?	Students planning together	Problem solving	Collaborative learning
R 1.090	S5: Have we got a ball in there?	S5: Have we got a ball in there?	Students planning together	Problem solving	Collaborative learning
R 1.091	S3: Yeah there are a couple of spikey	S3: Yeah there are a couple of spikey	Students planning together	Problem solving	Collaborative learning
R 1.092	S1: J's mum was asking if we had some balls. Just some small ones to throw sort of back and forth.	S1: J and (inaudible) mum were asking if we had some balls to throw back and forth.	Students planning together	Reflection	Collaborative learning
R 1.093	S3: Yeah Alice was playing ball with the play dough and then one of the kids was asking for a ball.	S3: Yeah Alice was playing ball with the play dough and then one of the kids was asking for a ball.	Students sharing observations about children's involvement	Reflection	Collaborative learning
R 1.094	M: Who was that that wanted a ball?	M: Who was that that wanted a ball?	Mentor asked students to recall observations of children	Mentor encourages reflection	Mentoring
R 1.095	S3: L and A	S3: L and A	Students sharing observations about children's involvement	Reflection	Collaborative learning
R 1.096	M: L and A -interested in balls. this is the rational for why we are going to play. Okay so we look at the observations of the children also as discussion with the parents. Now we probably won't have time today to look through the forms and read	M: we look at the observations of the children also as discussion with the parents. So, on those two observations should we	M explains planning by using specific observations	Advice	Mentoring

Appendices

	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
	through the interested but we'll have to try and make a point of doing that next week. Okay L and A – the balls. Okay. So, on those two observations should we then plan for outside. So, what do you want to put outside?	then plan for outside. So, what do you want to put outside?			
R 1.097	S1: I'd like to have the hoops set-up on the floor. Maybe even... Like obviously they're going to pick it up and do whatever they want with it, but maybe just...	S1: I'd like to have the hoops set-up on the floor.	Students planning together		Collaborative learning
R 1.098	M: How do you want to set it up?	M: How do you want to set-up?	Mentor asks students to contribute to planning	Problem solving	Mentoring
R 1.099	S1: Almost like a Hop Scotch sort of thing.	S1: Almost like a Hop Scotch sort of thing.	Students planning together	Problem solving	Collaborative learning
R 1.100	S4: You could even set it up with Hop Scotch with some um chalk. Yeah	S4: You could even set it up with Hop Scotch with some um chalk. Yeah	Students planning together	Problem solving	Collaborative learning
R 1.101	S1: Or we could already draw a few things and leave the chalk out and the kids can like...	S1: Or we could already draw a few things and leave the chalk out and the kids can like...	Students planning together	Problem solving	Collaborative learning
R 1.102	S2: You know with masking tape you can...	S2: You know with masking tape you can...	Students planning together	Problem solving	Collaborative learning
R 1.103	S4: Yeah that's an idea with the masking tape too.	S4: Yeah that's an idea with the masking tape too.	Students planning together	Problem solving	Collaborative learning
R 1.104	S1: So, chalk for outside.	S1: So, chalk for outside.	Students planning together	Problem solving	Collaborative learning
R 1.105	M: Okay. Hoops, chalk.	M: Okay. Hoops, chalk.	M agrees with planning	Mentor reinforces student's suggestions	Mentoring
R 1.106	S5: The paint.	S5: The paint.	Students planning together	Problem solving	Collaborative learning
R 1.107	M: The painting outside. I think we should do two sides as well because then you have double the amount. The children can have a turn.	M: we should do two sides as well because then you have double the amount.	M gives advice about the room set-up	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.108	Do you want to use the easel or do you want to...	Do you want to use the easel or do you want to...	M asks specific questions about the environment	Encourages discussion	Mentoring

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	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
R 1.109	S4: I think the easel is probably easier.	S4: I think the easel is probably easier.	Students planning together	Problem solving	Collaborative learning
R 1.110	M: Go back to the balls. Do you want to use the balls outside? How do we want to set them up or position them?	M: Do you want to use the balls outside? How do we want to set them up or position them?	M asks specific questions about the environment	Encourages discussion	Mentoring
R 1.111	if the balls go where Jess is sitting, if they go over that fence we can't retrieve them.	if the balls go over that fence we can't retrieve them.	Mentor gives specific advice about room set-up	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.112	S1: So, if they're too small, they'll go through those holes.	S1: So, if they're too small, they'll go through those holes.	Students planning together	Problem solving	Collaborative learning
R 1.113	M: That's right. So, we'll have to think... Do you want to have an um...	M: That's right. So, we'll have to think... Do you want to have an um...	M asks specific questions about the environment	Encourages discussion	Mentoring
R 1.114	S4: I've got some big balls I can bring in. I've got basketballs. Are they too heavy? I've got some that I could bring in for next week.	S4: I've got some big balls I can bring in. I've got basketballs.	S4 offers to share resources	Problem solving	Collaborative learning
R 1.115	M: Well have a look in there and see what we've got um we can bring them and we can see. We can try them out. Because you don't know until you try. Yeah. Why don't we bring in what we've got? But how do you want to use them? This is what we need to know. Do you want to use them from rolling, for bouncing? Do you want to encourage children to throw them in a hoop or just to see what they do with the balls and then plan something more specific after?	The mentor encouraged the students to bring in resources and try them and to consider rationale for experiences	M advises the students on planning	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.116	S2: I reckon yeah just see what they do... Just observe. Yeah because we don't know what they want to do with them.	S2: yeah just observe. Yeah because we don't know what they want to do with them.	Students planning together	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.117	M: I would suggest setting them up in an interesting way, so if you've got hoops and you've got balls...	M: I suggest setting them up in an interesting way,	M gives advice about the room set-up	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.118	S4: I was going to say get the hoops and maybe put a ball in the hoop each and if they want to they can try and throw the ball through the hoop. That's an activity.	S4: I was going to say get the hoops and put a ball in the hoop each and if they can try and throw the ball through the hoop.	Students planning together	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.119	M: Alright so you can setup the hoops and the ball together and see what they do. Alright?	M: you can setup the hoops and the ball together and see what they do.	Mentor reinforces student's idea	Mentor accepts student's suggestions	Mentoring

	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
R 1.120	Okay now back to the painting. Who enjoyed, who observed children painting, and what were they doing with the paint?	who observed children painting, and what were they doing with the paint?	Mentor asked students to recall observations of children	Mentor encourages reflection	Mentoring
R 1.121	S3: Some of the were just using the same colour like and I had to try and tell them to use another one. And J's mum really wanted her to use other colours but she didn't know how to pick them up, so maybe just someone standing there and helping them a bit.	S3: Some of the were just using the same colour like and I had to try and tell them to use another one. And J's mum really wanted her to use other colours but she didn't know how to pick them up	S3 shares observations with group	Problem solving	Collaborative learning
R 1.122	M: Do you know what though? If they (inaudible). So, J was interested in using one colour. Um A when I talked to her about her name she said she couldn't write her name.	M: when I talked to her about her name she said she couldn't write her name.	M shares observations of children	Mentor shares observations	Mentoring
R 1.123	Oh, the other thing is we need to write their names on the left-hand side. That was the other thing I wanted to say. Because...	we need to write their names on the left-hand side.	M gives advice about the student role	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.124	S6: It teaches them how to...	S6: It teaches them how to...	Students planning together	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.125	M: Left to right, because we learn English left to write so if we can write their name or get them to write their name. Just put a pen up and say 'Do you know how to write your name?' And they'll say yes or no or they can have a try and it doesn't matter what they're doing. Whether they write their name or not. They can have a try. Put a couple of pens up and then can have a try. A didn't want to write her name but she knew how to spell it so I said 'How do you write your name A? What's the first letter?' 'A.B.I.' Okay so that's literacy experience that we can follow up on. Okay, so maybe put the textas out. Okay, so she um, letter recognition. Oh, and who was it L loved the painting. He was there for such a long time. Yeah, he loves the paint and you can see how it's his paint desk. He's made a pattern there. Look. Green, yellow, green, yellow, blue. So, L as well. Okay.	M: Left to right, because we learn English left to write so if we can write their name or get them to write their name.so that's literacy experience that we can follow up on.	M gives advice about children's literacy	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.126	S1: I'll do it and e-mail it.	S1: I'll do it and email it to everyone.	S1 offers to write up program plan	Role modelling	Collaborative learning
R 1.127	M: Now what about the sign on sheet?	M: What about the sign on sheet?	M asks about specific program requirements	Problem solving	Mentoring

	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
R 1.128	S1: Yeah, I just forgot.	S1: I just forgot.	S1 forgot the sign in sheet	Role modelling	Collaborative learning
R 1.129	M: You could e-mail the thing to someone else and they can type it. You don't need to do it every week. It should be shared out.	M: You should share the tasks and S1 does not need to do it every week. She can email it to someone else and they can type it.	M encourages students to share responsibilities	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.130	S1: Oh, I might do the, type up the actual plan, um I'll maybe like it if everyone could take a turn evaluating.	S1: I might type up the actual plan, if everyone could take a turn evaluating.	S1 encourages other students to take a role	Role modelling	Collaborative learning
R 1.131	M: Of course, but people should be really, like this is sort of an evaluation now. What we're talking about and how things went. In reflective journals you need to write how you felt about the day. Observations is what we're talking about. What we saw. How we can extend and plan from that. Are you happy with that? Okay painting outside. Alright.	M: This is evaluation now. In reflective journals you need to write how you felt about the day. We can extend and plan from our observations.	M clarifies evaluation and planning	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.132	M: What else? What about the sand? R Yes R He was in the grey.	M: What about the sand?	M asks specific questions about the experiences	Encourages discussion	Mentoring
R 1.133	S3: He loved it there.	S3: He loved it there.	S3 shares observations about a child	Collaborative learning	Collaborative learning
R 1.134	S7: Yeah, yeah. I just went across them and Ruben took a scoop and he started putting it in the dirt. He did it by himself six times.	S7: Ruben took a scoop and he started putting it in the dirt.	S3 shares observations about a child	Collaborative learning	Collaborative learning
R 1.135	M: Okay. How do you think we could extend that then for him?	M: How do you think we could extend that for him?	M asks specific questions about planning	Problem solving	Mentoring
R 1.136	S4: Bring him more cups and stuff and funnels.	S4: Bring him more cups and stuff and funnels.	S4 suggests extensions for program	Problem solving	Collaborative learning
R 1.137	S6: Do you think he'd be more interested in cause and effect kind of stuff. Like putting the sand in the funnel and seeing it flow through.	S6: Do you think he'd be more interested in cause and effect kind of stuff?	S6 offers ideas for program	Problem solving	Collaborative learning
R 1.138	M: Can I suggest something? You could put some water out as well.	M: You could put some water out as well.	M gives suggestions for program	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.139	S4: Water play? I was going to say water play outside.	S4: Water play? I was going to say water play outside.	Planning together	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.140	S1: That was already on our plan...	S1: That was already on our plan...	Planning together	Discussion	Collaborative learning

	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
R 1.141	M: Let's do that because that follows up from the idea of pouring. Scooping and pouring. That's a quick effect with water. How about that? Do you like that?	M: Let's do that because that follows up from the idea of pouring.	Mentor gives advice about planning	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.142	Alright so we've got plenty going on outside. What about inside? We've got ten minutes before we have to go.	M: Alright so we've got plenty going on outside. What about inside?	M asks specific questions about program	Encourages discussion	Mentoring
R 1.143	S5: I think baby areas again. Baby areas.	S5: I think baby areas again.	S5 shares ideas about babies' program	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.144	M: Okay. How is the baby area utilised? What have you done?	M: How is the baby area utilised?	M asks specific questions about program	Mentor encourages reflection	Mentoring
R 1.145	S5: Baby's crawl all over the place.	S5: Baby's crawl all over the place.	S5 shares observations	Reflection	Collaborative learning
R 1.146	S6: They seem to love the boxes.	S6: They seem to love the boxes.	S6 shares observations	Reflection	Collaborative learning
R 1.147	S1: The boxes were really popular.	S1: The boxes were really popular.	S1 shares observations	Reflection	Collaborative learning
R 1.148	M: Boxes were good. Boxes.	M: Boxes were good. Boxes.	Mentor gives advice about resources	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.149	S1: And like what you said, to put stuff in it and on top, um the kids really enjoyed trying to get into it.	S1: We should put stuff in it and on top because the kids really enjoyed trying to get into it.	S1 shares observations	Reflection	Collaborative learning
R 1.150	S6: I think just with the box sitting there they can do whatever they want with it.	S6: I think just with the box sitting there they can do whatever they want with it.	S6 gives suggestions for program	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.151	S1: Yeah, they... that's all they pretty much eventually did with it. Like just pushed it around and stuff. Um parent spent a lot of time in there as well. Just sitting and playing with their babies. Maybe we need um I think more rattle type toys. There's this one ball there that... As another kid sees one. It like makes the activity popular and there's just the one.	S1: Maybe we need more rattle type toys.	S1 gives suggestions for program	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.152	M: Okay so actually that's something we need to consider too when we put things out. That there's not just one of them. Okay it's preferable to put more than one but if there's only one you need to... Well I would actually not suggest just putting one thing out, but unless there's something similar.	M: I would actually not suggest just putting one thing out, unless there's something similar.	M gave direct advice about the resources	Advice	Mentoring

	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
	Like if there's a ball-y kind of thing with the rattle, if there's a couple of other balls. So, there's a group of similar things together. Um, someone in a little purple top kept putting the head in the yellow bucket. You know that... Who was that? In and out. So, if we could get some bigger boxes so I know it's really tricky, but if anyone could find any bigger boxes like a fridge box. I know it's a nightmare but if we could find a bigger box so they could actually crawl, crawl in.				
R 1.153	S4: We haven't got any more tunnels, or bigger tunnels?	S4: We haven't got any more tunnels, or bigger tunnels?	S4 asks question about resources	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.154	M: Nope, no because we bought that with the money that was given. But again, why don't we... Weren't we going to put the tables together to make a carriage?	M: No Weren't we going to put the tables together to make a carriage?	M asks about the planning for experiences	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.155	S4: Yeah that's what I was just thinking.	S4: Yeah that's what I was just thinking.	S4 shares thoughts	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.156	M: Yeah. Why don't we do that? Why don't we do that out there in the babies and put, put the tables together, out the sheet on top and but some boxes and rattles and things?	M: Yeah. Why don't we put the tables together, out the sheet on top and but some boxes and rattles and things?	M gives suggestions for experiences	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.157	S1: And put things underneath it?	S1: And put things underneath it?	S1 gives suggestions for room set-up	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.158	S7: These tables?	S7: These tables?	S7 asks questions about room set-up	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.159	M: Yeah like you know how we had... Yeah, these tables.	M: Yeah like you know how we had... Yeah, these tables.	M gives suggestions for room set-up	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.160	S4: Because it's these sort that got to go outside anyway so we might as well utilise them. And then just out stuff underneath.	S4: Because it's these sort that got to go outside anyway so we might as well utilise them. And then just out stuff underneath.	S4 gives suggestions for room set-up	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.161	S1: High enough for them to crawl.	S1: High enough for them to crawl.	S1 gives suggestions about room set-up	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.162	S4: And they won't bash their heads	S4: And they won't bash their heads	S4 gives suggestions about room set-up	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.163	M: So, if we cover them.	M: So, if we cover them.	M gives suggestions for room set-up	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.164	M: Yeah, we might need to um we could put some cushions up perhaps against it. Or and I think actually we'll need	M: we'll need someone sitting there okay most of the time. If you're the person	M advises on student role	Advice	Mentoring

	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
	someone sitting there okay most of the time. If you're the person sitting there and you get sick of it you might need to get someone. I think we need to have someone close by in that area. Are you happy with that?	sitting there and you get sick of it you might need to get someone.			
R 1.165	Okay. boxes, rattles, tables and cups. Yeeha? Okay, what else very quickly out in that room do you want to? What else did you observe? Oh, what about C and the firefighting?	What else did you observe? What about C and the fire fighting	M asks questions about observations	Encourages discussion	Mentoring
R 1.166	M: Do you want to use the dress up firefighting stuff?	M: Do you want to use the dress up firefighting stuff?	M asks questions about resources	Encourages discussion	Mentoring
R 1.167	S4: That was out there wasn't it?	S4: That was out there wasn't it?	S4 shares observations	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.168	S6: Yeah it was out there. Are there any more books?	S6: Yeah it was out there. Are there any more books?	S6 asks questions about resources	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.169	M: Yeah there'll be books... somewhere... In the library. Are there any books? Yep. We could set-up, um, at an idea. There's some firefighting costumes in there. We could put some chairs in a row. if we could find some long cardboard tubes to pretend as hoses or something like that.	M: Yeah there'll be books in the library. There's some firefighting costumes in there. We could put some chairs in a row. If anyone had anything that we could, it's not really a ladder, but even if we could find some long cardboard tubes to pretend as hoses or something like that.	M gives suggestions about resources	Encourages discussion	Mentoring
R 1.170	S4: I've got some tubing at home. Cardboard tubing.	S4: I've got some tubing at home. Cardboard tubing.	S4 offers to bring resources	Teamwork	Collaborative learning
R 1.171	M: Is it dangerous? Oh, like a plastic tubing?	M: Is it dangerous? Oh, like a plastic tubing?	M asks questions about resources	Encourages discussion	Mentoring
R 1.172	S4: No, like the glad warp tubing. I've got that at home.	S4: No, like the glad warp tubing. I've got that at home.	S4 offers to bring resources	Teamwork	Collaborative learning
R 1.173	M: Yeah, okay. What about something like that? Or we could use that long lounge there and put some... I think it... Do you know what? I think it's actually more effective as chairs in a row though. Because they sort of sit there, you know, and we could like put some um, fire fighty things over the chairs. A few firefighting things. Yeah. What do you think about that?	M: Yeah, okay. What about something like that? Or we could use that long lounge there	M gives suggestions about resources	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.174	S4: I'll bring in some um tubing.	S4: I'll bring in some um tubing.	S4 offers to bring resources	Teamwork	Collaborative learning

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	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
R 1.175	M: Yeah? How do you feel about that?	M: Yeah? How do you feel about that?	M asks for student's ideas	Mentor explores feelings	Mentoring
R 1.176	S5: Yeah with like little steering wheels.	S5: Yeah with like little steering wheels.	S5 makes suggestions about resources	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.177	M: Yeah. Even if we got a paper plate, you know, do you want a paper plate? Do you want a few paper plates? Okay, alright, so some paper plates.	M: Yeah. Even if we got a paper plate, you know, do you want a paper plate? Do you want a few paper plates? Okay, alright, so some paper plates.	M gives suggestions about the experiences	Encourages discussion	Mentoring
R 1.178	S4: We've got paper plates in there haven't we? I'm pretty sure we have. I saw them.	S4: We've got paper plates in there haven't we?	S4 makes suggestions about resources	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.179	S3: Maybe like in this area where we did drawing we could do like something more like crafty.	S3: Maybe like in this area where we did drawing we could do like something more like crafty.	S3 makes suggestions about program	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.180	M: Yeah so would you, what sort of ideas do you have? Collage? Thinking collage? Okay. What do you think about collage?	M: What sort of ideas do you have about collage?	M asks students to share ideas about the program	Encourages discussion	Mentoring
R 1.181	S3: Just with the paper because it's a bit something for them to take home as well.	S3: Just with the paper because it's something for them to take home.	S3 makes suggestions about experiences	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.182	S1: We could even um put the coloured paper we have just when we're setting up, just cut up little bits of it and they could just stick it on.	S1: We could even put the coloured paper cut up little bits of it and they could just stick it on.	S1 Makes suggestions about experiences	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.183	S3: Yeah just put it all in a tray and they can use it	S3: Yeah just put it all in a tray and they can use it	S3 makes suggestions about experiences	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.184	S4: Where have you got glue? Here?	S4: Where have you got glue? Here?	S4 asks questions about resources	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.185	M: Or I could get some things that they could tear themselves.	M: Or I could get some things that they could tear themselves.	M gives suggestions about resources	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.186	S4: Tissue paper.	S4: Tissue paper.	S4 makes suggestions about resources	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.187	S3: And cut themselves.	S3: And cut themselves.	S3 makes suggestions about resources	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.188	S4 I've got at home...	S4 I've got at home...	S4 offers to bring resources	Discussion	Collaborative learning

Appendices

	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
R 1.189	S1: I've got some magazines.	S1: I've got some magazines.	S1 offers to bring resources	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.190	S4: I've got at home some, I've been collecting cardboard little boxes.	S4: I've got at home some, I've been collecting cardboard little boxes.	S4 offers to bring resources	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.191	M: Okay we could use some boxes.	M: Okay we could use some boxes.	M gives suggestions about resources	Encourages discussion	Mentoring
R 1.192	S4: I can bring those in and they can stick them together, they can paste them together. I did that as an experience at one of my placements and it went really well.	S4: I can bring those in and they can stick them together, I did that as an experience at one of my placements and it went really well.	S4 offers to bring resources	Teamwork	Collaborative learning
R 1.193	M: Just construction is fantastic.	M: Just construction is fantastic.	M gives suggestions for experiences	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.194	S4: Yeah and they can sticky tape them together, they can paste them together, they can draw on them.	S4: Yeah and they can sticky tape them together, they can paste them together, they can draw on them.	S4 gives suggestions for experiences	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.195	M: Do you want to do that together or separate?	M: Do you want to do that together or separate?	M asks students about experiences	Encourages discussion	Mentoring
R 1.196	S4: Whatever. I can bring them in if you want.	S4: Whatever. I can bring them in if you want.	S4 offers to bring resources	Sharing resources	Collaborative learning
R 1.197	M: Why don't you bring them in.	M: Why don't you bring them in.	M asks students to bring in resources	Teamwork	Mentoring
R 1.198	S1: If we can't fit them maybe we could do it the next week.	S1: If we can't fit them maybe we could do it the next week.	S1 gives suggestions for experiences	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.199	M: Use a big table for that because you need a big table to put all the stuff.	M: Use a big table for that because you need a big table to put all the stuff.	M gives suggestions about resources	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.200	S3: Yeah but we'll just explore the cupboard next week.	S3: Yeah but we'll just explore the cupboard next week.	S3 gives suggestions for experiences	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.201	S1: I only put down collage.	S1: I only put down collage.	S1 gives suggestions for experiences	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.202	M: Just put paper. Maybe put paper collage.	M: Just put paper. Maybe put paper collage.	M gives suggestions for experiences	Encourages discussion	Mentoring
R 1.203	S4: I'll bring them in and if you want to use, use them, if you don't, you don't have to.	S4: I'll bring them in and if you want to use, use them, if you don't, you don't have to.	S4 offers to bring resources	Discussion	Collaborative learning

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	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
R 1.204	M: Now how about the play dough and then I think...	M: Now how about the play dough?	M asks specific questions about the experiences	Encourages discussion	Mentoring
R 1.205	S4: Play dough was good 'because it had everything. The kids loved it and it's sensory.	S4: Play dough was good 'because it had everything. The kids loved it and it's sensory.	S4 shares observations	Reflection	Collaborative learning
R 1.206	M; How did they use the cars?	M; How did they use the cars?	M asks questions about observations	Encourages discussion	Mentoring
R 1.207	S4: They used the cars, because they buried the cars. They made roads.	S4: They used the cars, because they buried the cars. They made roads.	S4 shares observations	Reflection	Collaborative learning
R 1.208	M: Do you want to um put a car mat out there?	M: Do you want to put a car mat out there?	M asks specific questions about the experiences	Encourages discussion	Mentoring
R 1.209	M: It should be there. It's green. We've used that before. You could use that on the table as a basis. Have the play dough on top and have some more cars.	M: You could use that on the table as a basis. Have the play dough on top and have some more cars.	M gives suggestions for experiences	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.210	M: That extends on... Who was playing the play dough?	M: That extends on... Who was playing the play dough?	M asks questions about observations	Mentor encourages reflection	Mentoring
R 1.211	S3: I was and there was like everyone...	S3: I was and there was like everyone...	s3 shares observations	Reflection	Collaborative learning
R 1.212	M: Because this is the rationale...	M: Because this is the rationale...	M explains program rationale	Encourages discussion	Mentoring
R 1.213	S3: L and A were there for ages. The two older boys.	S3: L and A were there for ages. The two older boys.	s3 shares observations	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.214	M: Okay let's do that, the play dough, the road map and we'll get some more cars. Have a chocolate bar because we're going to have to go.	M: Okay let's do that, the play dough, the road map and we'll get some more cars.	M confirms plan	Encourages discussion	Mentoring
R 1.215	S4: Who was playing with the... A and who else?	S4: Who was playing with the... A and who else?	s4 ask questions about observations	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.216	S3: L and then another boy	S3: L And then another boy	s3 shares observations	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.217	S4: Was it O?	S4: Was it O?	s4 asks questions about observations	Discussion	Collaborative learning

	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
R 1.218	S3: Oliver didn't really want to do it.	S3: Oliver didn't really want to do it.	s3 shares observations	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.219	S1: Yeah. I noticed that. He just sort of... seemed a bit uncomfortable.	S1: Yeah. I noticed that. He just sort of... seemed a bit uncomfortable.	s1 shares observations	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.220	s4. But because E is his brother	s4. But because E is his brother	s4 shares observations	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.221	S3: He's actually not unlike his brother.	S3: He's actually not unlike his brother.	s3 shares observations	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.222	S6: He ran straight to the computer and that's all he wanted to...	S6: He ran straight to the computer and that's all he wanted to...	s6 shares observations	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.223	M: I was watching C throwing the books today. How do you feel about that?	I was watching C throwing the books today. How do you feel about that?	M asks students to share their ideas	Mentor explores feelings	Mentoring
R 1.224	M: Now very quickly too. First years we've got to think about your last assignment that's due in three weeks. Part of setting up an experience. Okay that will be part of, it'll have to be part of the planning for next week. Um, but the diploma people do you have something that yo u need to do for your...	First years we've got to think about your last assignment that's due in three weeks it'll have to be part of the planning for next week.	M makes links to requirements	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.225	M: Do you need to set something up because we'll need to...	M: Do you need to set something up because we'll need to...	M clarifies Diploma requirements	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.226	M: Now with the water - have to make sure that we have towels and there's aprons. We have to make really make sure the water is warm when we put it out. Don't put too much out because everyone gets a bit nervous about water. As in not us, but the parents.	M: we have to make sure that we have towels and aprons, that the water is warm and not too much. The parents get a bit nervous about water.	M advises on safety	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.227	M: Well you should all be doing it now. That's what we're doing now.	M: Well you should all be doing it now. That's what we're doing now.	M advises students about evaluation	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.228	M: I don't mind whether you type it up. Um alright so we've got the outside, the inside, there we've got the babies, the tables. We've got the firefighting. What else?	M: I don't mind whether you type it up. What else?	M informs students about her expectations	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.229	M: Yeah you don't want too much but today I just came in and whoever it was, A wanted to do a painting so I just got things on the up. So, you just change it. You just go along. I think it's better to have enough to offer so you don't have a lot of kids mucking around and just before you go, how did,	M: It's better to have enough to offer so you don't have a lot of kids mucking around	M advises on program	Advice	Mentoring

	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
R 1.230	M: That's okay and you guys, this is something that is always really tricky for students. They always find it hard to intervene when the parents are there. Saying that though, what you could do (just think about this for next time) you could say, go and grab a book, and say, 'Come on Chloe let's pick up one of those books. Let's put the others back in the shelf and let's read one together.' Okay. Distraction is a really good technique. Alright, so if you're worried about that, I know it's awkward to sort of step in, but sometimes you have to. So, you just say, 'Come on let's pick the books up, put them in the shelf and then we'll choose one and go and read one together.' Or 'We'll get a book to read with Grandma.' Okay, so that's something that might be helpful. Right.	M: it is always hard to intervene when the parents are there. Distraction is a really good technique.	M gives advice on guiding behaviour	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.231	M: Okay well I'd really, I'd like to say again you did such a fantastic job so well done. Really proud of you. It was a big day today. You coped really well. You worked really well as a team. So, we're okay for next week?	M: you did such a fantastic job so well done. Really proud of you. You coped really well. You worked really well as a team.	M gives positive feedback	Feedback	Mentoring
R 1.232	M: He was quite difficult to separate from his mother and ah found it hard to sit for all that long time. So, siblings, interesting looking at siblings. So, in this room a big table for collage, play dough – that's enough in this room? I think that's probably. I mean you could have a big table for play dough, a big table for collage. We've got goodness knows fifty things outside. Balls, hoops, paint...	M: He was quite difficult to separate from his mother and ah found it hard to sit for all that long time. So, siblings, interesting looking at siblings.	M shares observations	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.233	M: Everyone will need to be there.	M: Everyone will need to be there.	Everyone will need to be there	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.234	M: I think water is enough. I think it's enough.	M: I think water is enough. I think it's enough.	M advises on program	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.235	or, if it's raining outside we'll have to change what we do, but I would actually really strongly suggest if it's not raining	or, if it's raining outside we'll have to change what we do, but I would actually really strongly suggest if it's not raining	M advises on program	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.236	M: I think um. I think the books and put some soft toys with the books. Might be nice with the bean bags. Is that too many do you think	M: I think the books and put some soft toys with the books. Might be nice with the bean bags. Is that too many do you think	M asks students for their ideas	Advice	Mentoring

	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
R 1.237	What does everyone else think?	What does everyone else think?	M asks students for their opinions	Encourages discussion	Mentoring
R 1.238	M: the fire-fighter is sort of chairs in a row, a few fire fighter costumes and a few other...	M: the fire-fighter is chairs in a row, a few fire fighter costumes and a few other...	M clarifies experience	Encourages discussion	Mentoring
R 1.239	M: Okay, so in. Are you writing this? Ah we've got one in there. Just, just not a big one though, it'll be small because they're in tubs. Like we had the sand.	M: we've got one in there it'll be small because they're in tubs. Like we had the sand.	M makes suggestions about experiences	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.240	M: Yeah whatever there is and maybe S4 can bring in the tubes and we can just put a few books.	M: maybe S4 can bring in the tubes and we can just put a few books.	M makes suggestions about resources	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.241	S1: What was the firefighting?	S1: What was the firefighting?	s1 asks questions to clarify program	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.242	S1: So up there we're going to have the firefighting at the table and that's it. And then will just like do the whole like what we did before like books where the bean bags are and just kind of decorate it up.	S1: we're going to have the firefighting at the table books where the bean bags are and decorate it.	s1 clarifies program experiences	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.243	S1: Like police.	S1: Like police.	s1 suggests resources for experience	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.244	S4: Do you want to do the sand again still?	S4: Do you want to do the sand again still?	s4 asks questions about the program	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.245	S4: But it has to be supervised too obviously.	S4: But it has to be supervised too obviously.	s4 makes suggestions about safety	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.246	S4: Too much.	S4: Too much.	s4 shares her ideas	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.247	S5: Yeah, I think water is enough.	S5: Yeah, I think water is enough.	s5 makes suggestions about program	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.248	M: Everyone has to do stuff.	M: Everyone has to do stuff.	Mentor explains that everyone needs to contribute	Advice	Mentoring
R 1.249	S3: Did we decide, do we type it up?	S3: Did we decide, do we type it up?	s3 asks questions about written work	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.250	S7: Yeah, we have experiences.	S7: Yeah, we have experiences.	diploma students have responsibilities	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.251	S4: I'm typing mine up but you can do whatever.	S4: I'm typing mine up but you can do whatever.	s4 informs students what she is doing	Discussion	Collaborative learning

	Comment	Construct	Concept	Theme	Emergent Theme
R 1.252	S6: She would pick them up and…	S6: Yeah, she would pick them up and…	s6 shares observations	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.253	S6: Her grandmother had taken gently put them down and she kind of started to throw the ball gently. It's just I'm a book lover, I'm like 'Oh my God.'	S6: Her grandmother gently put them down and she started to throw the ball gently. It's just I'm a book lover, I'm like 'Oh my God.'	s6 shares observations	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.254	S6: We have to do some experiences but I'll have a look at the sheet again and be able to tell you guys.	S6: We have to do some experiences and I will tell you	s6 informing students about expectations	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.255	S4: Can I ask a quick question too? Who's doing the evaluation for this?	S4: Can I ask a quick question too? Who's doing the evaluation for this?	s4 asks questions about team roles	Discussion	Collaborative learning
R 1.256	M: And you sort of figure out the mothers that sit there and talk and the children who are interested and the children who aren't and the children who like singing and the children who don't and the children who want to come and pick up their painting or… Who was it that came in here. Jayden wanted to come and do another painting. So, you find that you find your place. You find how you interact with certain people. But I think that was really good for a first effort.	The mentor reassured the students that they would eventually find their place and how to interact with to meet the different needs of parents. She indicated that specific adjustment is required to meet individual children's needs.	The mentor reassured the students that they would get to know the children	Feedback	Mentoring
R 1.257	M: Now with the plan, who's writing it up? Are we all writing it up? Are you going to do it S1?	M: Who will write up the plan?	M asks about students about planning	Problem solving	Mentoring