



early childhood education council of nsw inc

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This is the fourth newsletter of 2005 for the Early Childhood Education Council of NSW. Please refer any comments to the Editor, c/- PO Box 418 Leichhardt NSW 2040 editor@ecec.asn.au

Our Vision

The Early Childhood Education Council of NSW Inc. is a professional association promoting child centred practices through advocacy and professional development, informing on current trends in early childhood education and ensuring a high profile for early childhood issues.



Professional Learning Day part 2

This newsletter completes the reports from the ECEC Professional Learning Day on Saturday 10 September 2005

Readers' Theatre

Dr Margery Hertzberg is a lecturer at the University of Western Sydney as well as provides private consulting in the areas of drama, language, literacy and ESL. Margery gave us a motivating workshop where the participants were involved in practical activities that could easily be transferred into the classroom. The workshop moved through the following sequence:

- Using drama to build the field before reading a story where the emphasis is on body language and position in space;
- The reading and decoding distinction; and
- Reader's Theatre scripts.

Margery talked about why Readers' Theatre is a valuable oral reading activity:

- Reading vs barking at print;
- Opportunities for re-reading which encourages fluency and accuracy;
- Peer modelling; and
- Risk taking.

The workshop participants used the text "Something from Nothing" by Phoebe Gilman to work through the development of Readers' Theatre. This is an excellent text which is suitable for Stage One students.

Other texts that would suit Readers' Theatre are:

1. The Rainbow Fish by Marcus Pfister;

2. Wombat Stew by Marcia Vaughan; and
3. Peace at Last by Jill Murphy.

Listening and Speaking Through Poetry

Anette McCann & Catherine Matthews have provided their handout.

The topic chosen for this workshop is "Listening and speaking" **not Talking and Listening** as it is called in the syllabus. This was a deliberate decision, as developmentally, Listening comes before Speaking. *You must be able to hear something before you can say it.*

Listening and Speaking "play a vital role in all learning. The skills, knowledge and understandings in listening and speaking require the same focus as reading and writing."

Focus on Literacy: Talking and Listening NSW Department of Education and Training 2003.

This workshop referred to the **skills** of listening and speaking that are experienced even by a baby in the womb. From the time a baby is in the womb, they are attracted to the sound of the **human voice**, and research shows that the newborn baby's cry is in perfect harmony with the intonation of the voice of the mother.

It has been scientifically proven that the unborn child is capable of listening, hearing, and responding to sounds (smile and movement), particularly that of the mother's voice, and music, eg vowels, consonants, rhythmic patterns etc. This is where BECOMING LITERATE BEGINS.

During the late seventies/early eighties, the 'baby was thrown out with the bath water' in so much as specific instruction in the **skills** of Listening and Speaking were no longer encouraged. It was thought

that as the acquisition of correct speech was a developmental process it would also be a self correcting one. It is evident that this has not been the case. You only have to listen to the many people around you, eg in radio, on TV and in public office to realise how speech has deteriorated.

It is the responsibility of teachers, to not only model correct speech, but to also provide children with many opportunities to practise correct speech.

Poetry is a highly successful way to develop the skills of Listening and speaking.

So, what is Poetry? And why is it so important, particularly during the Early Childhood Period.

Poetry is 'the best words in the best order'.

There is no better way to engage all children in our care and develop in them a love of language, than through Poetry.

With an already overcrowded curriculum, it has become impossible to attend to the individual and their specific needs within the classroom. However, this can be addressed in an outstandingly successful way through Poetry and Verse Speaking.

The Purpose of Poetry:

- To provide opportunities for children to enhance and expand their vocabulary and language;
- To develop in children clear conversational speech;
- To develop confidence and self esteem in each child and to ensure inclusion of all children in all aspects of the lesson;
- To identify those children within the group who have specific speech needs and require monitoring;
- To develop in children a love and appreciation of the English Language;
- To come to appreciate the genre of Poetry and be confident in using this as a means of communicating ideas; and,
- To enable children to value the English Language as a means of communication, interaction and socialisation.

Poetry offers:

A sense of rhythm and rhyme;

Correct articulation, enunciation and pronunciation;

The ability to express feelings through the sensitive use of words eg. "You beautiful little baby". The baby can then pick up the

meaning expressed by the tone of the voice, and the facial and body language.

Children not only pick up the vocabulary and language they hear, but they also model the **tone** with which the words are delivered, and the facial and body language used. We, as teachers need to be very mindful of this when dealing with children.

Sometimes we think that children have not heard, when in fact they have. Their difficulty could be in the processing of the information. This is why it is so important for teachers to give children 'Thinking time' to enable them to understand what has been said, before expecting a response.

Verse Speaking provides all children with the opportunity to develop acute listening skills because when speaking as a group you need to sound AS ONE VOICE. For the first couple of poems, this may take some time, but as the children become familiar with the skill of listening to the teacher's voice and the voices of the children around them, they begin to refine their ability to speak as with **one voice**. This not only improves the listening skills of the child, but also the Listening skills of the teacher, eg one voice louder, variation in tone from other children, not keeping in time with the rest of the group, etc.

Guidelines

- Poems need to be of a reasonable length and age appropriate;
- Poems should cover a wide range of topics;
- Choices should include poems that are imaginative, humorous, sensitive and include every day experiences;
- The print of poems displayed in the classroom should be of an appropriate size;
- Poems should become part of Browsing Boxes once they have been read and recited by the children, so they can be read and reread;
- Poems used should support the development of clear articulation of sounds and enunciation and pronunciation of words and phrases;
- Appropriate facial expression is encouraged throughout these strategic activities; and,
- Children should be encouraged to speak clearly, fluently and expressively at all times.

Lesson Components

Poetry can contain the following elements:

- Posture and breathing exercises;
- Articulation exercises;
- Exercises for correct articulation of sounds, enunciation and pronunciation of words;
- Introduction of new poem;
- Revisiting known poems; and,
- Performance of chosen, known poem/s e.g. assembly, eisteddfod, visitors, etc.

Finally, many outcomes across the curriculum can be addressed through Poetry and Verse Speaking. Drama, Music, Visual Arts and the following strands of the English Syllabus of Values and Attitudes, Talking and Listening, and Reading, can all be covered in just one activity.

Using ICT in the Classroom

Kathy Gibson presented a workshop highlighting the work she has been undertaking with her Kindergarten class at Waverley Public School and the movie a group of students made to enter into a Regional competition.

Kathy has written a paper for inclusion in the next Current Topics which is due out next week. This will do more justice to her presentation than a summary.

Current Topics

The ECEC committee apologise for the delay in publication of *Current Topics* over the past 12 months. There are currently three in development

Members should receive the first one *Literacy ideas for the K-2 classroom* in the next few weeks. This contains a numbers of articles that address a wide range of Literacy activities, including ICT. We were motivated to produce this one as a result of the current political debate over literacy skill development. The committee hope you will find them interesting.

There will be a further publication *Managing Special Needs in the Classroom* to follow before the end of the year. This is an area of great concern for many teachers and we hope the articles will prove useful. The committee would like to follow this one at some time in the

future addressing students at the gifted and talented and of the spectrum.

This will be followed by a further publication and the annual report early in the New Year.

Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be held on Wednesday 9 November as part of a professional development dinner meeting. The topic is **Developing Resilience in Young Children**. The presenter is Dr Toni Noble. Flyers were sent previously.

What do you want from ECEC?

The Early Childhood Education Council would love to hear from you! We're in the process of evaluating what we do and the committee would appreciate your feedback. This is an opportunity for members to provide suggestions for future professional development.

A short survey on the back of the newsletter will help us to plan for 2006.

As you are aware, our afternoon workshops are held at Leichhardt for convenience and cost effectiveness. The committee in the past have conducted one-day workshops in Dubbo, Tamworth and Bowral. Twice we have tried to hold them in Katoomba with very poor response.

The committee would like to present workshops in non-metropolitan areas. This would require the support and assistance of members in that area to help identify a venue and to perhaps nominate additional presenters. If you would like to help organise a non-metropolitan workshop we'd like to hear from you. You can email the president Suzanne Ziems at sdziems@bigpond.com

ECEC hopes you will spare a few minutes to respond and also would like make additional copies and ask other colleagues to respond.

All respondents will be eligible for a lucky draw for a \$100 voucher.

Closing date 21st December 2005

What do you want from ECEC?

Fax survey to (02) 9816 1003
No cover sheet required

Fill in this survey to be in the draw to win a \$100 voucher!

We'd love to hear from your colleagues as well, so feel free to copy this survey and they can have a chance to win as well!

Name: _____
(You can be anonymous, but a name and contact details are needed to be eligible for the prize)

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Have you attended an ECEC inservice? YES NO

If yes, what type? Whole day Afternoon Dinner meeting

What area of professional development would you be interested in attending?

Mathematics	English	ICT
HSIE	SciTech	PDHPE
Creative Arts	Student Welfare	Teacher Welfare
Cross curriculum	Curriculum differentiation	Special needs

What other topics would be of interest to you?

What time of the year would best suit you for a one day conference?

Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
Do you read our newsletters?		YES NO	OCCASIONALLY
Do you use our "Current Topics" books?		YES NO	OCCASIONALLY

What topics would you like ECEC to address in newsletters or Current Topics?

What is your preferred model of ECEC professional development?

Whole day Afternoon Dinner meeting

What courses (ECEC or other) have you benefited from this year? _____

What locations would be best meet your inservice needs

City	Northern Sydney	Western Sydney	Southern Sydney
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Or another area: _____

Closing date: 21st December 2005