

Session 1 Summaries

Early Childhood Education - Practices and Pedagogy

Date: 17 February 2025

Hosts: Amy-Lee Pollard & Donita Bell

The Power of Play in Early Learning

Play is the foundation of learning in early childhood, fostering creativity, problem-solving, social and communication skills. Participants explored how teaching through playful approaches support holistic development which is essential for learning. Educators shared what play looks and sounds like in their contexts and how they justify the learning. We shared a resource (see below) from the work of 'Project Zero' through their book- "The Pedagogy of Play" which has some great real-life examples of play and the importance of this approach to learning.

Making Learning Visible Through Documentation

Effective documentation of play helps educators reflect on teaching practices, the student engagement, and to communicate learning to parents, colleagues and the students themselves. As a reflection tool that makes the learning available to learners through their dialogue, photos, videos and artifacts, it also allows teachers to look deeply at the students' thinking and next steps for learning. The discussion focused upon the essential nature of documentation. We will explore documentation further in coming sessions and we urge participants to watch Part I of "Documenting Learning in the EL" before we meet again.

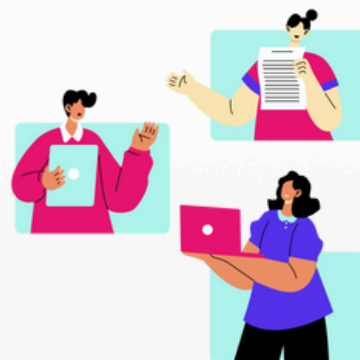
Creating a Supportive Community for Early Childhood Educators

Teaching young learners can be both fulfilling and physically and mentally exhausting. Our community encourages members to make connections and emphasized the importance of professional networks, where educators can share insights, ask questions, and learn from one another. Many attendees noted that hearing how others approach common challenges—such as scaffolding play or managing mixed-age classrooms—was incredibly valuable. Our 30 participants connected through breakout rooms and by engaging in dialogue.



Additional Resources

- * [Session 1 Recordings](#)
- * [Session 1 Slide Deck](#)
- * [PoP Book](#)
- * [Documenting Learning in the Early Years'](#)



Session 2 Summaries

Early Childhood Education - Practices and Pedagogy

Date: 3 March 2025

Hosts: Amy-Lee Pollard & Donita Bell

The Role of Play in Learning

Play is fundamental to early childhood education, serving as a powerful tool for exploration, creativity, and problem-solving. Participants reflected on impactful quotes from educational philosophers, reinforcing that play is not just recreation but the essential work of childhood. Discussions highlighted how educators can foster meaningful learning experiences by allowing children more autonomy in their play.

Documentation Enhances Learning and Reflection

Effective documentation helps capture children's thinking and learning processes. The session explored different ways to document play, such as visible thinking routines, storytelling, and project-based learning. Educators discussed how documentation not only benefits children's learning but also provides valuable insights for teachers and parents.

Encouraging Student Agency Through Inquiry-Based Learning

The session emphasized fostering student agency by allowing children to take ownership of their learning experiences. Educators reflected on case studies from the Pedagogy of Play book, such as "Too Many Rules on the Playground" and "More Than One Way to Tell a Story," which illustrated the benefits of providing children with autonomy and space to explore. Discussions highlighted how questioning techniques and documentation can support students in becoming independent learners.

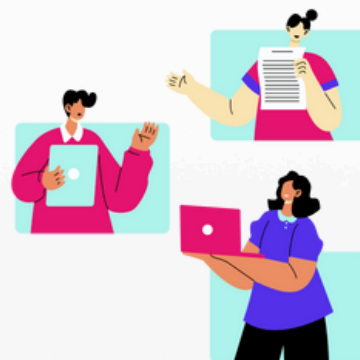


Additional Resources

- * [Session 2 Recording](#)
- * [Session 2 Slide Deck](#)
- * [PoP Book](#)
- * [Project Zero Resources](#)
- * [IB Document learning in EL Part 1 video](#)

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Session 3 Summaries

Early Childhood Education - Practices and Pedagogy

Date: 17 March 2025

Hosts: Amy-Lee Pollard & Donita Bell

Sensory Play as a Foundation for Learning

The session emphasized the importance of sensory play in early childhood development, highlighting its role in cognitive, social, and emotional growth. Educators discussed using textures, scents, and movement-based activities to engage children and foster deeper learning. A key insight was allowing children to explore freely, without over-structuring activities, to encourage creativity and independent problem-solving.

Creating Engaging Learning Environments

A well-designed classroom enhances learning. Participants shared strategies for using natural materials, dim lighting, varied seating, and interactive displays to make spaces inviting and stimulating. Practical tips included incorporating real-world textures, interactive literacy corners, and sensory stations to enrich the classroom experience and reduce behavioral issues.

Storytelling and Social-Emotional Development

Storytelling was highlighted as a powerful tool for social-emotional learning. The session explored how books, oral storytelling, and hands-on activities (e.g., reenacting scenes or creating props) help children process emotions, build empathy, and improve communication skills. Teachers were encouraged to embed sensory play into literacy activities to enhance engagement and comprehension.

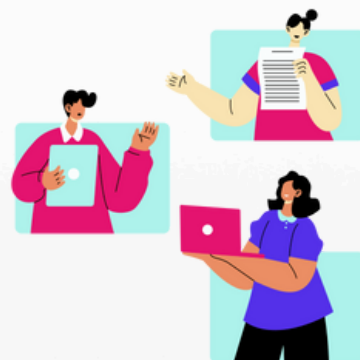


Additional Resources

- * [Session 3 Recording](#)
- * [Session 3 Slide Deck](#)

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Session 4 Summaries

Early Childhood Education - Practices and Pedagogy

Date: 14 April 2025

Hosts: Amy-Lee Pollard & Donita Bell

The Power of Storytelling in Early Childhood Education

Storytelling develops children's voice, agency, and self-awareness. Educators can encourage storytelling through activities like creating books, role-playing, and using visual aids. Making stories visible in the classroom helps children feel valued. Ideas shared included using recycled materials for bookmaking and AI-generated illustrations.

Sensory Play and Social-Emotional Learning

Sensory play enriches early childhood experiences and supports social-emotional learning. It helps develop language skills and supports children with different needs. Educators shared sensory play techniques such as using loose parts for storytelling and building self-portrait walls. These activities promote emotional resilience and collaboration.

The Role of Educators as Thinkers and Researchers

Educators should focus on inquiry rather than just instruction, becoming thinkers and researchers. This involves listening to children, researching their interests, and co-creating learning experiences. Story workshops and play-based approaches help document children's evolving understanding. This approach fosters a culture of collaboration and meaningful learning.



Additional Resources

- * [Session 4 Recording](#)
- * [Session 4 Slide Deck](#)
- * [Storyworkshop Studio](#)

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