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Cultural diversity and children's literature: Kindergarten educators' practices to support principles of cultural diversity through book sharing

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Cultural diversity and children's literature: Kindergarten educators' practices to support principles of cultural diversity through book sharing

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the award of

Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

Since Australia became a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989, the importance of recognising, valuing and respecting a child's family, culture, language and values has been increasingly articulated in education policy. Diversity and inclusion are now central themes guiding the principles and quality measures of early childhood education and care as encompassed by the National Quality Framework, including both the National Quality Standard and the Early Years Learning Framework (Early Childhood Development Steering Committee, 2009). Children's literature can be a powerful tool for extending children's knowledge and understandings of themselves and others who may be different culturally, socially or historically (Boutte, Hopkins, & Waklatsi, 2008), thus having the potential to be a valuable resource in promoting diversity and inclusion in early childhood. However, a body of evidence suggests that the use of children's literature in early childhood settings does not promote principles of diversity, often serving to promote outdated or stereotypical notions of minority groups.

This study investigated the factors and relationships influencing the use of children's literature to support principles relating to cultural diversity in the kindergarten rooms of long day care centres.

The study was conducted within an ontological perspective of constructivism and an epistemological perspective of interpretivism informed by sociocultural theory. A mixed methods approach was adopted, and convergent design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018) was employed to synthesise the qualitative and quantitative data and interpret significant relationships and their meanings. Twenty four educators and 110 children from four long day care centres in Western Australia participated. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, video-based observations, field notes, document analysis and a book audit.

This study identified four key findings. First, that current book sharing practice in kindergarten rooms of long day care centres promotes monocultural viewpoints and "othering" of minority groups. Second, educators lacked the beliefs, understandings and confidence needed to promote principles of diversity using children's books. Third, access to books portraying inclusive and authentic cultural diversity was limited. Finally, many children did not have access to the benefits of book sharing and engagement through high quality evidence based practice.

These findings have implications for the meeting of principles of diversity articulated in Australian education policy and curriculum and draw attention to the challenges faced by educators when selecting and using books with young children.

These findings are significant for what they reveal about the relationships between the nature and availability of books together with the nature and quality of educator practice and the involvement and engagement of the children in book sharing in long day care. Findings highlight a need for measures to address each of these factors in order to meet principles of diversity and equity for all children.

The outcomes of this study have implications for educators, policy makers, early childhood organisations and those who provide higher education and training for early childhood educators.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to three powerful and amazing women who have influenced my life and its direction through the lives they have led and their roles in my own life journey.

The first of these is Elly Schwartzbach (Angela Kofler) (1 Mar 1912 - 6 Sep, 2000). 'Aunty Elly' was my Godmother. In 1949 as part of post WWII resettlement programs, she and her husband Gus left what had been a life of relative privilege and status to come to Australia. With four sons to raise and knowing no English, her resilience, determination, joy and faith in the face of anything that life threw her way was an inspiration to all. Anything she wanted to do she tackled with the same fierce determination never doubting her own abilities to take on a challenge, whether it be making a dining room suite, hand painting crockery or knocking down and rebuilding walls of her house – and this woman was barely 4 feet tall! I am so privileged to have had Elly as my Godmother.

The second of these is my grandmother Clarissa (Riss) Edmonds (Elliott) (16 Jan 1906 - 7 June 2003). Granma graduated from Claremont Teachers College in 1925 and set out to teach at Wattening and then to open the Piesse Brook School. Following her marriage she set to work as a farmer's wife raising her children and helping her community. She fought to keep small country schools open – even sending my mother to Wattening School at the age of four so they could meet the minimum numbers needed to get a teacher and later petitioning successfully for the extension of the school bus service to Bolgart Primary School for similar reasons. When "Aunty Elly" arrived in Australia the two became firm friends with Granma instructing Elly in English and Elly instructing Granma in the Catholic faith. As a grandmother she treated my siblings and me to countless trips to watch Gilbert and Sullivan productions or attend any 'shows' on offer in Perth. When I graduated from Churchlands Teachers' College in 1981 she presented me with her own journal of poems painstakingly copied by fountain pen during her own college days – this is now one of my most treasured possessions.

The third is my wonderful mother, Verna Adam (Edmonds). Mum left school after completing her leaving and matriculation to a high standard at Santa Maria College. Her academic potential was beyond doubt but, as with many young women of her time, higher education was not an opportunity she was afforded. In 1959 she married my dad (Rod Adam) and in a short period of time was mother to six children. Over the years, as with Elly and Riss, Mum has shown resilience, determination and strength. Along the way, she became a confident and discerning business owner and partner but her priority was always the raising of her six children, and, most importantly, supporting her family through life's ups and downs. Through of all of this she instilled in me (and my siblings) a love of reading and literature. There was never a Christmas or birthday, no matter the

financial situation of any given time, in which a book of some sort was not included in the presents. Book reading time was always a central part of my childhood – Mum must have read us thousands of books over the years. Mum (and Dad) insisted we all have an opportunity to finish high school and go on to University and I will be forever grateful for the sacrifices made to give us those chances.

The bond and influence between these three women was evident in Elly asking Verna (Mum) to be godmother to Elly and Gus' youngest daughter and, a few years later, Verna (Mum) and Dad (Rod) asking Elly to be my Godmother. I know that the woman, mother, grandmother and academic I am today has greatly and positively been influenced by each of these beautiful, strong and determined women. I am very grateful to them all.

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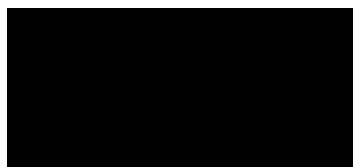
Signature........   Date...8th July, 2019...............................

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I wish to knowledge and thank the educators who volunteered to be part of this study. It takes courage to open your practice to a study such as this. Your generosity in this, as well as your enthusiasm for your work and your care for the children is inspiring. To the children (and their parents) also part of this study, you may not know it now, but I sincerely believe your involvement will contribute to positive outcomes for future generations.

To my fabulous supervisors, Professor Caroline Barratt-Pugh, Dr Yvonne Haig and Dr Janet Hunter – what a journey! You have inspired, cajoled and pushed me to be the very best I can be as a researcher. I owe you all so very much.

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To my amazing, delightful, crazy family - my six beautiful children (Matt, Josh, Monica, Ellen, Francis and Anna), their fabulous partners, my precious grandchildren, and my partner Vince - your support, patience and, especially, your pride in me means the world. Being what you lovingly call a "Giant Nerd" is all the easier with you by my side.

Finally, to my colleagues in the School of Education at Edith Cowan University, and my fabulous network of friends and extended family, you have all been so supportive, generous and patient as I have traversed the perilous terrain that led to completing this dissertation. I love you all.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Context of the Study: Diversity in the Early Years

An important and ongoing social justice issue facing educators and policy makers worldwide is that of diversity within society. Especially since the African-American civil rights movements of the 1950s and 60s, the concept of multicultural education has become a topical and widely-researched social justice issue centred on the concepts of understanding, respect and value for the diversity that exists within society (Bishop, 1997; Hickling-Hudson, 2005; McNaughton, 2001; Nieto, 2000, 2017). Over the past thirty years the importance of recognising and considering diversity in education settings and programs has become an increasingly important factor for policy makers and educators worldwide. This is largely due to the rapid and continuing increase in global integration and international mobility since the 1990s (Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority, 2010). This increasing mobility of the world's population has resulted in increasingly multicultural societies.

Diversity was found to be a key influencing factor in the Effective Provision of Preschool Education (EPPE) study in the UK (Sylva, Siraj-Blatchford, & Taggart, 2006). The outcomes of this longitudinal study indicated that the extent to which an early childhood educational centre caters for diversity can have strong implications for children's future educational success (Sylva et al., 2006). Another outcome of the study was the development of a quality rating scale, the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale Extension (ECERS_E), to measure the quality of early childhood education and care provision. Diversity was included as one of the four educational aspects of provision assessed by the scale. This highlights the important place of consideration of diversity in the measuring of the quality of care in early childhood education and care settings.

The term "diversity" is generally held to encompass a broad range of differences; the most commonly accepted include differences in age, race, colour, religion, ethnicity, gender, languages and sexual orientation. Additionally, it can include aspects such as socio-economic background, education, work experience and physical and mental capabilities (Deakin University Definitions, 2019). The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by the Australian Government in 1989, placed diversity at the centre of considerations for the care and education of children (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 1989). This declaration explicitly reinforces the aspects of diversity as defined above as well as also referring to nations of origin, the values of those nations and respect for those from different civilisations. Several of these aspects are closely related and can be grouped broadly under race and culture.

Racial and cultural diversity in Australia is steadily increasing. The Commonwealth Bureau of Statistics (renamed the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) in 1975), began taking a national population census every 5 years commencing in 1911, although it must be noted that the inclusion of those in the main population tables who were then termed "full blood" Aboriginals did not occur until 1967 (Madden & Al-Yaman, 2003, p. 3). The 2011 census showed that "Australians come from more than 200 countries, speak over 300 languages at home, belong to more than 100 different religious groups and work in more than 1000 different occupations" (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011a).

In the first national census of 1911, 83% of the population were born in Australia according to the ABS, excluding the proportion of Aboriginal people who were not included in the census at that time. The Australian-born figure continued to increase until it reached 90% in 1947, after which the post-World War II resettlement program led to a greater proportion of the population growth coming from immigration. By 2011, the census reported that 74% of the population was Australian-born, noting that this figure included the Aboriginal population which made the drop in the proportion of Australian-born even more significant (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011a). The 2011 census data reported that since 1986 there had been an increase in immigrants from Asian, Indian, Arabic and African backgrounds. This increasing diversity of the Australian population is reflected in educational policies today and is deemed an important element of consideration for educators.

A wide body of research attests to the importance of race and culture in the development of children's sense of identity and well-being as well as the development of their worldviews from an early age. From very early in life children develop an awareness and recognition of difference with a body of evidence suggesting that children develop own-race bias from as young as three to six months of age (Apfelbaum, Norton, & Sommers, 2012; Bar-Haim, Ziv, Lamy, & Hodes, 2006; Ito & Urland, 2003). Importantly, studies have indicated this bias can be disrupted or eliminated through even brief exposure to other racial faces, including in picture form, (Bar-Haim et al., 2006; Sangrigoli & De Schonen, 2004).

It is timely to consider this evidence and its impact in the light of growing international mobility of the world's population and increasingly multicultural populations. Moreover, education and care policies both worldwide and in Australia currently embrace this body of research by stipulating there must be consideration of racial and cultural diversity in educational provision. Therefore, this study focussed on race and culture as key aspects of diversity to be considered in the early childhood environment.

A review of existing research revealed considerable evidence that children's literature can serve as a useful resource for addressing diversity (Bishop, 1993, 1997, 2012; Boutte, Hopkins, & Waklatsi, 2008; Klefstad & Martinez, 2013; Koss & Daniel, 2017; Lowery & Sabis-Burns, 2007; Sims, 1982; Souto-Manning, 2009; Souto-Manning et al., 2018). These studies not only demonstrate the importance of introducing diversity through literature from birth, but also highlight the significance of including racial diversity as a way of introducing children to others who are different to themselves. Yet, despite this potential, the research suggests that many childhood education and care centres in English speaking countries, including Australia, provide monocultural, exclusive and potentially biased literature, that can cumulatively impact on children's long term attitudes and perceptions of diversity and well-being (Adam, Barratt-Pugh, & Haig, 2017; Boutte et al., 2008; Stallworth, 2006; Souto-Manning, Rabadi Raol, Robinson, & Perez, 2018). This investigation into the selection and use of children's literature in early childhood contexts in Australia can provide valuable insights for educators, administrators and policy makers.

1.1.1 Australian Education policy Relating to Diversity

This study is timely and relevant in the Australian context; not only because of the aforementioned evidence regarding the impact of diversity in education, but also because early childhood education and care in Australia is undergoing a period of change. A central component of the change is the consideration of diversity.

In Australia, early childhood education was brought under national policies for the first time in 2008. Since then, the education of young children has been included in the National Quality Agenda (NQA), the National Quality Framework (NQF) and subsequently governed by the National Quality Standard (Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority [ACECQA], 2011a) which incorporates the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) (Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations [DEEWR], 2009) as the guiding framework for the curriculum of all early education and care settings for children aged 0-5 years of age. A key component of this framework establishes principles to guide practice and sets goals to be achieved in relation to the recognition of, and provision for, diversity. In addition, the framework recommends the use of children's literature to develop literacy skills and to explore how texts can construct identities and stereotypes.

A body of evidence suggests that early childhood educators, including those in Australia (Buchori & Dobinson, 2015), face challenges in both understanding and responding to diversity (Robinson & Jones-Diaz, 2006; Souto-Manning & Mitchell, 2009). With evidence across the years suggesting that educators often see their role in addressing diversity as being related to teaching

children the English language (McInerney, 1987), or assimilating and socialising children into the dominant culture (Buchori & Dobinson, 2015; Amigo, 2012; McInerney, 2003). However, there is a gap in the evidence on how educators' understandings of diversity impact on their pedagogy and practice (Buchori & Dobinson, 2015), with a further gap in evidence relating to "the effect of institutional policies and practices" (Buchori & Dobinson, 2015 p. 71) when educators address diversity. The findings from a Western Australian study conducted by Buchori and Dobinson in 2015, support the evidence presented earlier relating to challenges faced by early childhood educators in Australia when responding to diversity. However, their study further highlights how little is currently known about how well early childhood educators and carers understand the concept of diversity or how well they address diversity in their practice. In addition, while, as outlined earlier in this introduction, the potential for literature to support principles of diversity has been established, the implications for childcare and other early years' settings in Australia have not yet been fully explored, with the researcher aware only of her own small pilot study conducted in 2011. Given the mandated requirements of the NQF, including those of the EYLF, this research on the implications of using literature to address principles of diversity in early childhood education and care, therefore, has the potential to add to the debate and inform future directions.

1.1.2 The Challenge to Early Childhood Educators Arising from an Emphasis on Diversity

In order to meet the National Quality Standard (NQS) it is important for all elements of child care play and learning environments, resources and educator practices to reflect consideration of diversity. This means educators must carefully consider current practice and make informed judgements on aspects of practice that may need to change to ensure standards are met, as well as identifying any existing practice that may be counterproductive.

As previously discussed, one way of meeting the goals, principles and practices described in the policy frameworks is through the use of quality children's literature. The value of books has been recognised in the EYLF (DEEWR, 2009) which advocates their use for engaging children with text and the meaning it carries. Importantly, this framework recognises that children need the opportunity to engage with books that reflect both familiar and unfamiliar cultural constructions (DEEWR, 2009). Thus, highlighting the importance for educators to consider the types of texts they need to select in the interests of promoting children's social, emotional and literacy development through recognition of diversity.

Early childhood education and care has traditionally emphasised the importance of children's social, emotional and literacy development. These are areas of development where literature can make a contribution (Jackson & Heath, 2017; Kara-Soteriou & Rose, 2008; Kidd &

Costano, 2013; Morgan, 2009,) by providing role models through the exploration of the traits of key characters and teaching children about important qualities such as friendship, cooperation, perseverance, respect and honesty (Heath, 2017; Kara-Soteriou & Rose, 2008). Literature can also help children to explore their feelings in a safe way that contributes to their sense of acceptance and wellbeing (Heath, 2017; Jackson & Heath, 2017; Zeece & Stolzer, 2002). Values and traditional mores can also be examined through literature to promote "new ways of being and thinking" (O'Neil, 2010, p. 40). All of these aspects have the potential to contribute to the achievement of the principles and outcomes of the EYLF, and the guiding principles of the NQS. It could be argued, therefore, that in order to meet the requirements of the EYLF related to diversity, the texts chosen for these purposes would need to be inclusive and be of good quality.

In addition to the literature previously discussed, current policy governing early childhood education and care highlights that educators need to prepare children for living in a rapidly changing society, where issues of race, ethnicity, gender and social background impact on the benefits enjoyed by different groups (Ministerial Council on Education Employment Training and Youth Affairs [MCEETYA], 2008). These barriers to success are recognised in national policy documents such as the EYLF in which Principle 3 emphasises the importance of promoting the inclusion and participation of all children for the achievement of equitable outcomes (DEEWR, 2009).

This suggests that for children's literature to be used as a means of meeting the NQS and achieving the EYLF outcomes in a way that is consistent with its principles and practices, the selection of texts should take place with reference to these policies. Of particular concern is meeting the requirement of Principle 4 of the EYLF which emphasises respect for diversity, particularly in relation to "the histories, cultures, languages and traditions, child rearing practices and lifestyle choices of families"(DEEWR, 2009, p. 13).

This study, therefore, examines the selection and use of children's literature texts in early childhood settings in order to better understand how children's literature is contributing to the achievement of the principles and practices related to diversity in the NQF and EYLF.

1.2 The Researcher

The researcher is a higher education academic with expertise in teacher education, English education, children's literature and inclusive education. In 2009, the researcher was invited to contribute a book chapter (Adam, 2011) to a new Higher Education text book, Language, Literacy and Early Childhood Education, (Fellowes & Oakley, 2011) with a requirement to include the role of children's literature in supporting the newly released Early Years Learning Framework. It was this

work which led to the researcher identifying the need for research into the field of children's literature as a resource to address principles of diversity and, ultimately, to this study.

1.3 Previous Study

The findings from a small pilot study conducted by the researcher in 2011 identified key concerns and, as discussed earlier in this chapter, these echo the findings of others relating to the prevalence of monocultural and potentially exclusive literature in early learning settings (Boutte et al., 2008; Souto-Manning et al., 2018), as well as the challenges faced by educators (Buchori and Dobinson, 2015; Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2006) when addressing diversity. The pilot study involved 20 informants across five long day care centres and found that child care based educators were aware of the need to consider diversity in their curriculum, but many were either unaware or uncertain as to how this related to the selecting and using of texts with children (Adam et al., 2019). Participants in two of the centres acknowledged the need to make multicultural literature available to children and reported occasionally borrowing multicultural books for short periods of time. However, these same participants cited difficulties in identifying and purchasing multicultural books for the centre. In addition, several of the participants appeared to misunderstand addressing diversity to mean emphasising "sameness" and assimilation rather than valuing the cultural and linguistic backgrounds and resources of each child.

An analysis of the children's literature resources in the five participating centres showed that only 10% of books in the centres contained characters of more than one race or culture (Adam et al., 2017). The number was even lower when books were categorised according to their availability for educators to read to the children or for children to use themselves. It was of particular concern that, across the five centres, there were only two books available to children that portrayed Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people.

The pilot study showed that while educators were aware of the need to cater for diversity, they had differing perceptions of what this meant and, therefore, what was required. They frequently selected and used books that portrayed out-dated monocultural viewpoints and characters, thus, unwittingly reinforcing stereotypes and practices that were potentially counterproductive to the NQS and EYLF goals and principles of diversity (Adam et al., 2019).

The study also showed that when the educators did use children's literature for teaching children about issues aligned with the outcomes of EYLF, they targeted areas perceived as beneficial to the smooth running and positive environment of their classrooms. The examples provided by participants were concerned with teaching children to share and to understand their emotions.

None of the educators provided examples, nor did the researcher observe any use, of literature specifically to teach children about differences, similarities or other issues related to diversity (Adam et al., 2019).

1.4 Statement of the Problem

Given that the pilot study was a small scale study and took place when the participating centres were in the very early stages of implementing the EYLF and before the NQS became mandatory, it is timely and relevant for further study to be undertaken on a deeper and broader level. This will permit greater generalisability and have the potential to extend the scope of the findings of the pilot study.

Early education and care settings are now legally required to meet NQS standards and the principles, practices and outcomes of the EYLF. An analysis of these policy documents reveals considerable emphasis on issues related to diversity and, coupled with the recognition of literature as an effective way to address diversity, an examination of current practice regarding the use of children's literature in early years' settings is both valuable and important.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research is significant in the Australian, and particularly Western Australian context, for several reasons. First, there is a dearth of studies addressing how children's literature is being used to promote diversity in early childhood. Existing studies on the effects of culturally sensitive literature and the benefits to children's sense of belonging and cultural pride have been undertaken with older children and outside Australia.

Second, there has been very little research on this topic in the context of Australia; and in Western Australia, only the small pilot study described earlier has been conducted. Since the results are uniquely perceptible to social, cultural and educational factors in the local environment, further research, globally and in Western Australia, will yield valuable insights.

Third, the importance of diversity is explicit in current policies framing early childhood care and education in Australia, and it is now a mandated responsibility for all service providers in this area. The current investigation into the role of literature in promoting inclusion is therefore more urgent than ever, particularly when repeated exposure of young children to monocultural and stereotypical literature has been shown to lead to outcomes that are at odds with current policies.

Finally, catering for diversity is an important key indicator for future educational success, as identified by the EPPE study (Sylva et al., 2006), and has justifiably been recognised and incorporated into national and global policies governing early childhood education and care.

This study will add to the body of knowledge on current practice and make a contribution to achievement of the diversity standards prescribed by national policy documents. At the same time, it holds promise for assisting educators to contribute to Australia's obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The findings have implications for policy makers, early childhood organisations, higher education institutions, and in-service and pre-service training of early childhood educators.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The literature review presented in this chapter serves multiple purposes. Initially, a review of the literature served as the basis for the conceptual framework underpinning this study. During the research process, the literature review evolved to include that relating to themes arising from the data collection and analysis and, finally, to incorporating literature of relevance to the outcomes of this study and its unique contribution to the field of knowledge.

This chapter presents a review of the literature relating to diversity in the early years context including policy and curriculum requirements and expectations, book sharing with young children and the combination of these that research suggests impacts on children's development. This chapter concludes with a summary of the key factors defined in the literature and their relevance to this study.

2.2 Diversity in Australian Education Policy

Successive policies in education over the last 25 years have seen an increasing emphasis on diversity, to a point where it has now become a prominent component in the most recent policy documents.

In April 1989, the Ministers of Education from the states, territories and Commonwealth of Australia (COAG) reached an historic agreement to develop a national framework for education. This resulted in the Hobart Declaration on Schooling (Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Education and Youth Affairs [MCEECDYA], 1989) which was the beginning of a national approach to setting educational goals and priorities.

The aim of the first of the ten national goals of the Hobart Declaration was "to provide an excellent education for all young people, being one which develops their talents and capacities to full potential" (MCEECDYA, 1989, para. 3). This could be seen to be inclusive of all children and would seem to imply recognition of the need to address issues related to diversity. However, the second part of this goal casts doubt on this interpretation as it focusses on national rather than personal needs, saying that the development of potential is related "to the social, cultural and economic needs of the nation." (MCEECDYA, 1989, para. 3). This statement implies that there is a uniform set of national cultural needs that can be met through schooling. If this is the case, it would seem to suppress rather than promote diversity. The third goal underlines the need to provide "for groups with special learning requirements" (MCEECDYA, 1989, para. 5). This would seem either to recognise that some children require different or extra provision, or to construct difference as deficit

and related to groups rather than individuals. There would seem to be little recognition of the multiple dimensions of diversity in this policy document.

The declaration, did however, refer to cultural and racial diversity in the eighth goal which stated the aim was, "To provide students with an understanding and respect for our cultural heritage including the particular cultural background of Aboriginal and ethnic groups" (MCEECDYA, 1989, para. 10). This goal acknowledged the existence of cultural diversity and the need to understand and respect diversity, but did so within an historical perspective.

At the same time and in contrast to the local policy development, the Australian Government ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 1989) which presented a much stronger case for recognising diversity. The signing of this agreement has been an important factor in the subsequent shift in focus and increasing emphasis on diversity in education policy since that time. In particular, the wording of Articles 2 and 29 has been increasingly incorporated into Australian education policy since this time:

> *Article 2: Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.*

> *Article 29 (c): The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;*

> *Article 29 (d): The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin* (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 1989).

In 1997, the Australian Joint Standing Committee on Treaties undertook an inquiry into the status of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (Jones, 1998). This report contained 49 recommendations, and those with clear relevance to future education policy highlighted the importance of policy makers and educators engaging in significant work to improve the inclusion and outcomes for children from Indigenous and ethnic backgrounds, including protecting their rights to have their cultural identity affirmed and respected. This report also called

for educational programs specifically aimed at improving "multicultural awareness and cultural sensitivity" (Jones, 1998, p. 3) The impact of these recommendations can be seen in the increased emphasis on the need to respond to cultural diversity in the Adelaide Declaration (Ministerial Council for Education Early Childhood and Youth Affairs [MCEETYA], 1999) which superseded the Hobart Declaration in 1999.

The Adelaide Declaration (MCEETYA, 1999) included three national goals of which the third addressed diversity and equality for all students. In this goal, the scope of diversity was increased to include sex, language, religion, disability, socio-economic background and geographic location in addition to culture and ethnicity. Further, the emphasis shifted from a view of culture and ethnicity as historical in its influence to one that saw it as impacting, with other factors, on the educational achievement of individuals in the present. Consequently, the goal included reference to an improvement in the educational outcomes of students seen as educationally disadvantaged (MCEETYA, 1999)

The third goal included explicit reference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and the need to work toward equitable standards and outcomes in education for them (MCEETYA, 1999). While the valuing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures was noted in the early declarations, the position that this understanding and appreciation could contribute to reconciliation was new, as was the expression of the view that improved relationships would benefit all Australians (MCEETYA, 1999).

Finally, in addition to promoting the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures to the wider society, the third goal of the Adelaide Declaration described an outcome whereby all students benefit from understanding and appreciating cultural and linguistic diversity, both in local and international contexts (MCEETYA, 1999).

In 2008, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), committed to a national approach to educational goals through the Melbourne Declaration (Ministerial Council on Education Employment Training and Youth Affairs [MCEETYA], 2008). This declaration continued to promote the recognition and valuing of diversity, including explicit reference to Indigenous cultures as "a key part of the nation's history, present and future" (MCEETYA, 2008, p. 4). The preamble to the declaration notes that changes, including an increase in global integration and mobility and the increasing influence of India, China and other Asian nations on Australia, are making demands on education. In response to these demands, the preamble notes that an appreciation of and "respect for social, cultural and religious diversity" (MCEETYA, 2008, p.4) should be promoted and the

disparity in the educational achievement of Indigenous Australians and those from low socio-economic backgrounds should be addressed.

The emphasis on diversity in the preamble is reflected in the National Goals for Schooling established by the Melbourne Declaration. Goal One has nine components that must be provided by all Australian governments and education sectors and these explicitly refer to the importance of providing equity of education to all students in our diverse society. The scope of diversity is broadened in these components to include gender, language, sexual orientation, pregnancy, culture, ethnicity, religion, health or disability, socio-economical background and geographic location (MCEETYA, 2008). There is further recognition of the importance of diversity in the context of developing active and informed citizens (Goal Two) in which appreciation and respect for social, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity, Indigenous cultures, reconciliation, and cross cultural communication are promoted. In addition, there is reference to the importance of recognising educational disadvantage faced by refugees, the homeless, Indigenous Australian students and those from remote areas. This goal also calls for the provision of equal opportunity as well as equitable outcomes for all.

It is clear from this analysis that a central component of the Melbourne Declaration is the recognition of diversity within Australian society and the importance of valuing the diverse backgrounds and needs of students. The policies arising from this historic agreement can be further analysed to identify how the goals and underlying principles of this most recent declaration are reflected in early childhood education and care policies now mandatory in Australia.

2.2.1 The Australian Context – Early Childhood Education and Care Policy since the Melbourne Declaration

Since 2008, a number of agencies, policies and projects have been established to manage and promote the achievement of the goals of the Melbourne Declaration. For the purpose of this study, those policies and frameworks specifically relevant to early childhood education and care are discussed. In 2009, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) endorsed the *Early Childhood Development Strategy* (Council of Australian Governments [COAG], 2009a). Following this and in the same year, the *National Partnership Agreement on the National Quality Agenda (NQA) for Early Childhood Education and Care* (Council of Australian Governments [COAG], 2009b), was signed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) on 7th December, 2009. This was closely followed by the *Early Years Learning Framework* (EYLF) (DEEWR, 2009), a framework to guide the provision of early childhood programs in early learning centres across Australia. The *National Partnership Agreement on the National Quality Agenda (NQA) for Early Childhood Education and Care* (2009b) introduced the *National Quality Framework* (NQF) which included the National *Quality Standard*

(NQS). A transition phase commenced upon the signing of the National Partnership Agreement through until 1st January 2012. In relation to the transition period, the signatories to the agreement agreed to "test and consult with the sector in order to finalise the detail of the NQF" (COAG, 2009b, p. 11). In particular, the NQS was subjected to "field testing and targeted consultation prior to finalisation" (COAG, 2009b, p. B 11).

The NQA was charged with raising the quality of early childhood education and care, and school age care services. In 2011, the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) was established by COAG as an independent body to oversee and administer the implementation of the *National Quality Framework* (NQF) (Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority [ACECQA], 2011a) which included the *National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care* (NQS) (ACECQA, 2011b), both of which were released in 2012. This signalled the end of the transition phase and formalised the implementation of the NQF.

The NQF includes:

- *National Law and National Regulations*
- *National Quality Standard*
- *Assessment and quality rating process*
- *National learning frameworks. (ACECQA, 2011a)*

The National Quality Framework (NQF), streamlined regulatory arrangements and established the quality rating system of the NQS (COAG, 2009b). The NQS articulated the key expectations of parents and the community regarding early childhood education and care. The EYLF, although released earlier in July 2009, is the nationally approved learning framework under the NQF designed to guide the curriculum of early childhood centres which care for children from birth to five years of age. The EYLF is the approved framework for all states except Victoria which follows the Victorian Early Years Learning Framework (VEYLDF) (Department of Education and Training, 2009). The VEYLDF, however, aligns with the EYLF. Full implementation of these frameworks was expected to be achieved by 2012. While there have been modifications to some of these frameworks since the study was conducted, this literature review discusses what was in place leading up to, and at the time, of the study.

THE NQS and the EYLF reflect the emphasis placed on diversity in the Melbourne Declaration.

Principles of Diversity in the National Quality Standard

There are six principles described in the NQS and these apply across all seven quality areas of the NQS. These are:

- *The rights and best interests of the child are paramount.*
- *Children are successful, competent and capable learners.*
- *Equity, inclusion and diversity underpin the framework.*
- *Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are valued.*
- *The role of parents and families is respected and supported*
- *Best practice is expected in the provision of education and care services. (ACECQA, 2011a)*

The *National Partnership Agreement on the National Quality Agenda (NQA) for Early Childhood Education and Care* (COAG, 2009b) gives specific detail to each of these principles. In this original agreement, the first, third and fourth principles make explicit reference to diversity.

The first principle, *the rights of the child, are paramount*, makes specific reference to Australia's commitment to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This principle sets as a foremost consideration, "the right of each child to have their individual and cultural identity recognised and respected" (COAG, 2009b, p. 5). This places the issue of diversity at the forefront of this national standard against which all early childhood education and care settings are to be measured.

The third and fourth principles are more specific in that they set out expectations for early years educators in regard to diversity and inclusion. Principle 3: *Equity, Inclusion and Diversity,* contains very clear expectations that early childhood educators provide equitable care for all children with specific consideration and respect for the diverse family structures, cultural backgrounds and abilities of all children (COAG, 2009b). Principle 4: *Valuing Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultures,* further develops the themes of equity with specific focus on respect, inclusion and equity for the First Nation people of Australia and includes the need to challenge bias and build positive relationships (COAG, 2009b).

These principles are reflected in the NQS released in 2012. Given that the NQS is now a mandatory Australia-wide measure of quality for early childhood education and care, addressing issues related to diversity and inclusion is a currently mandated requirement for early years' educators.

Diversity within the Quality Areas of the National Quality Standards

The NQS identifies seven areas of quality care against which early childhood centres are rated. In order to meet the standards, clear requirements for the consideration of diversity are articulated in the detail of these quality areas. However, it is apparent that during the field testing and consultation period there were modifications to the articulation of the expectations relating to cultural diversity in the NQS. This is seen in somewhat reduced prominence of consideration of diversity in the finally released and approved NQS (ACEQA, 2011b) than in the draft NQS first released as part of the National Partnership Agreement of 2009.

Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice

In the *National Partnership Agreement* 2009, the first quality area, *Educational program and practice*, placed the need to consider cultural diversity and each child's culture at the forefront of considerations when educators make curriculum decisions (COAG, 2009b). In the National Partnership Agreement, culture and cultural diversity formed one of the two elements of Standard 1.1 and was an explicit part of Standard 1.2 as shown (and highlighted in bold print) below:

> *1.1 The Early Years Learning Framework (or other approved learning frameworks) informs the development of a program for each child that enhances their learning and development.*
>
> > *1.1.1 The Early Years Learning Framework (or other approved learning framework) guides curriculum decision making and enables each child's learning in the five outcomes:*
> > - *Children have a strong sense of identity*
> > - *Children are connected with and contribute to their world*
> > - *Children have a strong sense of wellbeing*
> > - *Children are confident and involved learners*
> > - *Children are effective communicators.*
> >
> > ***1.1.2: Curriculum decision making is informed by the context, setting and cultural diversity of the families and the community.***
>
> ***1.2: The program for each child takes into account their strengths, capabilities, culture, interests and experiences.***
>
> > ***1.2.1: Each child's current knowledge, ideas, culture and interests provide the foundation for the program.***
> >
> > *1.2.2: Every child is supported to participate in the program.*

1.2.3: Each child's learning and development is assessed as part of an ongoing cycle of planning, documenting and evaluating children's learning.

1.2.4: Critical reflection and evaluation of children's learning and development, both as individuals and in groups, is used as a primary source of information for planning and to improve the effectiveness of the program and teaching strategies (Council of Australian Governments, 2009b).

While the consideration of cultural diversity and each child's culture is still evident in the final NQS (ACECQA, 2011b) the requirement is of considerably less prominence and this can be seen below:

Quality Area 1: Standards and Elements

Standard 1.1: An approved learning framework informs the development of a curriculum that enhances each child's learning and development.

> *Element 1.1.1: Curriculum decision making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.*

> ***Element 1.1.2: Each child's current knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program.***

> *Element 1.1.3: The program, including routines, is organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child's learning.*

> *Element 1.1.4: The documentation about each child's program and progress is available to families.*

> *Element 1.1.5: Every child is supported to participate in the program[1]*

> *Element 1.1.6: Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions and to influence events and their world.*

Standard 1.2: Educators and co-ordinators are focused, active and reflective in designing and delivering the program for each child.

> *Element 1.2.1: Each child's learning and development is assessed as part of an ongoing cycle of planning, documenting and evaluation.*

> *Element 1.2.2: Educators respond to children's ideas and play and use intentional teaching to scaffold and extend each child's learning.*

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[1] The elaboration of element 1.1.5 specifically refers to the importance of taking into account children's cultural and linguistic diversity.

Element 1.2.3: Critical reflection on children's learning and development, both

as individuals and in groups, is regularly used to implement the program

(Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority, 2011b).

These modifications made during the transition stage suggest that during the field testing and consultation period the explicit focus on culture and cultural diversity may have been identified as having either less priority than in the original signed partnership agreement, or that other elements were considered of equal or greater importance. Another possibility is that evidence to be outlined later in this chapter from those involved in the development and testing of the EYLF (which is the approved implementation framework of the NQS) (Sumison et al., 2009), suggest that consideration of political risk may also have been a factor in the "toning down" (p. 7) of the focus on culture and diversity. However, it is evident that, even if "toned down" since the original agreement, consideration of culture and cultural diversity are important components of Quality Area 1 of the NQS.

Quality Area 3: The Physical Environment

Quality Area 3 reflects consideration of diversity through an expectation articulated in the same way in both the draft NQS in the National Partnership Agreement and in the NQS released in 2012, to "recognise and reflect the diversity of families within the local community" (ACECQWA, 2011b, p. 85; COAG, 2009b, p. 15).

Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangements

In the draft NQS which was part of the *National Partnership Agreement* (COAG, 2009b), the fourth quality area, Staffing arrangements, placed a requirement on those who operate early education and care settings to ensure that all educators in their centres can "demonstrate the awareness, attitudes, knowledge and skills required to provide an environment where diversity and difference are acknowledged, valued and respected" (COAG, 2009b, p. 17). Interestingly, when the National Quality Standard (NQS) itself was released in 2012, this requirement was not included or mentioned within Quality Area 4. This again suggests that following the field testing and consultation period decisions were made to exclude this expectation from the NQS.

Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children

In Quality Area 5, consideration of children's culture and backgrounds are implicit in requirements relating to each element referring explicitly to educators considering "each child" when building relationships. In addition, the NQS released in 2012, when listing aspects that assessors may sight during ratings assessments, refers to "the service's approach to equity and inclusion, documented in the statement of philosophy" and to sighting examples of information gathered from "other professionals or work agencies that work with children, including children who

have additional needs and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds" (ACECQA, 2011b, p. 133)

Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities

In the National Partnership Agreement (2009), it was specified that the finally released regulations and schedules would include a requirement that services would have regulations and policies about "inclusion with procedures for reducing discrimination" (COAG, 2009b, p.30). In addition, the guidelines for Quality Area 6, referred to "guidelines regarding communication with Indigenous communities, ideas of cultural competence, and needing to reflect cultural diversity of community" (COAG, 2009b, p.30). However, when the NQS was released in 2012, while it contained explicit mention of polices relating to inclusion, it did not mention the need for policies relating to reducing discrimination. Nor did Quality Area 6 in the NQS (2012) encompass the need of relating to communicating with Indigenous communities. However, the NQS (2012) guidelines and expectations include that early childhood care centres are to provide "an environment that reflects the lives of the children and families using the service and cultural diversity of the broader community" (ACECQA, 2011b, p.132).

The Intent of the NQS in regard to Cultural Diversity

While some aspects of the NQS were modified between the signing of the National Partnership Agreement and the release of the NQS, it would appear that the original intent of COAG that awareness and acknowledgement of cultural diversity was to play a central part in the expectations placed on early childhood education and care is still evident in the NQS released in 2012.

Therefore, as the NQS is the standard against which all early childhood education and care services are assessed in order to be accredited for operation, all providers of this education and care must consider and address cultural diversity. This underlines the importance of investigating the ways in which cultural diversity is acknowledged and valued in early years' settings. Therefore, this study was designed to investigate the attention paid to cultural diversity when using children's literature in these settings.

2.2.2 National Goals Relating to Diversity within the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)

As the approved framework under Quality Area 1 of the National Quality Standard, the EYLF is specifically aimed at guiding the curriculum of early childhood care contexts for children aged 0-5 years. As outlined earlier, The EYLF is the approved framework for all states except Victoria which follows the Victorian Early Years Learning Framework (VEYLDF) (Department of Education and Training, 2009) which is aligned with the EYLF. Reference to diversity in the EYLF begins with the

introduction which outlines that, guided by the framework, early childhood educators must reinforce in their daily practice the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, stating "all children have the right to an education that lays a foundation for the rest of their lives, maximises their ability, and respects their family, cultural and other identities and languages" (DEEWR, 2009, p. 5). This is a clear directive to educators to ensure that curriculum decisions made within the EYLF consider and respect the diversity of all children in their care.

This emphasis on valuing diversity is seen in other sections which introduce the framework. In the section, *The Vision for Learning*, the importance of considering and valuing the influence of a child's family, community, culture and place in the development of their sense of belonging, being and becoming is promoted (DEEWR, 2009).

There are three key elements to the EYLF, namely Principles, Practice and Outcomes. These, in combination, are intended to be used by early childhood educators to guide their decision making and assessment in order to promote children's learning (DEEWR, 2009). Embedded within these elements is a focus on equity, respecting and valuing diversity and improving outcomes for Indigenous Australian children, further emphasising the important place that consideration of diversity has in the EYLF.

EYLF Principles in Relation to Diversity

The five principles of the EYLF reflect "contemporary theories and research evidence concerning children's learning and early childhood pedagogy" (DEEWR, 2009, p. 12).

The principles strongly articulate the focus on respecting and valuing diversity with statements related to the importance of educators working in partnership with families and communities; making inclusive and equitable curriculum decisions; being committed to helping all children succeed regardless of their differing circumstances and abilities; and, "valuing the continuity and richness of local knowledge shared by community members, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders" (DEEWR, 2009, p. 13). Additionally, Principle Four: Respect for Diversity, explicitly requires educators to "honour the histories, cultures, languages, traditions, child rearing practices and lifestyle choices of families" (DEEWR, 2009, p. 2013). This suggests the extent to which this framework promotes the rights of all children to have their cultures and identities considered and valued in all curriculum decisions.

The framework sees these principles as being met through the adoption of eight effective pedagogical practices which focus on "assisting all children to make progress in relation to the (five mandated) learning outcomes" (DEEWR, 2009, p. 12).

The eight pedagogical practices detailed in the EYLF (DEEWR, 2009) all refer to the importance of "respecting and valuing all children, their families and backgrounds when implementing both the planned and unplanned curriculum" (Adam et al., 2019). Explicit reference is made to respecting and considering cultural and family backgrounds under the sections addressing Responsiveness to Children, Cultural Competence, and Assessment for Learning. This emphasis on diversity in relation to pedagogical practice is consistent with the goals of the Melbourne Declaration (MCEETYA, 2008).

EYLF Outcomes in Relation to Diversity

Consistent with other aspects, acknowledging and valuing diversity and addressing its consequences continues to be a theme in the outcomes expected to be achieved through the implementation of the EYLF. This is particularly the case in the first three outcomes where children's sense of identity, connectedness to the world and wellbeing are addressed. Consideration is given to children's sense of agency, safety, identity and relationships, to their sense of belonging, fairness and social conscience, and to their social and emotional wellbeing, including their increasing capacity to take responsibility for these aspects of their lives. Within the elaborations of each of the outcomes there is a strong focus on inclusion and catering for all children. A clear definition of inclusion is given under Outcome One:

> *Inclusion: Involves taking into account all children's social, cultural and linguistic diversity (including learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstances and geographic location) in curriculum decision-making processes. The intent is to ensure that all children's experiences are recognised and valued. The intent is also to ensure that all children have equitable access to resources and participation, and opportunities to demonstrate their learning and to value difference* (DEEWR, 2009, p. 24).

In addition to the outcome statements themselves, many of the elaborations contain explicit statements related to the importance of educators providing opportunities to explore, value and appreciate diverse language and cultural backgrounds, including the use of children's own home languages; to build on children's existing knowledge and language; to provide print in home languages; and to explore, listen to and appreciate diverse perspectives (DEEWR, 2009).

However, some early childhood experts believe the EYLF does not go far enough in mandating considerations of, and approaches to, diversity and that this is due to perceived political risks associated with anti-bias approaches (Sumison et al., 2009). In 2009, six members of the consortium which carried out the initial development and trialling of the EYLF released a paper

outlining their "insider perspectives" of the development of the EYLF. In this, they expressed disappointment at what they saw as "substantial and cumulative 'toning down' of potentially controversial ideas in each of the two publicly released drafts and the final COAG-approved version (of the EYLF)" (Sumison et al., 2009, p. 7). The authors highlighted that this was most noticeable with regard to the rights of children as enshrined in the UN Conventions of the Rights of the Child (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 1989). The authors described the "toning down" of this element in particular as "vacuous". They also highlighted their belief that media attention to these drafts led to Government sensitivity and that the subsequent "toning down" was, in effect, a Government response to minimise political risk (Sumison et al., 2009).

The authors further contended that they had envisioned developing a curriculum that emphasised respect for diversity and recognition that discrimination can occur "when some ways of being and living in the world do not match what is commonly perceived to be normal" (Sumison et al., 2009, p. 9). They went on to say that they had intended to develop an anti-bias curriculum (Derman-Sparks & Anti-Bias Curriculum Task Force, 1989) in which children could learn about bias as well as develop a positive understanding of difference (Sumison et al., 2009). However, according to the authors, the influence of the media focus and, in particular, media releases by the then Federal Shadow Minister with responsibilities for ECEC in "toning down" the EYLF requirements related to diversity was "a sobering reminder" (Sumison et al., 2009, p.9) of the perceived political risks in building such a curriculum. This suggests evidence of political influences playing some part in the modifications to the EYLF during the transition and testing phase. As outlined earlier, the emphasis on diversity in the NQS was also "toned down" during the transition and testing period between the signing of National Partnership Agreement and the release of the NQF. Therefore, it could be reasonable to speculate that those modifications, too, may have been due to similar perceptions of political risk by those involved in the development of the NQF.

While recognising these perspectives of those who argue for a stronger focus on diversity and an anti-bias curriculum, it remains clear that in current policy it is incumbent upon educators in Australian early childhood education and care settings to consider issues of diversity and inclusion.

2.3 Defining Cultural and Racial Diversity

While researchers worldwide have investigated issues of diversity for many years, since the 1980s there has been a strong focus on issues related to race and culture and the impact of these on young children's sense of identity as well as on their view of themselves and of others. Much of this work can be traced back to the African American civil rights movements of the 1950s and 60s which led to the concept of multicultural education. Nieto (2000), in her book, *Affirming Diversity*, defined

multicultural education and diversity in a socio-political context (Nieto, 2000). This definition paid particular attention to the importance of multicultural education being for all students and that it "challenges and rejects racism and other forms of discrimination in society and accepts and affirms the pluralism (ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, economic and gender, among others) that students, their communities and teachers represent" (Nieto, 2000, p. 305). Nieto further highlighted that "multicultural education permeates the curriculum and instructional strategies used in schools, as well as the interactions among teachers, students and parents, and the very way that schools conceptualise the nature of teaching and learning" (Nieto, 2000, p. 305). Nieto has received awards for her research into issues related to race, cultural and multicultural education and her work has informed studies since that time.

Similar to Nieto, the work of Derman-Sparks was instrumental in the development of the "anti-bias curriculum" (Derman-Sparks & Anti-Bias Curriculum Task Force, 1989). This curriculum approach "aims to teach all children to be proud of their identities, to respect a range of human differences, to recognise unfairness and bias, and to act against prejudice and discrimination" (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019, p. 2; Derman-Sparks & Anti-Bias Curriculum Task Force, 1989). As highlighted earlier, the developers of the EYLF held similar viewpoints to those of Nieto and Derman-Sparks and had hoped that the EYLF would reflect this approach through developing in children the capacity to think critically about, challenge, and take action against bias (Sumison et al., 2009).

However, a body of research suggests that many educators, regardless of their own race or ethnicity, view children from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds from a deficit perspective (Boutte & Jackson, 2014; Milner, 2008). Research supporting this viewpoint focuses on low income and non-English speaking backgrounds as being deficits for the child, suggesting that children from homes characterised by low income and non-English speaking backgrounds, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children for many of whom Standard Australian English is a second language, are at increased risk of not being ready for kindergarten and formal schooling (Becker & Tuppat, 2013; Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2014; Sanders, Munford, & Boden, 2018). In the Australian context, Zeegers, Muir and Lin (2003) argue that a deficit theory approach has no place in today's multicultural society and that rather than view as deficit the "rich language backgrounds of Indigenous Australian children" (Zeegers, Muir, & Lin, 2003, p.54) these should be accepted and valued. Researchers including Zeegers et al. (2003) and others (Byrne & Munns, 2012; Gower & Byrne, 2012; Maher & Bellen, 2015; Perry, Kay, & Brown, 2008) have investigated ways in which children from such backgrounds *are* supported in early literacy practices suggesting that the viewpoint of deficit may be unhelpful and such demographic risk factors should not automatically be assumed to result in poorer outcomes.

Other evidence suggests that in some educational settings educators claim not to consider culture and race, and thus cultural diversity, conveying a belief that culture and race are "invisible" and, therefore, have no impact on their educational approaches (Willis & Parker, 2009). Such educators make claims such as, "'I don't see Black, White, Asian, green, pink or polka dot students. I just see kids'" (Willis & Parker, 2009, p. 34). However, Willis and Parker (2009) argue that those who claim to not see race actually imply that "only one race, White, is of value" (Willis & Parker, 2009, p. 34). Spina and Tai (1998) caution that "ignoring the racial construction of Whiteness reinscribes its centrality and reinforces its privilege and oppressive position as normative" (1998, p. 34). These researchers and others (Bakhtin, 1994; Compton-Lilly, 2009; Koss & Daniel, 2018; Robinson & Jones-Diaz, 2006; Whittingham, Hoffman, & Rumenapp, 2018) argue that ignoring the social and cultural worlds of children results in educational environments in which "some literacy practices are valued while others are devalued" (Compton-Lilly, 2009, p. xii). This, in turn can contribute to the perception of CALD children as being deficit when, in fact, their own literacy backgrounds are not recognised or valued (Compton-Lilly, 2009; Koss & Daniel, 2018; Sumison et al., 2009; Zeegers et al., 2003).

This review explores literature from each of these viewpoints. However, the researcher wishes to acknowledge that, similar to the claims of Compton-Lilly (2009) and of Sumison et al., (2009) current school-based practices in Australia often overlook, or view as deficit, the home literacy practices of many CALD children and particularly those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds (Petriwskyj, 2010) or "'normalise" practices of the dominant culture while devaluing those of non-dominant cultures (Sumison et al., 2009; Zeegers et al., 2003).

Defining race and culture is problematic for researchers (Egede, 2006). Race has traditionally been seen by some to be determined by biological factors (Krieger, 1987). However, others argue that rather than being a biological construct, race is more of a social construct (Compton-Lilly, 2009; Egede, 2006). Further, these researchers support the claim of Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas (cited in Compton-Lilly, 2009, p. 35) that while race is a social construct:

> *Racial categories are built on the acceptance of two fundamental untruths: (1) People can be distinguished on the basis of phenotype and physical markers, and (2) Whites are the superior racial group and Whiteness is the norm*

These beliefs are central to critical race theory (CRT) which challenges notions of deficit that many mainstream cultural groups hold about people from non-majority backgrounds and to validate the differing literacy practices and strengths of those from non-majority cultures (Compton-Lilly, 2009).

One integral literacy practice in formal and informal educational environments is the use of children's books (Fleer & Raban, 2005; Hill, Glover, & Colbung, 2011). Educators and parents use books as an important resource to expose children to language with the aim of developing children's literacy skills. Further, literacy is multifaceted and some (Compton-Lilly, 2009; Bakhtin, 1994; Petriwskyj, 2010), argue that literacy learning and literacy practices and literacy learning are ideological and that as children are exposed to books they also learn messages conveyed in texts, "They learn about gender, race, class and the ways texts operate in the world" (Compton-Lilly, 2009, p. xii). Thus, the nature and types of texts shared with young children and the practices through which they are used can have a lasting impact on how children see themselves and the world. Hence, it could be argued that the calls of those such as Nieto (2000) for multicultural education to "permeate the curriculum" would include attention to the books used with children as part of curriculum delivery. Similarly, Bush (2008) argues, in keeping with the aims of an anti-bias curriculum, that when using children's literature to teach about social justice, these practices should not be seen as something needing a "special" day or focus. Rather, inclusive literature should be integrated into "every lesson, every library collection, every display, every recommended reading list, and read-aloud program" (Bush, 2008, p. 25).

The work of Nieto strongly influenced the work of Rudine Sims Bishop who has researched extensively in the area of multicultural education focusing particularly on the use of multicultural children's literature as a vehicle for multicultural education. Bishop (1997) echoes Nieto's call for multicultural education to be focused on all children and asserts that multicultural literature should be inclusive and comprehensive and incorporate "books that reflected the racial, ethnic and social diversity that is characteristic of our pluralistic society and the world" (Bishop, 1997, p. 3). Bishop claims that "race or colour is one of the most, if not *the* most divisive issues in society" (Bishop, 1997, p. 3) and thus examines issues relating to the use of multicultural literature from and about people of colour. Other researchers such as Boutte et al. (2008) take the viewpoint that multicultural education should be for all children, but focus on the issues of culture and race as areas having the greatest impact on promoting multicultural education. Given the evidence of these and other researchers, this study will focus particularly on the concepts of race and culture within the framework of diversity.

In the Australian context, the work of McNaughton (2001) through the Preschool Equity and Social Diversity study found that pre-school children, themselves, are acutely aware of issues of colour and race and the power associations of these and draw on these understandings to define both themselves and others (McNaughton, 2001). While, in the Western Australian context, Buchori and Dobinson (2015) found that educators, despite being well-intentioned, struggle to address

diversity in an inclusive way, with much of their practice promoting dominant culture practices as preferable and as something minority children should be assimilated into. Thus, contributing to the "Othering" of children from minority cultures through educators viewing these children's own cultural practices or backgrounds as "burdens" or something only to be focused on as "special" (Buchori & Dobinson, 2015).

The evidence presented in this section suggests that issues of culture and race are central to addressing diversity in Australia. Furthermore, that the children's literature texts used in early education settings contribute to children's own developing understandings and viewpoints of diversity and thus books should be carefully considered to ensure they reflect the racial, ethnic and social diversity of society. Given there is currently a gap in the research in the Australian context, with the researcher only aware of her own pilot study investigating the combination of these factors, it is important for further research to be conducted into the portrayal of culture and race in children's literature and the use of such literature to support principles of diversity in early childhood.

While the researcher ascribes to the belief that race is a social construct (Compton-Lilly, 2009), for the purpose of this study, the researcher uses Bishop's definition of race being defined by skin colour or other visual differences (1997).

The definition of culture for the purposes of this study is drawn from the work of Nieto:

> *Culture consists of the ever-changing values, traditions, discourses, practices, social and political relationships, and worldview shared by a group of people bound together by a combination of factors that can include a common history, geographic location, race, ethnicity, social class, social identity, and religion (Nieto, 2017, p. 7).*

In addition, this study draws its demographic data and demographic definitions from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). The researcher does not assume that children from CALD, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and/or low socio-economic environments including those children who participated in this study, are automatically at an educational disadvantage.

2.4 Defining Children's Literature in the Context of this Study

As stated earlier in this review and in Chapter One: Introduction, evidence suggests that quality, inclusive children's literature can assist educators to address issues related to diversity Bishop, 1993, 1997, 2012; Boutte, Hopkins, & Waklatsi, 2008; Klefstad & Martinez, 2013; Koss &

Daniel, 2017; Lowery & Sabis-Burns, 2007; Sims, 1982; Souto-Manning, 2009; Souto-Manning et al., 2018).

Given this potential, this study focused on investigating the use of children's literature texts as a resource to meet principles of diversity in the kindergarten rooms of long day care centres in Western Australia. The principles of diversity examined in the study are those articulated in the National Quality Standard (NQS), and these were outlined earlier in this review.

While texts can take many forms, the EYLF defines texts as "... things that we read, view and listen to and that we create in order to share meaning" (DEEWR, 2009, p. 46). Further, the EYLF refers to texts as a being a means to explore, value and encourage appreciation and use of diverse language and cultural backgrounds; to build on children's existing knowledge and language; and to explore, listen to and appreciate diverse perspectives (DEEWR, 2009). The EYLF encourages educators to include texts in the home languages of children. The EYLF also recognises that texts are artefacts that are culturally constructed that can promote consideration of diverse perspectives (DEEWR, 2009). In addition, explicit mention is given to encouraging educators to share oral and written stories from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditions, those from our geographic neighbours and those brought by immigrants to Australia (DEEWR, 2009)

The EYLF also recognises that when children engage with literature, there is an emphasis both on "sharing the enjoyment of language and texts" *and* on beginning "to understand and evaluate ways in which texts construct identities and create stereotypes" (DEEWR, 2009, p. 28). This dissertation examines children's literature books as one form of text, and the most common form of text used in the early years, that has the potential to support diversity.

2.5 The Importance of Children's Literature in the Development of Young Children
2.5.1 Literacy and Learning
Research has consistently established the positive impact of sharing books on the literacy and learning of young children (Fleer & Raban, 2005; Halsall & Green, 1995; Ledger & Merga, 2018; Mol & Bus, 2011; Vaahtoranta, Suggate, Jachmann, Lenhart, & Lenhard, 2018). Frequent book sharing and book reading opportunities have a significant impact on children's long term educational gains through contributing to the development of important literacy skills, including children's oral language development and early reading skills, as well as impacting on their future reading proficiency (Fleer & Raban, 2005; Kara-Soteriou & Rose, 2008; Ledger & Merga, 2018; Mol & Bus, 2011; Morgan, 2009; National Early Literacy Panel [NELP], 2008; Vaahtoranta et al., 2018,). In addition, research over many years has consistently emphasised the importance of early literacy practices being shared between adults and children in order for children to develop higher order

cognitive and linguistic skills (Rogoff, 1992; Tharpe and Gallimore, 1998; Ledger & Merga, 2018; Logan, Justice, Yumus, & Chaparro-Moreno, 2019). In addition, and supported by the attention given to early literacy in the EYLF, few would dispute the importance of literacy as essential to successful engagement and participation in society (Fleer & Raban, 2005; National Early Literacy Panel, 2008; Rankin & Brock, 2015). Thus, book sharing as a contributor to these literacy skills plays an important role in enabling children to reach their potential.

2.5.2 Social and Emotional Development

Book sharing can also help develop children's social skills and understandings. Children can learn about important qualities such as friendship, cooperation, perseverance, respect and honesty through examining the character traits of key characters in children's books (Jackson & Heath, 2017; Kara-Soteriou & Rose, 2008). Furthermore, children's books can be used to develop values (Court & Rosental, 2007; Heath, 2017), assist in emotional healing (Harvey, 2010; Heath, 2017; Sullivan & Strang, 2002), develop empathy and theory of mind (Kidd & Costano, 2013; Mar, Tackett, & Moore, 2010), and "explore feelings and affirm notions of acceptance, safety and wellbeing" (Zeece & Stolzer, 2002, p. 47). Children's social and emotional development and well-being is emphasised in Outcome 3 of the EYLF (Children have a strong sense of well-bring) and implied in the other outcomes. Thus, considered use of literature with children can "promote children's sense of belonging, connectedness and well-being" (DEEWR, 2009, p. 31).

2.5.3 Developing Identities and Intercultural Understandings

The EYLF, as part of its *Vision for Learning*, recognises that "as children participate in everyday life, they develop interests and construct their own identities and understanding of the world" (DEEWR, 2009 p. 7). Importantly, and with strong parallels to this vision and to the outcomes and principles of the EYLF, a body of evidence suggests that children's literature plays a vital role in fostering in children a developing sense of belonging and of identity (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019; Kara-Soteriou & Rose, 2008; O'Neil, 2010; Souto-Manning et al., 2018). As children are exposed through book sharing to viewpoints, knowledge and ideas that may be different to their own they can experience new ways of thinking and being which, in turn, can impact on their own developing sense of identity, belonging and understandings of the world (Kidd & Costano, 2013; Magos, 2018). Of particular importance, is that when children are exposed to inclusive literature representing diversity in authentic ways, a sense of pride and affirmation of their identities can be engendered. In turn, this helps children from diverse groups to see themselves and their families as equal members of the wider communities in which they live (Bennett, Gunn, Gayle-Evans, Barrera, & Leung, 2018).

Furthermore, a number of researchers highlight that children's literature texts can serve as both a powerful "mirror" of children's own experiences and identity and a "window" onto the

diversity of the lives and world of others (Bishop, 1997; Cox & Galda, 1990; Glazier, 2005; Tschida, Ryan, & Ticknor, 2014). This shows important potential for the development of cross-cultural understandings (Harper & Brand, 2010; Magos, 2018) and helping children to "make connections, form relationships and create community with others" (Short, 2012, p. 9). Thus, the use of inclusive literature can give children a deeper understanding of the many ways of being and thinking in our pluralistic society. Short (2012) argues that literature provides a way "to move between local and global cultures and to explore the ways in which people live and think in cultures that differ from our own" (p. 9). Through this, children can be exposed to opportunities and ways to recognise and challenge some of the prevailing values and assumptions that are often characteristic of the dominant discourse. Lowery and Sabis Burns (2007) argue that, as such, multicultural literature gives children the opportunity to "live vicariously through these literary representations" (p. 2), thus potentially broadening children's understandings of the world.

Dominant discourses can be challenged or disrupted through the examination of diversity through literature (Boutte et al., 2011). For example, there are studies that illustrate how young children in their everyday experiences both reproduce and rework societal discourse on race (Tenorio, 2008; Van Ausdale & Feagin 2001), with some arguing that children, in their daily experiences in early childhood settings, learn ways in which diversity is constructed or valued (Bennett et al, 2017; Souto-Manning et al., 2018). Lowery and Sabis-Burns (2007) argue that rather than being neutral environments, many early years learning settings reflect monocultural viewpoints and promote a range of stereotypes through the books provided for, or shared with, children. As recognised by the EYLF (DEEWR, 2009) early childhood is an important time in the formation of children's attitudes to themselves and to others, thus the nature of children's books is important to ensure the provision of an environment in which diversity is reflected, valued and explored.

An absence of inclusive literature can lead to a sense of "Othering" or exclusion for children from non-dominant cultures (Plastow & Hillel, 2010). Plastow and Hillel suggest that "Othering" can engender fear and implies "a norm against which the other is measured and seen as aberrant" (2010, p. 97). As highlighted earlier in this review, children develop an awareness and recognition of difference, as well as a bias towards their own race, very early in life (Apfelbaum, Norton & Sommers, 2012; Bar-Haim, Ziv, Lamy & Hodes, 2006; Ito & Urland, 2003) and, importantly, that this can be addressed or disrupted through providing exposure to people from different races, even if this in the form of pictures (Bar-Haim, Ziv, Lamy & Hodes, 2006; Sangrigoli & de Schonen, 2004). This, again, highlights the importance of the current study in investigating the extent to which children are exposed to culturally diverse literature.

The findings of the research reviewed in this section highlight the importance of literature that reflects racial and cultural diversity as one way of introducing children to those who are different to themselves, and the value of introducing diversity through literature from birth.

Hence, the selection and use of books that reflect or promote positive and authentic views of diversity should be considered crucial in early childhood education. Children need access to books in which their own linguistic, social and cultural backgrounds are reflected through authentic and accurate representations and role models (Cox & Galda, 1990; Jones-Diaz & Harvey, 2002; Morgan, 2009; Tschida, Ryan, & Ticknor, 2014). Without this, the world of many children can remain invisible, or be presented in only stereotypical or discriminatory ways that serve to promote their backgrounds as "other" (Dunlap, 2012). This can lead to children experiencing emotions such as anxiety, doubt and fear that impact on their wellbeing (Dunlap, 2012), and make their participation in the curriculum challenging both emotionally and intellectually.

2.5.4 Respectful and Inclusive Literature

When educators provide literature portraying positive representation of racial and cultural diversity, they contribute to opportunities for all children to build a positive sense of identity. Given this, educators play a vital role when they infuse the curriculum with inclusive literature that promotes respect for the cultures, backgrounds and multiple perspectives of society (Bush, 2008; Harper & Brand, 2010). Not only does such literature contribute to, and strengthen, children's sense of identity and belonging but it supports children's learning as well as their holistic development (Colby & Lyon, 2004; Kara-Soteriou & Rose, 2008; Klefstad & Martinez, 2013; O'Neil, 2010). Literature not only reflects human experience but also constructs the experiences of those responding to the literature, thus, as highlighted earlier in this review, the situations and characters with which children can identify, can have a profound effect on children (Gollnick & Chinn, 2009; Morgan, 2009; Rosenblatt, 2005; Sipe, 2002; Tang, 2013). For children who see characters and situations familiar to them, a sense of affirmation can occur. However, when children do not see authentic or accurate representations of familiar situations or characters, they can be left with a sense of exclusion. This, in turn, can contribute to poor social and emotional implications which can impact on their self-efficacy, sense of identity, and academic achievement (Bennet et al., 2017; Department of Education Training and Youth Affairs [DETYA], 2000; Gollnick & Chin, 2009; Koss & Daniel, 2018). This, again, highlights the importance of providing authentic culturally diverse literature so that all children can achieve the benefits of book sharing and the contribution of this study to understanding the book environments of young Australian children.

A number suggest going much further than just exposing children to multicultural literature but for intentional use of such literature by educators to engage children in critical conversations

about race, culture and social justice (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019; Bigler & Liben, 2007; Kim, Greif Green, & Klein, 2006; Souto-Manning, 2009). Research has found that such intentional critical conversations, including with very young children, can support the development of "strong social competence" (Kim et al., 2006, p. 223) among children and reduce children's social stereotyping and prejudice (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019, Bigler & Liben, 2007; Souto-Manning, 2009; Souto-Manning et al., 2018; Magos, 2018).

As highlighted earlier in this review, studies show that when children are exposed to literature that is respectful and inclusive of diversity their learning and holistic development is supported which in turn can strengthen children's sense of identity and belonging (Colby & Lyon, 2004; Kara-Soteriou & Rose, 2008; Klefstad & Martinez, 2013; O'Neil, 2010). Literature not only reflects but also constructs human experiences and thus the inclusion or exclusion of characters and situations with which children can identify has a profound effect on children (Gollnick & Chin, 2009 Morgan, 2009; Rosenblatt, 2005; Sipe, 2002; Tang, 2013). Of particular importance is that when children do not see authentic and accurate representations of their own cultural groups they can be left with a sense of exclusion. This in turn can lead to social and emotional implications for their sense of self-efficacy and identity and self-efficacy, and also for their academic achievement (Department of Education Training and Youth Affairs [DETYA], 2000; Gollnick & Chin, 2009). Thus, the provision and use of respectful and inclusive literature should be an integral component of early childhood learning environments. This study will add to the literature in regards to current book collections in early childhood settings in Australia.

When educators select racially and culturally diverse literature to share with children they can engage children in discursive interpretation of characters and situations including those to which children can relate as well as those that are unfamiliar or new to them (Colby & Lyon, 2004). Children can be encouraged to make connections with both the text and the illustrations, and, in doing so, they can reflect not only on their own culture, but on those different to themselves (Klefstad & Martinez, 2013). This can also motivate children to discuss the emotions and feelings they experience through the literature. Values and traditional mores can be examined and discussed which can encourage "new ways of being and thinking" (O'Neill, 2010, p.42). Through such discussions, misunderstandings and stereotypes can be explored and challenged while respect and understanding for the practices, thinking and values of different cultural groups can be encouraged. (Hansen-Krening, 1992; Koss & Daniel, 2019; Morgan, 2009; Tunnel, Jacobs, Young, & Bryan, 2012). Using culturally diverse literature in this way, contributes to the empowerment of children and to the development of positive attitudes and tolerance towards others (Morgan, 2009; Roberts, Dean,

& Holland, 2005; Tunnel et al., 2012). Such culturally responsive literacy practices have the potential to "support children in developing appreciation and acceptance of a more global society" (Klefstad & Martinez, 2013 p.81) which will positively influence the achievements of all children and of future generations (Bennet et. al, 2018).

2.6 Identifying and Categorising Inclusive Children's Literature

As shown in this review, studies relating to the inclusion of multicultural literature in early childhood are unequivocal about its importance. However, challenges arise for both researchers and educators when identifying and categorising multicultural books and book collections. Diversity as a social construct is multi-dimensional, complex and ever-changing (Boyd, Causey & Galda, 2015). When considering cultural diversity, commonly considered characteristics include "themes centred on race, ethnicity, culture, and languages" (Boyd et. al, 2015, p. 379). As a result of these many characteristics, multiple definitions and approaches to categorisation of multicultural literature are evident in the literature.

Some, including Boutte et al. (2008) and Cole and Valentine (2000,) analysed multicultural children's books according to portrayal of differing ethnicities such as African, European, Latino, Hispanic and Native American, with Cole and Valentine also including in their approach explicit reference to books containing more than one "race". Brinson (2012) took a similar approach, asking educators to identify multicultural books according to portrayal of people from different cultural groups identifying these as Native-American, Asian-American Anglo-American, African–American and Latino-American. Similar to Cole and Valentine (2000) Brinson also asked educators to identify books with more than one culture represented. Gopalakrishnan & Becker (2011) took a more critical approach by defining multicultural literature as relating to "groups who have been previously underrepresented and often marginalized by society as a whole" (p. 5). Bishop (1997) refers to "people of colour" (p. 35). Further, she asserts that colour is a serious and divisive issue in society and that the "absence of such literature has constituted one of the most glaring omissions in the canon of children's literature" (Bishop, 1997 p. 35). Bishop (1997) categorises people or characters in children's literature largely by skin colour and other visual features. Bishop's work has become seminal research in the field of multicultural children's literature. This may, in part, be due to the identification of colour being more straightforward when compared with the more complex or multifaceted aspects of "culture" and "ethnicity" (Adam, et al., 2017).

Given the evidence of varying approaches taken by researchers to categorise multicultural literature, comparisons between studies becomes difficult and this also presents challenges for educators. In addition, a body of research argues that many children's books continue to promote

misunderstandings through exotic representation, stereotyping and inauthentic portrayal of the ideologies, viewpoints and lifestyles of non-dominant cultural groups. (Bishop, 1997; Chaudhri & Schau, 2016; David, 2001; Desai, 2013; Roberts et al., 2005). Some argue that issues such as these arise because often non-dominant cultural groups have been written about by authors from the dominant culture reflecting limited understanding or knowledge of the cultural group in question. (Bishop, 1997; Chaudhri & Schau, 2016; David, 2001; Roberts et al., 2005). Other evidence suggests that many book collections contain folktales relating to minority cultural groups without also containing books portraying contemporary depiction of these same groups (Handoo, 1990; Bishop, 1997). This is problematic as folktales, while giving some insight into the values and beliefs of differing cultural groups, also often portray these groups in historical or outdated ways and this can contribute to stereotypical perceptions of these groups' worldviews, ideologies and perspectives. Of particular concern is the representation of First Nations groups worldwide who, it has been argued, are often portrayed in books through ill-informed ethnic stereotypes resulting in distorted or superficial representation which contribute to further misunderstanding and prejudice (Chaudhri & Schau, 2016; David, 2001; Desai, 2013; Roberts et al., 2005). Many argue that not only does inappropriate representation of racial and cultural diversity impact negatively on children from the cultural groups so represented, but this can also lead to children from the dominant culture accepting these stereotypes as authentic. This, in turn, can contribute to ill-informed and prejudiced attitudes that can persist into adulthood thus further contributing to inequitable outcomes (Bishop, 1997; Chaudhri & Schau, 2016; David, 2001; Desai, 2013; Roberts et al., 2005; Souto-Manning et al., 2018).

An outcome of Bishop's (1992) work was the development of three categories for categorising multicultural literature: Culturally Neutral; Culturally Generic/Socially Conscious; and Culturally Specific/Authentic. Bishop's Culturally Generic category encompasses books that may contain characters from "so-called minority groups but contain few, if any, specific details that might serve to define those characters culturally" (Bishop, 1993, p. 45). These books often are written for "White readers who are being encouraged to develop a social conscience" (Bishop, 2012, p. 8). Bishop's Culturally Neutral category relates to books that "feature people of colour but are fundamentally about something else" (Bishop, 1993, p. 46) and, "choose to ignore anything, other than skin colour, that might identity the characters as Black" (Bishop, 2012, p. 8). The Culturally Specific/Authentic category encompasses books that "illuminate the experience of growing up a member of a particular, non-White cultural group" (Bishop, 1993, p. 44) and "set out to reflect both the distinctiveness of African American cultural experiences and the universality of human experience" (Bishop, 2012, p. 8). These categories have been adopted by several others in a number

of studies and have remained constant for over 25 years (Crisp et. al. 2016).

Other challenges arise due to the lack of a consistent approach in the literature when discussing the viewpoints and ideologies of diverse cultural groups. As outlined in this literature review, many researchers use a variety or combination of terms including worldviews, viewpoints, beliefs, perspectives, values and ideologies. Boutte and colleagues, (2008) refer to viewpoints in relation to historical perspectives and ideologies in relation to what is "condoned in literature selection" (p. 942) and "unspoken subtexts and ideologies regarding the roles and importance of U.S. and world populations (p. 941). However, they also refer to the voices, perspectives and worldviews portrayed in literature. Lowery and Sabis Burns, when making reference to other research in the field refer to literature that "can help students construct varying perspectives about their cultures and roles in society as well as provide opportunities for understanding other cultural surroundings, insights and, traditions and beliefs of others" (p. 2). Nieto refers to worldviews shared by a group of people (1992), while Bishop (1997) refers to "perspective and world view, and underlying ideology" (p. 39). The EYLF refers to the need for educators to use texts from a range of perspectives. Despite the variation in the application of these terms, the importance for the inclusion of literature reflecting diverse cultures and backgrounds remains unequivocal as highlighted throughout this review.

The evidence presented in this section highlights the importance of inclusive literature to young children and their developing sense of identity, and their ability to consider multiple perspectives and develop intercultural understandings (Gollnick & Chinn, 2009; Jackson & Heath, 2017; Morgan, 2009; Magos, 2018; Rosenblatt, 2005; Sipe, 2002). Furthermore, that use of such literature can support the EYLF outcomes in a way that is consistent with its principles and practices. Therefore, it is evident that texts must be carefully selected. The research evidence reviewed in this section has highlighted both the importance and challenges of building of book collections reflecting authentic cultural and racial diversity.

2.7 Selection of Children's Literature Texts

A body of research shows the importance educators place on books and reading to support the development of literacy skills such as vocabulary knowledge, understandings of language structure, and comprehension skills (Ewing, 2018; Fleer & Raban, 2005; Halsall & Green, 1995; Logan et al., 2019; Mol, Bus, de Jong, & Smeets, 2008; Rankin & Brock, 2015). Evidence such as that of Hill, et al. (2011), and Boutte, Hopkins and Watlaski (2008), also shows that educators value and use books to support early childhood content and skills, encourage children's imagination and use of fantasy or humour and, to teach children about morals, life values and attitudes. However, other

evidence, including that from the pilot study for this project (Adam et al., 2019), suggests that the criteria by which many educators select children's literature for use in their centres often result in limited book collections that are unlikely to promote principles of diversity (Brinson, 2012; Johnston, Bainbridge, & Shariff, 2007). Others have highlighted the importance of educators having access to appropriate guidelines to guide their book selections and to help them evaluate quality multicultural literature for sharing with children, with such guidelines being suggested as an important means of redressing the balance (Harper & Brand, 2010; Lowery & Sabis-Burns 2007). However, there is evidence that the selection of texts that reflect the diverse nature of Australian society and promote internationalism may not be straightforward.

Evidence suggests that the challenges of identifying and categorising authentic inclusive literature creates complex challenges for educators when selecting books for educational settings. For young children, adults make the majority of decisions about what books children read and have read to them (Agnew, 1996; Hill, et al., 2011; Wilkinson, 2003). Thus, the considerations made by adults when selecting books for children are important. If educators are to select authentic, inclusive literature and thus provide the potential benefits to the children in their care then their understandings and level of professional knowledge become important factors in selecting inclusive literature. Importantly, this also impacts on what books are made available by adults for children to select for their own use. Evidence suggests that some educators may hold unconscious biases that influence their selection of children's literature (Bainbridge & Johnston, 2017; Buchori & Dobinson, 2015; Kruse, 2001; Souto-Manning et al., 2018). If this is the case there are resulting implications for these educators if they are to support principles of diversity through informed and considered use of children's literature. In addition, some argue that some educators hold under-developed understandings of issues relating to race and power (Kruse, 2001; Buchori & Dobinson, 2015) and that this can lead to a lack of awareness or recognition of the importance and role of inclusive books. In addition, some educators may lack professional knowledge of how to select or implement literature representing racial and cultural diversity (Bainbridge & Johnston, 2017; Boutte et al., 2008), including lacking an awareness of books that portray different ethnic groups (Brinson, 2012).

2.7.1 Selecting Favourite or Well-Known Stories

Studies show that many adults select books for children on the basis of their own personal favourites which are often those they read, or had read to them, as children themselves (Adam, Hayes and Urquhart, under preparation; Agnew, 1996; Cremin, Bearne, Mottram, & Goodwin, 2008; Marsh, 2004) resulting in "teachers' overdependence on a relatively narrow range of very well-known writers" (Cremin et al., 2008, p. 13). Johnston and colleagues (2007) conducted a study involving 90 Canadian pre-service teachers, the majority of whom were from the "largely white,

European, English Speaking population" (Johnston et al., 2007. p. 77) and examined their responses to 68 multicultural picture books. The study found that the pre-service teachers, overwhelmingly favoured books which presented societal themes and perspective familiar to themselves and reflecting their own spatio-temporal backgrounds (Johnston et al., 2007). This suggests that selecting books on the basis of personal favourites or preference can lead to selection of texts that present and reinforce the societal viewpoints of the educators themselves. Given that the majority of early childhood educators in Australia, as is also the case in the U.K., Canada and the U.S.A., are predominantly from Anglo-European backgrounds (Garmon, 2004; Hickling-Hudson, 2005; Johnston et al., 2007; Matias, Nishi, & Sarcedo, 2017), the books they select on the basis of familiarity are likely to reflect their own dominant culture viewpoints and ideologies.

Adam, Hayes and Urquhart (under preparation) found in a study of 82 Western Australian pre-service teachers in their final year of their undergraduate teacher education course, that the top 10 books likely to be selected for classroom use contained no representation of non-White characters. The preferences of the pre-service teachers in that study and experienced educators in the pilot study for this project (Adam et al., 2019) were for well-known or classic children's books including Dr Seuss books and Disney books. This suggests that the problem of selecting books by what is familiar to the educator also exists in the Western Australian context. There is a body of evidence that argues that Dr Seuss books portray minority cultures in stereotypical or exotic ways and often in subservient roles to white characters (Ishizuka & Stephens, 2019; Nel, 2014, 2017). Ishizuka and Stephens go so far as to claim that "some of Dr Seuss' most iconic books….transmit Orientalist, anti-Black, and White supremacist messaging" (p. 14). The impact of this evidence has led to recent changes to the Read across America program, the biggest national literacy awareness program in the USA which "has been synonymous with youngsters in red-and-white-striped hats sitting down for story time on March 2, Dr Seuss's birthday" (Lynch, 2017, p. 12). Since 2017, the focus of this program has shifted to building a nation of diverse readers rather than on celebrating the birthday of Dr Seuss (Lynch, 2017).

Furthermore, some researchers argue that Disney stories, both in print and visual media, perpetuate racism (Beaudine, Osibodu, & Beavers, 2017; Giroux, 1994). Giroux (1994) claims that Disney stories "relentlessly define the United States as white, middle class and heterosexual" (1994, p. 31) and often serve to "reproduce sexist, racist and colonial ideologies" (1994, p. 32). This evidence further demonstrates that selecting only well-known, popular or personal favourite texts may result in book collections likely to reflect dominant ideologies and "serve to privilege particular kinds of texts over others" (Marsh, 2004, p. 259).

However, encouraging research has emerged from New Zealand finding that it may be important for educators to select books that resonate with them personally and that they are passionate about, and doing so can assist children to see the importance of books at a personal level. Furthermore, that such use of books can model to children "personal attachment and engagement with books" (Blakeney-Williams & Daly, 2013, p. 47). Importantly, though, they found that the educators in their study helped children to make connections between the ideas in the books and their own lifestyles and backgrounds, thus suggesting a clear understanding of these educators of the need for such connections to be made. This research took place with experienced teachers (7-20 years' experience) working in educational settings with a high level of cultural and linguistic diversity. This evidence suggests that experienced teachers working in culturally and linguistically diverse educational settings in which the diversity of the children is strongly valued, recognised and incorporated into everyday practice, "do not necessarily need to find picture books which specifically reference the various cultures and languages of the children in their classroom in order to teach in a culturally responsive manner" (Blakeney-Williams & Daly, 2013, p. 49).

This evidence also suggests that selecting books with which educators have a personal connection can contribute to highly effective classroom practice. Furthermore, that educators' experience and commitment in working in culturally and linguistically diverse settings may contribute to a deeper awareness of culturally responsive use of picture books even when the books do not reflect cultural and linguistic diversity (Blakeney-Williams & Daly, 2013). Therefore, it would appear that the use of educators' favourite texts in ways that promote positive outcomes for culturally and linguistically diverse children may be influenced by, and linked to, the experience and cultural competence of the educators themselves. Thus, it appears that the factors at play when using books with children extend beyond simply what and how texts are selected.

2.7.2 Selecting Books by Children's Interests

Similar to selecting texts according to educators' personal favourites, the pilot study for this project (Adam et al., 2019) and others (Agnew, 1996; Cremin et al., 2008) also show that educators may select books based on the perceived personal favourites or interests of the children. This approach is problematic for several reasons. Firstly, as the EYLF requires the consideration of children's interests it may be that educators would be likely to select and promote books that children express or show interest in, in order to meet curriculum requirements.

However, given that educators initially select the books that are made available to the children, and the evidence presented earlier suggests the books chosen by adults are often likely to be personal favourites or popular well-known books (Adam et al., 2019; Cremin et al., 2008; Johnston et al., 2007) and to reflect dominant ideologies (Marsh, 2004), this may result in educators

making assumptions that children will enjoy the same books the educators themselves enjoy or prefer. Thus, the books that children have an opportunity to show interest in is likely to be linked to the educators' personal preferences.   This can lead to a prevalence of popular or well-known books without critiquing them or the overall collection for portrayals of diversity, thus contributing to monocultural book collections.

Other research highlights that repeated readings of familiar texts is appropriate and desirable (Morrow & Smith, 1990; Penno, Moore, & Wilkinson, 2002) because "rereading texts also helps children understand stories and learn more words in the text (Zucker & Landry, 2010, p. 86) Hill, et al. (2011), when investigating the book choices of young Australian Aboriginal children, found that "high-quality children's literature appeals to children and generates numerous re-readings" (Hill, et al., 2011 p.83). Educators, therefore, may interpret such evidence as justification for selecting familiar and well-known texts that the children show interest in to share with, and make available to, children. Therefore, on the surface, selecting books according to the perceived interests of children, may seem a valid reason to select popular and well known books. However, given the evidence that most book collections in early years' learning environments are monocultural (Adam et al., 2017; Boutte et al., 2008; Crisp et al., 2016), it could be assumed that the books shared with children, used in repeated readings and subsequently becoming the children's favourite books, or books the children are interested in, are likely to also be largely monocultural.

Other interesting evidence emerged from Hill et al. (2011), when investigating the preferred book choices of young Aboriginal children. They found that Aboriginal children "preferred bright, cartoon-style books with cut-outs and flaps, rather than books with specific Indigenous content" (Hill, et al., 2011, p. 80) and were unlikely to select books that had been specifically written for their local community. While the reasons for these choices were not clear, it is possible that the Aboriginal children's preferences or interests may have been due to differences in the quality and presentation of the two types of texts. If this is the case, this has implications for the writing, design and presentation of books that reflect the lives and concerns of diverse groups. In addition, these findings could be problematic to selecting inclusive literature as educators may see this evidence as a reason to not include books reflecting specific Indigenous Australian content believing that children would not be interested in these books.

Several studies since the 1940s have examined children's racial preferences using dolls or pictures representing different races and found that children from minority groups will often prefer or identify with white dolls or pictures of white people, suggesting a learned belief in the superiority of Whiteness (Ebrahim & Francis, 2008; Clark &Watson, 2014). Some of these researchers also found

a possible link between children selecting the white doll or image when the researcher was also White and the possibility that children may make this choice in the belief this will please the adult who is asking them their preference (Katz, Robinson, Epps, & Waly, 1964). This again suggests a possible belief in a superiority, or at least influence, of being white. Therefore, identifying books by children's interests may, in fact, be clouded by children's already learnt racial bias that can be explained by their own beliefs or implicit awareness of white privilege and the social power associated with Whiteness (Ebrahim & Francis, 2008). This is, in turn, may contribute to a perception by educators that children are not interested in books which portray a variety of ethnic groups.

In addition, while educators who select books that are perceived favourites of children may appear to be addressing the requirement of the EYLF of providing a curriculum based on the interests of the children, it could be argued they are doing so in a superficial way that is not in keeping with the underlying intent of the EYLF and the NQS. The NQS Quality Area 1 (educational program and practice) requires educators to build a curriculum "with a foundation in children's interests, ideas, knowledge and culture" (Siraj et al., 2019, p. 370) and it could be argued that educators selecting books by children's favourites are striving to address the first part of this requirement. In doing so educators would seem to be addressing children's interests as perceived through the children's own curiosity or preferences. However, it could be argued that they appear to overlook a deeper understanding of "interests" and its application to the welfare, development or achievement of children.

The guide to the NQS (2012) states that the first principle of the NQF is "The rights and **best interests** of the child are paramount". The elaboration of this information cites Article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990) stating "The **best interests** of children must be the primary concern in making decisions that may affect them" (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 1989, Article 3). It could be argued that considering the best interests of children would require the provision of books that would promote positive viewpoints, ideologies and representations of all children, because, as this review has highlighted, there is overwhelming evidence of the potential harm to children's identities and well-being when their culture or race is invisible or absent in the books to which they are exposed. This also suggests that while educators may consider observed or expressed **interests** of children, it would appear that they may overlook what might be the **best interests** of children when making curriculum decisions such as book selection. Evidence shows that while children enjoy and prefer texts that they know and recognise, they also enjoy "trying the new and unknown; books which sometimes quickly develop into new favourites" (Wilkinson, 2003, p. 297). Other research highlights the importance of educators "leveraging these interests…to support learning and development" (Siraj et al., 2019, p.

379) Thus, it seems important and in the best interests of children to expose them to a wide variety of literature in order to stimulate and expand their interests and allow all children to experience the benefits of a wide range of books.

2.7.3 Selecting Animal Stories

The 2011 pilot study to this study found that approximately 50% of children's books available in the early learning settings studied were animal stories, with the majority of these telling stories with anthropomorphised animals as the characters (Adam et al., 2017). Similarly, Marriot (2002) surveyed 1074 "modern picture books" (p.177) and found that 48.5 % of them were animal stories, again most of these featuring anthropomorphised animal characters. A 2014 Western Australian study of 82 Pre-service Teachers' book choices for classroom use found that seven of the top ten book preferences of Pre-Service Teachers (Adam et al., under preparation) were well-known animal stories, with the remaining three being well-known stories containing only Caucasian characters. This suggests that educators place high value on the use of animal stories with young children and this is supported by evidence that animal stories have, for many years, been seen as a vehicle to impart ethical and moral lessons, and prosocial behaviours (Larsen et al., 2018). However, recent evidence challenges this assumption claiming that children are less likely to learn "causal knowledge" (Larsen et al., 2018, p. 11) and less likely to transfer knowledge related to solving social problems when the knowledge is learned through anthropomorphised animal characters rather than human characters (Larsen et al., 2018; Richert, Shawber, Hoffman, & Taylor, 2009; Richert & Smith, 2011). Thus, selecting animal stories as vehicle to promote intercultural understandings and respect for diversity could be ineffective as this recent evidence asserts that "to ensure that the moral of a story will be translated into children's action, the story should contain human characters, not anthropomorphised animal characters" (Larsen et al., 2018, p. 6). This is not to say that animal stories have no place in the early years, rather to suggest that selecting them as a vehicle to address important social, equity and intercultural issues may be flawed.

In addition, content analysis of animal stories has found that the lifestyle, viewpoints and activities of non-human characters often mirror that of the dominant cultures and "do not typically lend themselves to dialogues with children about race and can reinforce 'colour-blind' notions" (Boutte et. al, 2008, p.953) . Other evidence also shows that animals too can be typecast or stereotyped into particular roles and thus reinforce notions of superiority and inferiority (Borkfelt, 2011; Dunn, 2011). Others hold that animal stories often transmit racial messaging through symbolism and allegories (Nel, 2014, 2017). Thus it would appear that when building book collections with a view to addressing principles of diversity through the use of children's books, animal stories would also need to be considered and evaluated for the viewpoints and ideologies

they promote. Furthermore, and of particular relevance to this study, is that analyses of even recently published children's books show that many children from ethnic minority groups are more likely to see an animal such as a dinosaur or rabbit as a main character in a book than a member of their own culture (Cooperative Children's Book Centre [CBCC], 2017) thus further contributing to the invisibility of minority groups in book collections, especially when these book collections contain such high proportions of animal stories.

2.7.4 One Book, One Story

Other studies have found a viewpoint and practice among some educators that one book about a particular culture is sufficient to represent accurately the lifestyles, viewpoints and ideologies of its members (Mendoza & Reese, 2001; Tschida et al., 2014). This adds to the risk of stereotyping and marginalising children from those backgrounds, as the diversity within a particular culture is unlikely to be evidenced when only one book is used. Gower and Byrne (2012) highlight this issue in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people arguing that Indigenous culture across Australia is "very diverse" and includes differences in "language, cultural practices, location, family structure, and general life experience" (p.391). Therefore, using only one book to represent or portray Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can lead to limited and inaccurate understandings for all children, and risk alienating children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds. Evidence from other countries highlight similar problems for the portrayal of other First Nation groups (David, 2001; Roberts et al., 2005).

Furthermore, often the only books about minority groups present in book collections are those that portray them in folktales about minority groups (Bishop, 1997), further compounding their exclusion. Folktales often contain only stereotypical or historical depictions of an ethnic group (Handoo, 1990; Bishop, 1997) and while they can be used as a vehicle to build intercultural understandings, this is best done when coupled with approaches that make comparisons with contemporary lifestyles (Magos, 2018). This is unlikely to take place when there are no books portraying contemporary representation of the culture in question. This can result in collections that reflect stereotypical, one dimensional and non-contemporary understandings of diverse cultures, including their worldviews, perspectives and ideology. Tschida (2014) warns that the use of a "single story" not only creates stereotypes but that this is problematic as not only are the stereotypes untrue, they are incomplete. When used over and over again "these single stories become so much a part of our lives that we are often unaware of the ways in which they operate" (p. 30).

Other evidence shows that for young children, illustrations are very important and attract more visual attention than print, with young children using their working memory capacity to "interpret illustrations and to link the story content with the illustrations" (Mol & Bus, 2011). This raises further concerns when these illustrations portray inaccurate or inappropriate representations

of a culture. Pang (1992) and Morgan (2009) warn that educators should avoid books that rely heavily on characters wearing traditional clothing and, if used, should highlight that this clothing is only worn for special occasions. A focus on traditional clothing or celebrations at the expense of contemporary lifestyle and practices can result in exoticisation of "the other" resulting in practice that is contrary to principles of diversity (Banks & Banks, 2007). In addition, tokenistic illustrations such as repeated illustrations of elements such as chopsticks or fans in books representing Asian Culture, or writing made to look foreign, such as a font mimicking Chinese or Japanese writing (Morgan, 2009) are examples of how the use of "one story" can perpetuate tokenism and racial stereotyping and thus contribute to a discriminatory perspective.

Children's self-esteem can be affected when they are presented with images that misrepresent, stereotype, offend or make fun of their background and or/colour (Bishop, 1997; Roberts et al., 2005; Handoo, 1990; Souto-Manning & Mitchell, 2009). As a result, this may translate into fewer benefits from book sharing for these children compared with those from the dominant culture (DETYA 2000, Fleer & Raban, 2005; Koss & Daniel, 2018; Souto-Manning et al., 2018; Siraj-Blatchford & Clarke, 2000). For Caucasian children this may, again, contribute an inflated sense of White being "normal" (Bishop, 1997). This, in turn, could contribute to misunderstood viewpoints of difference, leading to prejudice and discrimination.

Furthermore, this evidence confirms the ideas proposed by Buchori and Dobinson, (2015), Schoorman (2011) and others (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010) that when cultural diversity is addressed or examined in classrooms the examination often does not go beyond a superficial level.

In order for children to develop a strong sense of identity and of understanding and respect for others, all of which are encompassed in the outcomes of the EYLF (2009), they need to see not only their own culture, but those of others, represented in multiple books in authentic and contemporary ways (Bishop, 1997; Gollnick & Chin, 2009; Boutte et al., 2008). This is why this study examines the selection, availability and use of children's literature in early childhood long day care settings.

2.7.5 Dearth of Literature
A major challenge in building inclusive book collections is the lack of authentic culturally diverse books available. Horning, Lindgren, Schliesman and Townsend (2015) found that in 2014 (when the data from this study was collected) of 3500 children's books received by the Cooperative Children's Book Centre (CCBC) in the U.S.A. only approximately 11% had "significant content, topics, characters and/or themes about African or African American, American Indian, Asian/Pacific American or Latino or Latino/American people" (cited in Crisp et. al, 2017, p. 1). Furthermore, the CBCC found that the number of multicultural books published has remained constant for more than

20 years. Similarly, data released by the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) in the U.K. showed that of the children's books published in 2017, only 4% featured characters belonging to a minority ethnic background (BAME) and only 1% had a BAME main character (Centre for Literacy in Primary Education [CLPE], 2018)

While there are few statistics available on the number and proportion of diverse books published in Australia, the National Centre for Australian Children's Literature (NCACL) recently compiled a database of culturally diverse books ("Cultural Diversity Database" [CDD], 2019) in response to the increasing call for diverse books. The database consists of 340 books published between 1926 and 2018 ("Cultural Diversity Database" [CDD], 2019) and the scope of titles encompasses books suitable for early years through to late secondary school years. Fifty of these books are listed as suitable for early childhood years. This group of 50 books includes animal stories, books by both majority and minority group authors, books with Caucasian main characters and books with minority group main characters. When these factors are considered in the light of this literature review, it could be argued that, while the creation of the database is an important initiative and a positive step towards supporting educators and others in sourcing culturally diverse books, it also highlights the dearth of multicultural literature published in Australia and further points to the lack of literature by minority group authors. Of further importance is that the NCACL total collection of Australian published children's books consists of over 45 000 books ("Collections", 2019) yet the cultural diversity database consists of only 340 titles, again underscoring the dearth of culturally diverse literature for Australian Children.

This dearth of authentic culturally diverse literature further contributes to the challenges faced by educators when building inclusive book collections, thus further compounding the difficulties faced when attempting to address principles of diversity through the use of children's literature.

2.7.6 Impact of Limited Collections

The absence of the representation of perspectives and viewpoints of minority groups in children's literature results in educators not having opportunities to use diverse texts as a "mirror" of children's identities, or experiences, or as a "window" onto the diversity of the wider community and the world (Bishop, 1993; Cox & Galda, 1990; Glazier, 2005; Tschida et al., 2014). In turn, this results in missed opportunities to harness the potential of diverse literature to helping develop children's understandings of themselves and others. Opportunities for helping children to "make connections, form relationships and create community with others" (Short, 2012, p. 99), are missed. As outlined earlier in this review, this lack of diverse texts results in further missed opportunities to extend children's understandings through the vicarious experiences literature can provide (Lowery &

Sabis-Burns, 2007). Furthermore, and of particular concern is the potential impact on children from minority backgrounds who either do not see reflections of their own world and identities in books, or only see stereotypical or discriminatory representation of these. For these children there can be serious implications for their participation in both their learning and social environments. To fully engage in book sharing and receive the associated benefits, all children need opportunities to interact with books containing authentic and accurate portrayal and role models relating to their social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Jones-Diaz &Harvey, 2002; Morgan, 2009).

2.7.7 Summary of Challenges in Building Multicultural Book Collections

While this review has shown that there is an increasing awareness of the importance and potential of literature to both include all children and to broaden their experiences, evidence suggests that the selection of diverse texts remains problematic. As this review has highlighted, the understandings of the educators themselves can result in narrow or limited collections that fail to reflect the pluralistic nature of society (Bainbridge & Johnston, 2017; Souto-Manning et al., 2018; Mendoza & Reese, 2001). This is confirmed by several studies finding that some early childhood educators lack professional knowledge and understandings relating to multicultural literature and its selection and use, and this is evident in the lack of literature that represents diversity in many early childhood learning environments (Adam et al., 2017; Brinson, 2012; Crisp et al., 2016).

Another issue that may impact on the selection of quality, inclusive texts is the educators' knowledge of, and views about, issues related to diversity. There is research that suggests that there may be problems with preparing pre-service teachers to work with children of diverse ethnic backgrounds. In Australia, Hickling-Hudson (2005) found that many pre-service teachers struggled with tokenistic ideas of ethnicity, including deep seated fears of Aboriginal people and confusion over matters of assimilation and preserving of minority identity. The paper concluded that many pre-service teachers are uncertain as to how they can overcome prejudice and explore diversity within the curriculum. Buchori and Dobinson (2015) as well as Gower and Byrne (2012) highlight similar challenges facing educators working in culturally and linguistically diverse contexts in Australia. This evidence suggests that Australia faces challenges in preparing pre-service teachers, and supporting in-service teachers, to work in multicultural classrooms. This has implications for achieving national goals related to diversity and given these identified concerns with both pre-service and in-service teachers' attitudes, it is possible that this could create problems when selecting and using literature as a means to promote principles of diversity.

Several studies have shown that the intentional inclusion of diverse children's literature in teacher education courses can assist in developing cultural competencies and understandings for

pre-service teachers, and in developing understandings related to their own use of culturally diverse literature in their later professional practice (Daly & Blakeney-Williams, 2015; Garmon, 2004; Harding et al. 2017; Johnston et al., 2007; Souto-Manning, 2009). Thus, it would appear that one key way to prepare pre-service teachers to be able to promote and meet principles diversity could lie in the inclusion and intentional use and exploration of diverse literature in teacher education courses. It could be argued that this would, in turn, assist those educators to build and use diverse books collections in their own later practice.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, research over many years has consistently found that the world represented in children's books is "predominately upper middle class, heterosexual, nondisabled, English speaking, and male" (Crisp et al., 2016, p. 29). A body of evidence suggests part of this problem lies with the publishing industry itself lacking cultural diversity (Deahl, Kirch, Patrick, & Rosen, 2016; Shukla & Flood, 2017), and that this contributes to unconscious bias affecting the publication of books from and about diverse perspectives (Deahl et al., 2016). Although there has been some increase in the publication of books representing diversity, it could be argued that this possible unconscious bias in the publishing industry may be an influence on the publication of books that are based on stereotypes and misrepresentation. In addition, this may contribute to the potential problem of authors from dominant cultures publishing books about non-dominant cultures that reflect limited knowledge or understanding of those cultures (Boutte et al., 2008; Morgan, 2009). Koss and Daniel (2018) and others (Jackson & Heath, 2017; Mendoza & Reese; 2001) argue that these challenges contribute to book collections which, for many children, do not reflect images of themselves, their backgrounds, experiences or world views.

As evidenced in this review, calls for increasing publication of diverse books have been made over many years (Yokota, 2015). In 2014, a movement known as the "We Need Diverse Books" movement began in the U.S.A. through the social media platform Twitter (Yokota, 2015; "WNDB", 2019). Led largely by the voices of minority background authors, illustrators and publishing insiders, the group was quickly formalised into a non-profit group describing itself as a "non-profit and a grassroots organization of children's book lovers that advocates essential changes in the publishing industry. Our aim is to help produce and promote literature that reflects and honors the lives of all young people" ("We Need Diverse Books", 2019). As well as calling for the publication of diverse books, those involved in this movement call on those who produce, select or share books with children to recognise their own understandings and misunderstandings about diversity, to recognise and seek authenticity in diverse representation and to recognise the benefits of diverse literature for all children (Yokota, 2015). This movement has continued to grow both in the U.S.A. and elsewhere, including Australia, and now includes the voices of academics, librarians, authors and teachers.

Since then, there has been an increasing use of social media platforms to promote the call for diverse books and, especially, the voices and authorship of minority groups in those books. These are largely promoted through use of social media hashtags such as #ownvoices ("#OwnVoices", 2018) which calls for the increased publication of books authored by those from minority background, and #loveozya, drawing attention to the need for diversity in Australian young adults literature ("About LoveOzYA", 2019). It could be argued that these are positive signs suggesting that awareness of both the importance and challenges of building authentic multicultural book collections may be growing, including a stronger call for changes in the publishing industry itself.

2.8 Educator Understandings, Beliefs and Confidence

Another issue identified is that some educators believe that children, particularly in diverse educational settings, "see diversity every day" and therefore, these educators perceive there is no need for them to place a focus on discussing diversity. Bronson and Merryman (2011) refer to this belief as "the diverse environment theory" (p. 55). However, there is a body of evidence suggesting that assumptions such as these are flawed. Pahlke, Bigler and Suizzo (2012) and Hewstone & Brown, 2005) argue that children's racial attitudes are not related to the percentage of racially diverse people in their pre-schools, neighbourhoods or friendship groups and that mere contact with different races is insufficient to change racial attitudes.

As this review has highlighted, exploring race and culture from an early age can contribute to children's worldviews and the development of their sense of identity and well-being. However, an environment in which discussion of race and difference are avoided leads to a "colour blind" environment in which the unique histories, cultures, values and experiences of minority groups are ignored or forgotten (Schofield, 2007). Children begin to develop an awareness and recognition of diversity early in life (Apfelbaum, et al., 2012; Ito & Urland, 2003). Bar-Haim et al., found in a 2006 study of 36 infants, that children develop a bias towards their own race as early as three to six months of age. In Australia, as outlined earlier in this review, the work of McNaughton through the Preschool Equity and Social Diversity study (2001) found pre-school children to have strong awareness of colour and race including the association of these with power. They further highlighted that children define both themselves and others through these understandings (McNaughton, 2001). As McNaughton's study took place before the development and implementation of the NQF and EYLF, it could be argued that such important findings may have been included in the literature informing the development of these Australian policies and documents. Furthermore, that this evidence and that, also presented earlier, relating to the importance of exploring race and culture with young children of others should inform the training and practice of educators who work with young children.

Other evidence suggests that educators are often hesitant to discuss issues relating to equality, power, values and attitudes because they lack confidence and knowledge compounded by a lack of resources (Boutte et. al., 2011). Others suggest that educators may avoid talking about race and racial issues, believing that children are too young for such discussions (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019; Whittingham, Hoffman, & Rumenapp, 2018), or that some educators hold concerns that such a discussion might be considered racist in itself (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019). Still others construct children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds as being "other" and take a viewpoint that the most important focus for these children is to learn to speak English (Buchori and Dobinson, 2015; Colombo, 2005). Many of these educators also aim to assimilate children into the dominant culture, often viewing the children's own backgrounds as "burdens" or challenges and thus teaching about diversity can often be superficial or tokenistic (Buchori and Dobinson, 2015; Colombo, 2005). In addition, some educators mistakenly believe that one book about a particular cultural group is adequate to portray that groups' viewpoints and perspectives (Mendoza & Reese, 2001). Evidence from both the U.S.A. and Australia suggests that the lack of provision and use of literature texts representing the perspectives of diverse cultural groups is sometimes due to the educators not seeing 'White' as a race (Buchori and Dobinson, 2015; Spina and Tai, 1998;) or as a "focus for critique and analysis" (Spina and Tai, 1998, p. 37). As outlined earlier in this review, such beliefs can result in educators "not seeing", or deliberately overlooking, diversity (Willis & Parker, 2009) and, in turn, this influences the curriculum decisions made by educators thus potentially further contributing to practices that may unwittingly reinforce a perception of the dominant culture as being preferable or superior.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, there is evidence that some educators working in culturally and linguistically diverse settings and having a high level of cultural competence can still use books to teach in a culturally responsive way even when those books do not reflect diversity (Blakeney-Williams & Daly, 2013). Ultimately, this suggests that interactions between pedagogical practices, children's literature and children's learning will depend, in part, upon educators' professional knowledge, their training, confidence, skills and judgements and the quality and relevance of the literature they share with children.

In summary, inclusive literature can be an enabler of "culturally responsive pedagogy" (Souto-Manning, 2009, p. 50). When educators use culturally responsive pedagogy through literature, they actively involve children in engaging with diverse literature and exploring meaning, ideas, viewpoints, ideas and responses to books that reflect their own worlds and, importantly, the world of those different to themselves (Colby & Lyon, 2004; Harper and Brand 2010; Klefstad & Martinez, 2013). This type of practice creates both opportunities and challenges for educators in

addressing both policy and program requirements and expectations related to diversity. In Australia, educators are required to apply their knowledge and understanding of the EYLF in all aspects of their daily practice as well as develop partnerships with families and the broader community in order to support children's learning and development (DEEWR, 2009). As this review has highlighted, including and exploring a range of diverse literature with children can be a central component of achieving these goals. Therefore, given the important role educators play as mediators between the literature texts and the children, it is important to investigate both the attitudes and practices of educators.

2.9 Book Sharing Practice

When creating an inclusive curriculum, selecting inclusive and appropriate literature is only the beginning. The use of such literature with children also brings opportunities and challenges. The way in which the children themselves engage with, and respond to, literature impacts on their educational, social and emotional outcomes including how they see themselves, others and the world (Colby & Lyon, 2004; Short, 2012). Thus, the nature of the practice surrounding the sharing of books with young children is also of importance to this study.

Over the years, the importance of book reading practice for young children has been well-researched. Evidence shows that there are multiple factors at play that impact on the processes and outcomes of book sharing with young children. These include access to a variety, quantity and quality of books, the frequency and nature of book sharing with children, group sizes, the types of books shared with children and, the quality of the book sharing processes and level of engagement by children.

2.9.1 Book Environments

Considerable evidence shows that children need access to a variety of high quality books and frequent opportunities to listen to, discuss and engage with books (Dickinson & Tabors, 2002; Halsall & Green, 1995; Mol, Bus, de Jong, & Smeets, 2008; Penitmonti, Zucker & Justice 2010). Despite this evidence, research in the U.S.A. by Dickinson, Anastopoulous and McCabe, (2003) found that daily read-alouds were not included in the routines of approximately 40% of preschool classroom routines. Zucker and Landry (2010) and others (Dickinson et; al 2003, Neuman, 1999), found that this is particularly the case for preschools serving children from low income households, with the book environments in these centres also often containing fewer books (Dickinson et al., 2003, Neuman, 1999) .

Evaluating the quality of book environments has been a challenge for researchers and policy makers leading to the development of tools to measure these important aspects in comparable and

reliable ways. One measure of the quality of literacy environments widely used in the U.S.A. is the Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO) Toolkit Pre-K (Smith, Brady & Anastasopoulos, 2008). A key component of the toolkit is the Books and Book Reading Subscale which scores classrooms across the domains of organisation of book area, characteristics of books, books for learning, approaches to book reading and, quality of book reading. This scale includes a specific assessment of the extent to which books reflect diversity. Studies since the introduction of this toolkit suggest some improvement in the book environments of many early learning centres including those for children from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds and this tool is now highly regarded and used worldwide in studies which seek to evaluate and improve early learning environments for young children.

In the U.K., one outcome of the longitudinal Effective Provision of Preschool Education (EPPE) study in the U.K. (Sylva et al., 2006) was the development of a scale, the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale Extension (ECERS_E), to measure the quality of early childhood education and care provision. Diversity was included as one of the four sub-scales of educational provision assessed by this scale. Of particular importance, Item 3 of the Diversity subscale specially measures the early childhood environment for "race equality and awareness" (Sylva et al., 2006, p. 37). Part of this measurement includes assessing the availability and authenticity of representation of diversity in books, pictures, dolls and displays and the attention given by educators to addressing diversity. The ECERS_E scale is now also widely regarded and used worldwide in studies seeking to evaluate and improve early learning environments for young children (Aboud & Hossain, 2011; Lehrl & Smidt, 2018).

In Australia, the National Quality Standard Assessment and Rating Instrument (Australian Children's Education and Care Authority [ACECQA], 2018) is now the mandated and thus most commonly used, measurement instrument of early learning environments. This instrument does not explicitly mention, and therefore evaluate, the literacy or book environment of early learning centres. However, the Guide to the National Quality Standard (ACECQA, 2011a) makes three references to books under the heading ***Assessors may observe,*** when assessing three of the elements of the NQS, thus suggesting that evaluation of books may form part of the assessment of a centre. These three elements are shown in Table 2.1.

Given the overwhelming evidence of the importance of quality book environments for young children, it is possible to question whether the NQS adequately recognises the importance of the book environments of early learning settings in Australia in the mandated evaluation instrument and, particularly, in regard to meeting the principles of diversity underpinning the NQF.

Table 2.1 Assessment of Books and Book Environment in the NQS

Element 1.1.1 Curriculum decision making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators
Assessors may observe: Educators providing a literacy-enriched environment that includes displaying print in home languages and in Standard Australian English.
Element 6.3.3 Access to inclusion and support assistance is facilitated
Assessors may observe: images, books and resources that reflect children and people with disabilities as active participants in the community.
Element 6.3.4 The service builds relationships and engages with the local community
Assessors may observe: images, books and resources that provide a balanced view of contemporary Australians.

The findings of a recent study (Siraj et al., 2019) which investigated the associations between the NQS and two research based quality rating scales, one of which was the previously mentioned ECERS_E, support this argument. This study found that the NQS contains ambiguous guidelines that could be interpreted in multiple ways by assessors and also lead to unclear expectations and guidelines for educators. Siraj et al (2019) argue that the quality assessment processes of the NQS could be improved and strengthened through the inclusion of research based quality measures such as ECERS_E as such instruments contain indicators "designed to be concrete and tangible – they can be seen, heard, read and require specific, observed, well-defined evidence" (Siraj et al., 2019, p. 379). Furthermore, they argue for the inclusion of such research based quality rating scales such as ECERS_E, measures as a way to "discriminate well between the highest levels of quality provision (and) consequent developmental benefits for children" (Siraj et al. 2019, p. 380).

Therefore, it would appear that the NQS may not adequately measure the quality and nature of the book environments in early learning settings. Thus, it could be argued that the NQS has even further "toned down" (Sumison, et al., 2009) the focus and requirements relating to diversity that are central to the NQF.

2.9.2 Groupings and Frequency of Book Sharing

A number of researchers assert, based on a large body of evidence, that small group instruction is one of the key components of high-quality early learning experiences for young children (Bowman et al. 2001; Katz, 1995; Wasik 2008). A study in 1990 by Morrow and Smith suggested that children's comprehension is best supported in small group reading (three children) than in both one to one reading and large group reading (over 15 children) (Morrow & Smith, 1990). Since then others, (Powell, Burhcinal, File & Kontos, 2008; Kaderavek, Pentimonti & Justice, 2013) have also found that whole group or large group reading sessions do not engage children in ways that encourage them to be highly involved and interested in book sharing.

In addition, the frequency and length of book sharing sessions with children impacts on the outcomes for children with some suggesting that 45 minutes per day made up of three 15 minute sessions should be aimed for (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001; Mol, Bus &De Jong, 2009; Zucker & Landry, 2010). Dickinson and Tabors (2001) and the (US) National Early Literacy Panel (2008) found that more intensive and frequent book reading interventions were more successful in building positive literacy outcomes for pre-school children. McGee and Schikendaz (2007) argue that repeated read-alouds using the same book, coupled with the active involvement of children in analytical thinking and discussion is the most systematic approach to enhance vocabulary and comprehension development for young children and is particularly beneficial for children from impoverished home literacy environments.

This is supported by other evidence suggesting that children from home and early learning environments with little school based literacy practices enter school considerably behind in particular areas of literacy compared with their peers who have had frequent experiences of storybooks being read to them (Mol & Bus, 2011). This, again, highlights the importance of children being read to frequently.

2.9.3 Quality of Educator Practice and Engagement of Children

Other research asserts that while the timing and frequency of shared reading is important, the quality of the educator practice in these experiences may be even more so (Pentimonti et al, 2010). Evidence regarding quality book practice for young children consistently shows that the literacy activities children are involved in from an early age substantially contribute to their language development and later reading comprehension (Ewing, 2018; Ledger & Merga, 2018; Mol, Bus, de Jong & Smeets, 2008; National Center for Family Literacy, 2008; Fleer & Raban, 2010). Research also demonstrates that to ensure book sharing improves outcomes for children, educators need to go beyond the reading of the text and stimulate "rich, literal and inferential extra textual conversations" (Zucker, Justice, Piasta & Kaderavek, 2009 p. 82).

The evidence highlighted earlier in this literature review also showed that in order to use inclusive literature successfully to address principles of diversity there is a need for such conversations to engage children in discussion, investigation and ongoing dialogue so they can begin to reflect on their own and others' cultures (Hansen-Krening, 1992; Roberts, Dean, & Holland, 2005; Morgan, 2009; Tunnel, Jacobs, Young, & Bryan, 2012; Klefstad & Martinez, 2013).

Other studies, too, have shown the importance of positive relationships between the child and the educator (Wasik, 2008; Organisation for Economic & Development, 2012; Siraj, Kingston, & Melhuish, 2015), with Bowman et al. (2001) suggesting that "if there is a single critical component to

quality it rests in the relationship between the children and the teacher/caretaker and in the ability of the adult to be responsive to the child" (p. 322). Of further concern are similar findings of Pianta, La Paro, Payne, Cox and Bradley (2002) who found that positive interactions between educators and children, the instructional climate of the classroom and a child centred climate were lower in areas in which the concentration of poverty was high and family incomes low. This suggests that the quality of interactions between educators and children may be at greater risk in areas of high poverty and this, in turn, is likely to impact on the educational outcomes for the children in those settings. Thus, investigating the nature of the book sharing practices, in the early learning setting is of importance to this study.

However, comparing the quality of practice across different contexts can be problematic. In 2008, the report of the (US) National Early Literacy Panel concluded that the difficulty in making comparisons among studies of shared reading practices was "detrimental to understanding effective features of shared reading interventions…and how they have been delivered" (Pentimonti, et. al, 2012 p. 514). In response to these challenges, Justice, Zucker, and Sofka, (2010) developed the Systematic Assessment of Book Reading (SABR) to measure the instructional practices and quality of educators when sharing books with children. When testing the psychometric properties of the SABR, Pentimonti et al. described SABR as a tool used to:

> *Systematically examine adult behaviours within the shared-reading context that appear to provide instructional support to children's (a) vocabulary and oral language skills, (b) abstract thinking skills, (c) print-related and phonological awareness skills, and (d) elaborative responses to the text. In addition, the SABR also captures more general features of the reading session, including: (e) adult behaviors that create a warm, supportive setting for shared reading"* (Pentimonti et al, 2012, p 513).

Also in response to the challenges of making comparable judgments about shared reading practices, Kadervarek and Hunt (2007), developed the Children's Orientation to Book Reading scale (COB) to evaluate the engagement of children in shared book experiences. This tool has been used in collaborative research projects along with the SABR. The COB is an observation tool designed to:

> *Capture children's overall responses to literacy events by monitoring levels of engagement, nonverbal and verbal behaviours, persistence and their focus of attention during book reading (*Kadervarek, Gao & Justice, 2014).

Both of these instruments have been extensively tested for reliability and validity (Kaderavek, Guo, & Justice, 2014; Pentimonti et al., 2012) thus providing standardised and

comparable ways for researchers to measure the quality of book sharing across the elements shown as being important for successful outcomes for children. These instruments have been used in a number of studies since their development (Kaderavek, Guo, & Justice, 2014; Pentimonti et al., 2012), including in combination (Kaderavek, Pentimonti, & Justice, 2014), in order to capture the full picture of what is happening during book sharing interactions.

The literature reviewed here has highlighted the importance of high quality practice, and that presented earlier in this chapter highlighted the importance of children seeing both themselves and others portrayed positively in children's books. Thus, it would seem apparent that the considered use of high quality and authentic multicultural texts coupled with high quality reading interactions and positive relationships between educators and children are critical to achieving equitable outcomes for all children. Furthermore, it would appear that using reliable and valid observation instruments to measure book reading practice will be able to contribute to the knowledge about successful book sharing practice and, in turn, contribute to the development of quality practice in early learning environments.

2.10 Conceptual Framework

The literature review presented in this chapter has highlighted the importance of authentic culturally diverse children's literature being shared with children in order to promote principles related to diversity and to achieve equitable outcomes for all children. The review of literature has revealed three key factors within the early years learning environment that are relevant to addressing diversity. These are the book and book environments, the nature and quality of book sharing practice and the focus educators place on diversity. Each of these factors is situated within the context of the policies and curriculum of each setting, national policy and guidelines and the broader socio-cultural influences. Therefore, in order to understand the impact of these on the outcomes of children, it is important to examine these factors in relation to each other. Thus, socio-cultural theory (SCT) is a logical theory on which to base the conceptual framework for this study.

Taking a sociocultural perspective has implications for education. A key feature of this view of human development is that children develop higher order functions through social interaction. Vygotsky argues that a child's development cannot be understood by studying the individual, "…we must also examine the external social world in which that individual life has developed...through participation in activities that require cognitive and communicative functions, children are drawn into the use of these functions in ways that nurture and 'scaffold' them" (Tharpe & Gallimore, 1988, pp. 6-7).

Therefore, this view of learning is reflected in the conceptual framework for this study with attention to the elements of the social world that impact on the children when book sharing takes place. Figure 2.1 provides a diagrammatic representation of the conceptual framework. This is followed by a detailed description of the key elements involved.

Firstly, the children are at the centre of the study. They interact with the books and with the educators as receivers and creators of reality and interpretations through the practices in which they are engaged. Secondly, the books are an important part of the educational and social environments of children in early childhood education and care settings and their selection and use are influenced by the factors represented in the surrounding circles.
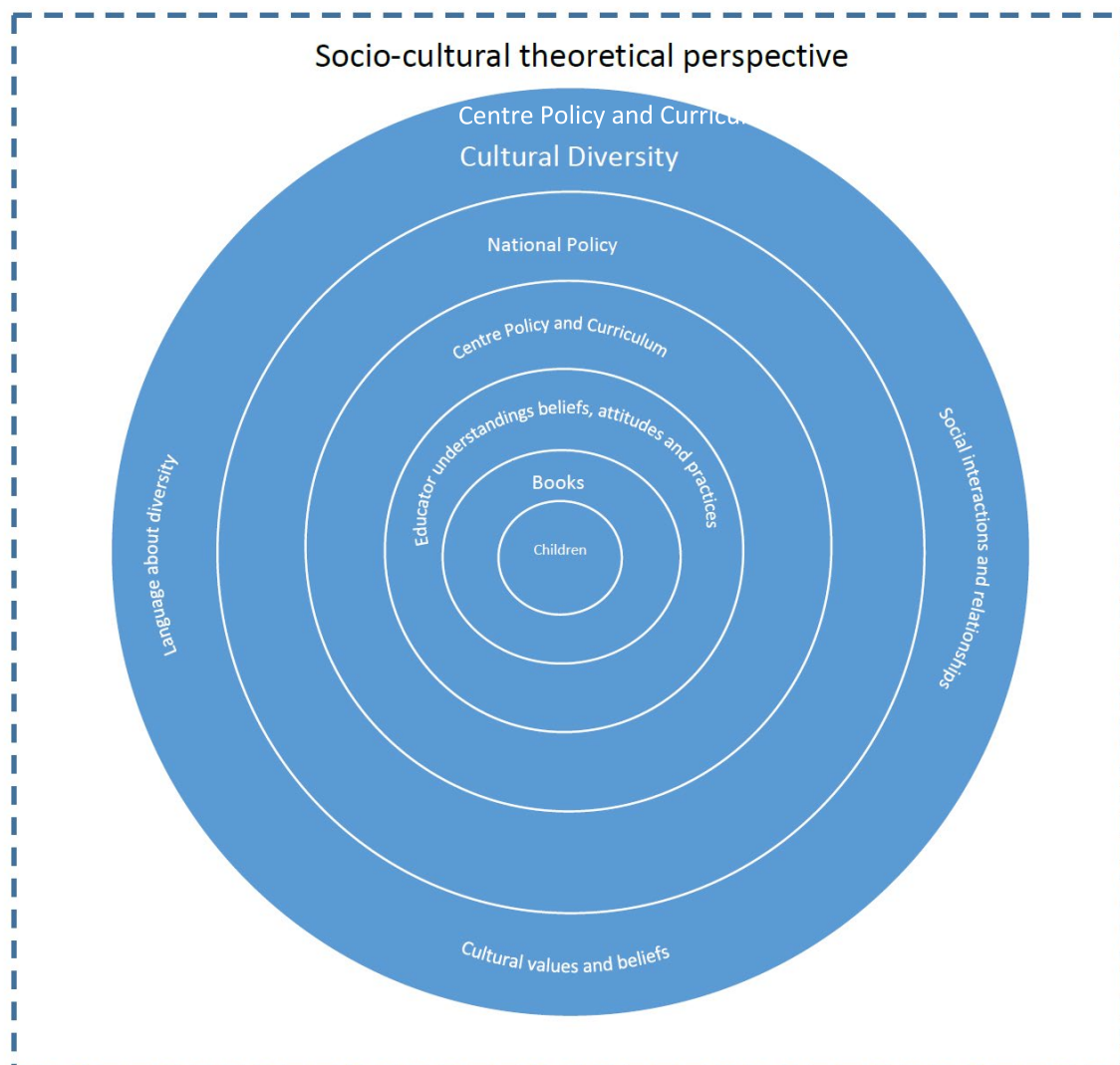
Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

In addition, as outlined in the literature review, social environments, viewpoints and ideologies are reflected in the texts themselves, including the way in which diversity is constructed in those texts, and these can impact on children's understandings of themselves, others and of the world. The texts then form the centre of book sharing activities in which the children are involved and, importantly, the educators act as mediators between the children and the texts. In this role, the educators both construct diversity themselves based on their own understandings and beliefs and mediate between the children and the texts with regard to how diversity is constructed within the texts themselves.

The understandings, beliefs, attitudes and practices of the educators represent the next layer of influence. Again, the relationships within this circle are influenced by and, in turn, influence the surrounding factors, particularly regarding how the educators' understandings, beliefs, attitudes and practices related to diversity impact on book selection, their use and the outcomes achieved by children.

The fourth layer of influence is the Centre Policy and Curriculum. These policy and curriculum documents articulate each centre's guidelines and requirements relating to diversity and to the use of children's books in the learning program. The relationships between factors here extend both inward to impact on the educators' understandings, beliefs, attitudes and practices and the children's outcomes and outward in terms of the interpretations made in these documents of National Policy concerned with diversity.

Fifthly, National Policy is considered, especially that concerning diversity, in the provision of early childhood education and care in Australia. This includes explicit attention to diversity in the NQF, the NQS and the EYLF, including how diversity is constructed within these policies and frameworks, and how this influences Centre Policy and Curriculum, educators' understandings, beliefs, attitudes and practices, book selection and use and children's learning outcomes. In turn, the influence on these policies of broader cultural and social notions of diversity prevailing in Australia and beyond are considered.

The final circle of influence considers the wider cultural and social climate focussing on three key factors, language about diversity, social interactions and relationships, and cultural beliefs and practices. These factors frame examination of each factor in the inner circles of the framework in order to consider the outcomes related to diversity of the children at the centre of this study.

This Conceptual Framework demonstrates that the outcomes related to diversity for children are influenced by the complex nature of the interactions and interrelationships between the

factors represented in this conceptual framework. By examining the factors related to the use of children's literature as a resource for addressing principles of diversity, possible impacts on children's learning outcomes can be identified.

2.11 Chapter Summary

In conclusion, the evidence presented and explored in this literature review clearly demonstrates that it is incumbent upon educators in early childhood education and care settings to consider inclusion and diversity when selecting and using books with children. The evidence of the positive influence that literature from diverse perspectives can have on young children, points to a clear opportunity for educators to use children's literature as one way of promoting principles of diversity and achieving equitable outcomes for all children. However, poorly selected texts can potentially undermine these same outcomes and the principles behind them. In addition, the nature and quality of the practice of educators, as well as their understandings of, and attention to, diversity, also contribute to the outcomes of book sharing for all children. Thus, this literature review has highlighted that the books and book environments, the nature and quality of book sharing practice and the focus educators place on diversity are important and interrelated factors impacting on the use of children's literature to address principles of diversity. While previous studies have focused on these elements individually, this review of the literature indicates they have not investigated these together and in relationship to each other. In order to fully address the research questions of this study, there was a need to investigate each of these factors and the relationships between them.

Finally, the Sociocultural Theory which informed the Conceptual Framework presented in this chapter, in turn, informed the methodological approach which will be outlined in Chapter 3: Methodology and Method. As outlined in this review it is particularly important to understand how diversity is constructed in policy and curriculum and in children's literature texts and, further, both constructed and interpreted by educators and children. Therefore, given the complex nature of the relationships to be investigated, an ontological perspective of constructivism allowed the researcher to investigate and understand the thinking and meaning made by the participants (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017) while an epistemological perspective of interpretivism allowed for the interpretation of the construction of diversity within policy, curriculum and the texts themselves.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Method

3.1 Introduction and Research Paradigm

This chapter will outline the theoretical approach that underpinned the study, explain the research questions and purpose of the study and identify the methodological approaches employed to answer the research questions. Finally, the data collection and analysis procedures followed in this study will be detailed.

3.2 How the Pilot Study informed the Current Study

As outlined in Chapter 1: The Literature Review, a small pilot study was conducted in 2011. The Pilot Study was conducted as a comparative case study undertaken within an epistemological framework of sociocultural theory using qualitative methodology. Comparative case studies frequently follow an interpretive tradition of research (Cohen, Cannion & Morrsion, 2018).

Critics of case studies argue that case studies create challenges to establishing reliability and generalisability of findings but that multiple case studies, can contribute to greater generalisability (Cohen, Cannion & Morrison, 2018). Smith (1991) argues that rather than study individual cases, the researcher should search for patterns across contexts. This suggests an approach whereby when investigating multiple contexts or cases, the researcher investigates patterns in the data across contexts and reports and compares the findings through these patterns rather than through the individual cases (Smith, 1991; Cohen, Cannion & Morrison, 2019). In the pilot study, the researcher followed this approach in identifying patterns and themes and using these as a framework for reporting and drawing conclusions. This was found to be an effective approach to presenting the research and informed the design of the current study.

The interpretive approach to research followed in the pilot study centres on the way participants interpret and make sense of their experiences to capture their version of reality (Crotty, 1998; Ormston et al., 2014; Snape & Spencer, 2003). It involves the collection of a variety of empirical materials within the context being investigated in order to uncover the meaning of social phenomena as experienced by participants. Interpretative analysis through inductive and deductive logic enables patterns, categories and themes evident within the data sets to be identified (Marshall and Rossman, 2010).

The findings of the pilot study revealed that book collections in long day care setting were overwhelmingly monocultural. Further, that educators had limited understandings of the role of literature in acknowledging and valuing diversity and rarely used it to promote the diversity-related outcomes of the EYLF. The key challenges which emerged from the study concerned beliefs of

educators, professional learning and the application of the EYLF in practice (Adam, Barratt-Pugh & Haig, 2019).

Given these key challenges, it was evident that further study would require deep understanding of the beliefs and understandings of the educators towards the requirements of the EYLF, their understandings of diversity and the use of children's literature to address principles of diversity. Further, that the mandated policies and curriculum under which the participants were required to operate also needed close analysis to understand how diversity and addressing diversity is both constructed and interpreted within these documents and by those required to implement them. This influenced the design of the current study through the researcher identifying the importance of taking an ontological perspective of constructivism and an epistemological perspective of interpretivism to guide the study in order for the researcher to "get into the heads" (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017, p. 33) of the participants. Further, the researcher identified the need for rigorous data collection processes and analysis tools in order to collect and analyse multiple types of empirical evidence. A constructivist and interpretivist paradigm would allow the researcher to combine and compare these for a deeper understanding of the factors and relationships influencing the use of children's literature texts to address principles of diversity in these contexts.

3.3 Research Paradigm

This study was conducted within an ontological perspective of constructivism and an epistemological perspective of interpretivism. Ontology is concerned with the question of "what is" or what can be known about the world (Crotty, 1998; Snape & Spencer, 2003). Ontology relates to what is believed about the nature of reality and "whether or not there is a social reality that exists independently from human conceptions and interpretations" (Ormston, Spencer, Barnard, & Snape, 2014, p. 4). An ontological perspective of constructivism takes an approach of exploring and seeking to understand the world of those being studied and the meaning and interpretations that the participants make about their world (Crotty, 1998; Ormston et al., 2014; Snape & Spencer, 2003). Epistemology relates to the assumptions made about the world and how sense is made of the world (Crotty, 1998; Snape & Spencer, 2003). An epistemological perspective of interpretivisim takes an approach that recognises that researchers themselves construct meaning and interpretations based on the meanings and interpretations of the participants they are studying (Crotty, 1998; Snape & Spencer, 2003). Interpretative analysis through inductive and deductive logic enables patterns, categories and themes evident within the data sets to be identified (Marshall and Rossman, 2010). Thus a constructivist and interpretivist form of inquiry centres on the way participants interpret and make sense of their experiences to capture their version of reality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Given this, constructivist and interpretivist approaches are suitable for this study as by exploring and understanding the social world of the participants of a study, the different perceptions and understandings of reality of those participants can be interpreted (Ormston et al., 2014). In addition, it is recognised that the researcher herself constructs meanings and interpretations based on those of the participants (Ormston et al., 2014). In this study, the researcher sought to understand the perceptions and understandings of the participants, while recognising that she, herself, was constructing meaning and interpretations from those of the participants.

The Literature Review, presented in Chapter 2, highlighted the complex nature of factors relating to the addressing of diversity with young children through the use of children's literature. This included how diversity is constructed in policy, curriculum and in children's texts as well as the ways that educators themselves view and construct diversity. Further, the review highlighted that educators' interpretations of policy, curriculum and children's literature texts can play a significant role in how they address principles of diversity. As a result, policy, curriculum and the texts formed important parts of the social world to be studied along with the educators' interpretations of each of these including in relation to their own practice. Consequently, as will be outlined later in this chapter, multiple data sources were required in order to identify patterns, categories and themes evident within the data sets (Marshall and Rossman, 2010) and thus iinterpret the social worlds of the participants.

In addition and, as already outlined in the conceptual framework for this study, sociocultural theory informs the constructivist and interpretive paradigm. Sociocultural theory posits that to understand child development, the external social worlds of the child must be studied (Tharpe & Gallimore, 1988). The educational and social environments of children in early childhood education and care settings influence their experiences. Children's literature texts both reflect and contribute to educational and social environments as does the practice of the educators as they act as mediators between the children and the texts. Thus, in this study, sociocultural theory informs the investigation of the educational and social environments in which the children are exposed to literature, and of the social environments reflected in the books themselves.

3.3 Research Questions

The main question this study was designed to answer was:

> What are the factors and relationships that influence the use of children's literature texts as a resource for meeting principles relating to cultural diversity in the kindergarten rooms of long day care centres?

In order to answer the research question, four sub-questions were designed:

a) What, and wat types of, children's literature texts are selected?

b) How are the texts selected?

c) How are the different texts used by the educators?

d) What interactions take place between the educators, children and the texts?

3.4 Methodological Approach

A mixed methods approach was adopted, with thematic analysis method (Braun & Clarke, 2006) employed for the qualitative component of the research, and convergent design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018) employed to synthesise the qualitative and quantitative data and interpret significant relationships and their meanings.

The ontological perspective of constructivism and an epistemological perspective of interpretivism chosen as a theoretical model for this guided both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis together and the integration of the results from both methods (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018) in order to understand the perceptions and understandings of the reality of the participants (Crotty, 1998; Ormston et al., 2014; Snape & Spencer, 2003). This section will outline this approach and why it has been chosen for this study.

3.4.1 Mixed Methods

Several definitions of mixed methods research are used by researchers (Creswell & Plano Clark (2018). However, a common understanding is that mixed method research involves the researcher combining elements of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) provide a definition of core characteristics of mixed methods research which they claim adequately describe this approach. Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) have developed this definition over "many years of reviewing mixed method articles and determining how researchers use both quantitative and qualitative approaches in their studies" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018, p. 55).

Cresswell and Plano Clark (2018) state that in mixed methods the researcher:

- *Collects and analyses both qualitative and quantitative data rigorously in response to research questions and hypotheses,*
- *Integrates (or mixes or combines) the two forms of data and their results,*

- *Organizes these procedures into specific research designs that provide the logic and procedures for conducting the study, and*
- *Frames these procedures within theory and philosophy*" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018, p. 55)

Mixed Methods and Importance to this Study

Mixed methods was suitable to this study as it enabled the researcher to collect multiple types of empirical evidence within the context being investigated and to combine and compare these for a deeper understanding of the factors and relationships influencing the use of children's literature texts to address principles of diversity in these contexts. A qualitative approach alone would be insufficient, as, while it would provide a detailed understanding of what was taking place in each context, the inclusion of a quantitative approach allowed the researcher to obtain more complete results through the use of quantitative research instruments and analysis processes. In this study some of the qualitative data was converted into numerical values to enable comparison of variables across contexts. In addition, the use of quantitative research instruments enabled corroboration of the results for a more in depth understanding of the contexts and the relationships among the variables and contexts (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

To address the qualitative data collection and analysis the researcher adopted the thematic analysis approach of Braun and Clark (2006). Braun and Clark highlight that thematic analysis "should be seen as a foundational method for qualitative analysis" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 44). Many researchers characterize thematic analysis as generic skills (Holloway & Todres, 2003) or a specific tool to be used across or within different methods (Boyatzis, 1998; Ryan & Bernard, 2000) rather than a specific method of research. However, Braun and Clark (2006) argue that thematic analysis, "should be considered a method in its own right" (p. 44). They further argue that thematic analysis enjoys "theoretical freedom" due to its widespread use across methodologies and, as such, provides a flexible approach to the analysis of data which can "potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data" (2006, p. 55). This type of analysis, therefore, was well suited to the constructivist and interpretivist paradigm of the study as it allowed the researcher to draw rich and detailed interpretations from the multiple data sources. Braun and Clark developed a six-phase guide to their thematic analysis method (Braun & Clarke, 2006) which allows both flexibility for the researcher and a "…'recipe' for people to… [conduct]… thematic analysis in a way that is theoretically and methodologically sound" (2006, p. 55). These six phases are: familiarisation with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing the themes, defining and naming themes, and the final analysis and writing up of the report (Braun & Clark, 2006). These phases were followed in this study to enable the researcher to iteratively collect and interpret the data and make

comparisons and draw conclusions through ensuring the process was theoretically and methodologically sound.

The concept of triangulation is a central component of the data collection and analysis in this approach. It allows the researcher to collect and compare data from multiple data sources in order to compare what the participants say they do with what they actually do and allows for the participants' voices to be heard when clarifying differences between these. Triangulation also assists in cross checking for researcher bias or misinterpretation. In addition, by using triangulation the researcher ensures that coding is consistent. This process allows insight into the social realities of potential inconsistencies of participant practice and beliefs (Gibbs, 2007). In this study, the researcher collected data from multiple sources, which will be outlined in this chapter, and the use of triangulation allowed the researcher to compare the perspectives of the participants with their practice and to clarify any differences between these.

Qualitative researchers commonly use interviews and observations as important data sources (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Elliott & Timulak, 2005; Goulding, 2002), but qualitative research also allows for the use of other relevant data sources such as documents, providing that these have relevance to the study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Goulding, 2002). This study required interviews, observations and document analysis in order to fully consider all essential aspects of the selection and use of children's literature texts. By following this approach, the researcher was able to iteratively collect and interpret data from each of these sources, then return to seek clarification or explanation from the participants as themes emerged through the analysis.

As this study involved multiple research sites and multiple data sources, the use of mixed methods and a convergent design enabled quantifiable comparison of results across contexts thus leading to more complete and corroborated answers to the research question and sub-questions. These data sources and the approaches used for each will be further outlined later in this chapter.

3.4.2 Convergent Design

A convergent design allows the researcher to collect different but complementary data on the research topic (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This involves the collection of a variety of empirical data within the context being investigated. Such an approach is beneficial when "the researcher wants to compare quantitative (statistical) results with qualitative findings for a complete understanding of the research problem" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018, p.68). With the approach of convergent design both data sets are analysed concurrently and separately and then merged. This merging permits comparisons to be made between the two data sets and so allows a more complete

understanding to emerge "than that provided by the quantitative or qualitative results alone" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018, p. 71).

There are four major variants of convergent design found in the literature (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018) and these vary depending on the researcher's use of the major designs in their research. Creswell and Plan Clark (2018) describe these variants as:

1. The parallel data bases variant in which data is collected and analysed independently and only brought together at the interpretation stage.
2. The data transformation variant in which, after the initial collection and analysis of the two sets of data, the researcher uses "procedures to quantify the qualitative findings" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018, p. 73)
3. The questionnaire variant in which both open and closed ended questions are included in questionnaires and the results from one are used to confirm or validate the results from the other.
4. The fully integrated variant in which the qualitative and quantitative strands of a study are not kept separate and independent but are implemented and interact together throughout the study.

Convergent Design – Data Transformation Variant in this Study

The data transformation variant was suited to this study as it allowed the researcher to transform qualitative data into quantitative data for the generation of tables and charts allowing for a deeper understanding and representation of each context and aspect. The researcher was able to transfer data from the book audit, document analysis and observations into numerical values enabling comparison of the variables across contexts. The approaches will be explained in detail later in this chapter.

3.4.3 Summary and Methodological Framework

This study uses a mixed methods approach in which thematic analysis and a data transformation variation of convergent design are used. The overall methodological framework for the convergent design is adapted from the work of Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), Braun and Clark (2006) and Goulding (2002). See Figure 3.1. The subsequent section will outline the data sources and processes associated with using the methodological framework.
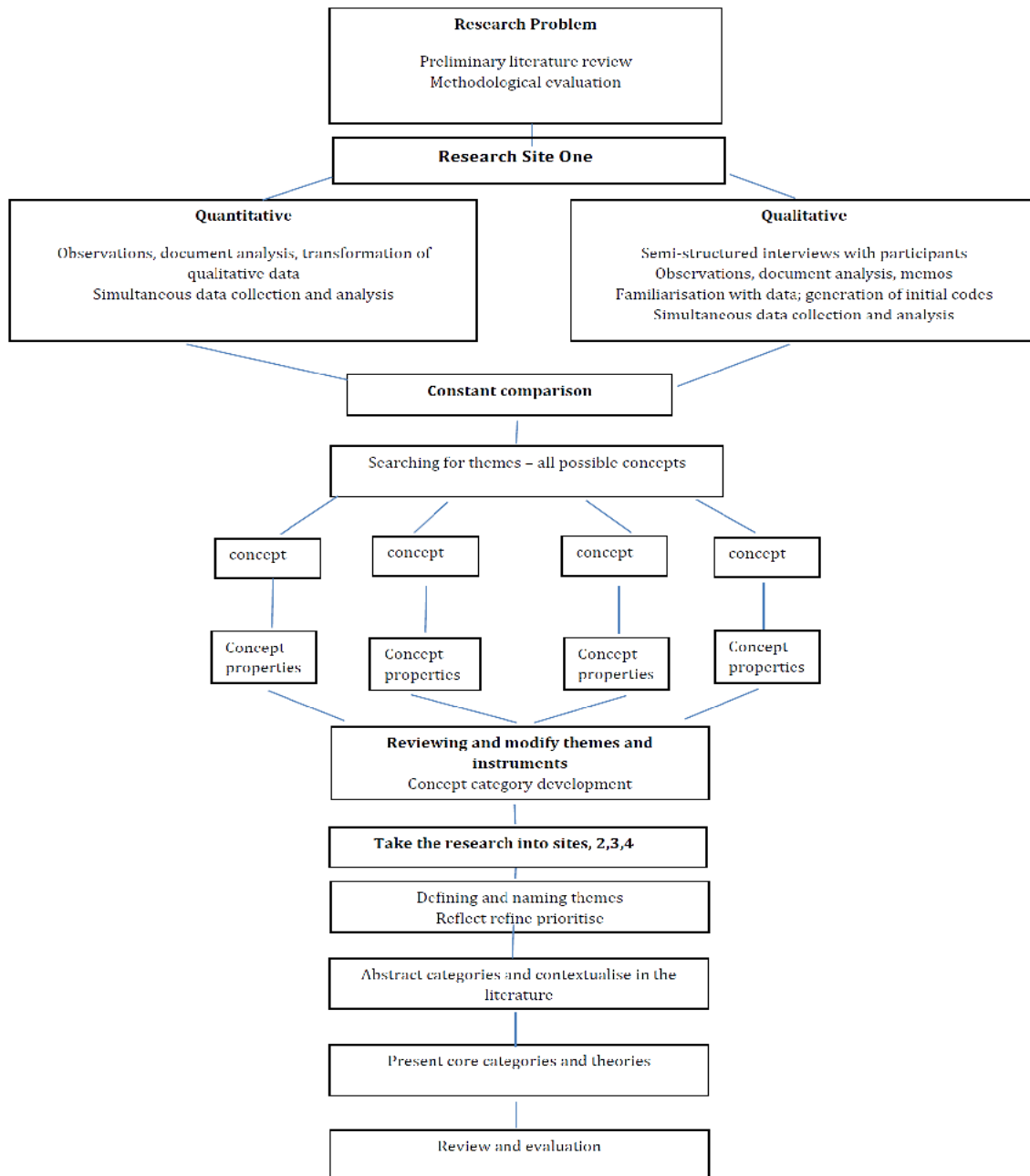
Figure 3.1 Methodological Framework

3.5 Participants

3.5.1 Research Sites

The study was conducted in five long day care centres In Western Australia selected by stratified purposeful sampling. In this study it was important to look across the varying demographics of Western Australia and multiple early learning environments in order to capture commonalities and differences in approaches to the use of children's literature to address principles of diversity. This sampling was informed by data from the 2011 Australian Census (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2011a) in order to select regions of diverse demographics including differing socio-economic profiles, varied ethnic population concentrations (including at least one centre catering largely for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children), and both urban and rural communities. Stratified purposeful sampling is particularly useful to study different models of implementing a particular teaching and learning strategy (Suri, 2011), in this case, that of book sharing with young children. This allowed for greater generalisability and transferability of findings as well as specific findings relevant to each participating centre.

Long day care centres in Western Australia provide full-time or part-time care usually for birth to five years in purposefully built or adapted buildings. Long day care centres are owned and managed by non-profit organisations, local councils, community organisations, private operators and employers. All long day care services must be operated in accordance with the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations (Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority [ACECQA], 2012). One important aspect of these regulations relevant to the study is the educator to child ratio requirements across age ranges. At the time of this study the educator to child ratio requirements for long day care in Western Australia were:

Birth-24 months - 1:4

24-36 months - 1:5

36 months up to and including preschool age - 1:10 (Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority [ACECQA] 2016)

Long day care centres typically operate in a multi room facility with children located in rooms according to their age. A typical long day care centre would have separate rooms for babies (birth-24 months), toddlers (24-36 months) and kindergarten (36 months – preschool age) children. Some variation occurs depending on the size of each centre, the staffing arrangements to meet the educator to child ratio and, the needs of individual children. An example of this is that a child is usually expected to be toilet trained before being transferred to a kindergarten room. Some larger centres are known to combine older toddlers with kindergarten children across one or more rooms.

From 2012, long day care centres with more than 25 children have been required to employ at least one educator who holds an early childhood teaching qualification.

This study was conducted in the kindergarten rooms of the participant centres. The rationale for this was largely based upon two factors. Firstly, the literature relating to the studies of the use of children's books with young children in overseas studies mostly relates to children over the age of three, thus by using children of a similar age group the researcher could make comparisons with existing knowledge and in an Australian context. Secondly, the long day care centres selected for this study placed the educators holding an early childhood teaching qualification in the kindergarten rooms to conduct the kindergarten programs and this gave the study an added dimension of studying the practices of qualified teachers.

3.5.2 Research Participants and Selection

Altogether 24 educators agreed to take part in the research, with qualifications ranging from an Education Assistant Diploma to a Bachelor of Education. The educators recruited from each centre included the centre coordinator and the educators in the kindergarten rooms of the four centres. One centre, Riverview, had three kindergarten rooms and the room and lead kindergarten educator selected for the study were nominated by the Centre Coordinator for Riverview. The centre coordinators and Lead Educators from each kindergarten room were selected for the semi structured interviews and observations as these participants held the responsibility for the selection of books for each centre and/or room and the programs conducted in the kindergarten rooms. All other educators who worked in these rooms were invited, and consented, to be part of the study on the basis of their role including the sharing of books with children. Thus, their participation involved observations of their book sharing practice and, where necessary, incidental member checking relating to observed practice was undertaken when the researcher identified a need to seek clarification about what had been observed. The children in the participating kindergarten room of each of the four centres also participated. The parents of the children were invited to give informed consent for observation of children's participation and engagement in book sharing and use. By inviting participation of all children, the researcher was able to observe participation and engagement of a large sample of children across differing contexts. Altogether there were 110 child participants. The four centres and all participants were assigned pseudonyms to ensure anonymity.

The context of each centre is explained in more detail in Chapter 4: Introduction to the findings. However, the demographic information for each of the participant centres is summarised in Table 3.1 The community demographic data is drawn from the 2011 Australian Census (ABS, 2011), the NQS ratings data is drawn from the My Child website (Australian Government Department of

Education and Training [AGDET], 2016) and the participants' qualifications and experience data is drawn from the semi –structured interviews.

All centres were not for profit centres. The centres encompassed a range of socio-economic demographics including percentage of overseas born, the percentage of low and high income earners. They also included demographics particularly relevant to this study which were including a range of percentages of those speaking a language other than English and of percentages of the population that were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. The participants ranged in industry experience from less than five years to up to thirty five years and held a range of highest qualifications from a Diploma of Children's Services through to Honours Degrees in Early Childhood. The size of the participating rooms ranged from 18 to 36 children.

Table 3.1 Participant Centre Demographic Information

Ownership/ operation/ location	NQS Rating at time of study (Australian Government, 2016)	% High income household [Higher than $2000 per week]	% Low income earners [Less than $600 a week]	Overseas born population - % of total population	Speaks a language other than English at home - % of total population	% of total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples	Participant Role	Participant Name	Industry Experience	Time in This Centre	Highest Qualification	Other Qualifica tion	Other Inform- ation	No of Other Educat -ors	No of Child Partici- pants
Not for profit centre - Western Suburb of Perth Metropolitan Area	Excellent (exceeding NQS in all 7 areas)	47.3% (Includes 13% >$4000)	13%	34%	15.7%	0.18% Below national percentage of overall pop (3%)	Centre Coordinator	Jill	20-25 years	9 years	Bachelor of Children's Services	Diploma of Child Psychol- ogy	Also holds nursing qualificat- ion and Cert iv	5	36
							Lead Educator Kindergar- ten Room	Michelle	15-20 years	2 years	Bachelor of Arts Early Childhood Education	N/A	Qualificat -ion gained in Ireland		
Not for profit centre Northern suburbs of Perth Metropolitan Area Funded by WA Dept. of	Not yet assessed *Subsequently rated as Working towards (Meeting QA1,2,4,5,6; Working towards 3,7)	13.9% (Includes 0.7% >$4000)	22.8%	53%	57%	4.3% Above national percentage of overall pop (3%)	Centre Coordinator	Warren	25-30 years	6 months	Diploma of Leadership and Management	Associate Diploma of Child Services	Nil	4	22
							Lead Educator Kindergar- ten Room	Lily	0-5 years	4 months	Honours Degree in Early Childhood Education	N/A	Qualifica- tion gained in Ireland		
Not for profit centre outer suburb of Perth Metropolitan Area	Exceeding (Exceeding QA 1,2,4,5,6,7; Meeting QA 3)	17.6% (Includes 1.5% >$4000)	30.7%	40%	9.8%	1.4% Below national percentage of overall pop	Centre Coordinator	Tracy	10-15 years	2 years	Diploma of Children's Services	Cert iii	Nil	4	34
							Lead Educator Kindergar- ten Room	Alice	0-5 years	5 years	Diploma of Children's Services	Cert iii	Working to BSc in Early Child- hood		

Table 3.1 Participant Centre Demographic Information

Ownership/ operation/ location	NQS Rating at time of study (Australian Government, 2016)	% High income household *[Higher than $2000 per week]*	% Low income earners *[Less than $600 a week]*	Overseas born population - % of total population	Speaks a language other than English at home - % of total population	% of total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples	Participant Role	Participant Name	Industry Experience	Time in This Centre	Highest Qualification	Other Qualifica tion	Other Information	No of Other Educators	No of Child Participants
Not for profit centre remote north east of Western Australia	Exceeding (Exceeding QA 1,2,4,5,6,7; Meeting QA 3)	33% (Includes 4.8% > $4000)	10.5%	15.8%	11.6%	25.8% Well above national percentage of overall pop (3%)	Centre Coordinator	Sarah	30-35 years	0-5 years	Diploma of Children's Services	Cert iii	Nil	3 (2 from local Aboriginal language Centre and visited once in the observation period).	18
							Lead Educator Kindergarten Room	Debbie	25-30 years	5 months	Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education	Cert iii	Nil		

3.6 Ethical Considerations

As with any research, ethical considerations were an important factor in this study. When a researcher has identified a field of study with the potential outcomes being of benefit to others (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2000), it is important to ensure the rights of all participants to their privacy. Participants must be informed and know that they are free to give, withhold or withdraw consent at any time without penalty.

In addition, it is important for research involving young children to be reviewed by "people who have specific experience and knowledge of the interests and vulnerabilities of children" (Royal Australian College of Physicians, 2008). While the researcher has both this knowledge and experience, through her experience in primary, early childhood and teacher education since 1982, she also drew on the advice of early childhood experts from Edith Cowan University to ensure risk was minimised. The researcher also held a current Working with Children Card at the time of data collection.

After ethics approval for this study was granted by Edith Cowan University (Project 10741), participating centres were sent an invitation to participate in this study. Once the invitation had been accepted, the Centre Coordinators and Educators who agreed to participate were provided with an information letter and consent form clearly identifying the researcher, her role and her goals, as well as an account of their role and commitments in the study. The parents of the children in the rooms were provided with similar documentation outlining the process of observing and video-recording the educators working with their children. Written permission was obtained from the parents/caregivers and verbal consent from the children. The researcher visited each centre at advertised times to be available to answer any queries or concerns from parents prior to collecting data. In the case of any parent withholding consent, capturing images of these children in the video recording was avoided and in the event that any of these children were inadvertently captured the image was blurred and the child was not included in analysis of the video.

Participants were advised that interviews would be transcribed and sent to them for member checking and verifications, with a right of reply to clarify or modify any part of the interview information. Participants were offered an opportunity to access a summary research report at the conclusion of the study.

3.7 Data Collection

In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon involved in the use of children's literature in the participant sites, data was drawn from a number of sources including semi-structured interviews, observations, field notes, document analysis and a book audit. These

data and their relevance to the research questions will be detailed later in this section. Multiple data sources provided opportunities for triangulation of findings and thus enabled the researcher to validate themes by cross checking information from multiple sources. This process allowed insight into the social realities and potential inconsistencies of participant practice and beliefs (Gibbs, 2007) as is an important component of interpetivism.

Each of the four participating centres operated only on week days, excepting public holidays. Each centre was visited for between eight and 14 days for data collection. The variation in number of total days was due to two factors. The first of these was the varying amount of time required to conduct the initial interviews and book audit prior to conducting the observation period, with some centres requiring less time due to smaller book collections. The second factor was related to time constraints for both participants and the researcher with absences of key participants or variations to the regular centre operation impacting on both the first (Riverview) and third (Dockside) centres. In each centre, during the period of interviews and conducting the book audit and prior to beginning observations, the researcher spent time in the kindergarten rooms in order to familiarise the children with her presence.

3.7 Research Tools and Processes

In order to answer the research sub-questions, multiple research tools and processes were chosen to collect and analyse data to enable the researcher to construct an understanding of the phenomena and interrelationships at play in each centre and collectively. Constant comparison and triangulation throughout the analysis processes enabled the researcher to construct overall understandings and interpretations to answer the main research question and this is shown below in the following table.

Table 3.2 *Answering the Main Research Question*

Research Question	Analysis
What are the factors and relationships influencing the use of children's literature texts as a resource for meeting principles relating to cultural diversity in the kindergarten rooms of long day care centres?	Constant comparison Triangulation of all data and finding from sub-questions.

Table 3.3 is an advanced organiser that summarises the research instruments, tools and analysis procedures in relation to the research sub-questions together with the data collected and the focus of research for each data source. This table also links to the data analysis procedure, which will be outlined later in this chapter. Following the table, the data sources are described followed by

an explanation of each research tool, making connections to research methodology and literature to situate the tool in the context of this study.

Table 3.3 *Advanced Organiser of Research Questions, Data Sources, Research Tools and Analysis Processes*

Research Sub-Questions	Data Collection (bold indicates method)	Research Focus	Data Tools/Collection	Analysis Tools/Processes
What and what types of children's literature texts are selected?	**Book Audit** - publication details, - genre - themes portrayed - cultural/racial portrayal - location in centre/room **Observations (video and field notes)**	**Book locations, availability to children/staff, publication details, genre, theme/s, racial portrayal, and cultural portrayal.**	**Book Collector Database** **Cultural Diversity Categories (CD)** **Overarching Themes of Children's Books (OT)** **Viewpoints and Ideologies Framework (VIF)** **Observation Framework (OF)** **Excel Spreadsheet – Detailed Observation Spreadsheet (ESDOS)** **Semi Structured Interview Framework**	**Conversion of book collector database into multiple spreadsheets to quantify books in each CD, OT and VIF.** **OF data entered into ESDOS and collated with video analysis entry to ensure accuracy and rigour of data recording and prevent data duplication.** **Transference of data from ESDOS and collated into multiple spreadsheets to quantify statistics relating to book selection and use (including relating to which CD, OT AND VIF).** **Thematic analysis of interviews.** **Triangulation of data produced by these processes.**

How are the texts selected?	Semi structured interviews (recorded).	Training/experience of educators.	Semi Structured Interview Framework	Thematic analysis of interviews and policy and planning documentation.
	Incidental conversations noted verbatim.	Expectations and beliefs and understandings of policy, centre requirements, practice regarding children's books/book use.	Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation – Pre-	Conversion of policy and planning data to numerical values and creation of spreadsheets for recording, comparison and triangulation.
	Documents collected.	Budget - books	K Toolkit: Book Reading Subscale (ELLCO-BBR)	
	• Centre policy,	Policy – book use, diversity	Observation Framework (OF)	Conversion of ELLCO_BBR data into numerical data for recording, comparison and triangulation.
	• Room policy	Planning – book use	Excel Spreadsheet – Detailed Observation Spreadsheet (ESDOS)	OF data entered into ESDOS in tandem with video analysis entry to ensure accuracy and rigour of data recording and to prevent data duplication.
	• Educators' plans			
	• Children's journal/portfolios		Field Notes	
		Book environments	Member checking	Transference of data from ESDOS into multiple spreadsheets to quantify statistics relating to book selection and use (including relating to which CD, OT AND VIF), who selected the books and for what type of book sharing activity.
		Selection of books – Who? When? Where? Why?		
	• Any other documentation relating to centre practices/activities with children's books			Field notes and member checking used to check and confirm patterns and themes.

Research Sub-Questions	Data Collection (bold indicates method)	Research Focus	Data Tools/Collection	Analysis Tools/Processes
	Observations (video and field notes) **Document collection and photocopying**			**Triangulation data produced by these.**
How are the different texts used by the educators?	**Semi-structured interviews (recorded)** **Observations (video and field notes)** **Field Notes**	**Educator beliefs about practice.** **Actual practice.** **Educator clarifications about practice – post observation and analysis.** **Children's interactions/response to texts and educators use of text.**	**Systematic Assessment of Book Reading (SABR)** **Children's Orientation to Book Reading (COB)** **Field Notes** **Semi Structured Interview Framework**	**Collation and Conversion of SABR and COB data into spreadsheets recording numerical values for presentation and comparison of data, results and patterns.** **Field notes used to check and confirm data, patterns and themes.** **Thematic analysis of interviews.** **Triangulation data produced by these.**

Research Sub-Questions	Data Collection (bold indicates method)	Research Focus	Data Tools/Collection	Analysis Tools/Processes
What interactions take place between the educators, children and the texts?	**Semi-structured interviews** **Member checking** **Observations– video and incidental**	**Observations** **Member checking**	**Systematic Assessment of Book Reading (SABR)** **Children's Orientation to Book Reading (COB)** **Excel Spreadsheet – Detailed Observation Spreadsheet (ESDOS)** **Field Notes** **Semi Structured Interview Framework**	**Collation and Conversion of SABR and COB data into spreadsheets recording numerical values to enable comparison and presentation of data, results and patterns.** **Transcription of SABR instructional supports from sessions with explicit focus on cultural diversity – thematic analysis of instructional supports** **Transference of data from ESDOS into multiple spreadsheets to quantify statistics relating to book selection and use (including data from CD, OT and VIF), who selected the books; groups size, length of sessions, involvement by children and educators, and type of book sharing activity.** **Field notes used to check and confirm data, patterns and themes.** **Thematic Analysis of interviews.** **Triangulation data produced by these.**

3.7.1 Data Sources

Data collected consisted of centre documentation, interview data, photographs, a book inventory, video recorded observational data, and the researcher's observation and field notes. Data collected included:

- 672 pages of centre documents.
- 27 hours and 7 minutes of video observations.
- 3 hrs and 35 minutes of recorded interviews.
- 386 photographic images.
- An inventory of 2413 children's books.

This section outlines the data sources and the type and quantity of data collected. The research instruments and analysis processes will then be outlined.

Centre Documentation

The Centre Coordinator and Lead Educators from each participating centre were asked to provide documentation relating to centre policies, curriculum planning, records of children's involvement in book related activities and attendance records. In addition, in two centres there were notices to parents displayed during the observation period which related to book use and the researcher also received permission to collect copies of these.

Interview Data

The Centre Coordinator and the Lead Educator from each centre were interviewed at the start of the study. Additionally, incidental unstructured interviews and member checking interviews took place throughout the study with most educators. Interviews were recorded using a Phillips Digital Voice Tracer 7000 Conference Recorder device. The initial interviews were transcribed by a transcription service with subsequent incidental and member checking interviews transcribed by the researcher. The length of interviews varied due to the input of each interviewee. All interviews, once transcribed were returned to each participant for member checking and clarification. In Argyle, as the Lead Educator declined being recorded, detailed notes were taken during interviews and member checking took place during the observation visit period.

Book Sharing Observation data

Observations took place for between five and 10 days. However, to ensure consistency in data reporting, a period of five consecutive week days in each centre was selected for the reporting of observational data. In the case of Dockside, a consecutive period was not possible due to organisational constraints so the observational data reported on was drawn from two periods, the first being two consecutive week days and the second being three consecutive weekdays a week

after the first period. This resulted in all five week days (Monday to Friday) being observed and reported on. This was to ensure as accurate a snapshot as possible of the reading practices and experiences of educators and children across a typical centre week. Field notes and incidental interviews relating to book sharing observations were conducted outside each of the five day observation periods and were included in identifying and checking themes.

Return visits ranging from a few hours to a day were undertaken for member checking in the first three centres. Return member checking visits could not take place for the fourth centre, Argyle, due to logistics of distance. However, as this was the final centre visited, data analysis methods were well established and being carried out systematically and iteratively at the end of each day. Therefore, member checking was conducted during the eight days in the centre.

In each centre, the observations took place for six hours per day, a time frame chosen in consultation with centre management due to these hours being the period of time most children enrolled each day would be in attendance. In Riverview, Community House and Dockside this time was between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. while in Argyle, it was between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. due to the centre operating for similar hours to local schools and workplaces in the community.

During the observation period in each centre, the researcher video recorded every book sharing session that took place using one of three Flip Ultra HD video cameras. The use of these small cameras enabled the researcher to be carrying a camera at all times thus enabling recording to start as soon as a child or educator picked up a book. The researcher also used a simple Observation Framework (Appendices I and J) to record details relating to the nature, book choice and participant involvement in each session. For some sessions these notes were simply recorded in the field notes. On a few occasions there were children interacting with books independently while an Educator read to one or more children. At these times, the researcher kept the camera trained on the educator who was reading while noting on the observation framework information relating to which children were engaged independently and the books they were engaged with. This was quite challenging at times, particularly in the larger centres, so occasionally when it was difficult to both video the educator's book sharing session and keep notes on individuals, the researcher would pan the camera to quickly capture children's faces and book details for confirmation with the framework afterwards.

Books and Book Environments Data

An audit was conducted of all children's books in each kindergarten room as well as those located in other parts of the centre, such as libraries or storerooms, which were available to be used in the kindergarten rooms. A software program called *Book Collector* was used in conjunction with

an ISBN scanning app called CLZ Barry on an iPhone 5 to record the publishing details of the books. Photographic images were taken of some book covers using an iPhone 5 to assist in identifying publication details when the scanning device indicated the details could not be automatically found online. In addition, Book Inventory Sheets (See Appendix A) were used to manually record the last four-six digits of each ISBN, book titles and incidental notes in order to crosscheck and ensure accuracy of recorded data. Photographic images were taken of book areas and of book storage areas using an iPhone 5. Field notes relating to book areas and storage areas were also kept.

Field Notes and Additional Images

The educator kept detailed field notes during each observation period. These assisted the researcher to crosscheck data and to ensure reliable and unbiased judgment could be made through comparison and triangulation with all data sources. Additional photographic images were taken with an iPhone 5 to assist with identification of children and, in one centre, of displays in the room.

3.7.2 Semi-Structured Interview Framework

A Semi Structured Interview Framework was developed by the researcher. This framework assisted the researcher to "elicit, detailed and first-person accounts of experiences and phenomena under investigation" (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014, p. 365) while remaining open and free from preconceived opinions or perceptions.

The schedule to guide the initial interview with each participant was modified from that used in the pilot study of 2011. The researcher found the questions used in that study engaged the participants and were useful in eliciting information about their selection and use of children's literature. The first section of the schedule was designed to elicit demographic information. The questions in the remaining sections were informed by the outcome statements of the EYLF. These focused on areas of practice particularly important to meeting the requirements related to diversity. As such, they allowed the matter of diversity to be investigated implicitly and helped avoid the potential problem of asking what could be leading questions. The Semi-Structured Interview Framework is provided as Appendix B.

3.7.3 Book Collector Software

The book audit was conducted using the software package *Book Collector*, a commercially available software book cataloguing package purchased from https://www.collectorz.com/book. This package was coupled with an iPhone application (app) called CLZ Barry purchased from www.clz.barry.com. This app scans the barcodes of each book instantly sending them to the *Book Collector* software on the researcher's laptop. This software searches the internet for publishing

details and instantly records these into the software database stored on the researcher's computer. This package was selected for its suitability to accurately and easily collate the book audit.

Intention of the Original Software Package

The software package is designed as a commercial package for consumers to record details of their personal book collections. Automatically included fields are: Author, Illustrator, Title, Genre, Subject, Publisher, Publication Date, ISBN and Index number (being the number of the book in the collection). Depending on the available information on the searched websites, book covers, plot summaries and other information are sometimes included. There are additional fields the consumer can choose to customise to suit their purpose and to which they can manually add information. These include fields such as: owner, location, purchase date, tags, and the option to create user-defined fields. The database can be sorted by any field and can be exported in full or in part to other software packages such as Word and Excel.

Modifications

To assist in answering research sub-question a) what and what types of children's literature texts are selected?, the researcher customised some of the additional fields well as creating user-designed fields to collate information relevant to this study.

The standard fields used by the researcher were:

Author, Title, Subject, Index Number, ISBN, Publication Year and Publisher.

The fields customised by the researcher were:

> **Genre:** Allowing the researcher to note if a text was Fiction or Non-Fiction

> **Location**: Allowing for differing locations within each centre to be noted. This also allowed the researcher to indicate any books that were part of private educator collections.

> **Overarching Themes**: Allowing for the recording of the Overarching Theme of each book (explanation of these themes will be detailed under the Overarching Themes Instrument).

> **Cultural Diversity Category**: Allowing for the recording of the Cultural Diversity Category of each book (explanation of these categories will be detailed under the Cultural Diversity Category Instrument.)

> **Tags**: Allowing the researcher to record any tags or labels that had been assigned by the relevant centre. For example, in some centres books were organised on shelves by themes such as Science, Geography, Stories and the like.

Condition: Allowing the researcher to note the condition of books. If books were in good condition the field was left blank.

Appendix C contains a screenshot of the main screen of the database to demonstrate to the reader how the book audit information was recorded and displayed.

3.7.4 Cultural Diversity Categories Framework

The Cultural Diversities Categories Framework was developed by the researcher from the work of Bishop (1993; 1997; 2012; Sims, 1982[2]). The framework provided a research based, reliable tool for analysing cultural diversity in children's books. Bishop's categories were selected as the basis for this as they have remained constant for over 25 years and been found to be effective by other researchers (Crisp et al., 2016; Willis & Parker, 2009).

Original Application

Bishop's categories for multicultural literature (Bishop, 1993, 1997, 2012; Sims, 1982) were designed to assess the quality and validity of the portrayal of race and culture in children's books. In 1982, Bishop (writing as Sims) developed three categories of multicultural literature based on her research into African American literature. Bishop's labels for these categories have varied slightly in her work over the years but the nature of descriptors has remained constant. Bishop's works (Bishop, 1993, 1997, 2012; Sims, 1982) described several indicators for each category that guided her and have guided others in categorising multicultural children's books.

The categories are presented below along with two of Bishop's descriptors for each, one from her early work and one from her more recent work:

Culturally Generic (Social Conscience):

- Books that "feature characters of so-called minority groups, but they contain few, if any, specific details that might serve to define those characters culturally.**"** (Bishop, 1993, p. 45)
- "The primary audience for those books is White readers who are being encouraged to develop a social conscience" (Bishop, 2012, p. 88).

Culturally Neutral (Melting Pot):

- "Feature people of colour but are fundamentally about something else." (Bishop, 1993, p. 46)
- "Choose to ignore anything, other than skin colour, that might identity the characters as Black (or from a non-Caucasian background)" (Bishop, 2012, p. 88).

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[2] Bishop's research in 1982 was published under her maiden name of Sims

Culturally Specific (Culturally Authentic):

- books that "illuminate the experience of growing up a member of a particular, non-white cultural group" (Bishop, 1993, p. 44)

- "Set out to reflect either the distinctiveness of African American (or other non-Caucasian cultures) cultural experiences and the universality of human experience" (Bishop, 2012, p. 88).

Bishop's categories have been modified and utilised by many other researchers and applied to analysis of representation of several other minority groups including Asian Americans, Latino/a children, and gay, lesbian or queer content (Bishop, 2012), and as an instrument for evaluating cultural representation in book collections that include representation of several cultural groups. (Crisp et al., 2016). In 2012, Bishop, in relation to her categories being applicable to wider research and use, suggested:

> *Children's books from underrepresented groups may tend to follow a pattern: from stories in which they are the exotic Other, to stories in which they are assimilated into the larger American culture, to their own stories, told by their own group members and reflecting their perspective on the world and their experiences in it. (Bishop, 2012, p. 88)*

Modifications

As this study sought to understand the nature of the book collections in the participating centres, all children's books available to be used in the participant rooms were included in the book audit. Thus, there was a need for categories to assign to those books which did not contain any representation of cultural diversity. During the book audit, it emerged that there were two additional categories required. The first of these was Solely Caucasian – for books in which only Caucasian people were represented in non-fiction books or as characters in fiction books. The second additional category was assigned to books in which no human representation was present. Most of these were fictional animal stories with some others having other non-human characters such as teddies or monsters, while some non-fiction texts including concept books and content books such as those related to science, space or geography contained no character or human representation. These books were assigned to the category of No People.

Bishop's three categories were also included and ascribed the labels of Culturally Authentic, Culturally Generic and Culturally Neutral. Indicators for each were drawn from Bishop's work and, in the case of the Culturally Generic Category, one indicator was modified to include the Australian context. In addition, during the study, six books were identified as being bilingual with one of these

Inter-relater reliability was carried out early in the study. The researcher firstly provided her two supervisors with background readings on the work of Boutte et al. (2008) and the development and application of their categories. The researcher then trained these two supervisors in the use and application of the Overarching Themes Framework using ten books selected from the children's book collection at the researcher's university ensuring a variety of book types and topics. Following this, inter-rater reliability was undertaken using the same random selection of 34% (n=14) of the books used in the first book collection (n=41) that had been evaluated for the Cultural Diversity Categories. Each of the three raters independently read the books and coded them using the framework, highlighting relevant indicators. The raters then held a conference to compare and discuss results. The inter-rater reliability was 100%.

3.7.6 The Viewpoints and Ideologies Framework

As discussed in the literature review, when discussing the messages promoted through children's literature many researchers use a variety of terms including beliefs, values, perspectives, viewpoints, worldviews and ideologies. Despite the varying use of terms it is clear that the portrayal of these can have a powerful impact on how children view themselves and others within their community and world. In turn, this can have important implications for children's educational and social development and outcomes and, therefore, needed to be closely examined in this study. To ensure consistency during analysis and reporting, the researcher adopted the term *ideologies* to refer to "unspoken subtexts and ideologies regarding the roles and importance of [differing] world populations (Boutte et al., p. 941) and *viewpoints* as a more general term encompassing "varying perspectives about… cultures and roles in society" and understanding "insights and, traditions and beliefs of others" (Lowery & Sabis-Burns, 2007, p. 2). Therefore, it was important to evaluate not only the representation of cultural diversity in the books in this study, and the purpose of or focus of each book, but also the viewpoints and ideologies promoted in the books. While the Cultural Diversities Framework provided one measure of viewpoints and ideologies in books containing people, as the book audit progressed, it became apparent that there were a large number of books in the study that contained only non-human characters. It was important to recognise that these, too, portray social viewpoints and ideologies that may be harder to distinguish than books containing people and that identifying these viewpoints and ideologies was important to the study. To carry out this analysis the researcher developed the Viewpoints and Ideologies Framework from the work of Boutte et al (2008).

In their study of 29 commonly read picture books, Boutte et al. (2008) firstly analysed the books for ethnicity, gender and social class. Following this they used the Freirean construct of *Cultural Invasion* to further evaluate the books for overt messages or themes or surface lessons to be learned.

> *Cultural invasion is defined as methods used that facilitate the internalization of*
> *the ideologies and values of the dominant group (Freire, 1970/1999). These methods*
> *typically disrespect the marginalized group's potentialities and strengths and*
> *impose a dominant view of the world. (Boutte et al., 2008, p. 947).*

As the three researchers in that study were African American and "intimately familiar with this knowledge/research base" (Boutte et al., 2008, p. 948), they evaluated the books through identifying "which books affirmed non-mainstream lifestyles and perspectives either covertly or overtly" (Boutte et al., 2008, p. 947). These themes were identified through analysing the content of the books including, "the text; illustrations; characters; and actions, thoughts and feelings of the characters" (Boutte et al., 2008, p. 947947). Some of the indicators used by Boutte and her colleagues included "the use of Standard English, adults with white-collar positions, linear/sequential routines, and what we classified as mainstream housing" (Boutte et al., 2008, p. 950).

Modifications

Using the indicators outlined by Boutte et al. (2008) the researcher designed the Viewpoints and Ideologies Framework to analyse books for ethnicity, gender and social class and affirmation of dominant or non-dominant cultural viewpoints. The researcher acknowledges that specifying male and female genders may, to many, be considered exclusive and that other identities are now commonly accepted in society. The researcher believes that all forms of diversity are entitled to equal recognition and acceptance. However, the books in this study contained predominately binary characters or, in some cases, characters in which no gender was specified and, as such, the researcher has followed the lead of Boutte et al. (2008) and used the categories of male, female and neither.

As stated earlier, Boutte et al. (2008) examined 29 books, all of which were fictional picture books. In this study, however, there were extensive book collections containing both fiction and non-fiction books and so the researcher also included additional indicators for evaluating non-fiction texts. This framework was applied to the books that were used in the study and this will be further

outlined in the data analysis section. The Viewpoints and Ideologies Framework is attached as Appendix F.

Issues of Reliability and Validity

Inter-relater reliability was carried out early in the study. The researcher firstly provided her two supervisors with background readings on the work of Boutte et al. and the processes and criteria they employed when analysing books for overt message or themes. The researcher then trained these two supervisors in the use and application of the Viewpoints and Ideologies Framework using ten books selected from the children's book collection at the researcher's university ensuring a variety of books including some with non-human characters. Following this, inter-rater reliability was undertaken using the same random selection of 34% (n = 14) of the books used in in the first centre (n = 41) that had been evaluated for the Cultural Diversity Categories. Each of the three raters independently read the books and coded them using the framework, highlighting relevant indicators. The raters then held a conference to compare and discuss results. The inter-rater reliability was 100%.

3.7.7 Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation – Pre K Toolkit: Book Reading Subscale (ELLCO-BBR)

As detailed in the literature review, considerable evidence shows that children need access to a variety of high quality books and frequent opportunities to listen to, discuss and engage with books. The researcher initially recorded information about the literacy environment onto the Observation Framework for Use of Children's Literature, which will be outlined later in this section. However, as analysis progressed it became apparent that a more standard approach that had scope for the variations found in each centre would be beneficial to the process and could assist in making more accurate and objective judgements. The researcher went back to the literature on book environments and specifically searched for reliable instruments to evaluate the quality of these. One measure of the quality of literacy environments widely used in the U.S.A. is the Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO) Toolkit Pre-K (Smith et al., 2008). A key component of the toolkit is the Books and Book reading subscale which scores the classrooms across the domains of organisation of book area, characteristics of books, books for learning, approaches to book reading and, quality of book reading (Smith et al, 2008). This scale includes a specific assessment of the extent to which books reflect diversity. Therefore, the Book and Book Reading Subscale of ELLCO (ELCCO-BBR) was selected to measure the quality of the book environments in the study.

Original Application

This toolkit was designed in 2008 and is now widely used in both education research and as self-monitoring tool for early learning centres. As outlined in the literature review, since its

introduction in the U.S.A. improvements have been seen in the book environments of many early learning centres including those catering for children from disadvantaged backgrounds which earlier evidence suggested often contained smaller and lower quality book collections.

Modifications

In this study, the ELLCO-BBR was utilised with the exception of the final domain of quality of reading. This domain was not included as it is designed to evaluate one reading session. In this study, multiple reading sessions were observed, video-recorded and analysed so a more comprehensive instrument was used for the analysis purpose. The instrument used for this purpose was the Systematic Assessment of Book Reading (SABR) and this will be detailed later in this section.

The ELLCO is a proprietary instrument thus cannot be provided as an appendix. However, permission has been provided to include some descriptors in the findings chapters later in this dissertation.

Issues of Reliability and Validity

Psychometric analysis of the ELLCO Pre-K observation tool was carried out as part of the Early Reading First project: Reading to Nurture Excellence in Worcester (RENEW), funded by the U.S. Department of Education (Smith, Brady, & Anastasopoulos, 2012). Observations using the ELLCO Pre-K were collected from 2008 through 2010 with twice yearly observations in 35 classrooms with a total number of 203 observations. Cronbach's alpha for the *Book and Book reading subscale* was .871 demonstrating good internal consistency. Cronbach's alphas for the five sections were all high, ranging from .723 to .894 (Smith et al., 2012).

In this study, inter-rater reliability could not be carried out due to organisational constraints. However, the researcher is an experienced educator with over 30 years' experience including working in and with early childhood settings. In addition, the ELLCO is designed to be used by researchers as well as by educators as a self-assessment tool, thus is widely applicable for individual use. However, to ensure results were reliable, the researcher conferred with her supervisors using images of the book environments, the Observation Framework for the Use of Children's Literature and field notes along with the ELLCO-BBR instrument to confirm her rankings of each centre.

3.7.8 Systematic Assessment of Book Reading (SABR)

Two of the sub-questions in this study (sub-question c and sub-question d) related to the practice of educators when sharing books with children. In the early stages of the study, the researcher used the Observation Framework for Use of Children's Literature, which will be outlined later in this section, to collect qualitative data on the educator practice and to support the entering of data into the Detailed Observation Spreadsheet, also outlined later in this section. However,

during the extended period of secondary analysis following all data collection, the researcher found a need to be able to make objective and quantitative comparisons of book reading quality across the differing contexts. Therefore, the researcher went back to the literature to search for a more standardised and reliable tool to measure the quality of practice. The Systematic Assessment of Book Reading (SABR) tool (Justice, Zucker, & Sofka, 2010) was selected for this purpose.

Original Application

The SABR was developed by the Preschool Language and Literacy Research Lab at Ohio State University in 2007 and supported by a Grant from the US Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences (Justice et al., 2010). The SABR is an observational tool that uses a time-sampling approach to document adults' discrete behaviours across four instructional support constructs of extra-textual talk (i.e. Language Development, Abstract Thinking, Elaborations, and Print/Phonological Skills (Justice et al., 2010; Pentimonti et al., 2012):

Instructional Support Constructs

Language Development. *The Language Development construct examines the extent to which the teacher highlights words during reading and discusses word meanings. This construct includes instances of expanding on a child's verbal contribution.*

Abstract Thinking*. The Abstract Thinking construct examines the teacher's use of modelling and open-ended questioning to engage children in predicting, hypothesizing, remembering, reasoning, and inferencing about aspects of the book's content. All of these codes involve an inferential level of demand.*

Elaborations*. The Elaborations construct examines the extent to which the teacher elaborates on word meanings, expands on children's own topics, or encourages children's dramatic expansions of the text. This construct also assesses the extent to which the teacher elaborates on characters' emotions and ways the text links to children's own lives.*

Print/Phonological Skills*. The Print/Phonological Skills construct examines the extent to which the teacher includes verbal references (questions, directives, comments) regarding the forms and features of print or book organization. Additionally, explicit references to phonology, or the sounds of language (e.g., rhyme, alliteration), are examined within this construct"* (Justice et al., 2010, pp. 5-6)*.*

In addition the SABR also codes the book reading context through evaluation of *Session Climate.*

The Session Climate construct examines the extent to which the teacher demonstrates enjoyment of reading and respect towards the children during reading. This construct also examines the extent to which the teacher invites children to manipulate the book during book reading. The Book-Reading Context domain also includes two ratings of the quality of the teacher's dramatic reading style and approaches to behavior management (Justice et al., 2010, p. 6).

Coders record the frequency of these specific extra-textual behaviours at 15 second intervals throughout the video-recorded book sharing session enabling quantitative analysis of educators' use of the instructional supports. The use of video-recorded sessions enables the coder to view, pause and re-play the recording in order to ensure accuracy of coding.

The SABR includes two optional global rating scales to further evaluate the book reading context. One of these rates *Reading Delivery* examining *"*the voicing and dramatic qualities of the teacher's reading of the text" (Justice et al., 2010, p. 66). The other rates *Behaviour Management* to assess "whether the teacher uses proactive or reactive approaches to managing children's behavior during the reading session" (Justice et al., 2010, p. 66). The SABR scoring sheet also allows for qualitative comments to be recorded in relation to the observed educator conduct.

The SABR is useful in capturing and comparing individual differences among adults in the nature of their extra textual talk when sharing books with children (Pentimonti et al., 2012) and is also useful for comparing differences for individuals reading in different contexts or times (Kaderavek, Pentimonti, & Justice, 2014). Given the importance in this study of investigating the nature of book use by educators and their interactions with children, this tool was selected as a reliable and comparable tool.

Modifications

No modifications were made to this tool for this study. In most applications of the SABR that the researcher is aware of, controlled studies have investigated and compared educators sharing the same books with children in order to compare and comment on practice in differing contexts. In those situations comparisons were made using statistical analysis. Given that in this study, the researcher was observing and evaluating the everyday practice in the participating centres, statistical comparison could not take place as different books were used by all educators. However, researchers investigating the application of the SABR promoted the suggestion of "a shift in the research to observing multiple shared readings sessions" (Pentimonti et al., 2012, p. 522), suggesting this was important in order to consider behaviours across types of texts and variations in children's engagement at different times and with different texts.

In this study, it was important to understand the nature of the educators' practice in their "natural" settings. Therefore, the SABR was used to evaluate the quality of practice and the use of the instructional supports in order to understand 'typical' practice and variations in practice in each centre. As such, the use of the instructional supports across the differing educators and participating centres were compared by averages including length of sessions and the use of the instructional domains.

Issues of Reliability and Validity

Testing of the SABR in 2012 assessed: "the reliability of the constructs, delayed alternate form reliability, inter-rater reliability, factor structure of the tool and construct validity" (Pentimonti et al., 2012, p. 520) and found that the SABR is a "psychometrically sound tool that could serve to examine and compare shared-reading interventions across studies" (Pentimonti et al., 2012, p. 522).

For this study, the researcher conducted training with her two supervisors using the SABR Training Manual (Justice et al., 2010). This manual states that:

To become reliable in SABR coding, coders must score a set of FIVE master-coded (consensus-scored) DVDS and must have a mean reliability score of 85% across the DVDs. Additionally, no intervals can have more than 4 disagreements (Justice et al., 2010, p. 83)

The master coded DVDs could not be provided to the researcher due to human subject protections (Justice, 2016). However, advice from researchers involved in the development and testing of the SABR stated "you can establish reliability with a different set of videos… if you had a strong process on your end that would meet the requirement for rigour" (Kaderavek, 2016). Therefore, the training was conducted using six videos from this study. The researcher and her two supervisors individually coded the six videos and followed this with an inter-rater conference. The coding showed a 90% inter-rater reliability score thus ensuring reliability of the use of the tool in this study. In addition, this quantitative data was integrated with the qualitative data from the Observation Framework for the Use of Children's Literature to confirm and expand the findings.

The entire tool along with coding sheet and a comprehensive training manual can be downloaded from: https://earlychildhood.ehe.osu.edu/research/practice/assessments/

The SABR scoring sheet is provided as Appendix G.

3.7.9 Children's Orientation to Book Reading (COB) Rating Scale

One of the sub-questions in this study related to the interactions between educators and children during book sharing sessions. Thus, it was important to evaluate the quality of engagement

by the children during book sharing. Initially the researcher used the Observation Framework for Use of Children's Literature, which will be outlined later in this section, to collect qualitative data on the children's engagement and to support the entering of data into the Detailed Observation Spreadsheet, also outlined later in this section. However, during the extended period of secondary analysis following all data collection the researcher found a need to be able to make objective and quantitative comparisons of children's engagement in book sharing across the differing contexts. Therefore, the researcher went back to the literature to search for more standardised and reliable tools to measure the children's engagement in book sharing and provide comparable quantitative data. The Children's Orientation to Book Reading (COB) (Kadevarek & Hunt, 2009) rating scale was selected for this purpose.

Original Application

The COB was originally developed for research studies and subsequently used for intervention studies (Kaderavek & Hunt, 2009). The COB rating scale "is designed to evaluate children's level of orientation (i.e. interest, engagement, and focus of attention) during adult-child shared book reading" (Kaderavek & Hunt, 2009, p. 22). Coders observe a child's behaviours across an entire book sharing session and rate the behaviours on a 4 point scale (4 being the highest level of engagement). The behaviours observed are: posture, facial expressions, eye gaze, distractibility, verbal or non-verbal communication and, response to adult support.

Modifications

No modifications were made to this tool for this study.

Issues of Reliability and Validity

A study was carried out in 2014 to investigate the validity of the COB (Kaderavek, Guo, & Justice, 2014). The study found that "the COB is a valid instrument" (Kaderavek, Guo, et al., 2014, p. 174). Furthermore, the study found "it may be that children's literacy orientation is a critical moderator of the impacts of shared reading participation on their literacy development" (Kaderavek, Guo, et al., 2014, p. 172), suggesting that the COB could be a useful tool in predicting benefits of literacy intervention strategies.

For this study, the researcher conducted training with her two supervisors using the COB Training Manual (Kaderavek & Hunt, 2007). The developer of the program provided the researcher with the training manual, training videos and score sheets. The researcher and her supervisors then independently coded six children across six of the video recorded book sharing sessions from this study. An inter-rater conference was then held and inter-rater reliability was shown to be 100% thus ensuring reliability of the coding in this study. In addition, this quantitative data was integrated with

the qualitative data from the Observation Framework for the Use of Children's Literature to confirm and expand the findings.

The COB score sheet is attached as Appendix H. This score sheet has been reproduced with permission from Kaderavek, Guo, & Justice, (2014). Validity of the Children's Orientation to Book Reading Rating Scale. *Journal of Research in Reading, 37*(2), 159-178.

3.7.10 Observation Framework for the Use of Children's Literature

As the literature suggested that multiple factors can impact on book sharing outcomes for children it was important to be able to observe, record and measure these factors both in terms of capturing as many factors as possible during book sharing sessions, as well as details of the book environments of each centre. For this purpose, the researcher developed an observation framework based on the work of Henk, Moore, Marinak and Tomasetti, (2000).

Original Application

Henk et al. developed their Reading Lesson Observation Framework (RLOF) in response to identified needs in a large diverse public school district in south-central Pennsylvania, U.S.A. (Henk et al., 2000). The aim was to develop a reading lesson observation framework that could "provide a structure for emphasizing desirable instructional practices for classroom teachers, reading specialists, principals and literacy supervisors alike" (Henk et al., 2000, p. 44). The RLOF took the form of:

> *A checklist with seven major components: (a) Classroom Climate, (b) Prereading, (c)*
> *Guided Reading, (d) Postreading, (e) Skill and Strategy Instruction, (f) Materials and*
> *Tasks of the Lesson, and (g) Teacher Practices. Under each component, a series of items*
> *are included that represent criteria for evaluating the component's various aspects.*
> (Henk et al., 2000, p. 44)

The checklist was designed to be flexible with no expectation that every component would or should be observed in every reading lesson.

Modifications

The researcher modified this framework to capture as many factors of book sharing in a kindergarten room as possible. Component I, Classroom Climate, was modified slightly to reflect a Kindergarten context. Components II, III IV and V were excluded as they were intended for lessons focusing on formal instruction of reading skills and encompassed the steps of formal reading lessons. Component VI, Skill and Strategy Instruction, and Component VII, Material and Tasks of the Lesson, were combined and modified to be relevant kindergarten with a focus on educator practice. The

researcher then created additional components to evaluate the nature of the session and details of the book selected as well as the book selection process, and children's involvement. A section was included for additional comments. The framework was **further modified** during the study as the researcher found some components unnecessary to record as the information was already accessible through the video recordings. Thus, the framework was modified to only relate to the nature of the session and the book selection as these elements were not always evident in the video recordings.

The Observation Framework was designed as a qualitative instrument to support the analysis of the video observations and the qualitative analysis relating to each centre's book environment and practices. This framework was used in conjunction with the video recordings and information for each book sharing session was transferred to the detailed observation spreadsheets which are described in the next section.

Issues of Reliability and Validity

Henk et al. (2000) cautioned that observers and educators should not place too much emphasis on any single observation and that "a more valid and reliable picture emerges only after multiple observations have been made" (Henk et al., 2000, p. 88). In this study, multiple observations (366 observations of 24 educators in the four centres) were made, thus contributing to the reliability of the evidence collected. In addition, this qualitative data was compared with the quantitative data collected using the ELLCO-BBR for the book environments and the SABR for educator practice, with this triangulation strengthening reliability and validity.

The original Reading Lesson Observation Framework can be viewed at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/33437536_A_Reading_Lesson_Observation_Framework_for_Elementary_Teachers_Principals_and_Literacy_Supervisors

The initial modified Observation Framework is included as Appendix I. And the subsequently modified Observation Framework is included as Appendix J.

3.7.11 Detailed Observation Spreadsheet

The researcher designed a detailed observation spreadsheet to record details of all video recorded book sharing sessions as well as individual self-selected "book reading" by children. The spreadsheet contained several fields which are detailed in Table 3.4.

The observation spreadsheet was then used as a basis to sort and categorise data during data analysis in order to determine aspects relevant to this study. From this, data was extracted and

multiple spreadsheets were developed to record and analyse different quantitative aspects of the data.

A screenshot example of the Observation Spreadsheet is included as Appendix K.

Table 3.4 *Key to Observation Spreadsheet Fields*

Field	Description of Information Recorded
Date	The date of the observed session
Session Number	The number of the session
Child	The name of the child – in sessions with more than one child each child was given a separate entry
Independent	Signifies a child/children reading independently of an educator
Educator Led	Signifies a session led by an educator
Who Selected Book	Signifies who selected the book for the session
Book Title	The title of the book used in the session
Overarching Themes	The Overarching Theme assigned to the book a) Early Childhood Content and Skills b) Imagination, Fantasy or Humour c) Dispositions, Morals or Life Lessons d) Religion, Cultural Customs, Celebrations or Beliefs
Cultural Diversity Category	The Cultural Diversity Category assigned to the book SC – Solely Caucasian NA – No human portrayal 1 – Culturally Authentic 2 – Culturally Generic 3 – Culturally Neutral
Individual Time	The amount of time the child spent in that session
Total Teacher Time	The total time the teacher (educator) spent in that session
Notes	Any other observations transferred from The Observation Framework for the Use of Children's Literature.

3.8 Procedure

The researcher gained consent from each centre and began research in the first site, Riverview, with an initial visit to discuss the research process and determine a schedule of visits.

Following this, data collection began. On the first of these visits, interviews were conducted with the Coordinator and the Lead Educator and the book audit was started. Documentation relating to policy, planning and reporting was also requested with some provided at that time and others being provided over the next few days. The book audit continued for two days and, during this time, the researcher was often present in the room with the children and sat on the floor scanning books and allowing the children to watch and chat to her. This enabled them to be familiar and comfortable with her presence. The researcher also showed the children the small video cameras she would be using for the observations. On the third day, the researcher began formal observations using the Observation Framework for the use of Children's Literature and video-recording each book sharing session. The researcher visited the centre for six hours each day for two weeks providing eight days of formal observations. Throughout this period, simultaneous data collection and qualitative analysis was undertaken with observation videos reviewed and compared with observation frameworks, field notes and interviews. Member checking using semi-structured interviews took place both incidentally and in a planned way as needed in order for the researcher to gain insight into the educators' intentions beliefs and understandings of their practice as evidenced in observations and documentation analysis and ensured the voices of the participants were included. Detailed field notes and memos were kept by the researcher to support both the collection and transfer of recorded data collection into spreadsheets as well as for crosschecking and triangulating with other data to ensure the researcher's judgments were reliable. Recording of observation details in the Detailed Observation Spreadsheet was started. The researcher adapted the draft protocols followed in each type of analysis process and developed a final set of protocols to follow in the analysis of the data collected in the subsequent research sites to ensure consistency of approach.

At the conclusion of the two week period of visits to Riverview, the researcher engaged in intensive analysis of the data collected. This included analysis of interviews, centre documentation, video observations, and the books used and this will be detailed below.

Interviews were listened to several times and detailed notes and memos taken, the interviews were also transcribed and entered into NVIVO 10 for thematic coding. Documentation collected was analysed and also entered into NVIVO 10 for thematic coding. Initial concepts were identified along with their properties. Again, draft protocols were refined and recorded to guide future analysis and ensure consistency of approach.

The video observations were analysed and data entered into the Detailed Observation Spreadsheet. This process was supported by the integration of information recorded on the Observation Frameworks. The researcher continued to record written memos during this process of

entering data in the Detailed Observation Spreadsheet to inform the analysis and construction of codes. A return visit was made to the centre for further member and to answer questions emerging from the observational data. Concepts and concept properties were identified and constantly compared with those from the thematic coding. Quantitative analysis began with the data recorded in the spreadsheet to develop detailed measurements of aspects relating to time spent in book sharing by both educators and children (individually and collectively), the books selected, the categories and themes of the books (as determined by the three frameworks used in analysing the books), and time spent on different types of books.

The analysis of books took place alongside this thematic coding. The researcher had assigned Cultural Diversity Categories during the actual collection of the audit data but carried out the inter-rater process outlined earlier in this chapter during this period and this confirmed the accuracy of the processes. However, during this intensive period of data analysis comparison with the interviews and observation data it emerged that educators often selected books for particular purposes and these were often aligned to the purpose or intent of the book itself. The researcher then developed the Overarching Themes Framework and carried out the inter-rater process outlined earlier in this chapter. She then applied this framework retrospectively to the books from this centre. For many of the books this was straightforward and the themes could be designated based on the title or type of book and information automatically collated by the book collector software. However, the researcher paid a return visit to the centre to further inspect and clarify themes of any books she was uncertain about. This information was then entered manually into the Book Collectors database. The researcher then developed the Book Audit Recording Sheet for the subsequent centre visits to allow coding at the time of auditing.

While the Cultural Diversity Categories gave specific information about the portrayal and authenticity of cultural diversity in the books, thus a level of understanding of cultural viewpoints portrayed in the books, also emerging during this time of analysis was the need to further investigate the passive or underlying viewpoints and ideologies of the books used. Many of the books used had contained inanimate objects or non-human characters and it was important to ascertain the underlying viewpoints and ideologies of these texts in order to answer the research questions. The researcher developed the Viewpoints and Ideologies Framework. The researcher returned to Riverview to again borrow 14 of the 41 books used and carried out the inter-rater reliability detailed earlier in this chapter, and subsequently re-visited the centre to finalise the coding of the other books used. This information was then entered manually into the Book Collector database.

The Data in the Book Collector package was sorted by: genre, Cultural Diversity Category, Overarching Themes and locations. This information was exported to EXCEL to enable the construction of graphs and tables to reflect the information gained and allow for comparison and integration with the qualitative data.

At the conclusion of this intensive analysis, the researcher had identified conceptual categories and then took the research into the second site, Community House. The researcher followed the same data collection processes and protocols as in the first site, with the addition of the use of the Overarching Themes Framework, the Viewpoints and Ideologies Framework and the Book Audit Recording Sheet. At the conclusion of the visits to this second centre, the researcher again engaged in an intensive period of analysis and concept checking. This pattern continued for the remaining sites, Dockside and Argyle.

During the data analysis period that followed, the researcher identified the need for more specific and reliable quantitative measures of the quality of educator practice, children's engagement in book sharing and, the quality and nature of the book environments in each centre. To address this need the SABR, COB and ELLCO-BBR tools described earlier in his chapter were selected and used to analyse the relevant data from all four sites. The researcher also transcribed the instructional supports (measured by the SABR) of the educators from the video observations in which educators intentionally focused on cultural diversity.

3.9 Data Analysis

As outlined earlier in this chapter, a mixed methods approach was employed to conduct this study. The qualitative and quantitative data collected in this study were analysed separately and a convergent design was then employed to compare the quantitative results with the qualitative findings and thus allow the researcher to develop a complete understanding of the research problem (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Qualitative data including interviews, centre policies and planning documents, and the transcribed instructional supports of educators from book sharing sessions focusing on cultural diversity, were analysed through a process of thematic coding. Relevant observational data was analysed though the formal analysis tools of ELLCO-BBR, SABR and COB. These and the data from the Detailed Observation Spreadsheet were further analysed using a systematic approach to convert the data through reducing themes or codes to numerical information to assist in describing and explaining the phenomena observed and recorded, and to generate representation of data in the forms of tables, charts and graphs.

As already described, the data analysis in this study was iterative with draft instruments, procedures and protocols being refined through analysis of data collected at the initial study site,

Riverview, and then applied consistently to the data from the remaining three sites. Analysis was ongoing during the data collection process, including constant comparison and the noting of emergent patterns.

Table 3.3, included earlier in this chapter when introducing the research tools outlined which tools and processes would be used in collecting and/or analysing each of the data sources and the relationship of each of these to the research questions. The following section will outline the data analysis processes in relation to each of the research questions and the data collected for each of these.

Overarching research question: what are the factors and relationships influencing the use of children's literature texts as a resource for meeting principles relating to cultural diversity in the kindergarten rooms of long day care centres?

Given its complexity, four sub-questions were developed to facilitate the answering of the research questions. The selected research tools outlined earlier in this chapter were used to both collect and assist in analysing the data to answer these. The quantitative processes for each sub-question will be outlined later in this section. However, it is important to note here that the qualitative data collected through the semi–structured interviews, observations and documentation supported the answering of all four sub-questions, while the quantitative processes allowed integration of the differing types of data to interpret the results through a convergent design. The convergent process will be outlined later in this chapter.

The semi structured interviews; documents, including centre policies, planning documentation and records; and, other qualitative data such as notes made on the observation frameworks were analysed through thematic analysis. Braun and Clarkes' phases of thematic analysis (2006) were followed for this purpose. These were as follows:

Phase 1 - Familiarisation with the Data: To begin with, interviews were listened to several times over and memos and notes made of key patterns and recurring themes noticed. Interviews were then transcribed and read several times. Centre policy, planning and reporting documentation were also subjected to repeated reading with the researcher searching for meanings and patterns and keeping notes and memos of these (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Phase 2 - Generating Initial Codes: The transcribed interviews and the policy, planning and reporting documentation were then entered into NVIVO 10. The researcher then coded these for potential themes and patterns with full and equal attention given to each data item (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Phase 3 - Searching for Themes: The researcher then sorted the initial codes into broader levels of potential themes and relationships between these were considered and noted. Detailed memos and notes were kept of the researcher's thinking at each stage of this analysis.

Phase 4 - Reviewing the Themes: By this phase of the process, data collection had begun at the second site. Therefore, phase four involved further coding, constant comparison, reviewing of themes and coded data to define and refine themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Phase 5 - Defining and Naming Themes: In this phase, the researcher considered what 'story' was told by each theme and how each theme fitted in to the overall narrative emerging from the data in relation to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). At this point sub-themes were also identified which assisted in structuring the larger themes identified.

Convergent Design: Merging of the Data

During phases three to five, the quantitative analysis related to each of the sub-questions was taking place separately and concurrently. In addition, some of the qualitative data, such as that emerging from the document analysis of planning and reporting documentation, were transformed into quantitative data by reducing the themes or codes to numerical information to provide measurable and comparable higher level analysis through the generation of tables and charts. More information on the process of transforming of this data will be outlined under each sub-question later in this section.

Thus, the merging of the two data sets took place during these stages to allow the identification of concepts presented in both datasets and also for comparison and contrast. This allowed the researcher to synthesise the themes and interpret significant relationships and their meanings (Cresswell and Clark, 2018) in order to complete the final phase:

Phase 6 - Final Analysis and Writing Up of the Report. This is in the form of this dissertation. In this writing phase, data was further authenticated by extensive participant quotation in order to build an in-depth picture of participants' understandings of, and responses to, the use of children's literature to address principles of cultural diversity.

The following section will outline the analysis processes for each of the quantitative data sets. This will be aligned with the relevant research sub-questions. Following this, the key themes identified through the convergent analysis will be outlined.

3.9.1 Research Sub-Question a): What and What Types of Children's Literature are Selected?

To answer this sub-question, interview, documentary and observation data were analysed using thematic analysis as outlined earlier in order to identify the educators' beliefs and practices relating to the books and their types.

In addition, a book audit was conducted of all children's literature texts available for use by either educators or children in each kindergarten room in each of the participating centres. This audit was conducted using the Book Collector software package and the process outlined in the research tools section of this dissertation. The auditing process produced a database of all children's literature texts and contained descriptive information relating to publication details, genre, locations and availability to educators and children.

Additional analysis of each book was undertaken using the Cultural Diversity Categories Framework, the Overarching Themes Framework and the Viewpoints and Ideologies Framework. Key aspects of the analysis completed for each of these frameworks is summarised below:

Cultural Diversity Categories Framework: During the audit, each book was examined firstly for human representation. Books with no people were categorised as No People (NP). Books containing only Caucasian people were categorised as Solely Caucasian (SC). Books containing characters from cultures other than Caucasian were analysed by comparing the text and images in the book to the indicators on the Cultural Diversity Categories Framework. Addressing the indicators included analysing images and text for representation and mention of characters/people from non-Caucasian cultures as well as the overall focus or purpose of the book. Books were then assigned the matching Cultural Diversity category and this information was added to the Book Collectors database.

This data was then quantified through calculating frequencies of each category and converting these to percentages. This was done for variables such as total collection, collections in each centre, and books used during the observations.

Overarching Themes Framework: During the audit, each book was analysed by comparing the text and images in the book to the indicators on the Overarching Themes Framework to ascertain the Overarching Theme or purpose of each book. The relevant theme for each book was then added to the Book Collector database.

This data was then quantified through calculating frequencies of each category and converting these to percentages. This was done for variables such as total collection, collections in each centre, and books used during the observations.

Viewpoints and Ideologies Framework: The 41 books used in Riverview were selected as a purposeful sample to analyse using the Viewpoints and Ideologies Framework. These books were selected as the need for this analysis was found early in the study and by analysing all of the books used in that centre during the observation period, the researcher had a selection that was relevant to the observation data thus providing additional information about the books used which would assist in answering the research questions. The content of the books were analysed including "the text; illustrations; characters; and actions, thoughts and feelings of the characters" (Boutte et al., 2008 p. 947). Indicators used by the researcher to guide analysis included "the use of Standard English, adults with white-collar positions, linear/sequential routines, and what we classified as mainstream housing" (Boutte et al., 2008, p. 950).

While this purposeful sample analysed all books used in Riverview. Extensive field notes were kept throughout the observations in Community House, Dockside and Argyle to note the viewpoints and ideologies reflected in the books used in those centres. This served the purpose of identifying books that may diverge from the findings for the books used in Riverview and thus require deeper analysis using the Viewpoints and Ideologies Framework. This process identified that the only Cultural Diversity category of book that was not used in Riverview during the study, and thus not already analysed through the Viewpoints and Ideologies Framework was that of Culturally Authentic. While the indicators on the Cultural Diversity Categories framework indicate that Culturally Authentic books do represent the viewpoints and ideologies of the cultural group represented in the book, by also analysing these books through the Viewpoints and Ideologies Framework, another level of analysis could be used to validate the Culturally Authentic Category. Therefore, a further purposeful sample was undertaken relating to the three Culturally Authentic books used in Community House. This ensured all categories of books were analysed for viewpoints and ideologies.

This data was then quantified through calculating frequencies of each category and converting these to percentages.

Analysis with these three instruments enabled comparison of book collections across centres, book types and categories relating to the question, "What and what types of children's literature texts are selected?" This question could then be answered with attention to wider

questions of what books were selected to be in the book collections, what books were available to be selected by both educators and children, and what books were selected for use.

Merging Information with the Detailed Excel Observation Spreadsheet

In addition, information about each book used during the five day observation period was recorded on the Observation Framework and entered into the Detailed Observation Spreadsheet to confirm and complete the specific details entered regarding the video observations. The information entered included the book titles, the Cultural Diversity Category and the Overarching Theme of each book used. These data were also quantified through calculating frequencies of each category and converting these to percentages. This allowed further quantitative analysis to answer the other sub-questions as described in the following sections.

3.9.2 Research Sub-Question b): How are the Texts Selected?

To answer this question, interview, document and observation data were thematically analysed as previously described, in order to identify educator self-reported and documented selection criteria and processes as well as those observed by the educator. The Observation Framework allowed the researcher to record which child or educator had selected each text used during the observation period and additional notes were kept when a purpose for selection had been stated by the educator or a child, or when a purpose or pattern in selection was identified by the researcher as part of the observations. These notes were entered into the Detailed Observation Spreadsheet and analysed for patterns such as purposes for selection and influencing factors. Where necessary and possible, member checking took place to confirm observations as did reviewing of the video observations to check and confirm identified patterns and factors. Patterns observed were also transformed into numerical quantities by counting the frequency of each pattern and converting to percentages for representation in graphs and tables.

3.9.3 Research Sub-Question c): How are the Different Texts Used by the Educators?

To answer this question, interview, document and observation data were analysed as part of the thematic analysis already outlined in order to identify educator self-reported, documented and observed use of children's literature texts through book sharing. As outlined earlier in this chapter when introducing the Overarching Themes Framework, it emerged during analysis that educators' purposes for books sharing were often related to the Overarching Themes of the books themselves. While this was not surprising, it was important to confirm this pattern as part of answering this sub-question. Therefore, the documented and reported uses of books were compared with the Overarching Themes Framework and also transformed into numerical data to enable creation of

diagrams, charts and tables and allow for triangulation and comparison with other data and across contexts.

The Detailed Observation Spreadsheet was used to support the analysis of the observed book use. Data within the observation spreadsheet was converted to numerical values to allow representation in graphs, diagrams and tables. This included comparing the amount of time spent in book sharing by individual children and summarising this into quartiles both for individual centres and overall.

In addition, and as described in the research tool section of this chapter, the quality of educator book reading practice was measured using the Systematic Assessment of Book Reading Instrument (SABR). A purposeful sample of 20% of the educator led sessions in each centre, making an overall total of 30 sessions, was selected for the SABR analysis. The basis for the purposeful selection of the sessions included:

- Those in which literature containing cultural diversity was read.
- Representing a variety of group sizes from Individual to Whole Group (In the case of Whole Group, the longest session was selected).
- At least one session led by the Lead Educator.
- At least one session at or closest to the recommended duration of 15 minutes.

The SABR data was then transformed into numerical values representing the use the instructional supports, session length, group type and educator as well as calculating these for the average length book sharing session in each centre and the average length session for all centres. This enabled the creation of diagrams, charts and tables to allow for triangulation and comparison with other data and across contexts.

In addition, the engagement of children in educator led reading or book sharing sessions was measured using the Children's Orientation to Book Reading scale (COB). Fifty percent of children were selected from each centre for the COB analysis with a total of 54 children. Eighty four COB measurements were undertaken with some children being measured more than once and in different sessions. Selection of children followed purposeful sampling using the criteria of:

- From sessions analysed with the SABR – this allowed for consistency of selection criteria with SABR and for comparison of children's COB scores with the SABR scores
- In Individual or Small Group sessions, all children visible were analysed with COB.
- In Large group and Whole Group sessions a child from each quartile of overall reading time was selected.

- Where a target child was not visible in the recording the next best match was selected.

The COB data was then transformed into numerical data according to the COB scores, session length, group type and corresponding SABR scores to enable creation of diagrams, charts and tables and allow for triangulation and comparison with other data and across contexts.

3.9.4 Research Sub-Question d): What Interactions Take Place between the Educators, the Children and the Texts?

To answer this question, interview, document and observation data were analysed as part of the thematic analysis already outlined in order to identify educator self-reported and documented practice as well as that observed by the researcher. The SABR and COB data outlined under sub-question c) was also used in answering this research sub-question.

In addition, the descriptive data in the Detailed Observation Spreadsheet were converted into numerical values to enable comparison and reporting of book session information including: length and number of sessions, time spent in sessions by educators and children, number and type of sessions in each centre, group sizes of sessions and other associated data.

3.10 Organisational Framework of Analysis

As part of the analysis processes outlined in this chapter, three key aspects of the research questions were identified and adopted as an organisational framework through which to report the themes and findings emerging from the research. As outlined earlier in this chapter, the Pilot Study informed this approach to presenting the findings which allowed for comparison between contexts while focusing on patterns and themes identified across contexts (Smith, 1991). These themes were: the book environments, book sharing practices and, attention to diversity. Therefore, these have been adopted as an organisational framework for the reporting of the findings in the following chapters. This will be further outlined in Chapter 4: Introduction to the findings.

3.11 Validity: Defending Standards of Rigour

It is important with research design to ensure the trustworthiness of a study. Researchers need to consider the reliability and validity of their study throughout the design, implementation, analysis and reporting processes. Drew, Hardman and Hosp (2008) identified seven key threats to the trustworthiness of data: incompleteness of information collected, inadequate interpretation of the findings, inconsistencies in the data, inadequate use of metaphors, diagrams or direct quotations, participants' view not being fully integrated, failing to disqualify alternate explanations for findings, and observer effects. Of particular importance in this study, was the researcher's awareness that she was constructing meaning and interpretations based on the meanings and

interpretations of the participants she was studying (Crotty, 1998; Snape & Spencer, 2003) and, as such, to reduce observer effects, measures needed to be taken to ensure validity and reliability of the findings. To avoid the implications of these threats and increase the validity and reliability of the study, the researcher undertook several measures.

Firstly, the researcher spent extended time in each setting. In this way, all participants could become accustomed to the researcher's presence. In addition, the researcher did not begin video observations until the children and researchers were familiar with her and the processes she would follow.

Secondly, to minimise the risk of observer bias, the researcher kept a research journal in the form of field notes and memos to describe the process in detail and to keep a record of her thoughts, feelings and responses throughout data collection and analysis. Drawing on Drew et al. (2008) the researcher also engaged her supervisors in the process of examining and reviewing the data and, especially, in the process of inter-rater reliability for the application of the research tools used in the study, as outlined earlier in this chapter. In addition, the researcher used the strategy of member checking throughout the study. Member checking assisted the participants to judge the accuracy of the description and interpretation made by the researcher, again, minimising the effects of observer bias.

Thirdly, as recommended by Drew et al. (2008), the researcher meticulously described the participants, the conceptual frameworks of the study and the data collection and analysis procedures in order for others to "make determinations on every aspect of the research including the reliability and validity (both internal and external" (Drew et al., 2008, p. 235). The researcher also utilised multiple forms of data collections including interviews, observations and formal use of research tools. This ensured that themes and patterns could be developed through constant comparison and triangulation of the data. The use of triangulation ensured that evidence was corroborated across the differing methods of data collection.

In addition to these, specific steps and processes were undertaken to ensure the reliability of each of the research instruments as outlined earlier in this chapter.

3.12 Summary

This study used a mixed methods approach to collect and interpret data. A convergent design was used to merge the data sets and make interpretations, conclusions and recommendations. In the chapters that follow, the findings will be presented through the organisational framework developed from three key aspects of the research questions that emerged

during analysis. As results for each aspect are presented, findings are identified for each relevant factor emerging through the data. These are further summarised into Key Findings.

This research is designed to contribute to the achievement of equity goals as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and reflected in current policy documents framing early years' education and care. As such it has the potential to benefit the participants and the wider community.

Chapter 4: Introduction to the Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the findings chapters which follow. First, it provides additional demographic and participant information for each of the participant centres. This includes details of the educators and of the children and their attendance patterns. Demographic data for the centres was drawn from the community profiles of the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011 census data (ABS, 2011b). These community profiles provide descriptions of selected geographic areas using terms relating to socio-economic and population demographics (ABS, 2011b). This study uses the ABS terms from each relevant community profile when describing the demographics of each centre. The NQS ratings data were drawn from the Australian Government Department of Education and Training My Child website (AGDET, 2016). This website was replaced in December 2018 with Child Care Finder (Australian Government Department of Education and Training [AGDET], 2018).

This chapter then presents the framework of analysis used to structure the findings chapters. Finally, it provides a definition of terms used in the findings chapters.

4.2 The Centres

4.2.1 Riverview Early Learning Centre Demographics and Participants

Riverview Early Learning Centre (Riverview) was situated in an affluent suburb of Perth with a higher than average overseas born population, and slightly lower than average number of people who spoke a language other than English at home (ABS, 2011). The centre was licensed for 120 children from birth to six years. At the time of this study, the centre was rated by the NQS as *Excellent*. This rating is earned when a centre exceeds the NQS in all of its seven quality areas (AGDET, 2016). The kindergarten room selected for the study was one of three rooms which combined both older toddlers and kindergarten children ranging in age from 3 - 5 years. The selected room had been nominated by the Centre Coordinator to participate in the study. There were 36 child participants in this room. Thirty-four of these attended five days per week with the other two each attending three days per week. There were seven adult participants in this centre including the Centre Coordinator, Lead Educator, and five other educators who assisted in the room. Two of the other educators worked in this room full-time and three part-time. One of these was the Centre Inclusion Officer whose role in centre involved conducting the Playing and Learning to Socialise (PALS) social skills program (Cooper & Wingecarribee Health Service, 2007), which is aimed at developing social skills such as greeting others, listening and expressing feelings. During the

observation period this program ran for one 30-minute period with a small group of children identified by the Lead Educator as possibly benefiting from this type of intervention.

In this centre, observations took place for eight days. Days one to three were consecutive attendance days (Thursday, Friday and Monday), while days four to eight were consecutive weekdays from Monday to Friday with a week's break between day three and four. To ensure consistency in reporting across all sites, the consecutive five-day period of days four to eight was selected for analysis of the observational data.

4.2.2 Community House Participants and Demographics

Community House was a small early learning centre in a predominately low socio-economic suburb of Perth with a high immigrant population and higher than average Aboriginal population, a very high overseas born population and a very high number of people who spoke a language other than English at home (ABS, 2011). This centre was attached to a community centre funded by the Department of Local Government and also supported by state government grants. At the time of this study, the centre was rated by the NQS as *Not Yet Assessed* (AGDET, 2016). This centre was subsequently assessed as *Working towards the NQS.* This rating included meeting Quality Areas 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6; and working towards Quality Areas 3 (Physical Environment) and 7 (Leadership and Service Management) (AGDET, 2016). The centre was licensed for 45 children from birth to six years. There were 22 child participants in the kindergarten room. Seven of these attended five days per week, four attended three days per week, six attended two days per week and one child attended one day per week. This centre had been operating in this form for less than six months following the merging of two centres, one of which had been a centre identified as a multicultural child care centre.

There were six adult participants in this centre and they were the Centre Coordinator, Lead Educator, and four other educators who assisted in the room. One of these was fulltime, one was a workplace experience student studying a Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care and the other two assisted in a part-time capacity. Observations took place for a consecutive period of eight week days. The consecutive five-day period of days one to five was selected for analysis of observational data.

4.2.3 Dockside Participants and Demographics

Dockside was an early learning centre located in an outer Perth metropolitan suburb with a range of socio-economic demographics including a higher than average overseas born population, and lower than average number of people who spoke a language other than English at home (ABS, 2011). At the time of this study, the centre was rated by the NQS as *Exceeding the NQS.* This rating

included a rating of *exceeding* for all Quality Areas except Quality Area 3 (Physical Environment), which was rated as *meeting* the standard. The centre was licensed for 52 children from birth to 6 years. The kindergarten room participating in the study combined both older toddlers and kindergarten children ranging in age from three to five years. There were 34 child participants in this room. Attendance data was not provided for this centre but most children attended each day.

There were six adult participants in this centre including the Centre Coordinator, Lead Educator, and four other educators who assisted in the room. Two of these other educators worked part-time in this room and the other two were preservice teachers undertaking a childcare practicum placement. Observations took place over five days. Days one and two were consecutive attendance days (Thursday and Friday) and days three to five were consecutive weekdays from Monday to Wednesday with a week's break between days two and three due to organisational constraints.

While the five day period did not constitute five consecutive days, it did include Monday to Friday and thus was as close to a typical week as was possible to observe in this centre.

4.2.4 Argyle Participants and Demographics

Argyle was a small early learning centre located in the north east of Western Australia with a broad range of socio-economic demographics including a very high Aboriginal population, a lower than average overseas born population and lower than average number of people who spoke a language other than English at home (ABS, 2011). This centre was part of a family and community centre operated by a not for profit service identifying itself as providing services in rural and remote areas, with a focus on supporting those in challenging environments. At the time of this study, the centre was rated by the NQS as *Exceeding the NQS.* This rating included a rating of *exceeding* for all Quality Areas except Quality Area 3 (Physical Environment), which was rated as *meeting* the standard. This centre was licensed for 40 children from birth to six years. The kindergarten room catered for children aged from three year to five years. There were 18 child participants in this room. Two children attended five days per week, one attended four days per week, two attended three days per week, eight attended two days per week and five attended one day per week. The maximum number of children in the room at any one time during the study was 12.

There were three adult participants in this centre including the Centre Coordinator, Lead Educator, and another educator who assisted part-time in the room. In addition to these participants, an Elder from the local Aboriginal Language Centre and the Facilitator of that centre's Indigenous language program worked with the children in the room once a week for 30 minutes and consented to participate in the study. Observations took place for eight consecutive week days. The

consecutive five day period of days one to five (Monday to Friday) was selected for analysis of observational data.

4.3 Data Collected

As outlined in Chapter 3: Method, in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena involved in the use of children's literature in the participant sites, data were drawn from a number of sources including documents, semi-structured interviews, a book audit, observations and field notes.

4.3.1 Documentation Data

The amount of documentation made available, particularly planning documentation, varied between centres. This was partly due to differing approaches towards planning evident in the centres. Table 4.1 summarises the documentation collected from each centre.

Table 4.1 *Summary of Documentation Collected from the Centres*

Centre Documentation				
Data	**Riverview**	**Community**	**Dockside**	**Argyle**
Centre Manuals	Centre Policy with focus on 10x A4 pages relating to programming policies.	None available – new centre preparing policy documents at time of study.	113x A4 pages with focus on: 11x pages – diversity and inclusion. 13x pages – equipment and toys. 19x pages – educational curriculum.	Staff handbook 20x A4 pages. Centre Policy 29x A4 pages. NQS Partner Handbook 29x A4 pages. 2x A3 pages Room Policy.
Curriculum Planning Documents	12x A4 pages covering 6 months period of **monthly** plans	20x A3 and 1x A4 pages of weekly plans covering 4 months of **weekly** plans	4x A3 pages covering 4 weeks of **weekly** plans	25x A3 pages covering 5 months of **weekly** plans
Educator observation notes/record of children's book related activities	11x A4 pages relating to book use by 11 children.	3x A4 pages relating to book use by 5 children.	37x A4 pages of "Learning Stories" relating to book use in the centre. 16 A3 pages from children's portfolios relating to book use/activities.	Copies of 8x A3 Daily notes to parents "Books We Read today".
Attendance Register/Child ID		1x A4 page register.	9x A4 page images of children.	

Centre Documentation				
Data	Riverview	Community	Dockside	Argyle
		5x A4 page images of children.		
Other		1x A4 Notice to Parents – request for family photos.	19x A5 Library record slips.	3 notices to parents - "What We Did Today"

4.3.2 Interview Data

Interviews with each Centre Coordinator and Lead Educator were recorded and transcribed. In Argyle, the Lead Educator declined being recorded, hence the recording time only relates to the interview with the Coordinator. In this centre, the researcher kept detailed notes of face to face interviews conducted. The following table summarises the interview data collected.

Table 4.2 *Interview Data Collected from the Centres*

Centre Interview Data				
Data	Riverview	Community	Dockside	Argyle
Recordings	125 minutes (2 hrs 5 minutes)	53 minutes	29 minutes	18 minutes
Transcriptions	26x A4 pages of transcribed interviews	23x pages of transcribed interviews	26x pages of transcribed interviews	4x pages of transcribed interview (Centre Coordinator); 3 pages of face to face interviews (Lead Educator)

4.3.3 Observational Data

Observational data included the Observation Framework for the Use of Children's Literature (Observation Framework) (see Appendices I and J) and the video recording of all book sharing sessions in each centre. The following table summarises the observational data collected.

Table 4.3 *Summary of Observational Data Collect*ed

Data	Riverview	Community	Dockside	Argyle
Book sharing observation framework/notes	51x A4 pages	41x A4 pages	17x A4 pages	9x A4 pages
Video recordings of book reading/sharing	741 minutes (12 ½ hrs)	420.5 minutes (7 hrs 30 seconds)	282.25 minutes (4 hrs, 42 min, 15 sec)	175 minutes (2 hrs 55 min)

4.3.4 Book Audit and Book Environment Data

The book audit included collecting details of all children's books identified by the participants as being intended for use in each participant room as well as the location and availability of each book to educators and children. This data was recorded using the CLZ Barry app and the Book Collector software, which were outlined in Chapter 3: Method. In addition, Book Inventory Sheets (See Appendix A) were used to record manually the last four-six digits of each ISBN, book titles and incidental notes in order to crosscheck and ensure accuracy of recorded data. Photographic images were also taken of some book covers to assist in identifying books for which the app could not automatically locate details online. Images were also collected of book areas. The following table summarises the data collected relating to books and book environments.

Table 4.4 *Summary of Book and Book Environment Data*

Book and Book Environment Data	Riverview	Community	Dockside	Argyle
Audit of Children's Books	707 children's books	416 children's books	1042 children's books	248 children's books
Book Audit Recording Sheets	24x A4 pages	12x A4 pages	23x A4 pages	10x A4 pages
Images – Book Areas	22 images	11 images	10 images	2 images
Images – Book Covers/Pages	137 images	27 images	39 images	0 Images

4.3.5 Researcher's Field Notes

Throughout the study the researcher kept detailed field notes. The following table notes the quantity of data collected in field notes for each study site.

Table 4.5 *Summary of Researcher's Field Notes*

Researcher's Documentation				
Documents	**Riverview**	**Community**	**Dockside**	**Argyle**
Field Notes	26 A4 pages	32 A4 pages	26 A4 pages	35 A4 pages

4.4 Presenting the Findings: Organisational Framework

As outlined in Chapter 3: Method (Organisational Framework of Analysis), three key aspects of the research questions were used to form an organisational framework to present the findings in the following chapters. These are:

1. The book environments
2. Book sharing practices
   a. Documentary and Reported Practices
   b. Observed Practices
3. Attention to diversity.

4.5 Definition of Terms

This section provides a glossary of terms used in reporting the findings.

General Terms

Educator/s: used for the adult participants in the study.

Lead Educator: the educator in charge of each participating kindergarten room.

Coordinator: the educator in charge of each centre.

Terms Used in Book Collection Classifications

Total Collection: the total collection of children's books in the study.

People Only: this category of books contains some human representation. The term "people" is used in preference to "characters" as a term that is relevant across fiction and non-fiction.

Books used: the books that were shared with children by educators and/or selected and used by children during the observation period in each centre.

Terms Used in Book Classifications of Cultural Diversity

The following terms are from the Cultural Diversity Categories Framework outlined in Chapter 3: Method.

Cultural Diversity Categories: the umbrella term encompassing the following five categories.

Culturally Authentic: books containing culturally authentic representation of race as classified by Bishop (1997; 2012).

Culturally Generic: books containing generic or socially conscious representation of race based on the work of Bishop (1997; 2012).

Culturally Neutral: books containing culturally neutral or melting pot representation of race as defined by Bishop (1997; 2012).

Solely Caucasian: books in which the only people were Caucasian.

No People: books in which there were no people represented (For example animal stories, concept books).

Terms Used in Book Classifications of Overarching Themes

The following terms are from the Overarching Themes Framework outlined in Chapter3: Method and are used in the findings chapters.

Overarching Themes: the umbrella term for the Overarching Themes identified in the books based on the work of Boutte et al. (2008).

Early childhood content and skills*:* books categorised as having a primary purpose relating to early *childhood content and skills* modified from the work of Boutte et al. (2008).

Imagination, fantasy or humour: books categorised as having a primary purpose relating to *imagination, fantasy or humour* as identified in the work of Boutte et al. (2008).

Dispositions, morals or life lessons: books categorised as having a primary purpose relating to d*ispositions, morals or life lessons* as identified in the work of Boutte et al. (2008).

Religion, cultural customs, celebrations or beliefs: books categorised as having a primary purpose relating to *religion, cultural customs, celebrations or beliefs.* As outlined in Chapter 3: Method, this category emerged during data analysis and was included in the Overarching Themes Framework for this study*.*

Terms Used in Reporting Book Sharing Sessions

Session: a continuous period of time in which one or more children were engaged in interacting/sharing/reading of a particular book with or without an Educator. A new session was signified with the change of a book or if the group/children involved change and/or the book was read again.

Independent: instance in which one or more children were interacting with books in a session independently of any educators (if two or more children were sharing a book together this was counted as one independent session).

Educator led: instances in which an educator was involved in a book sharing session with children.

Individual Time: the total amount of time spent in book engagement by an Individual child.

Educator Time: the total amount of time spent by educators reading to children.

Total Used: the total collection of books used in the observed sessions.

Terms Used in Reporting of Educator Practice and Children's Engagement

The first four terms were taken from the description of group sizes used in the SABR (Justice et al., 2010) and the term Whole Group was added to categorise sessions in which all children in a room participated in a book sharing session.

One child: sessions in which an educator was involved in a book session with one child.

Two children: sessions in which an educator was involved in a book session with two children.

Small Group: sessions in which an educator was involved in a book session with three to six children.

Large Group: sessions in which an educator was involved in a book session with seven or more children.

Whole Group (WG): sessions in which all children present in the room were involved in the book sharing session. In some centres, this category overlapped with that of Large Group and, in the case of Argyle, with Small Group.

Other Terms

ELLCO-BBR: Early Literacy and Language Classroom Observation Scale, Section IV Books and Book reading, Items 12-16 (Smith et al., 2008). This instrument was used to evaluate and report on the book reading environments in each centre.

Chapter 5: The First Aspect
The Book Environments

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides findings relating to the book environments found in each of the four centres involved in this study. Following this, Key Findings from this aspect are presented.

5.2 Practical Aspects of the Book Environments

5.2.1 Book Areas

The following section describes the book areas of each centre. As detailed in the Advanced Organiser of Research Questions, Data Sources, and Research Tools and Analysis Processes (see Chapter 3: Method), these were evaluated through observations recorded in the researcher's field notes as well as photographic images taken by the researcher. The results relating to evaluation of the book environment follow. The constructivist and interpretivist paradigm guided the analysis in order to identify the results. The section concludes with a summary of the key findings.

Descriptions of the Book Areas
Riverview – Book Area Description

In Riverview, there was a large, attractive corner of the room set aside as a reading area for the children. That area was clearly defined as a special purpose reading area with a cave like structure covered with sheer but colourful fabric which allowed in plenty of light. It was furnished with comfortable cushions and benches and there were 18 books available either in a magazine holder or in a basket. On the third day of observations, the Lead Educator changed this collection by returning 10 books to the Centre Library and adding 7 books to make a new total of 15 books. All the available books were in good condition.

The outside play area also had a reading area consisting of a basket of books. The setting for this was varied every few days with the reported intention of providing interest and comfort for the children to motivate them to spend time engaging with books while they were in the area. During the study, the creation of five different reading area settings were observed. The first of these was under a shady tree surrounded by logs used as seats. The area was set up to suggest a bush campsite with the basket containing 11 books on a central carpet mat. The second setting was under a shady tree with the basket of 11 books on a small table covered by a table cloth and surrounded by milk crates with comfortable cushions attached. The third setting was in a triangular climbing frame that had been covered with a tarpaulin to make a tent like structure which had cushions and stepping stones inside for children to sit on. On this day, 10 of the books were returned to the library and another nine books added to the basket, providing a total of 10 books. In the fourth setting, the

basket of 10 books was on a table made from a large tractor tyre and surrounded by seats made out of smaller tyres fitted with comfortable cushions. The fifth setting was a small table with the basket of 10 books on it and surrounded with chairs. All books available outside during the observation period were in good condition.

Book areas were accessible to all children throughout the day, particularly as they were able to choose whether they were outside or inside. The only exceptions to this provision were for the younger children who had a nap inside after lunch and at most lunch times when the children ate in the centre dining room.

A shared library was located between this room and the next kindergarten room. This generally was only accessible to Educators, or occasionally to children to assist Educators to select books. This room also served as a sleeping area for an hour per day when younger children had a nap. The books in this room were organised and labelled by themes and topics. The role of Centre Librarian was assigned to an educator from another room who was responsible for the organisation of the library books. Another centre library only accessible to educators was located on a nearby veranda and this was described by the educators as containing the "Protective Behaviour" books. The educators explained that these books dealt with themes such as emotions and behaviours and were also used within the previously mentioned PALS program. Two more baskets of "Protective Behaviour" books were housed in the Centre Coordinator's office. The book audit showed that some of these books were duplicated in the general library in the rooms. Michelle, the Lead Educator, also had a personal collection of books that belonged to her and these were kept in a storeroom located off the kindergarten room. Michelle reported using these books for group book sharing sessions but not making them available in the book reading areas for children's use.

Community House – Book Area Description

The Community House kindergarten room had a central book and activity area consisting of a colourful carpet mat separated from the rest of the room on one side with a book rack on casters. This contained 21 books that children could access. All but one of these books were in good condition. A comfortable couch was along the wall at one end and there were colourful cushions on the mat. As this area doubled as an activity area and due to its central position and open access on three sides, this was a "high traffic" area. Further, it was used as a rest area during the compulsory nap time when the book rack was put away. In another area of the room, there were shelves of books near the activity tables but these were designated as teacher access only. However, after lunch each day, educators would select a number of books from these shelves and place them on the tables for the children to choose from. Educators nominated this period as a designated time

where children were expected to "read". However, this did not appear to be monitored closely, with many children observed to engage in other activities or wander around the room at this time.

The outside play area had a mat situated outside the main doorway to the room. There were five books on a shelf in this area. Two of these were of shabby appearance with the other three in good condition. On one day of observations, these five books were placed on a small table with surrounding chairs and on another day on a blanket in the outside play area.

While book areas were accessible to all children throughout the day, apart from nap time, there were clear inside and outside times when all children were required to be in the same location.

A storeroom only accessible to educators contained books they could select for book sharing and to place in the book rack. The books in this room and on the Educator Only shelves were not categorised or organised into themes, genres or curriculum areas.

Dockside – Book Area Description

The Dockside combined kindergarten and toddlers' room consisted of two main rooms open to each other. One room served as the main activity and learning area with the other used for storage, occasional activities and as a sleeping area for the toddlers. In the centre of these and accessible from both sides was a smaller separate room which had been set up as a book and activity room. This room was brightly coloured with comfortable chairs, small couches and cushions. At one end was a large book rack stacked with 85 books. Twelve of these books were of shabby or damaged appearance and the other 73 were in good condition. The room also contained shelves of puzzles and games. Children often brought toys into the room from other areas in the larger rooms. Due to the shared purpose of the room with children also engaging with puzzles, games and toys, it was often very noisy.

Another shelf containing 69 Big Books was located in the main activity area of the centre and children could only use the books in this area at particular times of the day under educator supervision. Usually the kindergarten children used these books while the toddlers were napping. Six of these books were shabby or damaged with the other 63 in good condition.

There was a box containing 17 books on a side table in the room. The Lead Educator, Alice, advised that children could borrow these books to take home. One of these was in a shabby condition with the other 16 in good condition. No book borrowing was evident during the observation period.

There was no book area outside and Alice reported that children were not permitted to have books outside as some books had previously been left out in the rain and destroyed. However, there was a covered and carpeted patio area outside the main door where Alice would read to children on most days.

Book areas were accessible to children at designated times during the day and occasionally access was withheld or restricted as a consequence of perceived poor behaviour.

Adjoining the main room was a shared area for the centre, which contained the centre library. This consisted of racks of tubs in which books were organised by themes and genre. This area was only accessible to the educators. However, books from this area were taken into the room each afternoon for the kindergarten children to read while the toddlers were napping in the other room. Several more tubs of books were kept inside a storage shed and, during the study, staff began to sort these books and either re-store them or place them into the centre library area. Alice reported this sorting had been prompted by the presence of the researcher.

Argyle – Book Area Description

The Argyle room had a large mat area with adjacent bookshelves containing 19 books that the children could access when permitted. One of these books was of shabby appearance and the other 18 in good condition. A large basket of 50 books in good condition was alongside a couch at one end of the mat. These books were accessible to children at designated times during the day and occasionally access was withheld or restricted based on children's behaviour.

This mat area was used for book sharing and engagement by children but was also an activity area and general purpose area. Another tall, narrow bookshelf was in the corner of this area and access to this was restricted to the educator only. Each afternoon the Lead Educator, Debbie, displayed the books shared that day on a table at the entry to the room. These books were accompanied by a note to parents to advise them of the books shared that day. There was no outside book area and children were not permitted to take books outside.

Another two shelves of books accessible only to the educators were in a small storeroom. The books in this room and on the Educator Only shelves were not categorised or organised into themes, genres or curriculum areas. Debbie, the Lead Educator, reported that "most" of the books belonged to her. It appeared that newer books purchased for the centre in the 12 months since it had opened were in the storeroom accessible only to the educators.

5.2.2 Evaluation of the Book Areas

All four centres had clear evidence of a valued and central book area for children to access. However, the makeup and arrangements of these varied considerably among the four centres, as did both implicit and explicit guidelines regarding children's use of and access to the books.

Evaluation of the Book Environment

As detailed in Chapter Two: Literature Review, considerable evidence shows that children need access to a variety of high quality books and frequent opportunities to listen to, discuss and engage with books. Thus, the quality of the book environments is of importance to this study and this was rated using the Books and Book Reading (ELLCO-BBR) subscale of the Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO) Toolkit Pre-K (Smith et al., 2008). The ELLCO-BBR scores the classrooms across the domains of organisation of book area, characteristics of books, books for learning, approaches to book reading and, quality of book reading. This scale includes a specific assessment of the extent to which books reflect diversity.

The ELLCO-BBR uses a 1-5 point rating scale for each item:

1. Deficient

2. Inadequate

3. Basic

4. Strong

5. Exemplary

The following table shows the ELLCO-BBR anchor statements for each item to assist with interpreting the ELLCO-BBR findings which will subsequently be reported.

For each of these items there are several sources of evidence, each containing specific and detailed descriptors, for which a score from 1-5 is given. An overall score up to 70 can be calculated from the scores allocated to each source of evidence. As the ELLCO is a proprietary instrument and subject to copyright, the detailed descriptions of these sources of evidence are not included in this dissertation. Instead, the following table provides a summary statement for each of the sources of information.

Note: From Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation Tool, Pre-K (ELLCO Pre-K) © 2008 Education Development Center, Inc. With permission of Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc. www.brookespublishing.com

Table 5.1 *ELLCO-BBR Anchor Statements*

Item	Deficient	Inadequate	Basic	Strong	Exemplary
Organisation of book area	There is **minimal** evidence of a thoughtfully designed area set aside for the use and display of books.	There is **limited** evidence of a thoughtfully designed area set aside for the use and display of books.	There is **some** evidence of a thoughtfully designed area set aside for the use and display of books.	There is **sufficient** evidence of a thoughtfully designed area set aside for the use and display of books.	There is **compelling** evidence of a thoughtfully designed area set aside for the use and display of books.
Characteristics of books	There is **minimal** evidence that available books offer variety in content, level, genre, and characters that reflects the diversity and abilities of children in the classroom.	There is **limited** evidence that available books offer variety in content, level, genre, and characters that reflects the diversity and abilities of children in the classroom.	There is **some** evidence that available books offer variety in content, level, genre, and characters that reflects the diversity and abilities of children in the classroom.	There is **sufficient** evidence that available books offer variety in content, level, genre, and characters that reflects the diversity and abilities of children in the classroom.	There is **compelling** evidence that available books offer variety in content, level, genre, and characters that reflects the diversity and abilities of children in the classroom.
Books for learning	There is **minimal** evidence that the books available across classroom interest areas are pertinent to current curriculum, children's interests and specific activity areas.	There is **limited** evidence that the books available across classroom interest areas are pertinent to current curriculum, children's interests and specific activity areas.	There is **some** evidence that the books available across classroom interest areas are pertinent to current curriculum, children's interests and specific activity areas.	There is **sufficient** evidence that the books available across classroom interest areas are pertinent to current curriculum, children's interests and specific activity areas.	There is **compelling** evidence that the books available across classroom interest areas are pertinent to current curriculum, children's interests and specific activity areas.
Approaches to book reading	There is **minimal** evidence that book reading is an integral part of children's daily classroom experience and occurs in a variety of settings and groupings.	There is **limited** evidence that book reading is an integral part of children's daily classroom experience and occurs in a variety of settings and groupings.	There is **some** evidence that book reading is an integral part of children's daily classroom experience and occurs in a variety of settings and groupings.	There is **sufficient** evidence that book reading is an integral part of children's daily classroom experience and occurs in a variety of settings and groupings.	There is **compelling** evidence that book reading is an integral part of children's daily classroom experience and occurs in a variety of settings and groupings.

Table 5.2 *ELLCO-BBR Summary of Sources of Evidence*

Item	Sources of Evidence			
Organisation of Book Area	**Area Set Aside for Book Reading**	**Attraction and Comfort of Book Area**	**Condition and Supply of Books**	**Opportunities for Children to use Books Independently**
Characteristics of books	Range of topics/issues	Variety of text difficulty	Variety of genres	Diverse representation
Books for learning	Meaningful/sustained use	Used to extend learning		
Approaches to Book reading	Book reading session	Informal reading/use	Selection of book	

The quality of the book environments varied considerably across the four centres. The breakdown of scores for each centre by item is shown in Figure 5.1
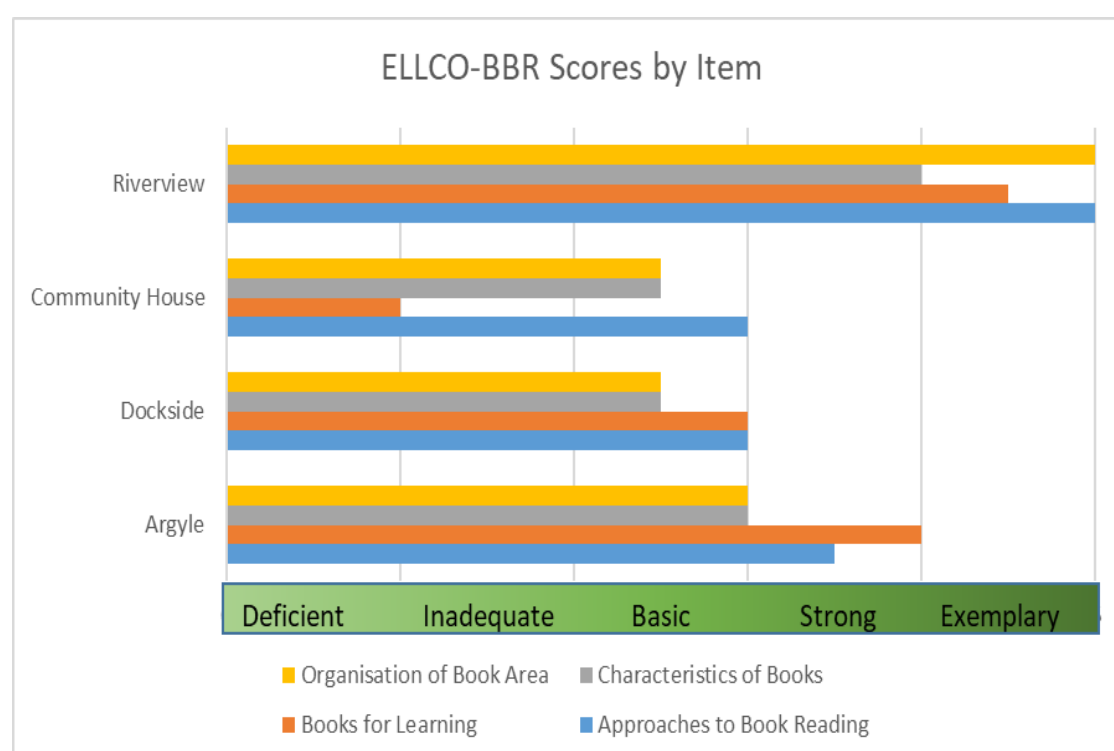
Figure 5.1 ELLCO-BBR Scores by Item

ELLCO-BBR Scores Overall Ratings

The overall scores, reported in Figure 5.2 show that only one centre, Riverview rated as Exemplary, Argyle rated as Strong and the other two centres rated as Basic.
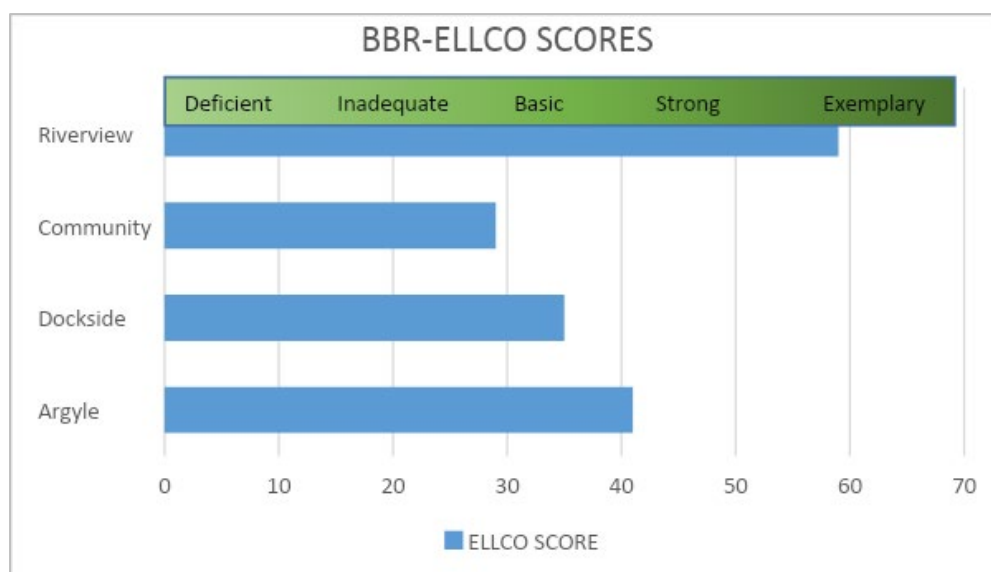
Figure 5.2 Overall ELLCO-BBR Scores

As can be seen in Figure 5.2, the quality of book environments in this study varied between centres. Only Riverview achieved a rating of exemplary for the quality of their book environment. In this centre, and of importance to this study, only one source of evidence (diverse representation) was rated as deficient as part of the rating of the item characteristics of books. Argyle was rated as Strong and this was largely due to the rating achieved for the items relating to books for learning and approaches to book reading, with the ratings for organisation of the book area and the characteristics of the books being at the upper end of a basic rating. Community House and Dockside both received ratings of basic. These two centres scored similar ratings for each item except for books for learning in which Community House received a rating of deficient, while Dockside achieved a rating of basic. It is important to note that representation of diversity in the book collections was the one source of evidence in which all four centres were rated as deficient. Following this analysis, two findings emerged regarding the book environments in this study:

Book Environment Finding 1: The nature and quality of the book environments varied across centres.

Book Environment Finding 2: All centres were scored as deficient in provision of books containing diverse representation using ELLCO-BBR.

5.3 Evaluation of the Book Collections

Given the importance of the books and book collections to this study, and as detailed in Table 3.3 Advanced Organiser of Research Questions, Data Sources, and Research Tools and Analysis Processes (Chapter 3: Method), the book collections were evaluated through several tools and

processes in order to understand the nature of the books. This includes in regard to book locations, availability to children and educators, publication details, genre, themes, racial portrayal, and cultural portrayal. This section provides the results relating to the evaluation of according to titles, Cultural Diversity Categories, Overarching Themes, and Viewpoints and Ideologies of the books. Findings relating to each of these are highlighted. The section concludes with a summary of the key findings.

5.3.1 Book Titles

The Total Collection of books across all centres consisted of 2413 books. Of these 1794 were fiction and 619 were non-fiction. The Total Collection was made up of 2041 individual titles with the other 372 being duplicate titles. The following table shows the makeup of the book collection in each centre by total and by individual and duplicate titles.

Table 5.3 *Book Collections by Total Number, Individual and Duplicate Titles*

Number of Titles in the Book Collections			
Centre	**Total Books**	**Individual Titles**	**Duplicate Titles**
Riverview	707	664	43
Community House	416	392	24
Dockside	1042	1005	37
Argyle	248	238	10

In Table 5.3, the total number of books across the four centres equates to the Total Collection number of 2413. However, in this table, the total individual titles and total duplicate titles do not equate to the overall individual titles and duplicate titles for the Total Collection. This is because some books were duplicated across centres and some had multiple duplicates. One hundred and sixty-eight fiction and 71 non-fiction titles were duplicated.

Of the duplicate titles, 109 (5%) titles were found in more than one centre. Of these, 97 titles were found in 2 centres, 10 titles were found in 3 centres and 2 book titles were found in all 4 centres. Some of the books duplicated across centres also had multiple copies within one or more centres. One hundred and twenty titles were duplicated within a centre but not found in other centres. Twenty-six titles had more than 2 duplicates. The highest number of duplicates for an individual title was 10 of which eight were held by one centre.

Given the high proportion of individual titles and the relatively small proportion of duplicate titles across the total collections, it is apparent that the book collections in each centre were different to each other in terms of individual titles.

> **Book Finding 1:** The book collections in each centre were different to each other when viewed as individual titles. Less than 5% of titles were found in 2 collections and less than 0.5% titles were found in 3 or more centres.

5.3.2 The Nature of the Book Collections

Cultural Diversity in the Book Collections

This section presents findings related to the portrayal of cultural diversity in the book collections both as a whole and in each centre. As outlined in the Chapter 3: Method, the Cultural Diversity Categories Framework adapted from the work of Bishop (Bishop, 1993, 1997, 2012, Sims, 1982) was used to categorise the books. Definitions of terms were provided in Chapter 4: Introduction to the Findings. The categorisation of cultural diversity within these books to the nearest whole percent is shown in Figure 5.3.
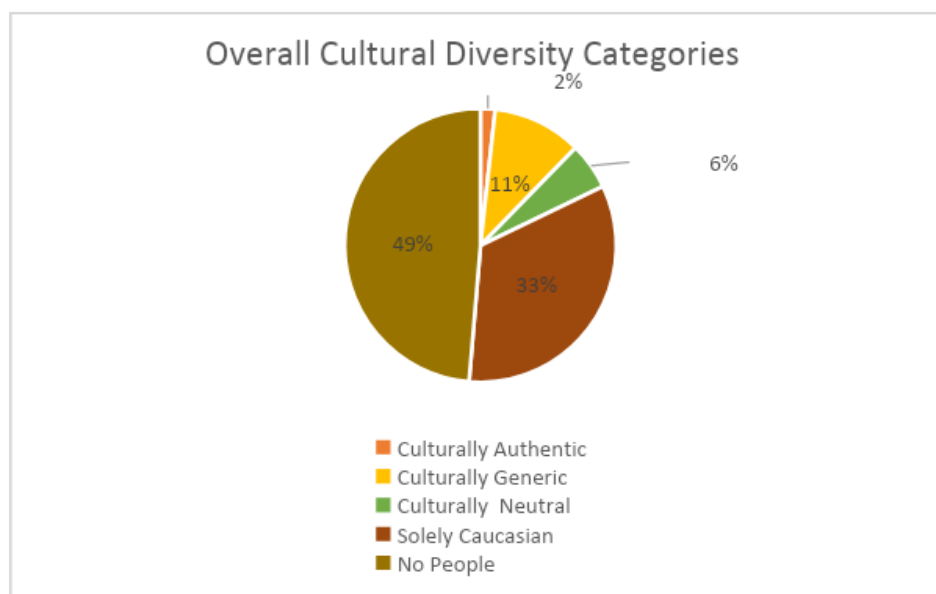
Figure 5.3 Cultural Diversity in the Total Collection

This analysis showed that 82% of the books in the collection across all four centres did not portray any cultural diversity. Figures 5.4, 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7 below show the distribution of all the Cultural Diversity Categories in each centre rounded to nearest whole percent.

Figure 5.4: Riverview Cultural Diversity Categories
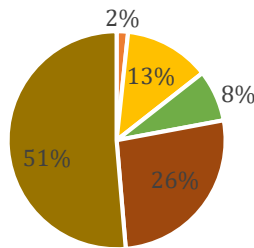
- 2%
- 13%
- 8%
- 51%
- 26%

Legend:
- Culturally Authentic
- Culturally Generic
- Culturally Neutral
- Solely Caucasian
- No People

Figure 5.5: Community House Cultural Diversity Categories
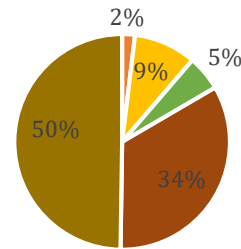
- 2%
- 9%
- 5%
- 50%
- 34%

Legend:
- Culturally Authentic
- Culturally Generic
- Culturally Neutral
- Solely Caucasian
- No People

Figure 5.6: Dockside Cultural Diversity Categories
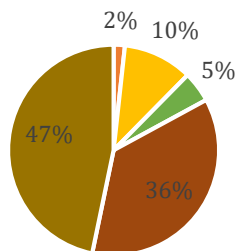
- 2%
- 10%
- 5%
- 47%
- 36%

Legend:
- Culturally Authentic
- Culturally Generic
- Culturally Neutral
- Solely Caucasian
- No People

Figure 5.7: Argyle Cultural Diversity Categories
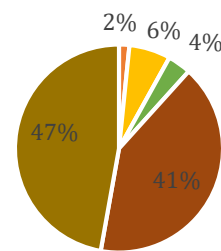
- 2%
- 6%
- 4%
- 47%
- 41%

Legend:
- Culturally Authentic
- Culturally Generic
- Culturally Neutral
- Solely Caucasian
- No People

Overall, almost half of the books in the Total Collection were in the No People category and this was relatively consistent across the collections in each centre. Argyle had the lowest proportion of No People at 46.7%, and Riverview the highest at 51%. All centre collections had similar patterns as the total collection with the No People Category having the largest number of books, Solely Caucasian the second largest, followed by smaller numbers in Culturally Generic, then Culturally Neutral, and the least number in Culturally Authentic.

The proportion of books in the Culturally Authentic Category was similar across all centre collections with the percentage between 1.6% (Argyle) and 1.9% (Community House). Culturally Neutral ranged from 3% (Dockside) to 7.6% (Riverview), while Culturally Generic had the greatest variability ranging from 6.4% (Argyle) to 12.7% (Riverview).

This evidence shows that there was an overall lack of portrayal of non-Caucasian cultural groups and only a very small proportion of books contained culturally authentic portrayals of non-Caucasian cultural groups in the book collections.

> **Book Finding 2:** Limited portrayal (18% of books) of non-Caucasian cultural groups with even less culturally authentic portrayal (2% of books) consistent across all centres.

Overarching Themes in the Book Collections

This section presents findings related to the Overarching Themes identified in the Total Book Collection and in each centre. As outlined in the Chapter 3: Method, the Overarching Themes Framework adapted from the work of Boutte et al., (2008) was used to categorise the books. Definitions of terms were included in Chapter 4: Introduction to the findings. The distribution of books in each of the Overarching Themes in the Total Collection is shown in Figure 5.8.
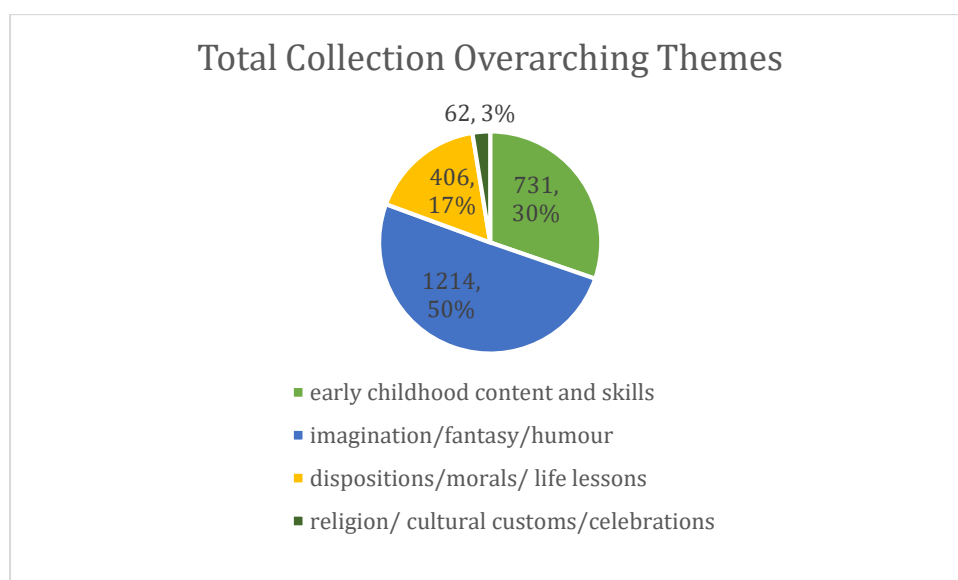
Figure 5.8 Overarching Themes in Total Collection

Although when viewed centre by centre the distribution of Overarching Themes showed more variation than did the Cultural Diversity categories, there were commonalities. One common characteristic in all collections was that the Overarching Theme of *religion, cultural customs, celebrations or beliefs* had the lowest proportion of books. In contrast, the Overarching Theme of *imagination, fantasy or humour* had the largest proportion of books in three centres. In the remaining centre, Riverview, the Overarching Theme of *early childhood content and skills* had the highest proportion of books. The distribution of Overarching Themes in each centre is shown in Figures 5.9, 5.10, 5.11 and 5.12.

Figure 5.9
Riverview Overarching Themes

- early childhood content and skills
- imagination/fantasy/humour
- dispositions/morals/life lessons
- religion/ cultural customs/celebrations
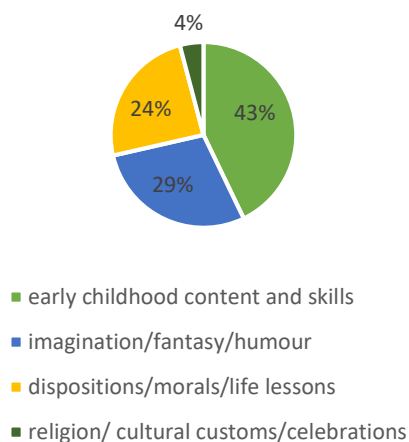
Figure 5.10
Community House Overarching Themes

- early childhood content and skills
- imagination/fantasy/humour
- dispositions/morals/life lessons
- religion/ cultural customs/celebrations
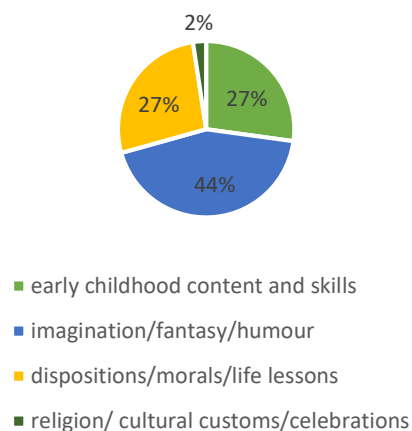
Figure 5.11
Dockside Overarching Themes

- early childhood content and skills
- imagination/fantasy/humour
- dispositions/morals/life lessons
- religion/ cultural customs/celebrations
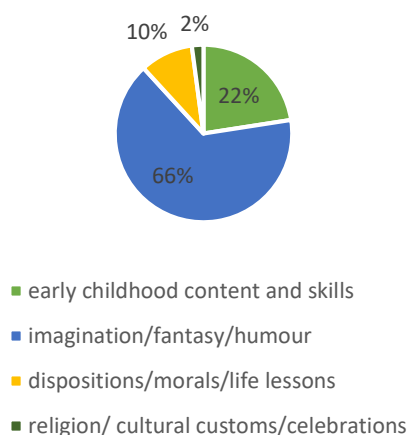
Figure 5.12
Argyle Overarching Themes

- early childhood content and skills
- imagination/fantasy/humour
- dispositions/morals/life lessons
- religion/ cultural customs/celebrations
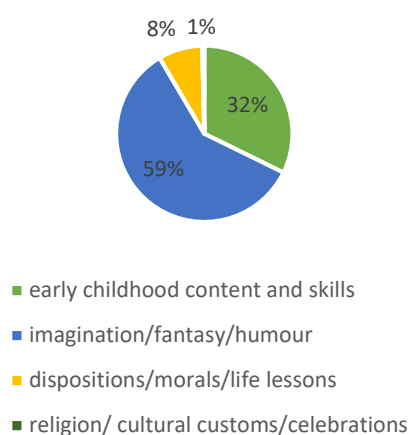
The least occurring theme across all centres was *religion, cultural customs, celebrations or beliefs.* The majority of books in the total collection and in each centre collection related to either the theme of *early childhood content and skills*, or *imagination, fantasy or humour*. Riverview and Community had similar proportions to each other of books relating to *dispositions, morals or life lessons*. Dockside and Argyle also had similar proportions of this Overarching Theme as each other.

5.3.3 Links between Cultural Diversity and the Overarching Themes in the Books
Distribution of Titles and Duplicates across Categories and Themes

As stated earlier in this chapter, the 2413 books in the study consisted of 2041 individual titles with 372 duplicate titles. The following table shows the distribution of the individual titles by

the Overarching Themes and identifies the percentage of duplicate titles for each Overarching Theme.

Table 5.4 *Book Titles According to the Overarching Themes Identified in the Books*

Number of Book Titles in each of the Overarching Themes				
	Early childhood content and skills	Imagination, fantasy or humour	Dispositions, morals or life lessons	Religion, cultural customs, beliefs or celebrations
Total Collection	731	1214	406	62
Total Duplicate Titles	125	166	69	12
Total Individual Titles	606	1048	337	50
% of Duplicate Titles	17%	14%	17%	19%

Table 5.5 shows the distribution of the titles by the Cultural Diversity Categories and identifies the percentage of duplicate titles for each Cultural Diversity Category.

Table 5.5 *Book Titles According to Cultural Diversity Categories*

Number of Book Titles in each of the Cultural Diversity Categories					
	No People	Solely Caucasian	Culturally Authentic	Culturally Generic	Culturally Neutral
Total Collection	1174	807	42	256	134
Total Duplicate titles	189	122	10	37	14
Total Individual titles	985	685	32	219	120
% of Duplicate Titles	16%	15%	23%	14%	10%

While the percentage of duplicate titles was relatively consistent across all Overarching Themes, (14-19%) when considered by Cultural Diversity categories there was a considerably greater percentage of duplicate titles (23%) in the Culturally Authentic category than in the other categories (10-16%).

Correlations between Cultural Diversity and the Overarching Themes in the Books

Secondary analysis of the individual titles was undertaken to identify any relationships between the Cultural Diversity categories and the Overarching Themes. Figures 5.13, 5.14, 5.15 and

5.16 show the distribution of the Cultural Diversity categories in each of the Overarching Themes of the books.

Figure 5.13: Distribution of Cultural Diversity Categories across Early Childhood Content and Skills
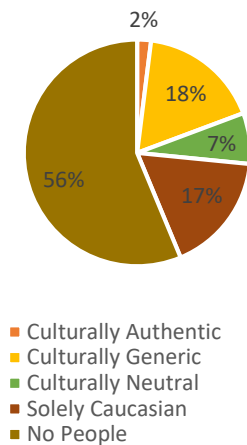
Figure 5.14: Distribution of Cultural Diversity Categories across Imagination/Fantasy/Humour
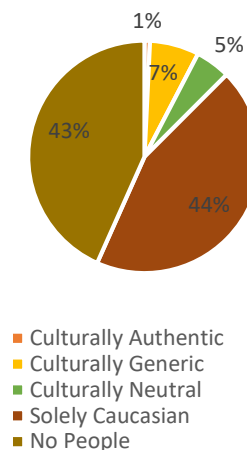
Figure 5.15: Distribution of Cultural Diveristy Categories across Dispositions/Morals/Life Lessons
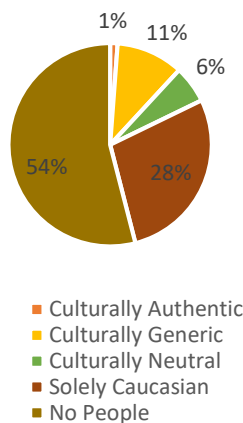
Figure 5.16: Distribution of Cultural Diversity Categories across Religion/Cultural Customs/Celebrations/Beliefs
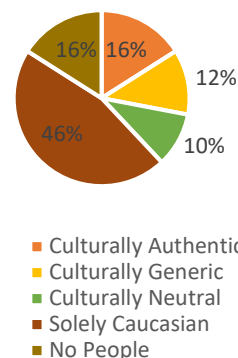
When considering the individual titles in the Total Collection, books containing people of cultural backgrounds other than Caucasian were more likely to be found in books related to *religion, cultural customs, celebrations and beliefs* (38%) than in books in the other three categories. The second most likely books in the Total Collection to contain any portrayal of cultures other than Caucasian were those relating to *early childhood content and skills* (27%).

As suggested by these findings, books containing only Caucasian people were dominant in all of the Overarching Themes except for books relating to *religion, cultural customs, celebrations or*

129

beliefs. The highest proportion of books containing only Caucasian people were found in the Overarching Theme of *imagination, fantasy or humour* (44%).

Correlations between Cultural Diversity and the Overarching Themes in the Books Portraying People

This section presents findings related to the portrayal of cultural diversity within books containing people. To do this all of the books in the No People Category were excluded so that only books containing human portrayal were included in this secondary level of analysis. The following table shows the numbers of individual book titles for books containing people in each of the Cultural Diversity categories and for each of the Overarching Themes.

Table 5.6 *Individual Book Titles by Cultural Diversity Categories and Overarching Themes for Books Containing People*

Individual Book Titles by Cultural Diversity Categories and Overarching Themes for Books Containing People					
Overarching Themes	Solely Caucasian	Culturally Authentic	Culturally Generic	Culturally Neutral	Totals
Early Childhood Content and Skills	104	12	105	44	265
Imagination, Fantasy or Humour	463	8	72	51	594
Dispositions, Morals, Life Lessons	95	4	36	20	155
Religious, Cultural Customs, Beliefs or Celebrations	23	8	6	5	42
Totals	**685**	**32**	**219**	**120**	**1056**

Figures 5.17, 5.18. 5.19 and 5.20 show distribution of the overarching themes across the sub-group of individual titles containing people. When considering the books containing people, representation of non-Caucasian cultures was more likely to be found in books related to the Overarching Theme of *early childhood content and skills*. Sixty-one percent of the books portraying people in this Overarching Theme were in one of the Culturally Authentic, Culturally Generic or Culturally Neutral Categories. The second most likely books to contain representation of people from non-Caucasian cultures were those relating to the Overarching Theme of *religion, cultural customs, celebrations or beliefs* with 45% of books including at least one person from a non-Caucasian culture.

Figure 5.17: Distribution of Cultural Diversity Categories in "People Books" across Early Childhood Content and Skills

- 4% Culturally Authentic
- 40% Culturally Generic
- 17% Culturally Neutral
- 39% Solely Caucasian

■ Culturally Authentic
■ Culturally Generic
■ Culturally Neutral
■ Solely Caucasian
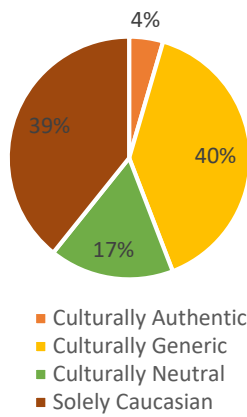
Figure 5.18: Distribution of Cultural Diveristy Categories in "People Books" across Imagination Fantasy or Humour

- 1%
- 12%
- 9%
- 78%

■ Culturally Authentic
■ Culturally Generic
■ Culturally Neutral
■ Solely Caucasian
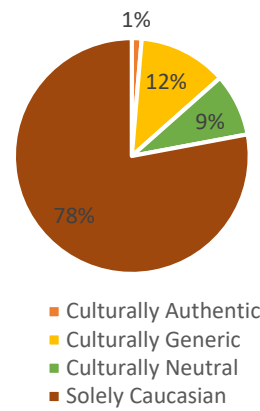
Figure 5.19: Distribution of Cultural Diversity Categories I People Books" across Dispositions, Morals or Life Lessons

- 3%
- 23%
- 13%
- 61%

■ Culturally Authentic
■ Culturally Generic
■ Culturally Neutral
■ Solely Caucasian
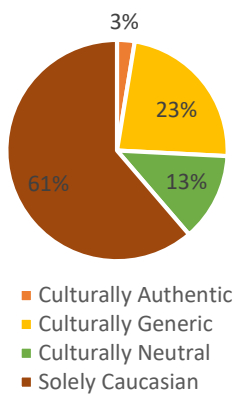
Figure 5.20: Distribution of Cultural Diversity Categories in "People Books" across Religion, Cultural Customs, Celebtrations or Beliefs

- 19%
- 14%
- 12%
- 55%

■ Culturally Authentic
■ Culturally Generic
■ Culturally Neutral
■ Solely Caucasian
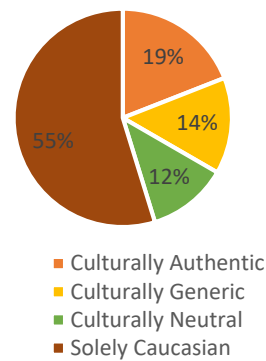
Of importance, culturally authentic representation of people from non-Caucasian cultures (Culturally Authentic books) was mostly likely to be in books relating to the Overarching Theme of *religion, cultural customs, celebrations and beliefs* and all except one of these were non-fiction books. There was a considerably greater proportion (19%) of Culturally Authentic books relating to this Overarching Theme than relating to the other three Overarching Themes.

Representation of people from Solely Caucasian cultures dominated books relating to the Overarching Theme of *imagination, fantasy or humour* (78%). People in books relating to *dispositions, morals or life lessons* were also predominately Caucasian (61%).

Ninety-eight percent of the books relating to the Overarching Theme of *imagination fantasy or humour*, 89% of those relating to the Overarching Theme of *dispositions, morals or life lessons* and 61% relating to the Overarching Themes of *religion, cultural customs, celebrations and beliefs* were also fiction. However, as might be expected, 98% of books relating to *early childhood content and skills* were non-fiction books.

Book Finding 3: Books portraying any representation of non-Caucasian cultures were most likely to be non-fiction books from the Overarching Theme of *early childhood content and skills.* Sixty-one percent of the books in this theme that contained people portrayed some cultural diversity.

Book Finding 4: The small number of books portraying people that also portrayed culturally authentic representation of non-Caucasian cultures (32 individual titles out 2041) were most likely to be non-fiction books relating to the Overarching Theme of *religion, cultural customs, celebrations and beliefs.* Culturally Authentic books were also more likely to be duplicated in the collections (10 duplicate titles) than other books.

5.3.4 Passive Ideologies or Assumptions in the Books

This section presents findings related to passive ideologies or assumptions represented in the books used by participants during the study. Two hundred and twenty-one books were used during the study. One hundred and ninety three of these were fiction and 28 were non-fiction. As detailed in Chapter 3: Method, the 41 books used in Riverview were selected as a purposeful sample to analyse using the Viewpoints and Ideologies Framework developed from the work of Boutte et al. (2008). Thirty-two of these were fiction and nine were non-fiction.

Passive Ideologies and Assumptions in the Fiction Texts used in Riverview

Table 5.7 shows the 32 fiction books observed in use in Riverview. These books are categorised according to the Cultural Diversity Categories and Overarching Themes.

Legend for Tables 5.4 and Table 5.5		
Cultural Diversity Categories	**Overarching Themes**	**Other**
CN – Culturally Neutral	ECCS – early childhood content and skills	SES – socio-economic status
CG – Culturally Generic	IFH – Imagination, fantasy or humour	
SC – Solely Caucasian	DML – dispositions, morals or life lessons	
NP – No People	RCCCB – religion, cultural customs, celebrations or beliefs	

The findings from the analysis of the demographic characteristics of the main character, according to the Viewpoints and Ideologies Framework, in each book are also reported. The Overarching Themes and Cultural Diversity Categories are represented by the initials of each category and socio-economic status by SES. Note that the table is presented in the order of the Cultural Diversity categories rather than book number (order in which books were used).

Table 5.7 *Viewpoints and Ideologies Reflected in the Fiction Books Used in Riverview*

Book Number	Cultural Diversity Category	Overarching Theme	YOP	Main Character			Minority/ Dominant Viewpoints/ Lifestyle/Ideology
				Ethnicity	Gender	SES	
3	CN	IFH	2008	Caucasian	male	Working class	majority
7	CN	IFH	2012	Caucasian	female	middle	majority
16	CN	IFH	2011	Caucasian	female	upper	majority
2	CN	DML	2011	Caucasian	female	middle	majority
5	CN	DML	1982	Caucasian	male	middle	majority
6	CN	DML	2003	Caucasian	female	middle	majority
11	CN	DML	2007	Caucasian	male	middle	majority
17	CN	RCCCB	2000	Middle East	male	lower	majority
1	SC	IFH	2007	Caucasian	female	middle	majority
8	SC	IFH	2012	Caucasian	male	middle	majority
9	SC	IFH	1957	Caucasian	male	middle	majority
10	SC	IFH	1957	Caucasian	male	middle	majority
12	SC	IFH	2008	Caucasian	male	middle	majority
22	SC	IFH	1996	neither	female	middle	majority
4	SC	DML	1989	Caucasian	female	middle	majority
13	SC	DML	2001	Caucasian	female	middle	majority
15	SC	DML	2005	Caucasian	male	middle	majority
14	SC	RCCCB	2000	Caucasian	male	middle	majority
32	NP	ECCS	2011	neither	female	middle	majority
20	NP	IFH	2004	neither	male	neither	majority
23	NP	IFH	2005	neither	male	middle	majority
28	NP	IFH	2010	neither	female	middle	majority
29	NP	IFH	2005	neither	male	middle	majority
18	NP	DML	2007	neither	male	middle	majority
19	NP	DML	2005	neither	female	neither	majority
21	NP	DML	1995	neither	male	middle	majority
24	NP	DML	2005	neither	male	middle	majority
25	NP	DML	2008	neither	male	middle	majority
26	NP	DML	2013	neither	female	middle	majority
27	NP	DML	2002	neither	male	middle	majority
30	NP	DML	2011	neither	female	middle	majority
31	NP	DML	2009	neither	both	middle	majority

This analysis showed that all fiction books used in Riverview reflected majority culture viewpoints and ideologies. Furthermore, the only fiction books used that contained any portrayal cultural diversity (that is contained any people from cultures other than Caucasian) were Culturally Neutral books yet these reflected dominant culture viewpoints and ideologies. In addition, while books were used relating to each of the Overarching Themes, they all reflected dominant culture viewpoints and ideologies.

Sixteen of these books (50%) contained a Caucasian main character. In nine of these books all the characters were Caucasian and in the other seven books there were one or two people featured in the illustrations who were of minority racial appearance. In only one of these books did a character representing a minority group play a role in the story itself with the remainder simply being present in illustrations. Examples of these included a Chinese child in a playground amongst several Caucasian children, and a dark skinned child in a classroom with several Caucasian children. In each of these books these minority characters could have been replaced with Caucasian characters with no impact on the storyline itself.

In the one book in which characters of a race other than Caucasian were involved in the story, they were of middle-eastern background. However, the illustrations showed them with predominantly Caucasian features with culture identified through dress and geographical location rather than facial features and/or skin colour. The story in this book was narrated from the point of view of an animal character and presented Christian/Western ideologies and themes from the viewpoint of a child being born to save the world and a key overall theme of sharing.

One book had an animal as the main character with all minor human characters being Caucasian.

Fourteen (44%) of the fiction books were animal stories with no human portrayal. All of these affirmed dominant culture lifestyles and ideologies through the text and illustrations reflecting dominant culture lifestyles such as middle class western style housing, western style food, dress, cars and daily activities.

When analysed through the Cultural Diversity Categories it was apparent that 25% of the books were Culturally Neutral, 31% were Solely Caucasian and the remaining 44% were No People. There were no fiction books from the Culturally Authentic or Culturally Generic categories used in Riverview. When analysed according to the Overarching Themes in the books, 3% related to *early childhood content and skills*, 41% related to *imagination, fantasy or humour*, 50% related to

dispositions, morals or life lessons and 6% related to *religion, cultural customs, celebrations or beliefs*.

Passive Ideologies and Assumptions in the Non-Fiction Texts used in Riverview

The following table shows the results from the analysis according to the Cultural Diversity Categories and Overarching Themes of the nine non-fiction texts used in Riverview during the study. It shows the categorisation according to the Cultural Diversity Categories and Overarching Themes. As these books contained no main character as such, the demographic analysis considers overall portrayal of the people in the books. This table uses the same abbreviations as Table 5.4. Table 5.5 Viewpoints and Ideologies reflected in the non-fiction books used in Riverview.

Of the seven (78%) non-fiction texts containing human portrayal, one was solely about one race which was Chinese. When considered in terms of audience, style of language and focus of topics it was apparent that this book assumed a dominant culture audience and aimed to teach children about China (the country) with a partial focus on life there. Another five non-fiction books contained a variety of races but all of these reinforced stereotypical or exotic viewpoints of particular races through background or dress. An example of this was the only Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Australian being portrayed as living in the outback, being semi-naked and playing a didgeridoo. In another example, a book with diverse cultures represented portrayed the people using unnatural skin colours including yellow and purple while all activities represented in illustrations or text were related to dominant culture lifestyle.

Table 5.8 *Viewpoints and Ideologies Reflected in the Non-Fiction Books Used in Riverview*

Book Number	Cultural Diversity Category	Overarching Theme	YOP	Racial Representation			Minority/ Dominant Viewpoints/ Lifestyle/Ideology
				Ethnicity	Gender	SES	
33	CG	ECCS	2011	mixed	both	middle	majority
37	CG	ECCS	1998	mixed	both	mixed	majority
38	CG	ECCS	2007	Chinese	both	middle + lower	majority
34	CG	DML	1997	mixed	both	middle + lower	minority (outdated)
35	CG	DML	2011	mixed	both	middle + lower	majority
41	CG	DML	2006	mixed	both	middle	majority
36	CG	RCCCB	2012	mixed	both	mixed	majority
39	NP	ECCS	2013	neither	both	neither	majority
40	NP	ECCS	2001	neither	male	neither	majority

One book was classified as affirming minority group lifestyles. However, this book was written in 1997 and portrayed children from different countries telling their favourite folktales from their culture. The background information on the lives of the children in the book provided some affirmation of their lifestyles yet it was clearly focused on lives in countries other than in Australia. The children in this book were pictured in their national dress.

The two (22%) non-fiction books showing a classification of "neither" for racial representation were information books solely about animals. These were classified as portraying dominant culture viewpoints as the language about these animals from countries other than Australia focused on these animals as being different or unusual with an underlying assumption that these would be outside the everyday experience of the reader.

All of the non-fiction books used that contained people (78%) were from the Cultural Diversity Category of Culturally Generic with the remaining two books (22%) being from the No People category. No non-fiction books from the Culturally Authentic or Culturally Neutral categories were used in Riverview. Fifty five percent of the non-fiction books related to the Overarching Theme of *early childhood content and skills*, while 33% related to the Overarching Theme of *dispositions, morals or life lessons*. The remaining book (11%) related to the Overarching Theme of *religion, cultural customs, celebrations and beliefs*.

> **Book Finding 5:** Books within the categories of Culturally Generic, Culturally Neutral, Solely Caucasian and No People reflected dominant culture viewpoints and ideologies.

Passive Ideologies and Assumptions across all Collections

While only books used in Riverview were chosen as a purposeful sample and analysed to reveal the passive ideologies and assumptions evident in them, there was attention to this issue in the other centres. The researcher noted the ideologies evident in texts used in these remaining centres and recorded these observations in comprehensive field notes (as outlined in Chapter 3: Method). These notes were analysed and the findings compared with the purposeful sample results. Where divergent results were identified, they were further analysed using the Viewpoints and Ideologies Framework.

This process identified that the only type of book in the Cultural Diversity Category not used in Riverview during the study, was that from the category of Culturally Authentic. To ensure all categories of books were analysed for viewpoints and ideologies, the three culturally authentic books used (in Community House) were selected as a purposeful sample. Analysis of the field notes confirmed that all books used in the other centres reflected similar viewpoints and ideologies to

those in Riverview. In Community House, three fiction books from the Culturally Authentic Category were used and these all affirmed the lifestyle and viewpoint of a non-Caucasian culture. While this was unsurprising giving their category of Culturally Authentic, this secondary analysis reinforced that Culturally Authentic books were the only category of books to affirm cultural viewpoints and ideologies of non-dominant cultures. These represented less than 2.5% of books used in Community House and less than 1.5% of book used across all centres. One of these books used in Community House told a traditional Aboriginal tale portraying an historical depiction of Aboriginal people. The other two books provided contemporary depiction of non-Caucasian Cultural groups and affirmed their viewpoints and lifestyles.

> **Book Finding 6:** Culturally Authentic books reflect the viewpoints and ideologies of the non-dominant culture/s portrayed in the book/s.

5.3.5 The Overarching Themes and Cultural Diversity Categories of the Book used in the Study

Analysis of all books used showed that in Riverview and Community House both used books from all four Overarching Themes while Dockside and Argyle both used books from all Overarching Themes except for *religion, cultural customs, celebrations and beliefs*. However, the relative number of books in each category varied within and across the centres. The following table shows the percentage of books within each of the Overarching Themes used in each centre and across the four centres. Figure 5.21 shows the percentage of Overarching Themes for all books used in the study.

Table 5.9 *Books Used by Centres and Overarching Themes*

Centre	Overarching Themes Identified in the Books			
	% Early Childhood Content & Skills	% Imagination, Fantasy or Humour	% Dispositions, Morals or Life Lessons	% Religious, Customs, Beliefs and Celebrations
Riverview	15	32	46	7
Community	16	57	25	2
Dockside	12	51	8	0
Argyle	17	76	7	0
% of Books Used	**16**	**61**	**21**	**2**
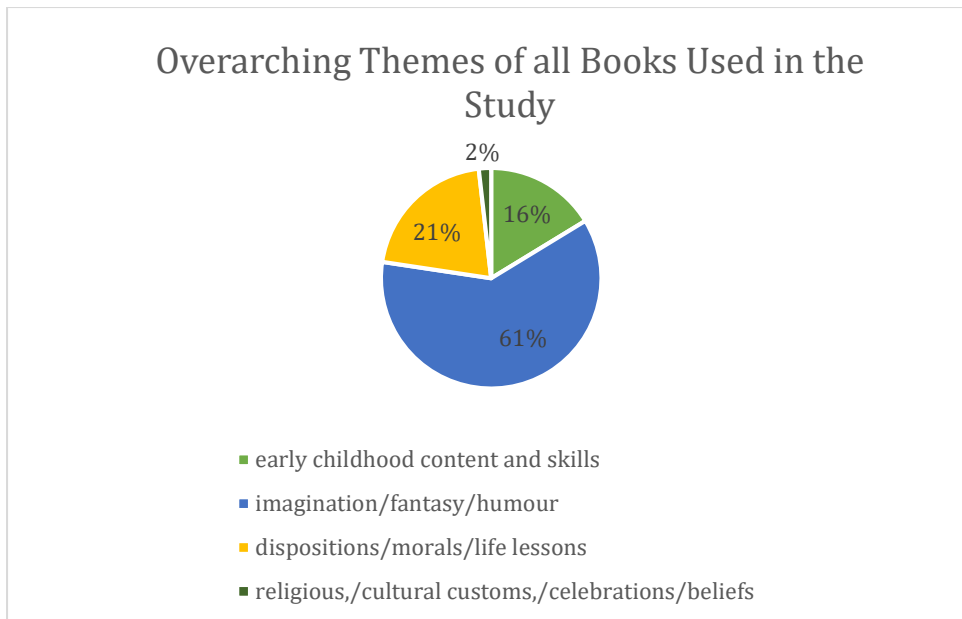
Figure 5.21 Overarching Themes of all Books Used in the Study

The analysis of the book used showed that Riverview, Dockside and Argyle used books from each Cultural Diversity category except for Culturally Authentic. Community House used books from each Cultural Diversity Category except Culturally Generic. All three of the books affirming non-Caucasian cultures in Community House were from the Culturally Authentic Category and these were the only three books from the Culturally Authentic Category used in the study. The following table shows the percentage of books used in each centre and across all four centres according to the Cultural Diversity Categories.

Table 5.10 *Books Used by Centres and Cultural Diversity Categories*

Centre	Cultural Diversity Categories of Books Used				
	% Culturally Authentic	% Culturally Generic	% Culturally Neutral	% Solely Caucasian	% No People
Riverview	0	17	20	24	39
Community	5	0	8	60	27
Dockside	0	11	7	39	43
Argyle	0	13	2	35	50
% of TC	**1**	**9.5**	**8.5**	**42**	**39**

As stated earlier in this chapter, the only books to reflect the viewpoints and ideologies of non-dominant cultures that were used in the study were the three culturally authentic books used in Community House. Thus, while 20% of books used in the study portrayed some cultural diversity, as

shown in Figure 5.22, 99% of the books used promoted dominant culture viewpoints and ideologies as shown in Figure 5.23.
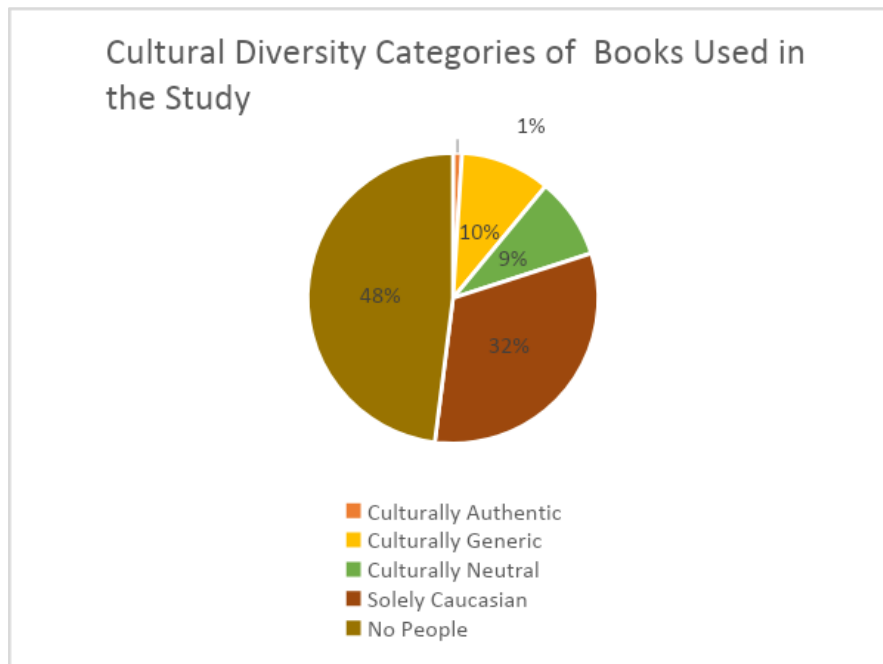
Figure 5.22 Cultural Diversity Categories of Books Used in the Study
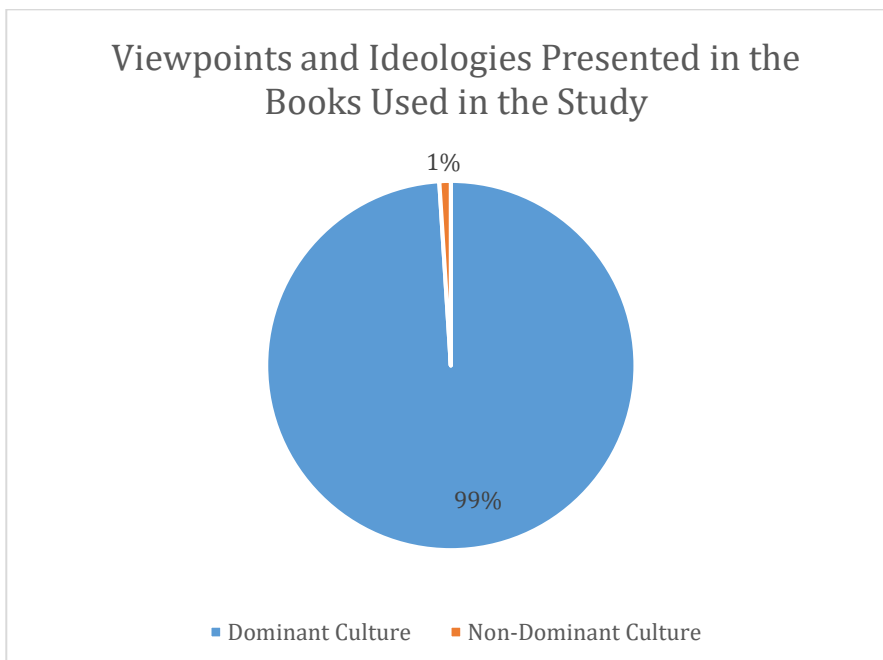
Figure 5.23 Ideologies and Viewpoint of Books Used

These results show clearly that all books from the Culturally Generic, Culturally Neutral and Solely Caucasian categories (60% of books used) reflected dominant culture viewpoints and

ideologies. Of note, was the finding that all books used in the No People Category also reflected dominant culture viewpoints and ideologies. This is particularly important given that books categorised as No People accounted for 39% of books used, close to 50% of each centre collection and 49% of the Total Collection. Therefore, 99% of books used in the study were found to reflect dominant culture viewpoints and ideologies.

Book Finding 7: The fiction books used predominantly portrayed dominant culture viewpoint and ideologies, with those of non-Caucasian Cultures being absent from all but three of the books used. These three fiction books (less than 1.5% of 221 books) reflected genuine non-Caucasian cultural ideologies, viewpoints and lifestyles.

Book Finding 8: All Non-fiction texts used reinforced dominant culture viewpoints and ideologies. While people of non-Caucasian cultures were not portrayed in an overtly negative manner the portrayal was largely outdated or stereotypical and reinforced dominant culture viewpoints and ideologies.

Book Finding 9: Dominant culture viewpoints and ideologies were not limited to books containing people. Books without human representation whether fiction or non-fiction (Cultural Diversity Category of No People) all reflected or reinforced dominant culture viewpoints and ideologies.

5.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented findings related to the nature of the books and book environments in this study. These findings can be summarised in the first key finding from this study:

KEY FINDING ONE: The books used and available to be used in all centres overwhelmingly portrayed dominant culture viewpoints and ideologies. The viewpoints and ideologies of people from non-dominant cultures were largely absent from the books used and the books available.

Chapter 6: The Second Aspect Part A -

Documented and Reported Book Sharing Practices

6.1 Introduction

This chapter reports findings related to book sharing practices, those which were described in Centre documentation and those reported by the participants. The constructivist and interpretivist paradigm guided the evaluation and triangulation of the data in order to identify the findings. These findings were collated and the emergent Key Findings are reported at the end of the chapter.

6.2 Centre Documentation

This section reports findings from analysis of the specific references to books and book use in the official documents provided by the centres. The documents analysed included policy statements, planning and reflection documentation, children's learning journals or portfolios, and copies of notices provided to parents.

6.2.1 Centre Policy Documentation

While the main policy documents provided by the centres differed in some respects, they were all largely concerned with the educational or curriculum program, diversity and inclusion, and resources, material and/or equipment. Only three of the centres in the study provided this documentation because Community House, as described earlier, had recently been established as a result of a merger between two pre-existing centres and was in the process of developing new policies.

The analysis showed that policy documents in Riverview, Dockside and Argyle were based on legislative requirements extant or mandated at the time of their development. The Riverview policies had last been reviewed in 2010 and reflected the Children and Community Services (Child Care) Regulations of 2006 (Western Australian Government, 2006), the Quality Improvement Accreditation System (QIAS) of 1994 (National Childcare Accreditation Council, 1994), the Equal Opportunity Act of 1984 (Department of Education and Training, 1994), and the Children and Community Services Act of 2004 (Department of Child Protection, 2004). The Dockside policies had last been reviewed in November 2012 and reflected the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 1989), The Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act of 2012 (Western Australian Government, 2012), Federal and State Occupational Safety and Health Legislation Act of 1984 (Department of Mines Industry Regulation and Safety, 1994), The National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care (ACECQA,

2011) and the Early Years Learning Framework (DEEWR, 2009). The Argyle policies had last been updated in October 2013 and reflected the Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act of 2012 (ACECQA, 2012), Federal and State Occupational Safety and Health Legislation Act of 1984 (Department of Mines Industry Regulation and Safety, 1994), The National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care (ACECQA, 2011), the Equal Opportunity Act of 1984 (Department of Education and Training, 1994) and the Occupational Health and Welfare Act of 1986 (Western Australian Government, 1986).

Initial analysis of centre documents found no explicit mention of children's books. However, interview data and member checking with centre coordinators and educators confirmed that books were considered, in all centres, to be part of equipment, materials and/or resources. Thus, the policy requirements relating to these aspects were further analysed for implicit requirements that may relate to books. While policy document comparisons were not possible with Community House, interview data did confirm that books were not explicitly mentioned in the policies being developed but were also considered by the educators as part of equipment, resources and/or materials.

Table 6.1: *Policy Requirements that Educators Considered Inclusive of Books and Book Use*

Centre Policy Documentation				
Documents	**Riverview**	**Community**	**Dockside**	**Argyle**
Centre Policies/ Manuals	10 A4 pages of Centre programming policies:- **Program:** 5 pages **Diversity and Inclusion:** 3 pages **Equipment:** 2 pages	None available – new centre preparing policy documents at time of study	43x A4 pages of Centre programming:- **Educational curriculum:** 19 pages. **Diversity and inclusion:** 11 pages **Equipment and toys:** 13 pages	15x A4 pages of Centre programming policies: **Curriculum Development:** 5 pages **Diversity and inclusion**: 5 pages. **Physical environment:** 5 pages.
Number of implicit references to provision of books and/or reading of books	**Children's program:** 1 - resources 1 - equipment **Diversity and Inclusion:** 1 - resources **Equipment:** 2 - materials 2 - equipment		**Educational curriculum –** 1 - resources 1 - equipment **Diversity and inclusion** 2 - resources **Equipment and toys** - equipment	**Curriculum Development** 1- resources 1 - equipment materials and resources **Diversity and inclusion** 1 - resources 2 - materials 3 - representations **Physical environment** 5 - equipment

Table 6.1 shows the centre policy documents examined followed by the number of implicit references that educators considered to include books and book use within those documents. These were confirmed through interview data analysis and member checking.

Each of the three centres' policy documents relating to resources, materials and equipment addressed three main purposes: that of providing enough resources for all children; provision of resources to cater for the children's interests; and, provision of resources to reflect the backgrounds, cultures and diversity of all children. It was interesting to note that either exact or near exact wording was used to express the requirements relating to diversity and inclusion for all three aspects of resources, equipment and materials in all three policies.

Further, the wording of these requirements was similar across the three sets of policy documents despite the differences, such as the influence of different mandated National policies on their development, as reported earlier. Examples related to the three elements found in the policies are provided below in order to demonstrate these similarities.

Provision of enough resources for all children

"There will be sufficient **equipmen**t for the number of children enrolled" (Riverview: Equipment and Materials) (Dockside: Equipment and Toys)
"Plenty of **resources and equipment** available" (Argyle: Physical Environment)

The need for resources to cater to the interests of children:

"The play and teaming program will be child centred and will allow children to experience a variety of materials and pursue their own **interests**" (Riverview: Equipment).
"There will sufficient equipment for the number of children enrolled to… engage **children's interests**" (Dockside: Equipment and Toys)

 "All equipment & toys purchased for the centre will meet Australian safety standards & be appropriate to the developmental stages, **interests** and culture of the children in care" (Riverview: Equipment) (Dockside: Equipment and Toys)
Note: The policy documents of Argyle did not contain specific statements regarding requirements for resources, materials and equipment to relate to children's interests. However, a further analysis of these documents revealed broader statements relating to the physical environment which implied that resources, materials, and equipment should relate to children's interests. Examples of these include:
"The curriculum is supported by the physical environment which is set up to facilitate and include… individual and group **interests**" (Argyle: Curriculum Development).
"Environment reflects the children's **interests**" (Argyle: Physical Environment).

> **The need to provide resources reflecting the backgrounds, cultures and diversity of children.**
>
> "Staff will obtain and use resources that reflect the **diversity** of children, families and the community" (Riverview: Children's Program).
>
> "Educators will obtain and use resources that reflect the **diversity of children, families and the community** and increase awareness and appreciation of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and multicultural heritage" (Dockside: Diversity and Inclusion)
>
> "…accessing and using a range of resources (including multi-cultural and multi-lingual resources) that reflect the **diversity of children and families in the service and in the broader community**" (Riverview: Children's Program)
>
> "All equipment & toys purchased for the centre will meet Australian safety standards and be appropriate to the developmental stages, interests and **culture** of the children in care" (Riverview: Equipment) (Dockside: Equipment and Toys)
>
> "... Equipment is **culturally inclusive**" (Dockside; Equipment and Toys).
>
> "Ensure the physical environment and resources at the centre reflect **cultural diversity**" (Argyle: Diversity and Inclusion).
>
> "… Ensure toys and learning materials are **representative of different cultures**" (Argyle: Diversity and Inclusion).
>
> "… Wherever possible facilitate access to **representations of families and children that show a variety of lifestyles**" (Argyle: Diversity and Inclusion).

It was evident from this analysis that all three centres had clear policies relating to the provision of equipment, materials and/or resources reflecting cultural diversity. The provision of resources to cater for children's interests was another important component of the resources aspect of the centres' policies. Importantly, however, books themselves were largely ignored in the policy documents, rather it was assumed by educators that these policy requirements were inclusive of books.

> **Documentation Finding One:** Books and book practices were not explicitly described in centre policies. However, policy documents indicated that equipment, materials and/or resources should reflect cultural diversity and be appropriate to the interests of the children.

6.2.2 Centre Panning and Record Keeping Documentation

In each centre, the Lead Educators kept two key types of documentation relating to their curriculum planning and record keeping. These were the educators' planning documents and records of children's learning or activities.

This section reports on the findings from an analysis of these two key types of documentation specifically related to book use by educators and children kept by the Lead Educators in each participant room.

As part of the analysis, the planning and record keeping documentation related to the selection and sharing of books was compared with the Overarching Themes identified in the book collections. These Overarching Themes were *early childhood content and skills; imagination, fantasy or humour; dispositions morals or life lessons,* and, *religion, cultural customs, celebrations or belief*s

Planned and Reported Book Use According to Occurrence and Overarching Themes

Thematic analysis of all mentions of book sharing or use within the planning and reporting documentation identified a relationship between the educators' identified purpose of book use in the documentation and the Overarching Themes identified in the books themselves. That is, when educators' identified a purpose of book sharing or use in the planning and reporting documentation, the purpose matched the Overarching Theme identified in the specific book mentioned in each documented record of book use. This finding was triangulated with the analysis of interview data and member checking which confirmed the relationship. While this relationship was not surprising, confirmation of this pattern was important as this relationship also relates to findings about educators' understandings to be reported later in this chapter. Therefore, the identified purpose of each reference to book use within the documentation was coded according to the same Overarching Themes used in the book analysis to identify the nature of planned and reported book sharing or use in each centre. Furthermore, throughout the following related sections the Overarching Themes are used both in relation to reporting the themes within the books and when reporting the purposes for which they were used.

Within each centre, the instances of book use identified in the planning and reporting documentation were analysed to identify which of the Overarching Themes its stated purpose addressed. These were tallied and the findings in each Overarching Themes presented as percentages. This allowed comparison of Overarching Themes both within and between centres.

The following table summarises the percentage of book use in the centre planning and reporting documentation for each centre according to the purpose of each occurrence across the Overarching Themes identified in the books.

Table 6.2 *Book Sharing Purposes in Centre Planning and Reporting Documentation According to Overarching Themes*

Centre	Documented book use purposes according to Overarching Themes			
	Early childhood content and skills	**Imagination, Fantasy or Humour**	**Dispositions, Morals or Life Lessons**	**Religion, Customs, Beliefs or Celebrations**
Riverview	75%	25%	0	0
Community	22%	43%	13%	22%
Dockside	36%	55%	0	9%
Argyle	26%	74%	0	0
Totals	**32%**	**57%**	**4%**	**7%**

Figure 6.1 shows the overall distribution for all centres of educators' documented book use by Overarching Theme in relation to the purpose of the reported or planned activity.
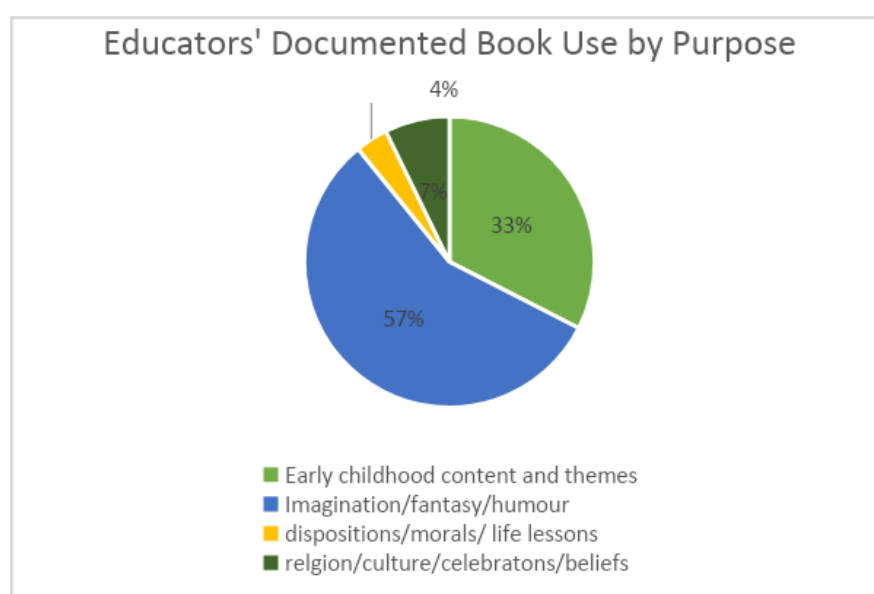
Figure 6.1 Educators' Documented Book Use According to Identified Purpose

The most common purpose identified in planned and reported book use was the development or use of *imagination, fantasy or humour*. Riverview was the only centre to have more planned and reported use for books to develop *early childhood content and skills* than for *imagination, fantasy or humour.* Community House was the only centre to have planned or reported use of books to develop *dispositions, morals or life lessons.* Community House and Dockside both planned and reported on book use to educate about *religion, cultural customs, celebrations or beliefs.*

Triangulation of these findings with those relating to the book collections, showed that these patterns of planned and reported book use in regard to the two most common Overarching Themes showed interesting similarities to the distribution of the Overarching Themes identified in the books in each centre which were reported in Chapter 5: The Book Environment (See Figure 5.8). That is, that 57% documented book use and 50% of the total book collection related to the Overarching Theme of *imagination, fantasy or humour* while 33% of documented book use and 30% of the total book collection related to the Overarching Theme of *early childhood content and skills.* Seven percent of documented book use and 3% of the total book collection related to the Overarching Theme of *religion, cultural customs, celebrations or beliefs.* However there was more variation in the Overarching Theme of *dispositions, morals or life lessons* with 4% documented book use and 17% of the total book collection relating to this Overarching Theme.

This evidence suggests a link between the themes educators plan for and report on regarding book use and the proportion of books from those themes in each collection.

Documentation Finding Two: The proportion of books related to each of the Overarching Themes in the total collection mostly reflects the purpose evident in the educators' planning and reported book use.

When this data was further triangulated with that of observed book use (see Figure 5.22 in Chapter 5: The Book Environments) this revealed that in both these sets of data, the most common Overarching Theme was *imagination, fantasy or humour* with 61% in the books used and 57% noted in planning and reporting in this category. However, there was greater variation in the other three Overarching Themes. Sixteen percent of observed book use and 33% of documented book use related to *early childhood content and skills;* 21% of observed book use and 4% of documented book use related to *dispositions, morals or life lessons* and*, 1% of observed book use and 4% of documented book use related to *religion, cultural customs, celebrations or beliefs.* As the documentation reflected a longer period of time than the observation period, the differences in the reported or documented book use and the observed books use for the other themes may suggest that over a longer period there may be more variation in the purpose of planned and prepared book use than that seen in the observation period.

Viewpoints Presented in the Planned and Reported Book Use

In order to explore the nature of the treatment of cultural diversity in the planned and reported book use, each of the book titles referred to in this documentation were categorised according to the Cultural Diversity Categories Framework (see Appendix D). Figure 6.2 shows the

overall distribution of specific books titles mentioned in planning and reporting documentation according to the Cultural Diversity categories.
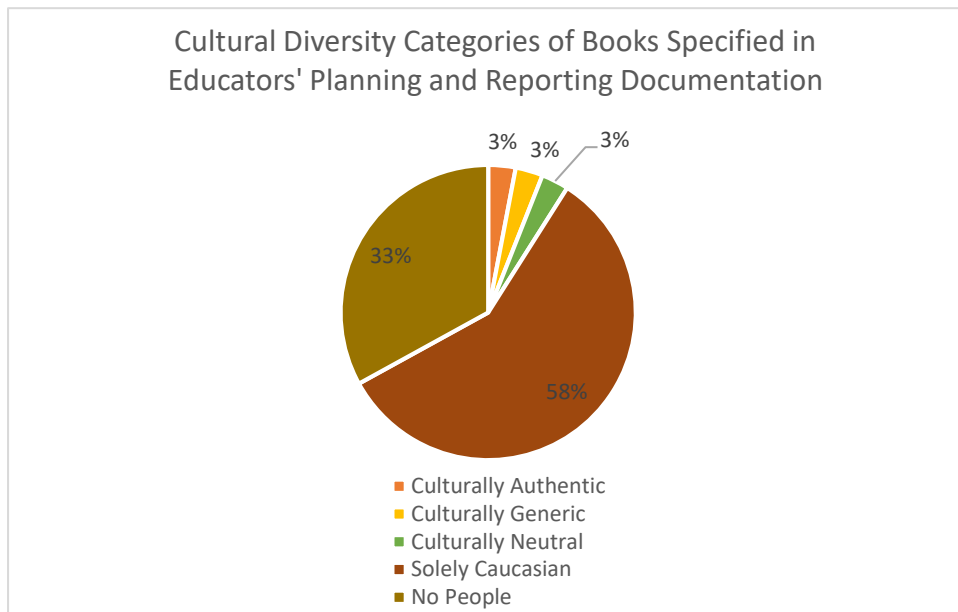
Figure 6.2 Cultural Diversity Categories of Books Specified in Educators' Planning and Reporting Documentation

As shown in Figure 6.2, only 9% of the books referred to in this documentation reflected any cultural diversity. When the viewpoints and ideologies promoted in these books were further analysed it was found that these overwhelmingly (97%) reflected those of the dominant culture (see Figure 6.3).
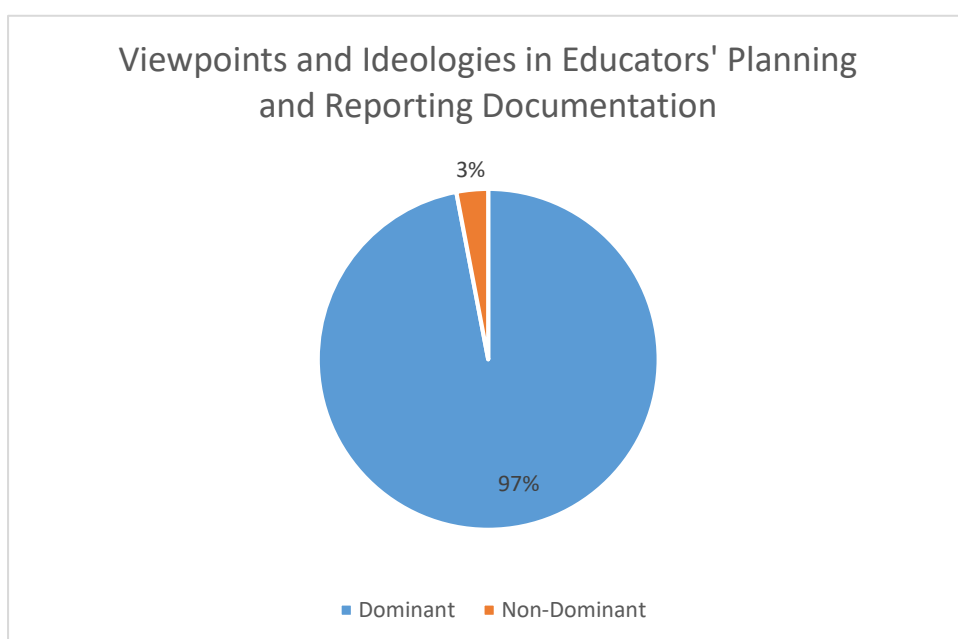
Figure 6.3 Viewpoints and Ideologies in the Books Mentioned in Planning and Reporting

These results show that books noted in the planned and reported book use documentation mostly (97%) reinforced dominant culture viewpoints. These findings reflect those related to the books used in the observation period suggesting that the prominence of dominant cultural viewpoints was typical of longer time periods than the five days observed.

Documentation Finding Three: Most of the planned and reported book use in the documentation reinforced dominant cultural viewpoints and this may be typical of longer term centre operation.

Planned and Reported Book Use Related to Cultural Diversity

As identified earlier, there were two mentions in planning and reporting documentation that related to cultural diversity. In both instances, the books used and the purpose of their use related to the Overarching Theme of r*eligion, cultural customs, celebrations or beliefs*. The first of these was from Community House documentation and the Lead Educator, Lily, clarified that the specific purpose had been to encourage the learning of an Aboriginal language. The second was from Dockside, and the Lead Educator, Alice, clarified that the specific purpose had been to celebrate the Hindu festival of Holi.

It is important to note that in Argyle there was a large display in the room reporting activities related to weekly visits to the centre by Elders and a language consultant from the local Aboriginal language centre. Participants, including those from the language centre, reported that these activities sometimes included the reading of a book to the children. However, the displays did not include reference to books or their use. Furthermore, when these planned visits took place, including during this study, the focus was on language learning and preservation related to the local Aboriginal language and did not include the reading of a book.

Documentation Finding Four: The small amount of planned or reported book use relating to the Overarching Theme of *religion, cultural customs, celebrations or beliefs* was focused on language learning or cultural celebrations.

6.3 Centre Practice

This section provides findings related to the centres' operational aspects framing the role and place of children's literature in the curriculum and daily experiences of the children. As with the previous section and due to the relationship between the identified purpose of book use in the documentation and the Overarching Themes identified in the books themselves, the Overarching Themes are used both when reporting on the themes within the books and when reporting on the purposes for which they were used.

6.3.1 Book Selection and Book Purposes

The document analysis found that there were similar responsibilities, expectations and processes relating to the selection of books for each centre, for each kindergarten room and for the different book sessions and use in each kindergarten room. Participant quotation from the centre coordinators and Lead Educators is used in this section to exemplify the document analysis findings and provide evidence of participant views that influenced decision making.

Educators' Beliefs and Understandings Relating to Book Selection and Use

Centre coordinators were responsible for the overall selection of books for their centre, while educators were permitted to request books for specific purposes or different types of books to enhance curriculum planning. Books were included in the resource and equipment budget in each centre. Educators in Argyle expressed concern about their relatively small collection of books but explained that it was due to budgetary constraints imposed by the first year of operation: "We have an educational supplier we have to buy all our books through and they're very limited and of course they're very costly so of course we had a budget and you know we haven't got enough books" (Sarah: Coordinator, Argyle).

Lead Educators were responsible for selecting books from the centre collection for use in their kindergarten rooms. The centre coordinators expressed the belief that books should be rotated regularly and expected this to occur weekly or fortnightly. This practice included leaving some books which were of particular interest to the children and rotating others less well used. Argyle was an exception to this general practice owing to an inadequate book collection. Indeed, the Lead Educator, Debbie, reported that most of the books in the room belonged to her. Debbie's books were kept on shelves either in the storeroom and accessed only by the educator or on "special shelves" which children could only access at designated supervised times. The 50 books available for the children to use in the book basket in this centre appeared not to be rotated.

Analysis of the data showed five main categories of influences on educators' selection and use of books. These were the well-known nature of books deemed to be favourites, requirements of the learning curriculum, perceptions of children's interests, attention to children's social and emotional development and acknowledgement of children's background or culture.

The First Category of Influence: Selecting and Sharing Well Known or Favourite Books

Educators reported selecting well known or favourite books and analysis showed that these were all fictional picture books categorised within the Overarching Theme of *imagination, fantasy or humour*. For example, the three Lead Educators who cited this motivation in book selection spoke

passionately about personally enjoying these books, having used or seen them used with children, or having perceived children as loving these books.

Michelle (Lead Educator: Riverview) spoke about her personal enjoyment being a factor in selecting books as well as considering the book's capacity to promote children's thinking:

I love Dr Suess! Love Dr Suess! But obviously they have to work; we have to work up to that kind of stage so that they understand it. I love books that get children to think why. To like get their imagination and their own opinions going, I love those type of books. They are my favourite!

Debbie (Lead Educator: Argyle) also referred to using P.D. Eastman books, which are published under the Dr Seuss brand. Debbie also spoke with excitement about intending to read other popular or well-known books to the children and referred to well-known stories including Scarface Claw[1] (Dodd, 2009) The Elves and the Shoemaker (no publication details given) and the Dr Seuss published version of King Midas and the Golden Touch[2] (Perkins, 1969).

Lily (Lead Educator: Community House) said,

I suppose I like a lot of the ones that the children enjoy, but I like, I suppose the funny stories that are nice to sound when you read them and they have a nice kind of a tune to them. But I like some fairy tales, the modern fairy tales as well. And yeah I suppose, just you have your own preferences for books and things.

Sarah (Coordinator: Argyle) stated, "I go for the books I know have worked well in the rooms I have worked in."

The finding that most of the known books selected and used by educators were from the Overarching Theme of *imagination, fantasy or humour* was triangulated with results from the analysis of planning and reporting documents, reported earlier in this chapter. This showed that approximately half of the planned and reported activities identified under the Overarching Theme of *imagination, fantasy or humour* used books identified as favourite or well-known books.

Book Selection and Purposes Finding One: Educators selected books for the Overarching Theme of the category of *imagination, fantasy or humour* on the basis that they were well known or favourite books.

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[1] Dodd, L. (2009). *Scarface Claw*. London: Puffin.

[2] Perkins, A. (1969). King Midas and the Golden Touch. New York: Random House for Young Readers.

The Second Category of Influence: Selecting and Sharing Books According to the Requirements of Learning or the Curriculum

Educators reported selecting and using books for learning or curriculum related purposes. These aims were influenced by what they considered to be important content and skills in early childhood. Examples of these priorities given by educators included language and literacy, concept, and community and world knowledge development.

Jill (Coordinator: Riverview) said, "We look at, are they [the books] educational in some way, what kind of things do they teach the children, are they things we think are important to teach the children." Similarly, Lily (Lead Educator: Community House) reflected that, "I find the books that link to kind of what we are doing at the moment and I will take them out and we will read them and talk about that." Likewise, Sarah (Coordinator: Argyle), mentioned the importance of linking the selection of books to the learning in the room saying, "Usually the educator will choose the books with what is going on in the room."

Tracy (Coordinator: Dockside) spoke of the importance of developing early literacy when she said, "The purpose of using books is basically to develop children's speech and language and understanding." She followed on by affirming the importance of also considering the wider curriculum when selecting and using books:

> It's not only about the reading; it's about the learning that's happening in the story; like it doesn't have to be about, like stories that are made up, but things that actually have a meaning. So, we have a lot of books here as well, like life cycle of frogs, things about Aboriginal cultures and things like that.

In turn, the educators were influenced by their perception or understanding of children's interests in their selection and use for books relating to early childhood content and skills, favouring those the children showed or expressed interest in. For example, Tracy (Coordinator: Dockside) asserted that, "When educators choose books to share with children….it's relating to a child's interest or the room's interest…" while Sarah (Coordinator: Argyle) said, "As far as [selecting] books…going with the children's interests." Similarly, Michelle (Lead Educator: Riverview) claimed that when using books to develop early childhood content and skills, children's interests were important to the learning or nature of the sharing experience, "Children's talk on books will always go the complete opposite way that you think it will, so they work off their interest, we work off their interest so we generally follow them." And Lily (Lead Educator: Community House), cited children's interests as important in deciding what books to put out for children, including when putting books out for learning or development of curriculum, "If I know there are particular books that they like, I

will take them out and put them on the shelf so I know when they come in; they always like that book."

Furthermore, there was clear evidence that all the educators involved in this study considered children's interests as a key consideration in planning and delivering the learning curriculum in their centres and rooms. As described in the findings presented earlier in this chapter, the centres' policies strongly promoted children's interests as important to planning, resource selection and other curriculum considerations. Triangulation of these findings with those reported earlier in this chapter showed that all of the planned and reported activities within the Overarching Theme of *early childhood content and skills* evident in the document analysis, had been driven by the educators' perceptions of the children's interests.

> **Book Selection and Purposes Finding Two:** Educators consider the demands of the curriculum related to *early childhood content and skill*s when selecting and using books. These decisions and actions are strongly influenced by their perceptions of the children's interests.

The Third Category of Influence: Selecting and Sharing Books According to Children's Interests

As detailed earlier, educators' perceptions of children's interests were found to drive the selection of books relating to the Overarching Theme of *imagination, fantasy or humour* in addition to influencing the selection and use of books to promote *early childhood content and skills* development. Educators spoke frequently and confidently about sharing fictional "stories" with children and the importance of considering their interests and what they "love" or "loved" when selecting books.

Although the educators referred to being guided in selections and book use by children's interests, they did not describe what child behaviours indicated interest. Rather, as with the earlier findings, educators' understanding of "children's interests" related to what they perceived the children to show interest in. For example, Michelle (Lead Educator: Riverview) showed this when she said, "Yeah, the girls….they just depending on their age level and whether they're interested in that type of story or not ……… the boys, especially through this year…….prefer to have something that they are either joking about it later as well." Debbie (Lead Educator: Argyle) when asked about book selection said "You've got to know what children like and look for it." Lily (Lead Educator: Community House) referred to children "loving" certain books when she said, "They love the 'Hairy Toe'[3], and they love that one as well. They just, I think it's the humour and the building and it's a little bit scary, so they love that."

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[3] Postgate, D. (2009). *The hairy toe: a traditional American tale*. London: Walker.

There was also evidence that perceptions of children's interests in particular books drove repeated readings of them by educators and led to the books being made available for children to use. For example, Lily (Lead Educator: Community House) said:

I know that they love a lot of the classics; they are quite good. I mean they love 'Going on a Bear Hunt'[4]; I mean I've read it about 50 times over the last couple of weeks alone but they love that.

And, Michelle (Lead Educator: Riverview) advised, "If we pick a story and they really like it, we will leave it out as well."

Alice (Lead Educator: Dockside) also referred to repeated readings when discussing what books the children appear to enjoy:

Um, funny ones and scary ones. But not actually scary ones, like the book in the woods where they go for a picnic and then the wolf comes and they actually trick the wolf, things like that, we will turn the lights off and we will read a scary one, even if it's not really scary, but they like those. And also, yeah, anything funny like Underpants Thunderpants [5]– any play on words, yeah, anything like that.

As already reported, the majority of fiction or "storybooks" in the centres were books relating to the Overarching Theme of *imagination, fantasy or humour,* and from the comments of the educators, it was evident that these were the type of books they meant when talking about "storybooks".

> **Book Selection and Purposes Finding Three:** Those books selected and used for reading or sharing "stories" were from the Overarching Theme of imagination*, fantasy or humour* and the educators' decisions were strongly influenced by what they perceived to be the children's interests as judged by their responses to the books.

These findings confirmed those from analysis of the planning and reporting documents, as reported earlier in this chapter, which showed that approximately half of the planned and reported activities identified under the Overarching Theme of *imagination fantasy or humour* had been driven by the educators' perception of children's interests. Of importance, and as with the earlier findings,

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[4] Rosen, M., & Oxenbury, H. (1996). *We're going on a bear hunt big book*. London: Walker Books.

[5] Bently, P. (2011). *Underpants Thunderpants*! New York: Parragon Club.

educators considered children's interests as being what the children showed or expressed interest in. As such, this led to the category of findings relating to educators' understandings.

> **Educator Understandings One:** When educators referred to selecting books by their perception of "children's interests" they appeared to judge this by what the children expressed or appeared to show interest in.

The Fourth Category of Influence: Reading and Book Use for the Purpose of Social and Emotional Development

All Lead Educators spoke of selecting and using books for purposes related to children's social and emotional development. The data analysis showed that when books were used for this purpose, the desired outcomes or goals related to socialisation and self-regulation skills such as children sharing, feeling settled or calm, and understanding and controlling their emotions.

Michelle (Lead Educator: Riverview) said:

So we use them [books] as a big settling tool. Then, also, trying for them to understand that there are different sorts of people in the world - some people are angry, so we see angry people in books and how they feel.

Michelle, was positive about the impact that book sharing for such purposes could have for children and gave this example:

We were reading a story about being sad or being lonely…, but you could see just the follow on from everyone after that being like 'Are you okay?' or 'Do you need a hug?, 'It's alright' – you could see like that they were like 'oh no'… mean to make sure that their friends are feeling alright and make sure I ask them are you alright and you could see that the complete process that it really sunk in and it was like 'Ohhh….'

The Coordinator of Riverview, (Jill) spoke specifically about identifying such books for the PALS programs which was outlined under Chapter 4: Introduction to the Findings, "We have tried also to separate our books so we will have separate books for the PALS programmes, separate books for the protective behaviours programme, we have a feelings box with books in there."

Lily (Lead Educator: Community house) gave this example, "We had a child that was getting very angry and aggressive so we took out the feelings books." Similarly, Alice (Lead Educator: Dockside) spoke of using a book to help children to understand the need to treat others nicely:

We had a stage where children were really you know, not being nice to each other, saying horrible things to each other, so we used Rainbow Fish...I thought of the

Gopher, so I thought ok, I need to find a book that's going to get them to share and

realise that the things about being a good friend and things like that, so then I thought

yep, Rainbow Fish, we will do Rainbow Fish, yeah.

Debbie (Lead Educator: Argyle) gave a similar example in reference to having read a story about sharing:

I see this as a parable – I share it I don't force it, revisit later and I see if children are sharing I

make the connection with the book and the message. I look for books to give a message

through a story, not just the message.

It was evident that when books were selected for these purposes, they related to the Overarching Theme of *dispositions, morals or life lesson*s and were intentionally selected by the educators for this purpose.

These findings are consistent with those from the analysis of the planning and reporting documents, reported earlier in this chapter, which showed that the planned and reported book use for the purpose of social and emotional development used books which matched the Overarching Theme of *dispositions, morals or life lessons*.

Book Selection and Purposes Finding Four: Educators select and use books from the Overarching Theme of *dispositions, morals or life lessons* category according to their preferences to meet goals related to children's socialisation, particularly those concerning their self-management understandings and behaviours.

The Fifth Category of Influence: Reading and Book Use for the Purpose of Considering Children's Backgrounds or Culture

Of particular importance to this study was the finding that all centres placed some value and importance on providing books related to cultural diversity. However, most Educators showed a tentativeness, uncertainty or lack of confidence about this which contrasted strongly with their confidence when talking about other considerations influencing book selection. Furthermore, the perceptions of the importance, purpose and use of culturally diverse literature varied greatly among the Educators. This section provides findings related to the varying perceptions, beliefs and practices referred to by the coordinators and Lead Educators.

Children's Backgrounds

When educators referred to considering children's backgrounds, their perceptions and understanding of this varied and an element of hesitation and tentativeness was apparent. Jill

(Coordinator: Riverview) referred to different family structures "with same sets of parents or whatever," as did Tracy (Coordinator: Dockside),

…books that we actually would be showing the children obviously different family structures. We have children here that have two mums and things like that, so it's actually making children understand at a young age that there's different family structures.

Lily (Community House) referred to cultures but then gave an example of a child with allergies:

Especially with things like the stereotypes or different books on different cultures and things like that or like I said, the allergy book, it talks about being different and kind of, it's shown that it's something that they can talk about and look out for each other and now sometimes they notice that Levi can't have it, and they say 'Oh you can't have that Levi' and they will kind of be aware of each other.

Donna (Lead Educator: Argyle) stated that "If children can't see themselves or something they can relate to …for example, little Jock with the book 'Fish out of Water' he thinks (the boy) is him," thus showing that she considered children's background to include what the children could relate to.

Tracy (Coordinator: Dockside) mentioned the importance of cultural back grounds when she said:

So, I say to the girls to try and incorporate something at least every day and the biggest thing is looking at what kind of family structures you have in your room and where their cultural backgrounds come from and where our Educators' cultural backgrounds come from.

Overall, while educators from all centres reported culture or children's backgrounds as an important criterion when selecting books, the perceptions about what this meant varied. Most educators spoke of backgrounds and culture interchangeably, with some also mentioning the importance of children being able to relate to "something" in the book.

> **Educator Understandings Finding Two:** Educator understandings of "children's backgrounds" encompassed broad aspects related to family structure, cultural background, difference and relatability.

Much of the hesitation or tentativeness of educators when talking about selecting and using books inclusive of children's background or culture related to their concerns about what was accurate, authentic or, what they described as, "politically correct". For example, two centre coordinators spoke comprehensively about these concerns.

Jill (Coordinator: Riverview) was concerned about the challenge of providing books relating to the backgrounds and cultures of all children when she said, "Will they [books] represent all the different nationalities, cultures, thoughts, family backgrounds that we have here." She further expressed a fear of not knowing how to select authentic literature related to children's background and culture:

> *I think there is a lot of books around that, I think they would fall into the category of "tokenism", so if you are looking at people from different cultures, would you get a whole load of books on the Aboriginal culture but you know, do they actually really show what our Aboriginal children see as home life or whatever, or are they completely alien to them so I find that difficult to really know what their culture is about first and foremost and then to find the book that suits that? I think the different dynamics of families these days – with same sets of parents or whatever – is there an appropriate book that we read to children and if we do that, do we step on toes of other parents and how much permission do we need to ask and that kind of stuff, so there are a lot of challenges around them.*

Sarah (Coordinator: Argyle) also spoke of these concerns:

> *Um this is important ….(inaudible)….try to cover all different cultures as well which is a bit tricky so I couldn't get lots of books that cover that but compensated with… bit hard to know what is politically correct in the (local area) compared to other places."*

Sarah also mentioned an aspect of this when referring to using audio pens to read the local Aboriginal language saying, "….that's where the [digital voice pen] pen is good to use cos (sic) then it's not, it's culturally appropriate."

Michelle (Lead Educator: Riverview) also expressed a concern about perceived "political correctness" but in contrast to Jill and Sarah she felt more confident to discuss religions or cultures other than her own with children. She also believed that other educators had a similar attitude to this. Michelle explained,

I think that everyone has that sense of oh, if I say too much…that sense of….especially if it's their own religion. If they're talking about another religion I think they feel more comfortable because they know they're not going to say anything that's like it's not your opinion put into it, whereas if it's your own religion it can come across that you're saying that this is right.

Michelle went on to say that she would feel more comfortable talking about Ramadan than Easter. She clarified that this was because she was afraid that when talking about Easter, she might promote her own personal beliefs and that the children "may or may not necessarily believe that."

Overall, the level of confidence when discussing the use of books to address the children's backgrounds or culture was considerably less than that evident when educators discussed using books for other purposes. Educators were mostly concerned about being, what they described as "politically correct".

Educator Understandings Finding Three: Some educators expressed a lack of confidence in knowing how to select books which are authentic, accurate or "politically correct" and how to use these to address to address children's backgrounds, religion or culture.

Cultural Diversity as "Language"

Educators from Community House and Argyle, when referring to addressing cultural diversity, identified the provision of books reflecting the local Aboriginal culture as an important consideration. Both centres had intentionally acquired books in the local Aboriginal language for this purpose.

Warren (Coordinator: Community House) said, "So we've recently purchased a whole range of books that focus on the Indigenous culture, particularly looking at Noongar culture and the (local) tribe which is the local community within this area." He went on to explain that he saw this as a starting point to help children explore diversity, "Which again helps the children start to explore the concept of different cultures and the diversity of people in general." Warren then expressed a belief that children in his centre were already familiar with, and understanding of, diversity:

We are blessed in this Centre; we have so many different cultures attending this service that I mean to the children it's just second nature to see someone that you know may look different or sound different to you know...have different ways about them and I think you know books that we purchase or could look at buying, would only support that.

Educators from Community House and Argyle held a belief that exposure to books containing minority group or Indigenous Australian languages and/or language preservation was an

159

important consideration when addressing cultural diversity. In each of these centres, this belief was coupled with a lack of confidence in the educators' ability to correctly pronounce the Aboriginal language leading to a reliance on audio recordings to allow the children to hear the books read.

Warren (Coordinator: Community House) also explained that the actual use of the three books that had been purchased specifically with the local Aboriginal culture and language in mind, took place with the aim of valuing and preserving the local Noongar language. He also clarified that these three books were those he had previously referred to, and mentioned earlier in this section, as "whole range of books that focus on the Indigenous culture." He then expressed concerns about the challenge of correct pronunciation of the Noongar language in the books:

> *Some of them [books] have got an audio CD in the back of them which is good because a couple of the books have actually got the dual language so it's actually written in (local) language and then written in English. There's one particular book that doesn't have the English at all it's all completely in Noongar, but it has an audio CD which allows the children to actually hear the spoken word as well because Lily...the Educators' fear is that they are not pronouncing the words properly.*

Sarah (Coordinator: Argyle), when asked about the purpose and use of books written and provided by the local Aboriginal language centre, highlighted that the partnership with them was established to promote the valuing and preservation of the local Aboriginal language. Similar to Warren, she expressed a lack of confidence relating to pronunciation:

> *I think they are definitely written for the Indigenous women to read to but that's where the (digital voice pen) pen is good to use cos then it's not, it's culturally appropriate. At the next staff meeting we are going to go through a bit of the language with the staff as well, they do teach them over there but it's hard yeah.*

Educator Understandings Finding Four: Some educators saw attention to diversity as mainly relating to the recognition or preservation of a local minority group language.

Educator Understandings Finding Five: Educators expressed a lack of confidence relating to "correct" pronunciation when using books for the purpose of recognising and preserving languages.

Cultural Diversity as Celebration or a Focus on "Different" or "Special" Aspects of "Other" Cultures

An emergent theme in the analysis was a view among educators that addressing cultural diversity meant exploring the different and special nature of "other" cultures. This was often through a focus on celebrations.

Michelle (Lead Educator: Riverview) described how by sharing books related to cultural celebrations children could "See different cultures and what people do different to celebrate and obviously what some of the children celebrate as well, like I wouldn't necessarily celebrate." Michelle went on to say that this helps children to understand and respect others:

So it kinds of give them a respect and a bit of a knowledge that this is the way some people in the world interact so both of them are completely … need to be respected and to be understood and so…

Tracy (Coordinator: Dockside) was clear that educators in Dockside were expected to place a focus on cultural celebrations, "So, I say to the girls to…looking at different celebrations that happen through the calendar and obviously enabling children to learn a little bit more..."

Alice (Lead Educator: Dockside) was very positive about her perceived success in incorporating Tracy's requirements and, in doing so referred specifically to a book about celebrations around the world that had been purchased for this purpose. "So, all of those have been really successful. All our multi-cultural events have been really, really successful, so we do four a month and we...we just keep linking back to that book."

Like Michelle, Alice expressed a belief that this type of focus on cultural celebrations helped develop intercultural understanding and respect among the children saying:

I just personally really believe in giving children like a strong exposure to different cultures when they are young. And I think the earlier they learn to accept and embrace other cultures the better. So, children's literature obviously helps me do that. I just think it's so important and they love it, they get so excited about it and it just shows that no-one is born racist – it's obviously something that's constructed, so the quicker we can get in and teach children to love each other and not worry about differences the better.

Michelle (Lead Coordinator: Riverview) also expressed a desire to find books that educated children about the lives of children in "other countries" saying:

But obviously children in other countries – there's no real storybooks that we are like, that are children's books that explain like 'oh well, some children actually have to get up and go to work…like this is how lucky we are' and whereas, I think it's important for children to understand that life, because it gives them examples of like, oh well, we are really lucky and like there is children that are [less fortunate].

In summary, educators expressed a belief in the importance of attention to cultural diversity. When describing how this belief was enacted, the educators mostly referred to book selection and sharing that focused on celebrations, or the "different" or "special" aspects of "other" cultures. The high level of confidence with which educators talked about this contrasted noticeably with their hesitation and uncertainty when describing how they respond to children's backgrounds, being "politically correct" or pronouncing minority languages, as reported earlier.

> **Educator Understandings Finding Six:** Educators were very confident about addressing cultural diversity through focusing on celebrations or the special or different nature of "other" cultures.

Cultural Competence and Accreditation

The educators in only one centre nominated accreditation requirements particularly that of cultural competence, when describing their selection and use of books related to diversity. Tracy (Centre Coordinator: Dockside) noted this consideration when questioned about two books recently purchased for the centre and identified by her and Alice, the Lead Educator, as being central to the addressing of diversity. She responded to this query by saying:

> *I'm the one who looks through to see where they [books] meet in our quality areas and obviously under the Early Years Learning Framework, under the cultural competence section, so we get deals like that and we actually have a company that will just send these books.*

When questioned about the reasoning behind the purchase of these books, Tracy spoke of the aim of developing cultural competence in line with the NQS assessment and rating requirements, "It was kind of a quality improvement that would develop cultural competence a little bit more...it's very much through assessment and rating. They are looking for that through the centre, that cultural competence." This suggests Tracy was aware of the importance of books in developing or demonstrating cultural competency.

No other participants referred to accreditation requirements or the development of cultural competence as a consideration in the selection and use of books.

> **Educator Understandings Finding Seven:** Only one educator expressed recognition of the role of selection and use of books to meet cultural competence and accreditation requirements.

Books Selected to Address Background or Culture

It was evident from the educators' comments about using books to focus on diversity that when they were selected intentionally for this purpose, they were usually from either the

Overarching Themes of *religion, cultural customs, celebrations or beliefs* or *early childhood content and skills*.

These findings were similar to those from the analysis of planning and reporting documents, reported earlier in this chapter, where the sole example of planning to address issues of diversity involved the use of a text from the Overarching Theme of *religion, cultural customs or celebrations.*

Book Selection and Purposes Finding Five: When educators selected books with an intention of focusing on cultural diversity they selected books from the Overarching Theme of *religion, cultural customs or celebrations* or e*arly childhood content and skills* and this was influenced by educators' intentions and beliefs about diversity.

6.4 Chapter Summary

The findings regarding documented and reported practice relating to decisions, processes and purposes for book selection, can be summarised into two Key Findings:

KEY FINDING TWO: Educator understandings and reported practice showed restricted understanding and/or confidence related to the selection and use of children's literature as a resource for meeting principles related to cultural diversity.

Three patterns emerged in the data analysis related to this finding. These concerned the educators' perception of their knowledge about books related to diversity and their understandings of the issues of diversity and how these may be addressed.

Pattern One: We know that we don't know. Many educators reported that including books about culture and backgrounds is important but that they lacked confidence when selecting books, expressing a fear of not knowing what is authentic or "politically correct".

Pattern Two: We know and it's about language preservation. Some participants talked about the provision and use of books to preserve or teach Aboriginal or "other" languages as meeting the requirement to include culturally diverse books. They described their fear of not being able to pronounce the words in these languages "correctly" and explained that this was why they relied on audio devices or on others with expertise in the language. Some of the educators in this category expressed the view that as children already see diversity every day, they need books that focus on language rather than those which reflect diversity more generally.

Pattern Three: We know and we've got this – it's about celebrations, difference and the special/exotic. Most participants confidently expressed the belief that the requirements related to

diversity were met through selecting and using books to teach about cultural celebrations and customs with a focus on the special or exotic.

KEY FINDING THREE: There was a strong relationship between the different educator motivations and the selection and use of books from the differing Overarching Themes:

First, educators' favourite books or those well-known to them were drivers of book selection for books relating to the Overarching Theme of *imagination, fantasy or humour.*

Second, educators' perceptions of children's interests were a key driver in the selection and use of books relating to the Overarching Theme of *early childhood content and skills* and also that of *imagination, fantasy or humour.*

Third, educators' beliefs were the key driver when they selected or used books relating to the Overarching Themes of *dispositions, morals or life lessons* and *religion, cultural customs, celebrations or beliefs*.

Chapter 7: The Second Aspect Part B

Observed Book Sharing Practices

7.1 Introduction

This chapter reports the findings from observed book reading practice in each of the four centres involved in this study. The findings relate to the nature of book sharing practice and to book sharing quality and engagement. The findings from these two aspects of practice were further analysed and the themes which emerged are reported as key findings at the end of the chapter. The constructivist and interpretivist paradigm guided the evaluation and triangulation of the data in order to identify the findings.

7.2 Nature of Book Sharing Practice

The following section reports on the nature of book sharing practice, including the structure, frequency, timing and involvement of participants in book reading or sharing sessions. Aspects examined as part of this investigation included group sizes, individual involvement, length of sessions and the books selected and used. These findings emerged from analysis of data collected through the video recorded observations of all book sharing by educators and children, the Observation Frameworks, and the Semi- Structured Interviews. For further details about the data collection and analysis processes see Table 3.3 Advanced Organiser of Research Questions, Data Sources, and Research Tools and Analysis Processes.

7.2.1 Types of Book Sharing Practice

The data analysis showed that in each centre there were two broad categories of book sharing evident; these were planned and unplanned reading. For each of these, two sub-categories emerged; these were educator led book sharing and individual book "reading" by children.

All four centres conducted planned educator led reading with children, usually as whole group sessions. In Dockside and Argyle, there was an explicit expectation that all children take part in this type of session. In contrast, Community House and Riverview permitted children to opt out of a whole group session. Some children in four of the six whole group sessions observed in Community House exercised this right and did not participate.

In Dockside, Community House and Argyle there was an additional planned session each day where children were expected to engage independently with books. In the case of Dockside, this involved the kindergarten children doing quiet independent reading while the younger children slept. In Community House, Lily (Lead Educator) reported that there was a planned book time, "a time specific for books", each day before the children's rest period where they were expected to sit

and read. This session was observed each day during the observation period and while most children engaged with books during this time, not all children did every day. In Argyle, Debbie (Lead Educator) reported that children were expected to take a book and read before nap time each day and this was witnessed on two of the five days of observation. On the other three days, this reading was optional, with only two children taking this opportunity on each occasion.

In Riverview, there was no specific planned time for independent book use by children. However, children could access books at any time during the day and educator involvement in this type of book use was expected, as described by the Lead Educator (Michelle), "Most of the time in our room, we work so that if the children are sitting in the reading area, we will go and we will read; it doesn't matter what time of the day it is." This approach was evident in the video recorded observations and the researcher's field notes and will be further described later in this section.

All centres reported unplanned or spontaneous reading taking place in their rooms. Again, this consisted of both educator led and independent child reading. However, as reported in Chapter 5: The First Aspect -The Book Environments, educators in both Dockside and Argyle prohibited children from accessing books at various times, often due to perceived behavioural issues. Consequently, data analysis showed that the children in these centres had fewer opportunities for spontaneous reading when compared with the other two centres.

The following table summarises the observed book sessions for each centre. The table is inclusive of sessions in which children were required to take part and those in which they chose to be involved.

Legend for Table 7.1	
Number of periods	The number of continuous stretches of time that book sharing took place over the 5 observation days.
Number of sessions	The sharing of a particular book with or by a particular/child/children (when a book was re-read or another book begun, a new session was recorded).
Independent sessions	The number of sessions in which a child/ren "read" a book without an educator.
Time I	The total time spent by children reading independently
Educator sessions	The number of sessions that were led by an educator.
Time E	The total amount of book sharing time led by educators.
Total Time	The total amount of time book sharing/reading which occurred across the five days of the observation period.

As shown in Table 7.1, Nature and Time of Book Reading, the nature, frequency and duration of book reading/varied considerably both within each centre and across all centres. Interestingly, further analysis showed that while Dockside had the highest number of individual sessions, approximately 40% of these were those where the kindergarten children were expected to "read" independently while the toddlers slept. In Community House and Argyle, approximately 20% of the individual sessions were mandated "reading time". In all the reported sessions in Riverview, children chose to engage independently with books for as reported earlier in this chapter, this centre had no mandated individual "reading time".

Table 7.1 *Nature and Time of Book Reading*

Centre	No of Periods	No of sessions	No of Indepen-dent Sessions	Time I	No of Educator Sessions	Time E	Total Time
Riverview	26	107	56	227.50	51	453.75	681.25
Community House	49	141	94	197.25	47	177.00	374.25
Dockside	28	181	152	294.75	29	170.50	465.25
Argyle	26	100	79	286.00	21	100.00	386.00

It was noted that over the five day observation period, the amount of time individual children "read" a book independently of an educator varied by only 97.55 minutes (19.5 minutes per day) across the four centres. This was in contrast to the amount of time that educators were involved in book sharing which varied by 353.75 minutes over the five day observation period (70.75 minutes per day) across the four centres. The overall time spent in book sharing or reading over the five day observation period varied by 307 minutes (61.4 minutes per day) across the four centres.

Further analysis of the educator led sessions examined their duration and number. Figures 7.1 to 7.4 show the number and duration of the educator led sessions for each centre.
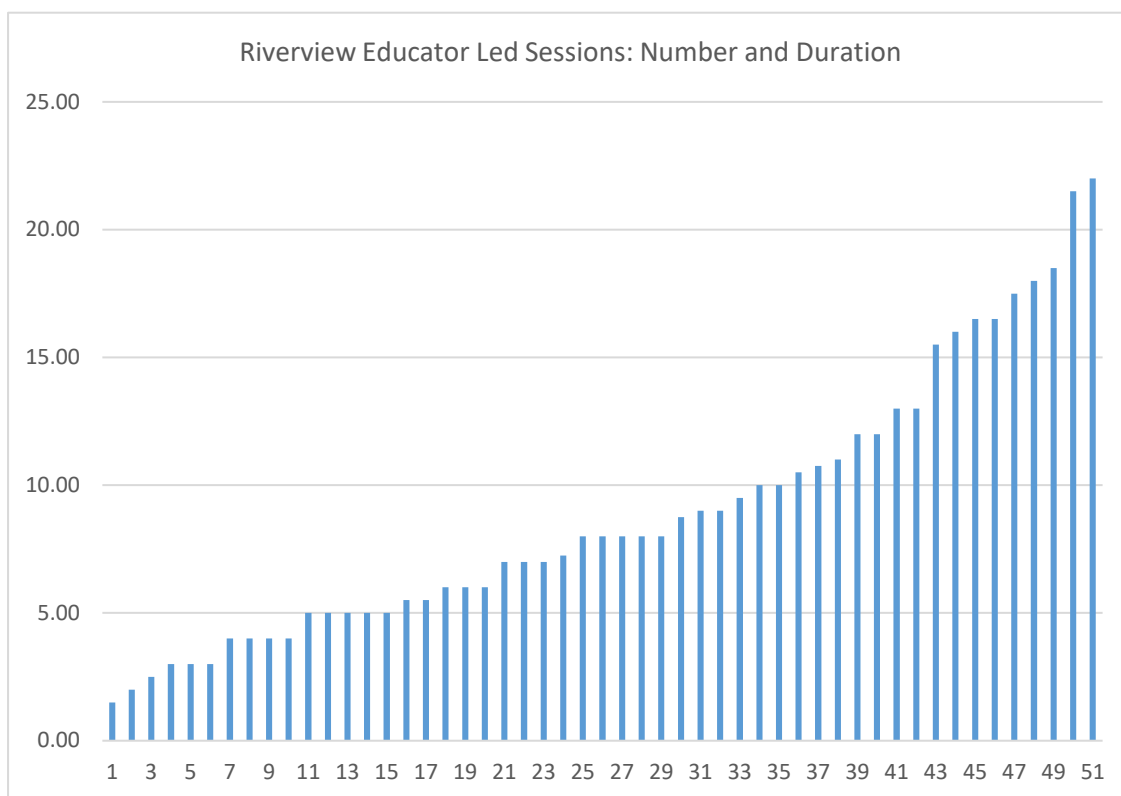
Figure 7.1 Riverview Educator Led Sessions
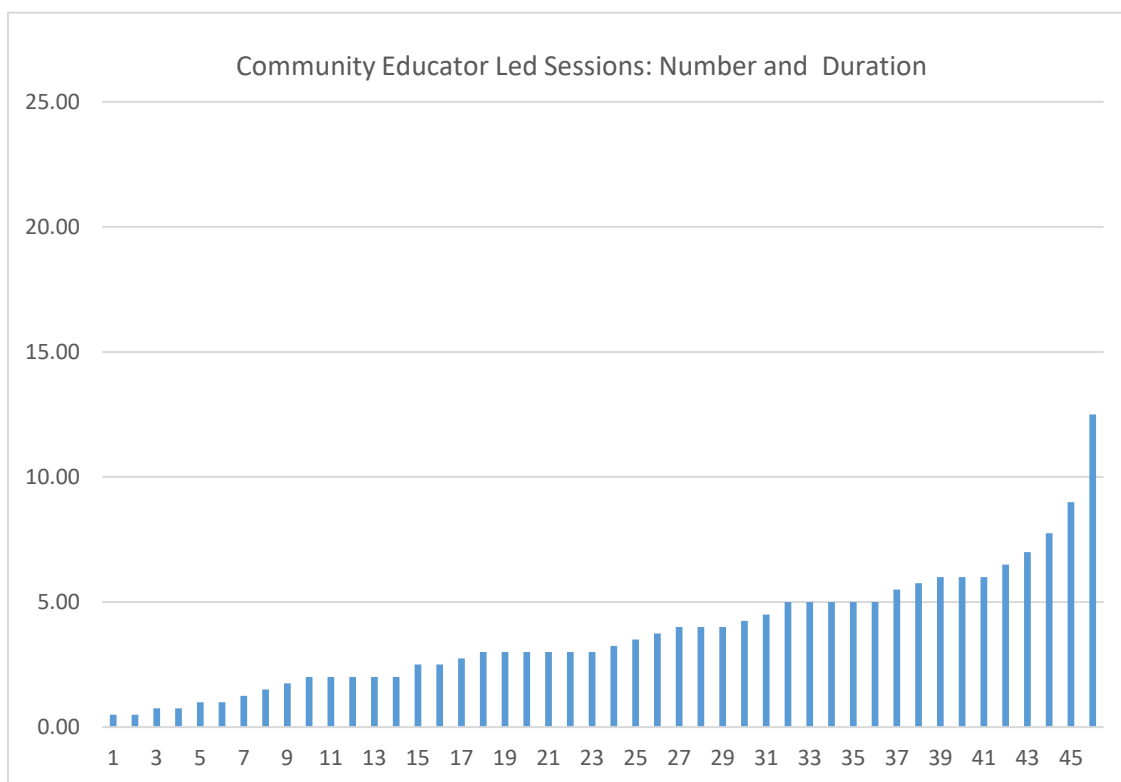
Figure 7.2 Community House Educator Led Sessions
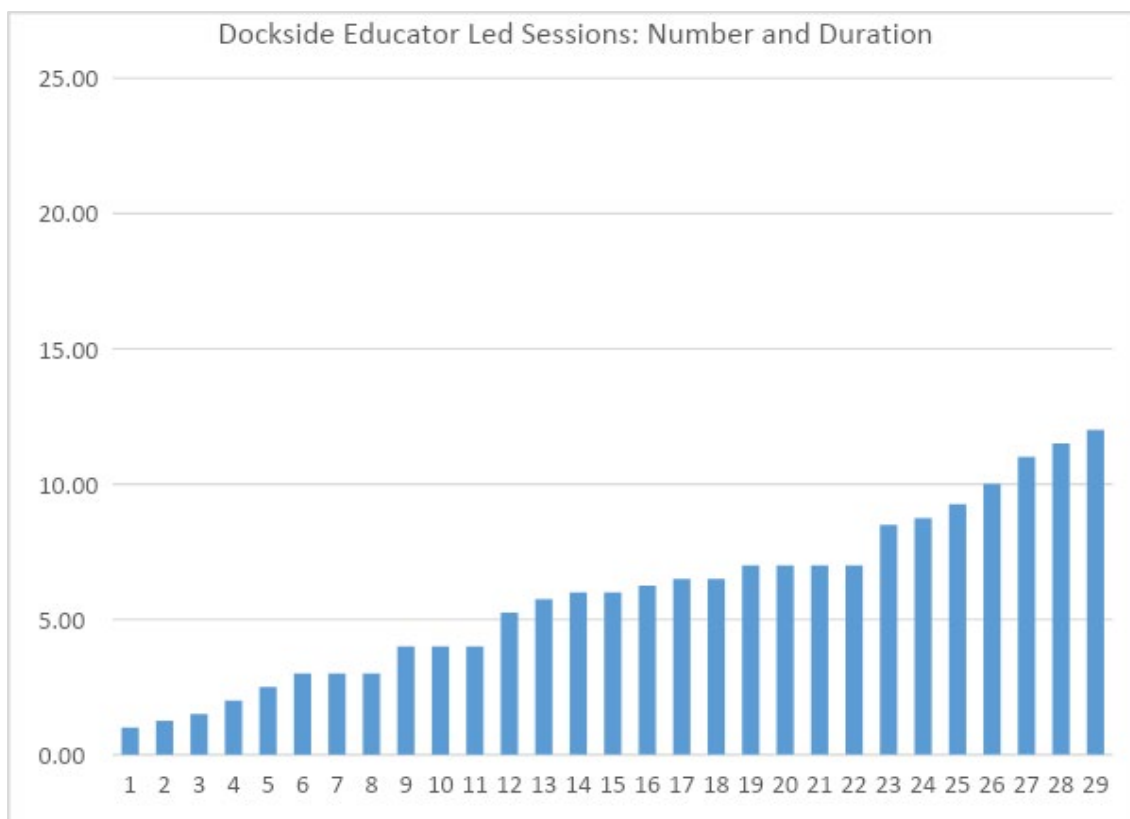
Figure 7.3 Dockside Educator Led Sessions
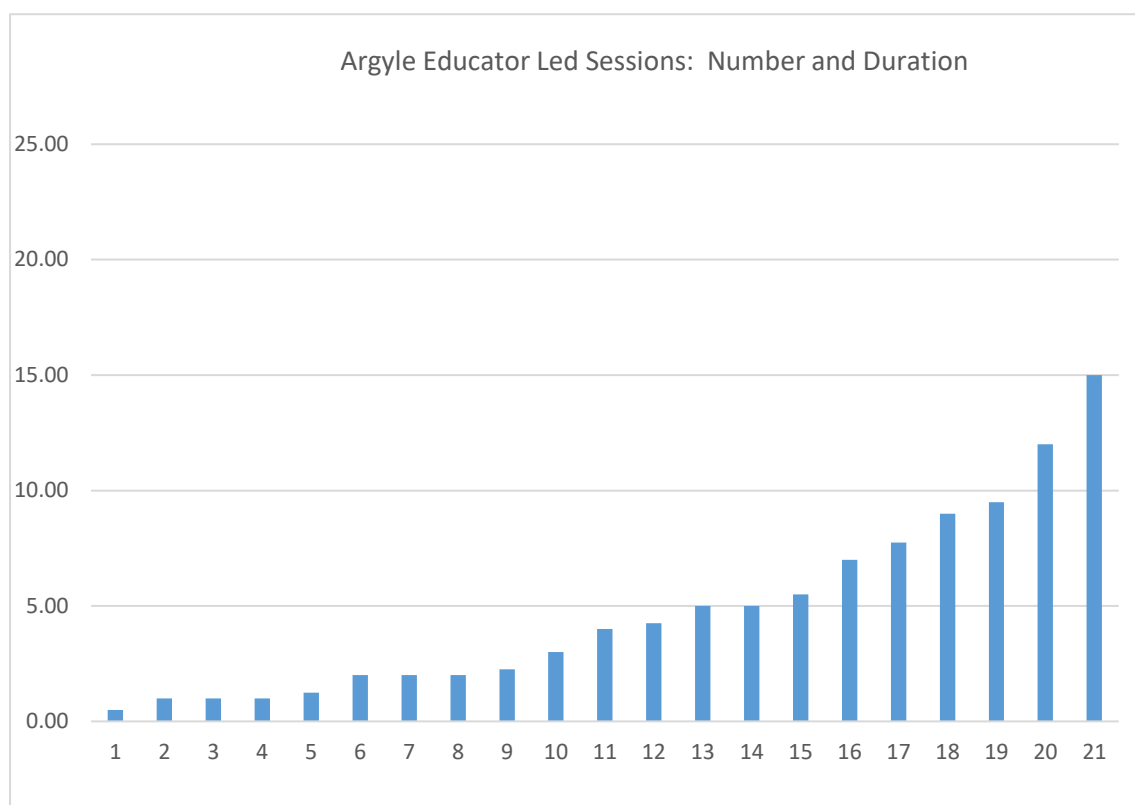
Figure 7.4 Argyle Educator Led Sessions

This analysis identified that both within and between the centres the number (21- 51) and duration (0.5 minutes - 22 minutes) of the educator led sessions showed considerable variation.

Table 7.2 shows statistics relating to the duration of educator led sessions for each centre. This table also includes, in the final column, the number of sessions that were within 2 minutes of the recommended 15 minutes (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001).

Table 7.2 *Duration of the Educator Led Book Sharing Sessions*

Duration of Educator Led Book Sharing Sessions					
Centre	**Range (minutes)**	**Mean Duration (minutes)**	**Median Duration (minutes)**	**Mode Duration (minutes)**	**No Meeting 15 (+-2 min)**
Riverview	1.5-22	8.75	8	5	7
Community	.5-12.5	3.75	3	3	0
Dockside	1-12	5.75	6	6.25	0
Argyle	.5-15	4.75	4	2	1

It was evident from this analysis that the amount of time educators spent reading to children varied greatly in relation to overall time, the number of sessions and the duration of the sessions – see Figure 7.5.
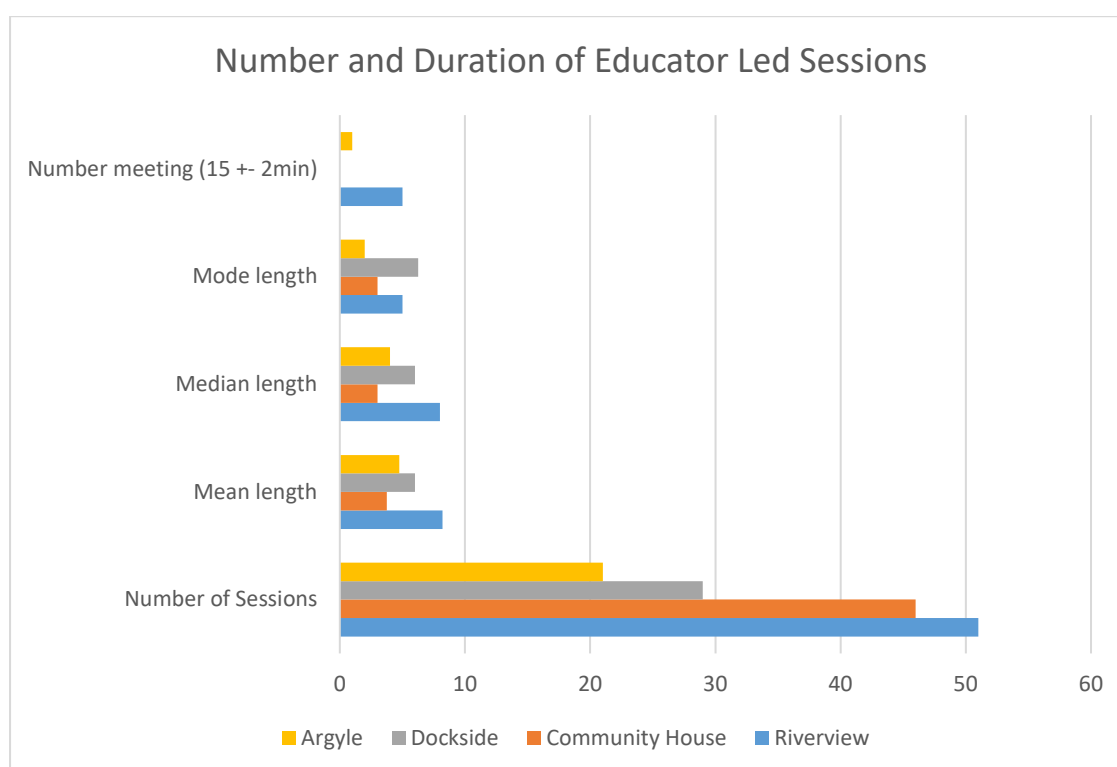
Figure 7.5 Number and Duration of Educator Led Book Sharing Sessions

Of particular note was that Riverview had a much higher amount of time spent on book sharing or reading by educators (276.75 - 353.75 minutes higher) and in total (216 – 307 minutes higher) than did any of the other three centres. These results are discussed further in relation to other aspects of educator practice in the following sections.

Book Reading Sessions

The following section presents findings related to the nature of the observed book reading sessions. This includes details about the structure of these sessions, including group sizes, individual involvement of children, duration of sessions and the books selected and used.

Group Sizes

Analysis of the observations showed that the nature of the educator led reading sessions varied in relation to the number of children involved in the sessions. The following table shows group size in educator led book reading sessions in each centre. The descriptions of group sizes are those used in the SABR (Justice et al., 2010). The final column, Whole Group/Mandatory, shows how many of the sessions were whole group and/or mandatory for children. In the first three centres, therefore, this category is a sub category of the Large Group, showing how many of the Large Group sessions were also Whole Group Sessions with a requirement or expectation for all children to participate. In the case of Argyle, with such a small number of children, the bracketed figures show how many of either the Large Group and Small Group sessions were also Whole Group sessions, so for Argyle, this a sub category of the small and large groups sessions.

Table 7.3 *Group Sizes for Educator Led Book Sharing Sessions*

Centre	Group Sizes for Educator Led Book Sharing Sessions				
	1 Child	**2 Children**	**Small Group (3-6 children)**	**Large Group (7+ children)**	**Whole Group Mandatory**
Riverview	6	17	23	5	1
Community	8	6	20	13	6
Dockside	5	3	5	16	14
Argyle	7	1	10	3	10 (3LG, 7SG)

As with the results reported earlier regarding the number and duration of sessions, this analysis showed considerable variation between the centres. Of note, is that in Dockside and Argyle, a large proportion of the sessions were large group sessions and/or sessions in which all children present were required to take part. The following table shows the percentage of total educator led sessions that were also large group sessions.

Table 7.4 *Percentage of Educator Led Large Group Sessions*

Centre	Percentage of Educator Led Large Group Sessions
Riverview	10%
Community	28%
Dockside	55%
Argyle	14%

Involvement in Book Sharing by Individual Children

Analysis of the amount of time individual children were involved in book reading (individual) or sharing (with an educator) showed considerable variation both within each centre and across all centres. The following table shows the time involvement of children by range, mean and median for each centre and overall. All figures are rounded to the nearest 0.25 of a minute.

Table 7.5 *Overall Time Involvement in Book Reading or Sharing for Individual Children*

Overall Involvement by Children in Reading or Book Sharing			
Centre	Range	Mean	Median
Riverview	10.75-162.25	56.00	44.50
Community	7.00-129.75	51.00	40.75
Dockside	98.75-158.25	117.00	109.25
Argyle	9-114.75	42.00	26.55
Overall	7.00-162.25	72.00	67.00

As all centres had either implicit or explicit expectations for all children to be involved in whole group sessions, the time they chose to spend involved in other book related activities was calculated. The following table shows these times to the nearest 0.25 minutes and includes the percentage of children who did not choose book related activities outside of the mandatory group sessions.

Table 7.6 *Involvement of Children in Book Reading or Sharing Sessions Other than Whole Group*

Involvement by Children in Reading or Book Sharing Excluding WG Sessions				
Centre	Range	Mean	Median	% of children @ 0
Riverview	0.00 - 151.50	45.00	35.00	14%
Community	0.00 - 101.75	36.5	24.25	5%
Dockside	0.00 - 60.00	18.50	11.00	3%
Argyle	0.00 - 79.25	20.50	13.00	6%
Overall	0.00 - 151.50	31.27	22.75	7.5%

This table shows that the variation between centres, and between individual children was considerable. Particularly striking was the range of reading or book sharing time by individual children. While all centres had some children at zero, the most time spent by an individual across the observation period ranged from just 60 minutes (or 12 minutes per day) in Dockside, to 151.50 minutes (or 26.3 minutes per day) in Riverview. Interestingly, the centre with the highest range, mean and median times, (Riverview) had the greatest percentage of children (14%) who did not engage with books outside of the Whole Group sessions.

This analysis showed that in all centres there were some children who were only involved in book reading or sharing sessions when there were whole group sessions with an expectation to participate. Also of interest is that in three centres (Community House, Dockside and Argyle) where there was a mandated individual "reading time" on some or all observation days, there were still some children who did no independent reading. However, field notes and attendance data offered an explanation for some of the children (n = 3) in Argyle who were absent on the two days when these sessions were held. In Dockside, some of the younger children were asleep during the designated "reading time". In Community House, observations and field notes confirmed that some children did not engage with books despite educators nominating observed sessions as a "time for reading".

Furthermore, the analysis showed that children in Dockside and Argyle where restrictions were sometimes placed on access to books used them less outside of whole group sessions than did children in Riverview and Community House where there was access to books throughout each day. The analysis also showed that individual children in Dockside, the centre with the largest number of Whole Group sessions, spent the least amount of time in book sharing or reading, (0 – 60 minutes, with an average of 18 minutes) outside of these mandatory whole group sessions.

Secondary analysis identified how children's decisions to be involved in book reading or sharing was possibly influenced by educator involvement. Table 7.7 shows the educator led reading

Table 7.7 *Children's Involvement in Educator Led Sessions by Child's Choice*

Children's Involvement In Ed led Sessions Initiated by Children				
Centre	**Range**	**Mean**	**Median**	**% @ 0**
Riverview	0.00 - 137.00	36.50	32.00	13.5
Community	2.25 - 53.50	18.75	15.5	0
Dockside	0.00 - 34.50	4.5	0.00	65%
Argyle	0.00 - 16.00	2.5	0.50	47%
Overall	**0.00 - 137**	**15.5**	**8.00**	**32.5%**

or book sharing that was initiated by children who chose to be involved. The table also shows the percentage of children who recorded zero time in these types of book sharing or reading activities.

This analysis showed that a high percentage of children in Dockside (65%) and Argyle (47%) did not initiate educator led sessions or choose to participate in those initiated by other children. An examination of the interview and observational data suggests that these results may have been influenced by two factors. First, in these two centres there were fewer opportunities for this type of session to take place due to restricted book access. Second, the more structured nature of activities and operation in these two sites meant educators were less available to read with children. Children's opportunity to initiate educator led book sharing was even more restricted in Argyle because for the majority of the time only one educator was available and she had responsibility for overall supervision, making her unavailable to read unless all were involved.

Table 7.8 shows the involvement of children in voluntary independent reading or engagement with books. This includes the percentage of children in each centre who did not engage in this type of book sharing or reading activities.

Table 7.8 *Children's Involvement in Independent "Reading" by Child's Choice*

Children's Involvement In Independent Reading by Child's Own Choice					
Centre	Range	Mean	Median	Mode	% of children @ 0
Riverview	0.00 - 54.00	9.0	0.00	0.00	49%
Community	0.0 - 24.00	5.00	2.5	0.00	27%
Dockside	0.00 - 28.50	8	6.5	0.00	14.7
Argyle	0.0 - 69.25	13.5	5.5	0.00	18%
Overall	**0.00 - 69.25**	**8.5**	**3.00**	**0.00**	**29.5%**

Further exploration of these results using observational and interview data suggests that in Riverview and Community House the comparatively higher percentages of children who did not choose to read independently may be largely explained by the endorsed practice of educators offering to read if a child showed interest in a book. As a result, these centres had a higher percentage of children involved in educator led sessions while the percentages were lower for individual sessions.

In Dockside and Argyle, related data from the researchers' field notes suggest that these centres had more explicit protocols guiding access to books and involvement in whole group book sharing. Despite this attention to book sharing, analysis of field notes showed most children in these

two centres showed less overall interest in choosing to access books individually or in taking part in spontaneous educator led sessions.

Importantly, these results showed that greater access to educator involvement in reading and book sharing was related to children's increased participation in these types of activities. While educator involvement influenced general results, individual children's involvement in book sharing was influenced by the level of interest they demonstrated.

Overall, these results show that the nature and type of involvement of children in book sharing activities varied among the centres with the nature of educators' involvement and availability as well as the children's choices being factors in the participation of children in book sharing.

Involvement Finding One: Children's participation in book reading or sharing was impacted by educator involvement and availability and by the interests of the children themselves.

Book Selection for Sessions

This section presents findings related to children's book selection. As outlined in Chapter 3: Method, and subsequently, reported in Chapter 6: The Second Aspect Part A: Documented and Reported Book Sharing Practices, the Overarching Themes identified in the books matched the purpose of the sessions for which these books were used. Therefore, in this section the book selections made by children are classified according to the Overarching Themes identified in the books (See Chapter 5: The Book Environment for more details about the categorisation protocols).

Table 7.9 shows the percentage of times a child selected a book for sharing sessions by Overarching Theme.

Table 7.9 Percentage of *Children's Book Selection by Overarching Theme*

Centre	Percentage of Children's Book Selection for Sharing Sessions by Overarching Theme			
	Early Childhood Content and Skills	**Imagination, Fantasy, Humour**	**Dispositions, Morals, Life Lessons**	**Religion, Customs, Beliefs, Celebrations**
Riverview	91	98	90	66
Community	95	94	83	0
Dockside	90	93.5	10	NA
Argyle	85	89.5	66	NA
Overall	**90.5**	**93.5**	**90**	**57**

This evidence shows that children selected the texts for most of the book sharing sessions relating to *early childhood content and skills*, and those relating to *imagination, fantasy or humour*. Children also chose the majority of books relating to *dispositions, morals or life lessons,* though this was somewhat less so in Argyle and strikingly less so in Dockside. Of interest, is that Riverview was the only centre in which children selected texts relating to *religion, cultural customs, celebrations or beliefs*, and this selection was considerably less (66%) that when books were selected by children for the other three Overarching Themes in this centre (90-98%). The only other centre in which books relating to *religion, cultural customs, celebrations or beliefs* were used was Community House and children did not make these selections. However, as reported in Chapter 5: The First Aspect: The Book Environment, books from this theme were not available to children and, on a few occasions, when children were observed to request books from this theme after educators had selected and shared them they were not permitted to do so.

This evidence suggests that children's interests in certain books and types of books influenced the selection of books for use across most categories of books but especially those in the *early childhood content and skills* category, and those belonging to *imagination, fantasy or humour*. However, as reported in Chapter 6: The Second Aspect Part A - Documented and Reported Book Sharing Practices it was the educators' perceptions of children's interests that determined which books were made available for children to select. Thus, in this way, educators' perceptions of children's interests influenced the children's seemingly independent selection of books by determining which books the children could select from.

Member checking and observational records showed that when educators selected books from the category of *early childhood content and skills*, or *imagination, fantasy or humour*, they chose those they believed the children would be interested in or those that were well-known favourites of the children's or theirs. Further, in the sessions in which an educator selected a book from the category of *dispositions, morals or life lessons*, they did so with the intention of using the book to teach children about behaviour management skills rather than broader social and emotional development. In an example of this from Community House, an educator (Lily) selected and read a book called, "When I'm feeling Angry" to the children shortly after a child had had an angry outburst in the room. When asked about her actions, Lily replied that she had selected this book to respond to the child's outburst by focusing on ways to manage feelings of anger in the text. Similarly, when an educator selected a book from the category of *religion, cultural customs or celebrations*, they did so with the intention of teaching children about cultural celebrations (Riverview) or Indigenous Language preservation (Community House). As such, their purpose was to focus on just on "special"

celebrations or aspects of culture rather than "culture" as the way people live their everyday lives and the way people view the world they live in.

Thus, this evidence relating to the book selection for the sessions in the observation period support findings reported in Chapter 6 as Key Finding Three: There was a strong relationship between the different educator motivations and the selection and use of books from the differing Overarching Themes.

Impact of Educators on Children's Book Selection

In order to explore further the ways in which educators influenced children's book choices, the observational data was analysed to ascertain whether children favoured books previously shared with them by educators. The following table shows the percentage of books read by educators and subsequently made available to the children that were later selected by children. The table also shows the percentage of books that were selected for multiple readings and the range of sessions were books were re-read.

Table 7.10 *Children's Selection of Texts Previously Read by an Educator*

Children's Selection of Texts Previously Read by an Educator			
Centre	% Subsequently Selected by Children	% Selected for Multiple Sessions	Range of Sessions
Riverview	90	60	1-11
Community House	70	38	1-13
Dockside	73	42	1-12
Argyle	75	25	1-4
Overall	**76**	**43**	**1-13**

This analysis showed that following an educator led session, if the book used in that session was then made available to children, it was highly likely to later be selected by a child for independent reading or to request an educator to read again. Many of the books shared by educators were also selected by children for multiple re-readings.

Educator Impact Finding One: children were highly likely to select books that had previously been read to them by an educator.

Importantly, this finding has parallels with Involvement Finding One reported earlier in this chapter; that is, children's participation in book reading or sharing is impacted by the factors of educator requirements and practice, and by the interests of the children themselves.

Time Spent on Different Categories of Books

This section reports findings from analysis of the amount of time educators and children spent in book reading or sharing sessions during the observation period. The time spent was further analysed according to the Overarching Themes and Cultural Diversity Categories of the books used. The findings from this analysis add to those related to the nature of books used as reported in Chapter 5: The Book Environment. It quantifies the relative use of these categories using time as a measure.

Overarching Themes Identified in the Books

The time spent reading or sharing books according to their Overarching Theme was calculated and the total time books with each Overarching Theme were used was compared. Figure 7.6 shows the percentage of time books with each Overarching Theme were used, including in both educator led and individual sessions, across all centres. Figure 7.7 shows the percentage of educator led time spent using books with each of the Overarching Themes across all centres.

Percentage of Total Time by Overarching Themes

2%
11%
16%
71%

■ Early childhood content and themes
■ Imagination/fanstasy/humour
■ Dispostions/Morals/life lessons
■ Religion/Cultural Customs/Celebrations/Beliefs
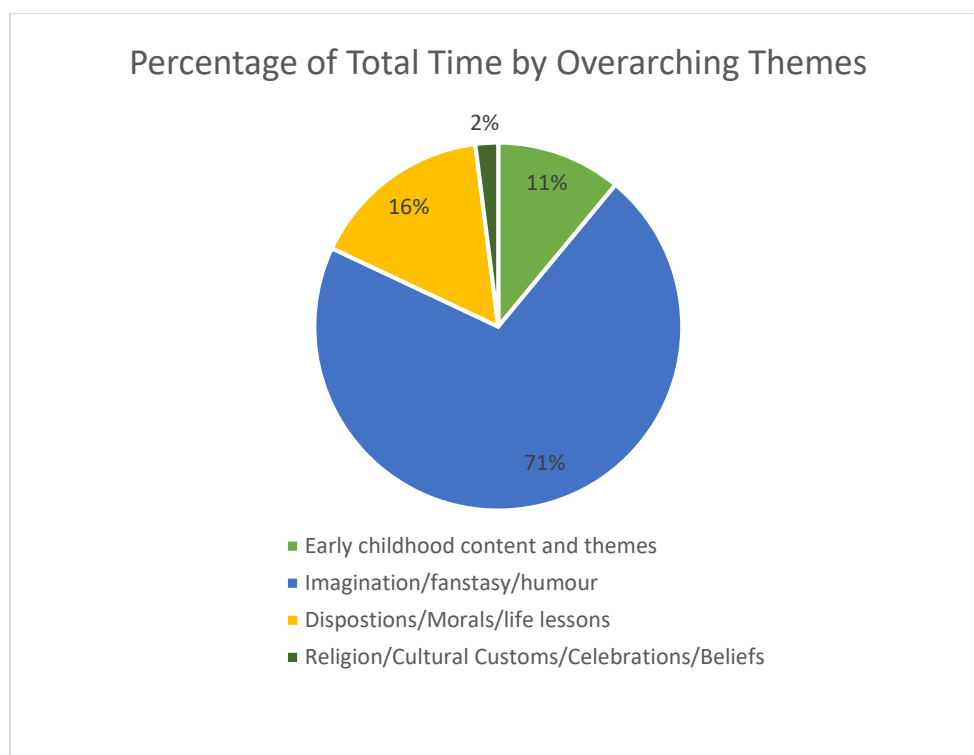
Figure 7.6 Percentage of Overall Time by Overarching Themes

This analysis shows that the majority of book sharing time was with books from the Overarching Theme of *imagination, fantasy or humour.* It is interesting to note is that children reading independently were even more likely to engage with books relating to the Overarching Theme of *imagination, fantasy and humour*. The total percentage of time for that Overarching

Theme which included independent reading by children was 5% higher (71%) than that relating only to educator led time (66%). Whereas, the educators' percentage of time using books with the other three Overarching Themes was 1-2% higher than the overall percentage of time which included independent reading by children.
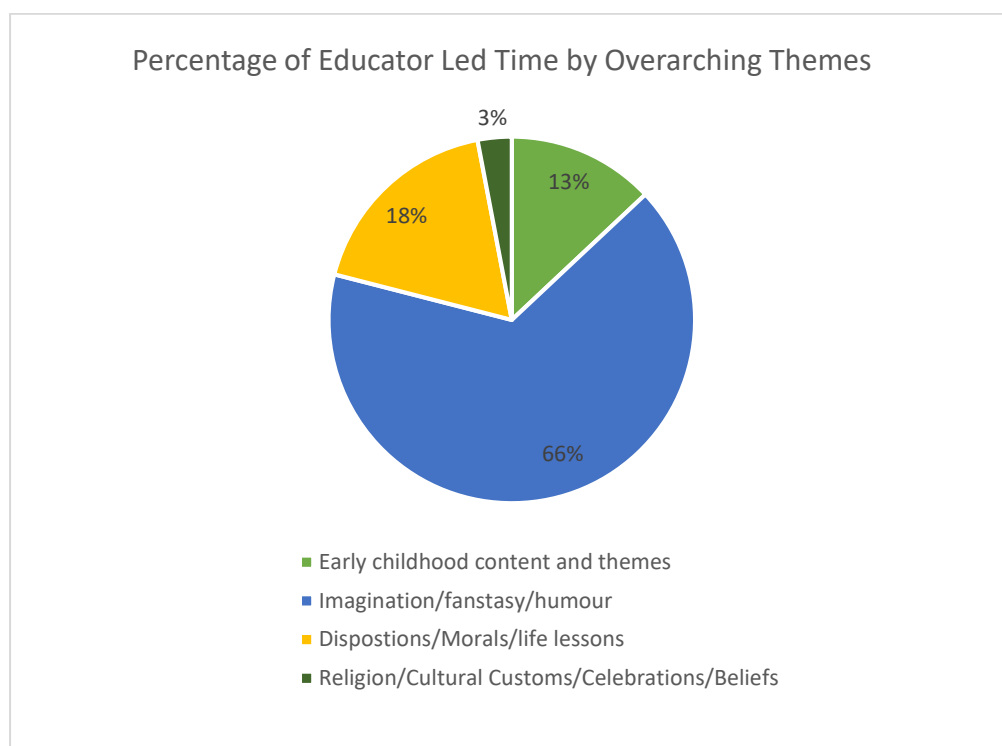
Figure 7.7 Percentage of Educator Time by Overarching Themes

Further comparison showed that time spent using the different types of books in centres varied considerably. Table 7.11 shows the time spent using books with each Overarching Theme for each centre and Table 7.12 shows the educator led time using books with each Overarching Theme for each centre.

Table 7.11 *Percentage of Time Using Books with Each Overarching Theme by Centre*

Percentage of Time Spent on Each Overarching Theme				
Centre	Early Childhood Content and Skills	Imagination, Fantasy, Humour	Dispositions, Morals, Life Lessons	Religion, Customs, Beliefs, Celebrations
Riverview	9.50	57.5	30.00	3.00
Community House	19.5	63	14.5	2.5
Dockside	9	82	9	0
Argyle	9	87.5	3	0
OVERALL	**11**	**71**	**16**	**2**

Table 7.12 *Percentage of Educator Led Time Using Books with Each Overarching Theme by Centre*

Percentage of Educator Led Time Using Books with Each Overarching Theme by Centre				
Centre	Early Childhood Content and Skills	Imagination, Fantasy, Humour	Dispositions, Morals, Life Lessons	Religion, Customs, Celebrations, Beliefs
Riverview	11.5	58.5	25.5	4
Community House	24.5	55	14.5	5.5
Dockside	8	85	7	0
Argyle	**8**	**83**	**9**	**0**
OVERALL	**13**	**66**	**18**	**3**

This evidence shows Riverview and Community House were the only centres in which books from the Overarching Theme of *religion, cultural customs, celebrations or beliefs* were used by educators and children, albeit for a small proportion of time. These two centres also had a greater spread of reading time across the Overarching Themes for both educator led and total time compared with the others. In comparison, Dockside and Argyle had over 80% of all reading time for both measures spent with books relating to *imagination, fantasy or humour*.

Cultural Diversity Categories

The books used were further analysed according to their identified Cultural Diversity Categories (See Chapter 5: The Book Environment for more details about the categorisation protocols). The time spent, including in both educator led and individual child reading, with books from each Cultural Diversity Category was calculated and the results are shown in Figure 7.8. The percentage of educator led time spent using books from each of the Cultural Diversity categories was then calculated and these results are presented in Figure 7.9.
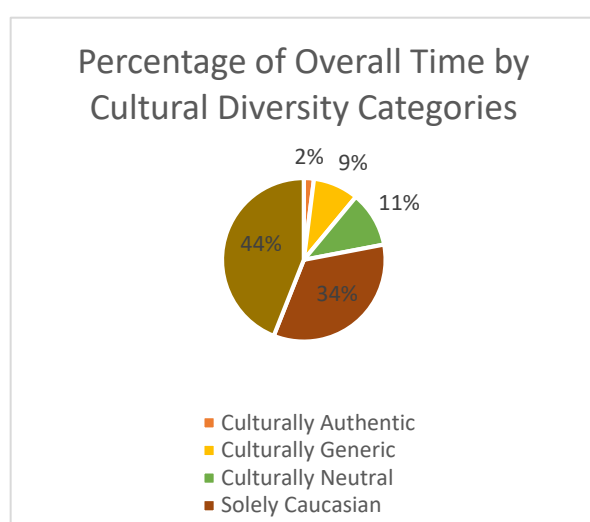
Figure 7.8 Overall Book Sharing Time by Cultural Diversity Categories
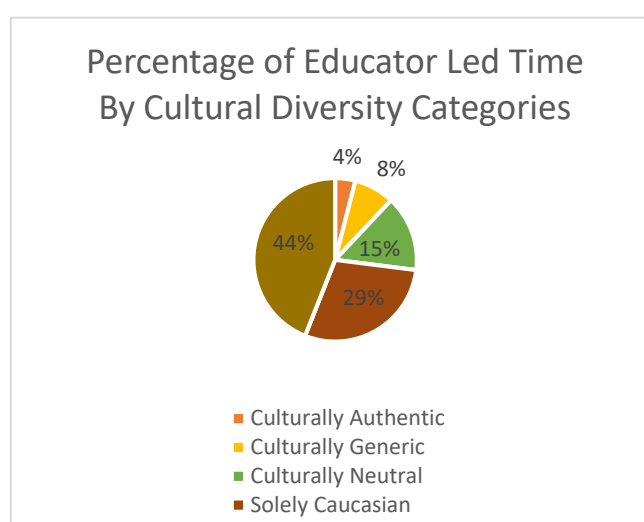
Figure 7.9 Overall Educator Led Time by Cultural Diversity Categories

The differences between the percentages of overall time and that of educator led sessions suggest that children reading independently were more likely to engage with books containing Solely Caucasian characters or people than those belonging to the other categories. The total percentage of time using books from the Solely Caucasian Category which included independent reading by children was 6% higher than that relating only to educator sessions. These results also show the educators' percentage of time using books containing some cultural diversity was 5% higher than the overall percentage of time which included independent reading by children. Interestingly the percentage of time spent with books containing no people was constant across both types of book sharing sessions.

Further analysis was undertaken to allow for comparisons across the centres. The overall time spent using books from each Cultural Diversity Category for each centre was calculated and are reported in Table 7.13 below. The time spent using books from each Cultural Diversity Category in educator led sessions in each centre was calculated and is reported in Table 7.14 below.

Table 7.13 *Percentage of Overall Time by Each Cultural Diversity Category by Centre*

Percentage of Overall Time Spent on each Cultural Diversity Category					
Centre	Culturally Authentic	Generic	Culturally Neutral	Solely Caucasian	No People
Riverview	0.00	8.5	16	32	43.5
Community House	9.50	0	7.5	30	53
Dockside	0.00	10	13	38	39
Argyle	0.00	18.50	3	35	43
Overall % Time	**2**	**9**	**11**	**34**	**44**

Table 7.14 *Percentage of Educator Led Time by Books from Each Cultural Diversity Category by Centre*

Percentage of Educator Led Time for the Cultural Diversity Categories					
Centre	Culturally Authentic	Generic	Culturally Neutral	Solely Caucasian	No People
Riverview	0.00	6	23.5	30.5	40
Community House	20.00	0	4.5	18	57
Dockside	0.00	29	9	33	28.5
Argyle	0.00	10.5	0	27	62.5
Overall % Ed Time	**4**	**9.5**	**14.5**	**28**	**44**

Importantly, this analysis shows that the majority of children in this study spent no book sharing time using culturally authentic books. Community House was the only centre where children

spent any time being exposed to Culturally Authentic books and this was mostly in educator led sessions. While children spent time with books reflecting some cultural diversity, this varied across centres and types of sessions. Children in all centres except Argyle, were more likely to spend time with books containing some level of cultural diversity in educator led sessions than when reading independently.

Findings Relating to the Viewpoints and Ideologies Presented in the Books Used

The data relating to the time spent on the books according to their Cultural Diversity Category was compared with that related to the viewpoints and ideologies presented in the books used (as reported in Chapter 5: The Book Environment). This comparison showed that in Riverview, Dockside and Argyle, 100% of the time spent in book sharing or reading was with books presenting dominant culture viewpoints and ideologies. In Community House, 80% of educator led time and 90.5% of overall time was with books presenting dominant viewpoints or ideologies. This is despite this centre being the only one where Culturally Authentic books were used.

Book Use Finding One: Children were more likely to use books containing some cultural diversity in educator led sessions than when reading independently.

Book Use Finding Two: All of the book reading and sharing time in three centres and over 90% in the fourth centre was with books that promoted dominant culture viewpoints and ideologies. The limited use of books that promoted minority culture viewpoints and ideologies in one centre related to the purpose of preserving an Indigenous language.

Children's Use of Culturally Diverse Books

Further analysis was undertaken to calculate the total time individual children used books which reflected cultural diversity. The results from this analysis are presented as overall percentages of time spent using books reflecting cultural diversity followed by the mean, median and mode for these times. These results are presented in Table 7.15.

Table 7.15 *Children's Time Using Books Containing Cultural Diversity*

Children's Length of Time Using Books Containing Cultural Diversity						
Centre	% of Children with No Use	% of Children Using Books	Range (Time)	Mean (Time)	Median (Time)	Mode (Time)
Riverview	27	73	0 - 61.5	16.00	11.50	0.00
Community	19	81	0 - 37.25	15.00	14.00	0.00
Dockside	0	100	54 - 85	58.00	54.00	54.00
Argyle	41	59	0 - 33.75	7.40	2.00	0.00
Overall %	**19.5**	**80.5**	**0 - 85**	**27.58**	**21.50**	**0.00**

This analysis shows that nearly 20% of children did not spend any time using books portraying any category of cultural diversity. For children who did use books with some cultural diversity, the time they spent using these types of texts varied across the centres (37 minutes - 85 minutes). The average time spent by children with books containing some cultural diversity was less than 28 minutes across the five day observation period (5.6 minutes per day) and, this too varied across the centres (7.40-58 minutes or 1.5-11.6 minutes per day). This data was compared with the children's overall involvement in book sharing (Table 7.5) which showed that in Riverview and Community House, these children used books portraying cultural diversity for approximately one third or less of the average total time they spent using books. In Argyle, the average time using books portraying diversity was a sixth of the average overall reading or book sharing time. In Dockside, the average was close to half of the average overall exposure to books. Thus, when children were exposed to culturally diverse books it was for a minority of their overall time of engagement in books.

> **Book Use Finding Three:** 19.5% of children did not use any books reflecting cultural diversity. For most of the children who were exposed to some books containing cultural diversity, the time spent with these books was a small proportion of their overall reading and book sharing time.

7.3 Quality of Book Sharing and Child Engagement

The following section presents findings related to the quality of educator book sharing practice and the engagement of children in the observed book reading and sharing sessions. These findings are from the analysis of video recorded observations of all book sharing by educators and children.

7.3.1 Quality of Educator Book Reading Practice

This section presents results relating to the educators' use of instructional supports, the book reading contexts and the session climate as measured by the Systematic Assessment of Book Reading Instrument (SABR) (Justice et al., 2010). As outlined in Chapter 3: Method, a purposeful sample of 20% of the educator led sessions in each centre was selected for the SABR analysis. The criteria used to select the 30 sessions were sessions in which literature containing cultural diversity was read, sessions to represent a variety of group sizes from Individual to Whole Group (for Whole Group the longest session was selected), at least one session involving the Lead Educator for each centre, and at least one session at, or closest to, the recommended duration of 15 minutes.

Instructional Supports

Using the SABR, a time sampling approach was applied to quantify the four instructional supports educators use when sharing books with children as measured by the SABR. These supports

are categorised as Language Development, Abstract Thinking, Elaborations, and Print/Phonological Skills (Justice et al., 2010) (For further information on these instructional supports see Chapter 3: Method). The 30 selected sessions were each analysed using this approach. Following this, for each of these sessions, the number of times each instructional support had been used in that session was divided by the length of the session in order to calculate the number of times each instructional support was used per minute of book sharing. These figures were then multiplied by the average book sharing session length (see Table 7.2) for each centre in order to produce a comparable set of data that reflected the frequency of educator use of the instructional supports for the average session in each centre. Figure 7.10 shows the use of the instructional supports compared across centres according to the average session length of each centre.
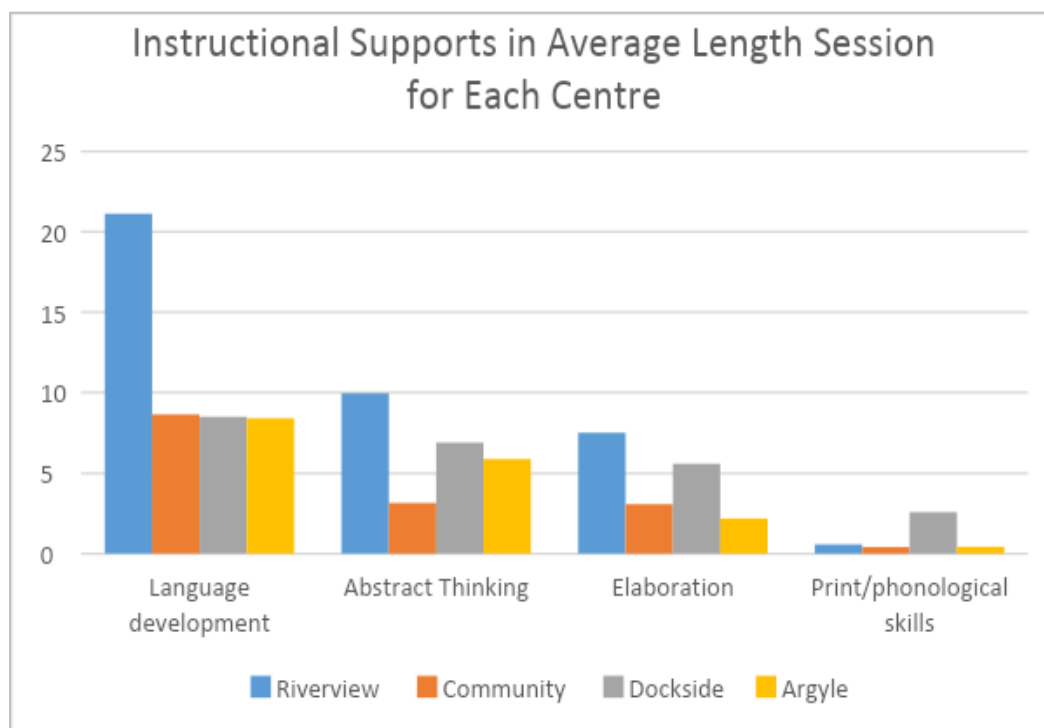
Figure 7.10 SABR Instructional Supports for an Average Length Session by Centre

This analysis shows that the educators' relative use of the four instructional strategies varied both within and across centres. However, all educators used the instructional support of language development more frequently that the other three supports in all four centres. To more closely examine variations in educator practice across centres the use of instructional strategies was calculated for the average educator led session length across centres (6 minutes). The results of this analysis are presented in Figure 7.11.
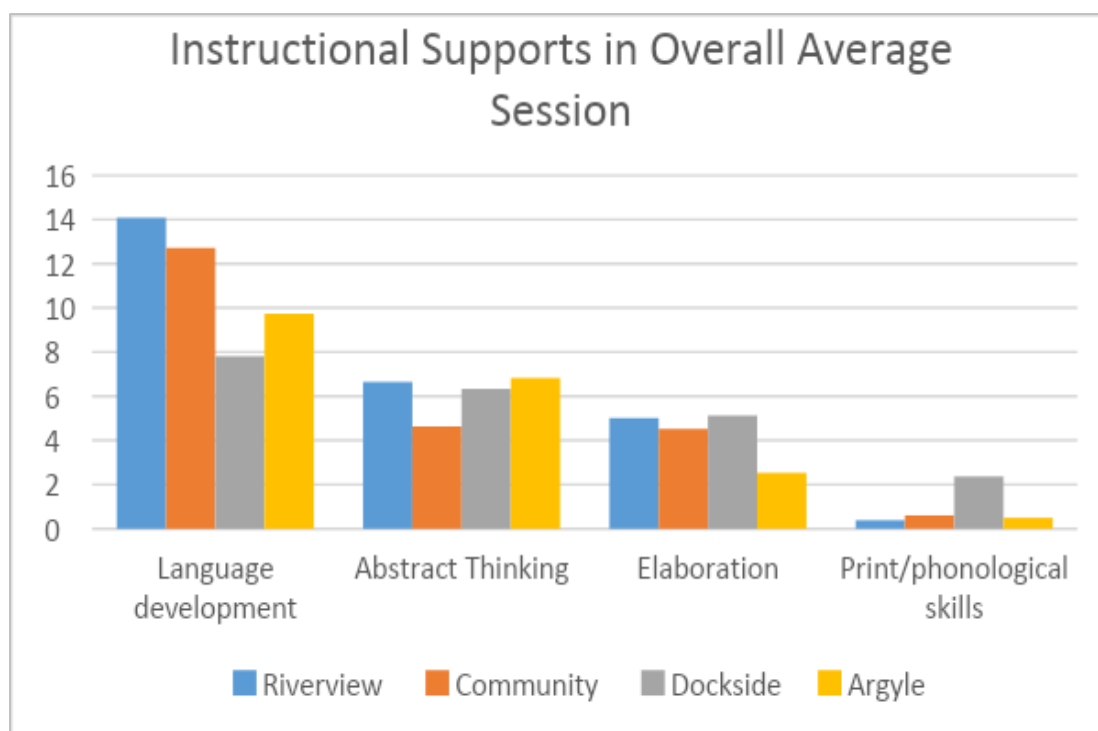
Figure 7.11 SABR Instructional Supports for Each Centre by Overall Average Session Length

This evidence again shows variation between centres regarding the number of times each instructional support was used in each session. However, it shows that educators provided more instructional supports for language development than for the other categories followed by abstract thinking, then elaborations and the least use of supports for developing print/phonological skills. The only small exception to this was in Dockside in which the use of supports for abstract thinking and elaboration were similar.

Book Reading Context

As outlined in Chapter 3: Method, The SABR also measures the book reading context through evaluating the support of Session Climate (Justice et al., 2010) which is quantitatively measured through the same time sampling approach used for the four instructional supports and this measures the strategies used by the educators to support the maintenance of a positive session climate. The book reading context is further evaluated through two qualitative Global Rating scales: The Global Rating Scale for Behaviour Management and The Global Rating Scale for Reading Delivery. Finally the SABR scoring allows for further qualitative comments regarding observed educator or child conduct. This section reports on the nature of the book reading contexts as measured through these components of the SABR.

The session climate supports for each of the 30 coded sessions were calculated per minute for each session. These figures were then multiplied by the average overall book educator led book

sharing length (6 minutes) in order to produce a comparable set of data that reflected the frequency of educator use of session climate supports for each centre. Figure 7.12 shows the use of the instructional supports compared across centres according to the average session length of each centre.
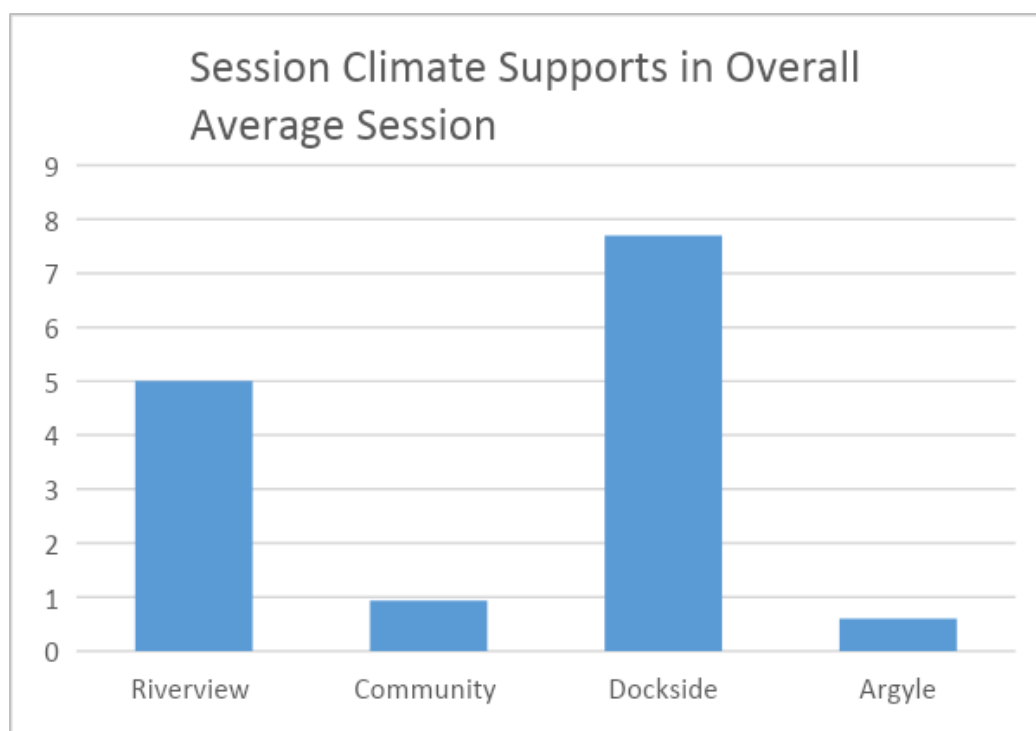
Figure 7.12 SABR Session Climate Supports for Each Centre by Overall Average Session Length

This evidence shows that educators in Riverview and Dockside provided high levels of support for a positive session climate and these were much higher than those in Community House and Dockside.

When the qualitative results from the Global Rating Scale for Behaviour Management were viewed, the educators in Riverview and Dockside consistently rated at Moderate to High on the measure of behaviour measurement, indicating proactive and positive approaches were applied during the reading sessions. In addition, for Riverview the coders recorded several positive comments relating to noteworthy or excellent supports. In contrast the Global Rating Scale for Behaviour Management indicated that the educators in Community House and Argyle consistently rated at Low to Moderate, indicating the use of reactive approaches during the reading sessions. In addition, qualitative comments recorded extreme incidents of child behaviour such as biting, kicking and screaming, as well as educator responses or actions of over-controlling or distraction resulting in interruptions to the flow of the sessions recorded for these centres.

Interestingly, the Global Rating Scale for Reading Delivery showed that Riverview, Dockside and Argyle all rated as consistently Medium to High for reading delivery, while Community House consistently rated as Low to Moderate.

These results for the SABR measures for book reading context were compared with the SABR measures for the use of the four instructional supports. This comparison showed two main contexts for book reading and these are summarised into Book Reading Practice Quality One:

Book Reading Practice Quality Finding One: Patterns of educator use of instructional support for book reading were similar across all centres, with those relating to language development being the most commonly used. However, the book reading contexts were found to be of two main types; one characterised by high session climate support, high quality behaviour management and positive educator behaviour, and the other by low session climate support, less effective behaviour management strategies and evidence of negative educator responses/actions.

Relationships between Instructional Supports, Group Size, Session Length and Session Climate

Secondary analysis compared the data related to instructional supports and session climate with that related to group size and session length to identify any patterns and relationships. As reported earlier, language development was the most common instructional support used by educators in all the centres. However, further analysis found that six of the eight sessions (75%) in which the supports of abstract thinking and/or elaborations outnumbered those focussed on language development were small group sessions. Interestingly, one of the remaining sessions, while categorised as a large group, had only 7 children (the minimum number for this category). Additionally, these sessions were close to the average session length (range 8.5 -16 minutes) or longer and all received high quality rankings for session climate support. Reading delivery was ranked High in six (75%) of these sessions with the other two (25%) ranked as Moderate. And in all of these sessions, the behaviour management was rated as either moderately or highly effective, with no negative comments for teacher or child behaviour being recorded.

This evidence suggests a relationship between group size and session length and the quality of the session climate and behaviour management in book sharing sessions in this study.

Book Reading Practice Quality Finding Two: Small group sessions that were longer than the overall average duration and characterised by quality reading delivery, a positive session climate and positive behavioural management also had a greater number of instructional supports for abstract thinking and elaborations.

7.3.2 Children's Engagement in Educator Led Book Reading Sessions

This section presents findings relating to the engagement of children in educator led reading or book sharing sessions as measured by the Children's Orientation to Book Reading Scale (COB) (Kadervarek & Hunt, 2009). As outlined in Chapter 3: Method, a sample of children was selected from each centre and their engagement was measured using the COB. Selection of this sample was through purposeful sampling from those children participating in the video recorded sessions that had been analysed with the SABR. In addition, all children visible on the video of individual or small group sessions were analysed with COB. In those large or whole group sessions videoed, a child from each quartile of overall reading time was selected. Where a target child was not visible in the recording, the next best match was selected. The engagement of children selected through this purposeful sampling was analysed using the COB scale. Individual children's COB scores were calculated and then averaged for each centre.

Table 7.16 shows the number of COB ratings, the number of children rated and the number of children rated more than once for each centre. Finally, the average COB score for each centre (1-4, with 4 being highest level of engagement) is presented. This analysis showed that children in Riverview were more likely to show higher engagement scores than the children in the other three centres. These COB scores were then compared with other results to identify patterns and relationships.

Table 7.16 *Number of Children Rated for Engagement and Average COB Score per Centre*

Children Rated using COB			
Centre	**Number of COB Ratings**	**Number of Individual Children Rated**	**Number of Children Rated Multiple Times**	**Average COB Score for Each Centre**
Riverview	17	14	3	3.05
Community House	24	14	8	2.6
Dockside	20	15	3	2.7
Argyle	23	11	6	2.54
OVERALL	**84**	**54**	**20**	**2.709**

Engagement, Group Size and Session Quality

Secondary analysis compared the children's COB scores with group size, session length and session climate to identify possible patterns and relationships. All the children who demonstrated low engagement (scores of 1) did so in Whole Group or Large Group sessions. The children in Argyle had the lowest overall scores for engagement, followed closely by Community House. Further, the

low engagement scores were predominantly recorded in sessions showing low session climate support, less effective behaviour management and evidence of negative educator behaviour.

Conversely, 85% of engagement scores of 4 (high engagement) occurred in sessions that were categorised as Small Group (or less). These highest scores were mostly from Riverview with Dockside second most common. Another pattern in the comparison of data sets was that the highest levels of engagement were predominantly found in sessions with high session climate support, high quality behaviour management and positive educator behaviour.

This evidence suggests a relationship between the quality of educator practice and the engagement of children in book sharing.

> **Engagement Finding One:** Educator level of support for the session climate and behaviour management was related to the level of engagement of children in book reading and sharing sessions.

Comparisons were made for the children who had been scored in both Whole Group and Small Group sessions to identify possible patterns and relationships related to group size. Twelve children were rated in both Whole Group and Small Group sessions (N=12). None of these children had a higher engagement score for Small Group compared with large group sessions, suggesting higher engagement is more likely in small group sessions.

> **Engagement Finding Two:** Group size was related to children's engagement in book reading and sharing with children more likely to show higher levels of engagement in small group sessions and low levels of engagement in large group sessions.

Interestingly, two of the children had consistent scores of 4 (high) regardless of the group size. Results reporting children's involvement in book sharing showed that they were both from the top quartile in overall book reading and sharing time and in free choice book reading and sharing time. One child had consistently lower scores of 1 or 2 regardless of group size. This child was from the lowest quartile of both overall and free choice book sharing and reading time.

Engagement and Book Reading Time

Further comparisons were made between the children's engagement scores and their overall involvement in book sharing. Seventy-one percent of children who scored a rating of 1 (low) were from the 3rd or 4th (lower) quartiles of overall book time. When compared with the results related to children's involvement in book sharing by choice, 78.5 percent of children who had a low level of engagement (scored a 1 for COB) were also in the 3rd or 4th (lower) quartiles of overall book time by choice. This evidence suggests that children who frequently opted out of book sharing or

reading were likely to score low engagement ratings when they were involved in book reading or sharing.

Conversely, 70% of children with a rating of 4 (high) were from the top two (higher) quartiles of overall book time and independent book time. When compared with the results showing children's involvement in book sharing by choice, 85% percent of those with a high engagement score (4 as measured by COB) were from the top two quartiles of overall book time by choice. This suggests that children who frequently chose to be involved in book reading and sharing were more likely to be highly engaged when educators read to them.

> **Engagement Finding Three:** Children's interest in book reading and sharing (as evidenced by their time spent in sessions by choice) was related to their levels of engagement in book sharing sessions. Generally, the more time children chose to be involved in book related activities, the higher the level of engagement in any book sharing sessions.

Levels of Children's Engagement in Book Sharing Sessions across Centres

Children's levels of engagement in book reading sessions were analysed for each centre. The proportion of children who scored the highest level of engagement (score of 4 on the COB) and the proportion who scored the lowest level of engagement (score of 1 on the COB) in each of the centres are presented on the following table. Examining the extremes of engagement allows relationships with other aspects of book sharing to be explored.

Table 7.17 *Percentage of Children Receiving Highest and Lowest COB Scores across Centres*

Centre	% of Children with Low Levels of Engagement (rated 1 on COB)	% of Children with High Levels of Engagement (rated 4 on COB)
Riverview	7	35
Community House	35.5	25
Dockside	14	25
Argyle	43	15

The levels of children's engagement in book sharing sessions were compared across centres. Argyle had the highest percentage of children with low engagement scores (1) and the lowest number of those with high levels of engagement (4). As reported earlier, this centre had the least amount of time spent in educator led book reading and book sharing of all the centres. Riverview had the highest overall level of child engagement scores and the greatest amount of time spent in

educator led book reading and book sharing of all centres. This centre also had the lowest percentage of children with low engagement scores (1).

> **Engagement Finding Four:** The overall amount of time educators spent reading with children impacted on the engagement of individual children when they were involved in book reading and sharing sessions.

7.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented findings relating to the observed book reading practice in each of the four centres. This included the nature and time of book sharing, the selection of texts, and the quality of educator practice and the engagement of children.

Findings relating to children's interest in particular books or types of books showed links to the choices that educators made regarding what books were available for children and, in particular, the books educators shared with children impacted on what books the children subsequently were likely to select themselves. This is summarised into Key Finding Four.

> **KEY FINDING FOUR:** Educator practice was an influence on children's interests

The findings presented in this chapter relating to the involvement of children in book sharing, the nature of educator practice and the engagement of children in that practice showed relationships between these factors.

In particular, the nature and type of involvement of children in book sharing activities varied among the centres. Educator requirements and the nature and quality of practice, were key factors in the participation and engagement of the children. These findings are summarised in Key Finding Five.

> **KEY FINDING FIVE:** Educator practice was related to children's involvement and engagement in book reading and sharing

Chapter 8: The Third Aspect
Attention to Diversity

8.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings relating to the educators' practice and use of children's literature to address cultural diversity in each of the four centres involved in this study. These findings emerged from analysis of data collected through the video recorded observations of book sharing by educators and children, the Observation Frameworks, the Semi- Structured Interviews, member checking and the researcher's field notes. This analysis was also informed by data was extracted from the analyses of the books using the Cultural Diversity Categories Framework The Overarching Themes Framework and the Viewpoints and Ideologies Framework (reported in Chapter 5), and from the analysis of educator practice through the SABR and of children's engagement through COB (reported in Chapter 7). The constructivist and interpretivist paradigm guided the evaluation and triangulation of the data in order to identify the findings.

In order to enable the researcher to consider the nature of educator practice when using culturally diverse books to address cultural diversity several steps were followed. First, the educator led book sharing sessions in which books containing any representation of cultural diversity were used were identified (n = 29). Second, the associated data from the book analyses using the Cultural Diversity Categories Framework, the Overarching Themes Framework and the Viewpoints and Ideologies Framework for each of these identified sessions were extracted from the previous analyses in order to identify any relationships between educators practice and the types of books used. Third, of the 29 identified sessions using culturally diverse literature, seven sessions were identified as sessions that had been evaluated for educator practice (through the SABR), and for children's engagement in book sharing (through the COB) and the associated data for these sessions were extracted in order to further analyse the nature of practice and engagement in the sessions in which culturally diverse literature was used. Fifth, interview data, member checking and field notes were used to confirm and check emergent findings. This was undertaken both in relation to educators' reported viewpoints towards, and practice of, using children's literature to address diversity, and to the 29 specific book sharing sessions using culturally diverse books,

Initial analysis revealed that of the 148 educator led sessions, there were 29 educator led book sharing sessions in which books portraying some cultural diversity were used. Further analysis showed that the use of these books by educators fell into two main contexts. These were 18 book

sharing sessions in which the stated or identified focus of the session was not explicitly related to exploring or promoting diversity, and 11 book sharing sessions in which the stated or identified focus of the session was to address or promote consideration of cultural diversity. These will be reported below and findings identified. Following this, Key Findings are presented.

8.2 Attention to Cultural Diversity using Culturally Diverse Books

The following section provides findings related to the educators' use of books containing any portrayal of cultural diversity where the stated or identified focus of the session was not explicitly related to exploring or promoting diversity. This analysis was undertaken for two purposes. Firstly, to ascertain whether the use of culturally diverse books resulted in any variation to educator practice as measured by the SABR or to children's engagement as measured by COB. Secondly, to ascertain whether educators gave any attention to diversity and, if so, what was the nature of this attention?

8.2.1 Types of Books

Secondary analysis was undertaken of educator led book sharing sessions to identify those in which educators used books containing some cultural diversity without a focus on diversity having been identified by the educator as the purpose of the session. This analysis revealed 18 sessions of this nature. As part of this analysis, the Cultural Diversity Category and the viewpoints and ideologies of each book used were identified from previous analyses and noted. This data was then collated for each centre and the proportion of books used from each of the relevant Cultural Diversity Categories was calculated. The time educators spent on these each of these categories in these sessions was also calculated as a percentage of the educator led time for each centre and overall. The following table shows the proportion of educator led book sharing time spent in this type of session and the proportion of each of the Cultural Diversity categories of the books used in these sessions.

Table 8.1 *Educator Led Time with Culturally Diverse Books without Focus on Cultural Diversity*

Centre	Culturally Authentic	Culturally Generic	Culturally Neutral	Total % of Ed Led Time
Riverview	0	0	23.5	23.5
Community	0	0	4.5	4.5
Dockside	0	10.5	9	19.5
Argyle	0	10.5	0	10.5
Overall	**0**	**3**	**14.5**	**17.5**

This analysis showed that while the books selected for these sessions portrayed some cultural diversity, none were from the Culturally Authentic Category. Further, all those selected were found to promote dominant culture viewpoints and ideologies as found through previous analyses

using the Viewpoints and Ideologies Framework, despite some portrayal of cultural diversity.

8.3 Quality and Engagement

Four of the eighteen educator led sessions identified as involving culturally diverse texts without a focus on diversity had been evaluated as part of the analysis processes for the quality of book reading practices and for children's engagement as part of the purposeful sample using the SABR and COB (as reported in Chapter 7). This analysis showed that in three of these sessions the quality and nature of educator practice, as measured by the SABR, was consistent with the average practice of each centre. That is that the use of the instructional supports, was similar to the average practice in each centre, as was the support for session climate and the two global rating scales (reading delivery and behaviour management). Similarly, the children's level of engagement was found to be similar to the average found in that analysis. This suggests that when books with some cultural diversity were used without a deliberate focus on diversity, the quality of educator practice and the level of engagement demonstrated by children was similar to that when using books without portrayal of cultural diversity. However, it should be noted that this is a very small sample.

Educator Focus

Further, examination of the SABR evaluation of the educators' practice in the four sessions analysed showed that the instructional supports they provided to children mainly focussed on aspects of language, particularly words and word meanings. Where support for abstract thinking was provided, this appeared to largely relate to the Overarching Theme of the book. For example, practice with books with the Overarching Theme of *early childhood content and skill*s focused on the content or concepts promoted in the book, while practice with books from the Overarching Theme of *imagination, fantasy or humour*, focused on the storyline or events of the story. Despite these books portraying some cultural diversity no mention was made about, or attention to, this was initiated by the educators.

Of note though, in one session in Riverview on one page of a text were multiple characters of different races. The educator was focusing on counting objects on the pages when at one point one of the children involved in the session pointed to a character with similar skin tone and hair features to herself and said, "That's me." The educator responded to this comment by asking, "Is that you Yaz? Does she look a bit like you?" This child then left the session and the educator returned her focus to the counting of objects in the book. No other attention to diversity was observed in these sessions. Given that all of the books in these sessions promoted dominant culture viewpoints and ideologies and that the educators focused on the viewpoints or message of the

books, it appeared that educators overlooked opportunities to address diversity even when diversity was present in the books used.

Of note though, in the one instance of a child (Yaz) making a connection to a character with visual similarities to herself, the educator responded by attempting to engage the child in discussion about this connection. This suggests that educators may be more likely to attend to cultural diversity implicitly when this is initiated by a child.

8.4 Explicit Use of Children's Literature to Address Diversity

During the observation period, educators in three of the centres used books for purposes they identified as addressing aspects of cultural diversity. The eight sessions where this attention to diversity occurred were identified and information relating to their nature was extracted from other data sets. These data included the session foci as identified by the educators, the books used with their Cultural Diversity Categories and Overarching Themes noted, the number of sessions, the number of children involved, the time involved and the overall percentage of educator time devoted to this type of session. In addition, the instructional supports evaluated through the SABR used by the educators in the sessions were transcribed and thematically analysed. This allowed all of the educator "talk" outside of the reading of each text, to be analysed to identify the nature of educators' attention to cultural diversity.

Through analysing the nature of the instructional supports, the foci identified by the educators and through member checking two main themes emerged from analysis of these eight sessions. The first theme was that cultural diversity was constructed as preserving languages other than English and the second was that cultural diversity was represented as "other" or "special". Table 8.2 shows the specific details of these sessions with an educator identified focus on cultural diversity.

Legend: ECCS – Early Childhood Content or Skills   IFH – Imagination/Fantasy/Humour RCCCB – religion/cultural customs/celebrations/beliefs

Table 8.2 *Details of Book Sharing Sessions with an Intentional Focus on Cultural Diversity*

Centre/ Book	Nature of Session Focus	Cultural Diversity Category of Book	Overarch -ing Theme of Book	Number of Sessions	Number of Children involved	Time (mins)	% of Over- all Ed Time
Riverview/1	special/other	Generic	RCCCB	1	5	17.50	
Riverview/2	special/other	Generic	ECCS	1	4	9.00	
TOTALS				**2**	**9**	**26.5**	**6**
Community/1	special/other	Authentic	ECCS	1	3	9.00	
Community/2	Language	Authentic	RCCCN	2	14	10.00	

Centre/ Book	Nature of Session Focus	Cultural Diversity Category of Book	Overarch-ing Theme of Book	Number of Sessions	Number of Children involved	Time (mins)	% of Over-all Ed Time
Community/3	language	Authentic	ECCS	3	16	16.5	
TOTALS				**6**	**16**	**25.5**	**14.5**
Dockside/1	language	Generic	ECCS	1	31	3	
Dockside/2	special/other	Generic	IFH	1	31	8.5	
Dockside/3	language	Generic	IFH	1	31	9.5	
TOTALS				**3**	**31**	**11.5**	**7**

8.4.1 Cultural Diversity as "Language Preservation"

In four of the sessions with an intentional focus on cultural diversity the educators' stated intention and observed practice related to exposing the children to languages other than English. Member checking confirmed that this was done with the intention of preserving the language or acknowledging the language backgrounds of some of the children in the centre and to help those children feel included.

In the two Community House sessions this was the local Aboriginal language, a local dialect of Noongar. In one of these sessions, Bethany initially identified the focus language as "Aboriginal" when introducing it to the children. However, Lily corrected her and educators subsequently referred to it as Noongar. In the two Dockside sessions, the language was identified as "Chinese" with Alice referring only to "Chinese language" rather than Mandarin, which was the language in the books used.

Types of Books

The books used for these two sessions in Community House were both bilingual books from the Culturally Authentic category; thus, as found through previous analyses using the Viewpoints and Ideologies Framework they promoted culturally authentic viewpoints. One was published in 2012 and the other in 2005. The books used in Dockside were from the Culturally Generic category and promoted dominant culture viewpoints. One was a bilingual book published in 2006 and the other had been published in 2010.

Quality and Engagement

In both centres, one of this type of session involved the educator holding the books and turning the pages to synchronise with an audio recording of the story in the focus language. The educators provided no commentary or instructional supports during or after the reading. Two children in each of these sessions were rated for engagement using the COB scale with 3 of them

scoring a low level (1) and the other being rated as demonstrating moderate engagement (2) on the COB scale.

In addition, the children in these sessions who spent the highest overall amount of time in book sharing showed lower levels of engagement in these sessions than in those where educators read to them.

In the remaining sessions focusing on language in each centre, the educator read the English translation of the relevant book. The SABR analysis of the quality of book reading in these sessions showed lower levels of instructional supports than the average for each centre. In Dockside this level was 20% lower and in Community House, 60% lower.

The levels of engagement of two children from each of these sessions were rated and found to be low (scores of 1 or 2). Comparisons were made with other sessions in which these children had been rated with COB and this showed that these children had higher scores in sessions where more instructional supports were provided.

Further analysis showed that all the sessions where the focus on cultural diversity was constructed as concerning a language other than English were whole group sessions. These book reading contexts were characterised by low session climate support, less effective behaviour management and evidence of negative educator behaviour. Therefore, it is possible that the quality and engagement scores could be explained by these factors rather than by the session focus on language or by the provision of fewer instructional supports.

Educator Confidence

Educator confidence when sharing these books with children appeared to be lower than when using books for other purposes, including when sharing for the specific purpose of focusing on the "special" or "other". Member checking and interview data supported this with educators expressing a lack of confidence in reading or talking about these books and saying that they used the recordings so they would "get the language right". This is supported by the evidence of the educators tending to use audio devices to "read" the books, or by the educators reading the books without, or with fewer, instructional supports. These approaches resulted in less talk or discussion around the books.

In Community House, when the audio recording or educator reading of the book was finished, the session was concluded immediately and the next activity in the day took place. There was no post reading talk about the book. As reported in Chapter 7, after one of these sessions a child requested to read the book and was permitted to engage with it for half a minute before the

educator put the book away. In Dockside, one of the sessions was conducted similarly to that in Community House and, in the other in the reading was followed by an activity where the children wrote Chinese characters in wet sand with their fingers. The book read was not subsequently made available to children. The post-reading strategy of immediately putting the books away and moving on to the next activity contrasted with most other sessions where educators would often continue to talk with the children about the book or allow them to read the books themselves.

Educator Focus

The educators reported that they focused on a language other than English to promote inclusion and understanding with reference to culturally diverse children attending the centre where they worked. In Community House, as reported in Chapter 7, the promotion of Noongar responded to the perceived needs and inclusion of Aboriginal children. In Dockside, Alice stated that she used "Chinese" books to help a Chinese background child feel comfortable and included in the centre.

In these sessions, only once was a specific focus placed on aspects of culture other than language. In this instance Lily pointed to a character in traditional dress holding a spear and asked the children, "Oh, does he look scary?" This question appeared to promote a dated, stereotypical viewpoint of a minority group related to a frightening nature of the dress and spear.

Argyle

Argyle was the only centre where explicit use of books to address cultural diversity was not observed. As reported in Chapter 7, both document analysis and interview evidence showed that Elders and a language consultant from the local Aboriginal language centre visited weekly and the activities they provided sometimes included reading a book to the children. However, the visit which occurred during the observation period did not include reading of a book. Interview data confirmed that when book reading did take place in these and other sessions led by these participants, the focus was on language learning and preservation of the local Aboriginal language. There were two books that were reportedly used occasionally in these sessions. One of these was categorised as Culturally Authentic and the other as No People. The centre had two audio pens which could be used by educators to "read" the books to ensure authentic pronunciation of the language. However, the educator (Debbie) reported that she did not use these audio pens or read these books to the children herself. She noted, "I do recap but I don't worry about using the language centre books; I do follow up in my own way". When member checking the data collected and analysed, the Coordinator of this centre expressed surprise that Debbie was not using the audio pens and books.

8.4.2 Cultural Diversity as Special or Exotic

The remaining four sessions identified by educators as focusing on cultural diversity reflected the emergent theme of "exotic" or "special". In Riverview, this included one session focusing on celebrations from around the world and another focusing on life in China. In Community House, there was one session focusing on life in an African village. In Dockside, there was one session in which the focus was to educate the children about the celebration of Portuguese National Day. There were no sessions matching this pattern observed in Argyle.

Types of Books

Analysis showed that three of the four books used in these sessions were classified as Culturally Generic and thus, as shown through the analysis with the Viewpoints and Ideologies Framework, the content reinforced dominant culture viewpoints and ideologies. The remaining book, used in Community House, was categorised as Culturally Authentic and, as shown through the analysis with the Viewpoints and Ideologies Framework, affirmed the viewpoints and ideologies of a non-dominant culture.

Quality and Engagement

The longer of the two Riverview sessions was selected, along with each of the sessions from Community House and Dockside in order to identify the nature of the educator practice and children's engagement. To do this, the data from the evaluation of educator practice (through the SABR) and the children's engagement (through COB) were compared with the practice and engagement data for each of the centres' overall average length session.

This comparison in practice showed that in the sessions focused on cultural diversity, the educators provided more instructional supports than was evident in the average length session. This was the case for the educator practice in all three centres.

Two children from each session (n=6) were rated for the levels of engagement they demonstrated. When these ratings were compared with those for the same children in sessions not focussed on diversity, four of these were found to have rated either at the same or one level higher in these sessions focusing on diversity. The remaining two children rated at their average score for other sessions.

However, when comparisons were made to other sessions that had shown similar levels of instructional supports as these, it appeared that the quality of educator practice could be likely to be a factor in the consistent or higher engagement of the children. In addition, comparison to data relating to group size showed again that group size appeared to be a factor impacting on engagement as, when compared with other sessions, all of these children had their highest

engagement scores in small group sessions. This suggests that it is possible that the higher engagement of the children in these specific sessions may be related to educator practice and group size rather than the specific focus on diversity evident in the sessions.

These three sessions were compared with those in which "language preservation" was the focus. This analysis showed that Educator practice was more varied in sessions where cultural diversity was represented as "special" or "exotic" than was evident where diversity was represented as preserving a minority language. To explore this further, the instructional supports used in each of these three sessions were transcribed and thematically analysed. The findings from this analysis are presented as vignettes. In the case of Riverview, comparisons were also made to the one other session that had explicitly focused on cultural diversity as special or exotic in order to confirm findings or to identify any other relevant characteristics of practice.

Following the presentation of the vignettes, the findings emerging from this analysis will be identified.

Riverview Vignette
Context

Betty was sitting in the outdoor reading area with a group of six children. Betty had just concluded reading a fiction book that had been the most frequently read book throughout the observations. Betty then picked up a book about cultural celebrations around the world, and suggested she read this book. The book was a non-fiction book from the Culturally Generic category and the Overarching Theme of *religion, cultural customs, celebrations and beliefs*. This book had a publication date of 2012. Betty later advised that the book had been placed in the basket by the Lead Educator, Michelle, for the purpose of supporting a curriculum focus on culture and that this was why Betty selected the book for this session. The session lasted for 17.5 minutes.

Betty's Practice – Instructional Supports

Betty used more instructional supports than the Riverview average when sharing this book. More specifically, she provided more supports related to language, but slightly less support targeting abstract thinking, elaboration, phonology/print and session climate. These results are reported in Figure 8.1.

Betty's Practice – Focus of Betty's Talk

Betty's instructional supports were transcribed and thematically analysed. This process involved calculating word frequencies then coding the instructional supports according to the frequency of key words evident in the transcription. This analysis showed that that Betty was

focusing the children's attention on "special" aspects of cultural celebration, in particular, to activities, clothing and food.

On several pages of the text Betty commented on the special nature of the activities represented. For example: "That's a special celebration in India. This one's about India as well, another special celebration" and, "They're having a special party and celebration here."
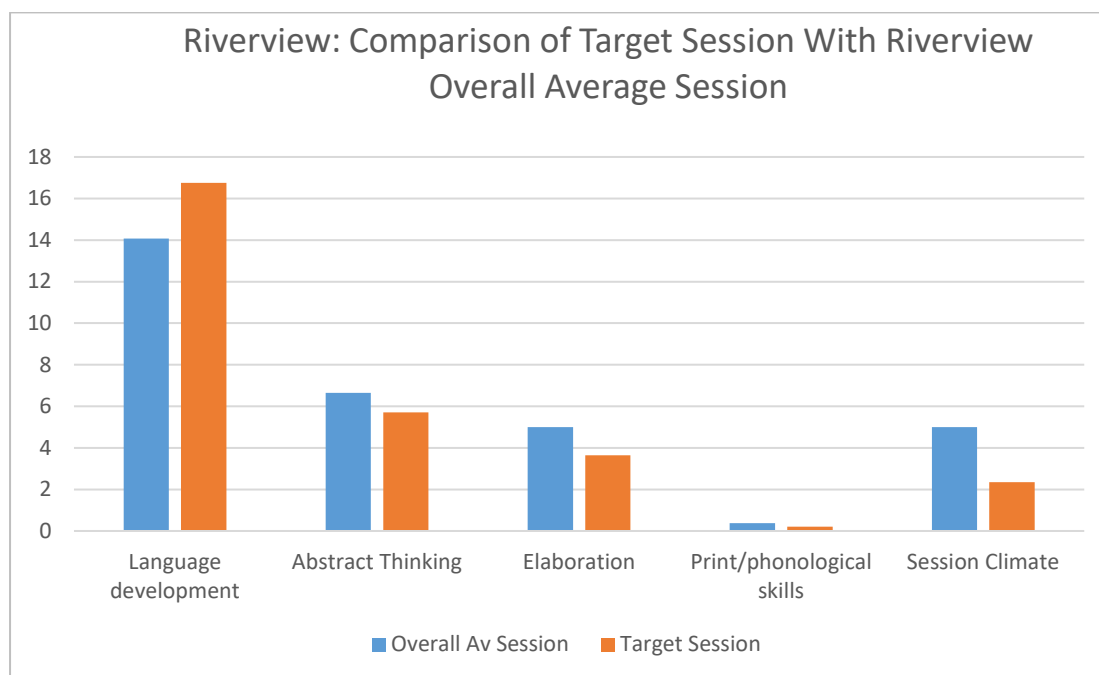
Figure 8.1 Instructional Supports of the Target Session Compared with the Riverview Average

Betty also drew attention to food being eaten or to clothing worn by people in the book and focused on this as different or special, for example:

Look at her there she's wearing a beautiful, a very beautiful costume. So this mummy dresses a little bit different to me or to your mummy because she comes from another country so she wears different clothes. From India……..Yes, he's got a special scarf on his head.

Furthermore, Betty did not appear to consider that the clothing in question might be familiar to some or all of the children, thus the "different" nature of clothing was promoted as being outside the possible lived experiences of the children in the centre.

Betty's Book Sharing Practice

While focusing on the "different" nature of celebrations, Betty provided a higher than average amount of instructional support or talk about the book. However, a marked change occurred when Betty turned to one double page focusing on the Christian celebration of Easter. Betty paused for a noticeable time before reading. She then read the content more quickly than

other pages and gave no instructional supports at all before moving on to the next page where the number of instructional supports she provided increased. It was noted that the only page in the book which did not prompt Betty to provide instructional supports or talk about the text was that which focussed on Easter. After she finished reading the book, Betty took it inside and put it away.

When asked about this book and her lack of attention to the Easter page followed by her decision to put the book away, Betty stated that she was "worried about what I was saying, I didn't know if it was a bit beyond them." She did comment positively on the content that focused on Chinese New Year saying, "There are lots of Chinese children here, so about Chinese New Year is great." These comments suggest that Betty may have been more confident when discussing non-dominant cultures and celebrations than those of the dominant culture.

Betty's comments regarding Chinese children in the centre suggested a decision to focus on this aspect of diversity to promote inclusion of particular culturally diverse children in the centre. This is similar to the approach taken in Community House and Dockside reported earlier in relation to the "language" focussed attention to diversity.

Betty's uncertainty about discussing Easter, was similar to interview comments of the Riverview Lead Educator, Michelle, who had stated that she was more confident, and she believed other educators also were, when discussing "other religions" but nervous when discussing her own (Christian) religion. This appears linked to doubt over whether the content was considered to be appropriate or "politically correct".

Other Riverview Practice

In the other identified session in Riverview, Adina shared a book about life in China. This was one of a series with each book featuring a different country presented from the perspective of a tourist travelling through it. This book, as with the entire series, was categorised as Culturally Generic and was published in 2011. Similarly to Betty, her focus was on the "different" nature of life in China. This was demonstrated by comments such as, "Different countries have different ways of doing things." Adina, also focused on appearance as a factor of difference asking the children," Can you guess which country I come from?" When one child suggested China, her answer was, "Do I look like I'm Chinese? I come from India". Further to this Adina asked Emma, a child of Maldivian heritage, "What country do you come from?" Emma appeared somewhat confused and replied, "I'm not from a country; I'm from Australia." Adina then corrected herself to comment on Emma's father being from the Maldives and proceeded to ask if Emma knew what crops were grown in the Maldives. It was evident from Emma's confusion in her response that she had never visited the Maldives and she seemed a little upset that Adina assumed she could answer the questions. It

appeared that in attempting to be inclusive of Emma's cultural background, Adina possibly focused on aspects of culture that were outside the lived experience of this child.

When asked about the purpose of sharing this book Adina reported that, "This was because we were doing cultures, there was cultures in the curriculum" and, "This book is about that place. It is good in a way they come to know about that country, what they eat, what they wear and that." This focus on the "different" nature of life in "other" countries, particularly food and clothing, is similar to the approach taken by Betty.

Community House Vignette

It was afternoon rest time and children who had finished their nap were allowed to select books to read. Jenna (a child) selected a book from those that had been put out after lunch by the educators (from the books only to be used under supervision). This book was from the Culturally Authentic Category and the Overarching Theme of *early childhood content and skills*, with a publication date of 2002. The book focused on life in an African Village told through the eyes of a child discussing her brother's favourite colour, blue. Educator Bethany offered to read the book and Levi joined Bethany and Jenna on some cushions on the floor. Jenna left about 15 seconds after Bethany began reading. Nathan joined the session after four minutes. The session lasted nine minutes.

The Lead Educator, Lily, reported that the selected book was one the centre had acquired through the merger with a multicultural child care centre and had been made available with the intention of exposing children to "other" cultures as part of the centre curriculum.

Bethany's Practice – Instructional Supports

Bethany's practice when sharing this book showed higher than the Community House average level of instructional support. This is shown in Figure 8.2.
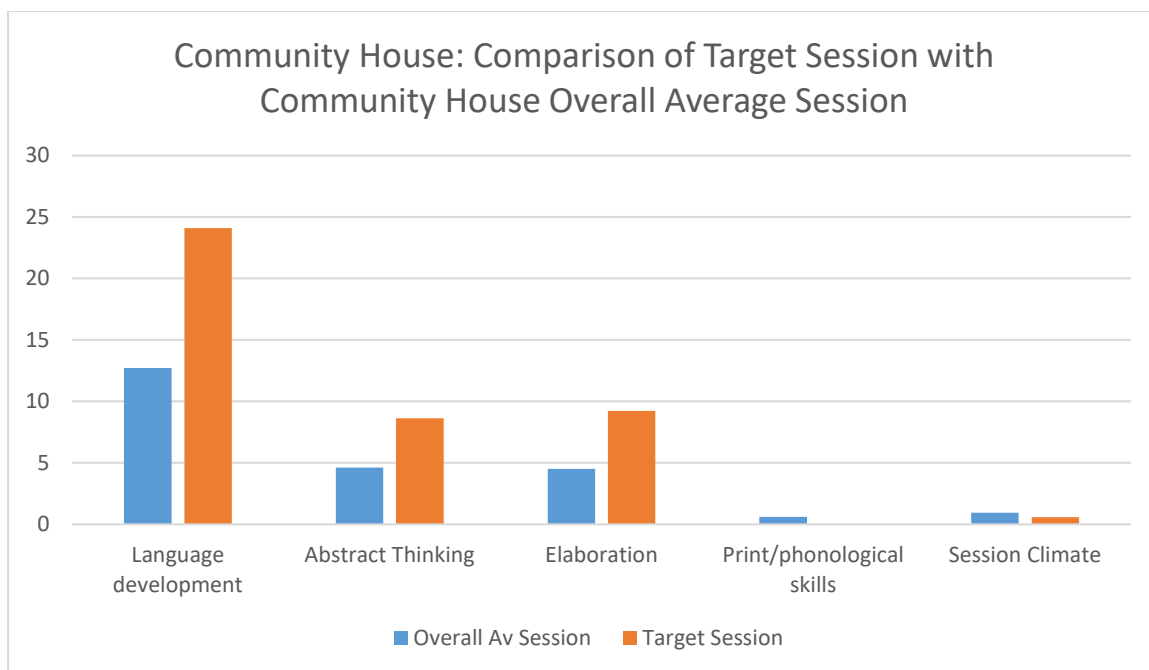
Figure 8.2 Instructional Supports of the Target Session Compared with the Community House Average

Bethany's Practice – Focus of her Talk

Bethany's instructional supports were transcribed and thematically analysed using the process described for Betty's practice (Riverview vignette). This analysis showed that Bethany focused strongly on pointing out the "special" nature of the African village lifestyle portrayed in the book.

Bethany frequently drew the children's attention to the "special" nature of activities, food and clothing in the text. For example: "Yes, they are special hats that only special people are allowed to wear. They're chiefs; they are picked by the king. They're special hats, they are important." And:

There are the chewing sticks, these are the special brushes they use to brush their teeth with. These people do in Africa though, they don't have the same toothbrushes as us, this is their special toothbrush. It's a pretty cool idea, look it's a special stick and then when you chew on the special stick it goes soft on the end and makes a toothbrush. It's pretty cool.

This analysis also showed that Bethany also asked children questions inviting them to make comparisons between themselves and the children in the text. For example, "He's using special white chalk. Do you like to draw with chalk?" Bethany also made comparisons between an object or activity in the book and something familiar to the children. For example: "They use these leaves to wrap up their food like a sandwich."

Thus, while Bethany was largely focusing on the "special" nature of the lifestyle represented in the book she appeared to be actively trying to help the children make connections between the activities and lifestyles in the book and the lives of the children involved in the session.

Interestingly, this session had a high amount of input from Levi, who made several comments on the content of the book including such comments as twice saying, "Look a Black girl" and, "It's like a toothbrush." Bethany did not directly address Levi's two comments regarding the "Black girl" and instead drew attention to similarities between the activities on that page and those likely to be familiar to Levi. From this, it appeared that Levi's attention to diversity did impact on Bethany's practice but issues of race that he noted seemed to be ignored.

Bethany's Book Sharing Practice

Overall, Bethany's practice and confidence in this session appeared to be high, as evidenced through her animated voice, her eye contact with children and her higher than average amount of instructional supports. This appeared consistent with most other observed sessions involving Bethany apart from the sessions reported on earlier in which Bethany focused on Aboriginal language. When compared with her sessions in which Aboriginal language was the focus, her instructional supports in this session were much higher and her utterances much longer and more descriptive.

Dockside Vignette
Context

The Lead Educator, Alice, had planned a book sharing session as part of celebrating Taste of Portugal Day. Both Alice and the Centre Coordinator, Tracy, had reported in interviews that Alice had researched cultural celebrations and planned four multicultural celebrations each month. Alice reported that this session was one of these intended multicultural celebrations and had asked an educator, Rhiannon, to take the session. The children were seated on the mat for this whole group session which lasted 8.5 minutes. Alice selected a book from those available in the room after being unable to locate the book dedicated to cultural celebrations around the world, and referred to by educators as "The Multicultural Book", originally selected for this session. The book chosen was a story set in Africa, although the nominated topic was a national celebration in Portugal. The book selected was from the Culturally Generic category and was published in 1994.

Rhiannon's Practice – Instructional Supports

Rhiannon's practice when sharing this book showed higher than the Dockside average level of instructional support in all but the print/phonological category. This is shown in Figure 8.3.
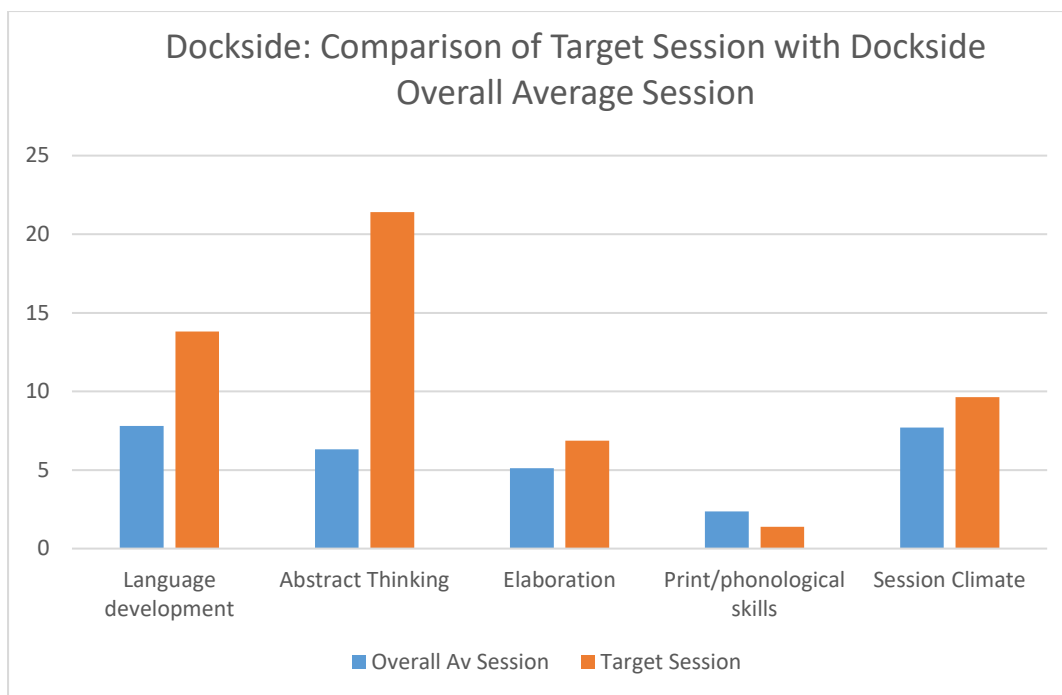
Figure 8.3 Instructional Supports of the Target Session Compared with the Dockside Average

Rhiannon's practice was characterised by high level of instructional supports, quality reading delivery, positive session climate and positive behavioural management. The session was of average length. The quality of the practice was higher than average for large group contexts in Dockside.

Rhiannon's Practice – Focus of Talk

Rhiannon's instructional supports were transcribed and thematically analysed using the process described for Betty's practice (Riverview vignette).This analysis showed that Rhiannon showed she focused mainly on questioning children about the names of objects illustrated in the book such as the names of the fruit, and, to a lesser extent of the animals.

It was apparent from the analysis of the instructional supports that much of Rhiannon's talk focused on questioning children about the types of fruit illustrated. This type of identifying and naming common objects or things would seem to focus on early childhood content and skills development rather than match the focus of the lesson which was intended to be on Taste of Portugal Day. However, the planned lesson emphasised an aspect of the Portuguese festival that involved a basket of fruit being carried on the head so this emphasis on naming fruit is not totally unrelated to the topic. Further, on the first page of the book Rhiannon did draw attention to an aspect of the lifestyle portrayed in the book by noting differences and comparing these to the children's own lives, when she asked the following questions?

Can you see what our friend's doing on the picture, what is she doing…?.

Where is she carrying it? How is she carrying it? Do we carry fruit on our heads…?

Do you think she lives in Australia…?

Right maybe we'll find out we don't carry food on our head do we?

After reading the book and placing it out of sight of the children, Rhiannon then raised the topic of Taste of Portugal Day for the first and only time saying:

Ok, today is Taste of Portugal day. Do you know what that is? Shall I tell you? Today's Taste of Portugal day and in Portugal they like to carry fruit on their head. So today we're going to try to carry fruit on our head. Do you think you can do it?

Thus, this practice was similar to that of both Betty in Riverview, and Bethany in Community House in that it placed a strong focus on food, clothing and/or appearance when drawing children's attention to cultural diversity.

Rhiannon's Book Sharing Practice

While focusing on the content of the book and identifying the fruit, animals and activities in the book, Rhiannon's confidence appeared to be high, as evidenced through her animated voice, her eye contact with children and her higher than average amount of instructional supports. However, a marked change occurred when Rhiannon raised the topic of Taste of Portugal Day. Rhiannon's utterance about Taste of Portugal Day was spoken very quickly and softly, so much so that the researcher had to listen to the recording several times over to distinguish the words. From the time Rhiannon finished the utterance, there was no further mention of Portugal or of the celebration and the focus shifted to how well the children could balance the fruit or beanbags on their head. Rhiannon's apparent lack of confidence evident in her hesitation and change of tone here contrasted with that of the Lead Educator, Alice, who had planned the session and was very excited that the researcher was present to observe her recognition and inclusion of cultural celebrations in the curriculum and her practice.

Other Dockside Practice

While the vignette has reported on the actual book used for this session and its associated practice, it is important to note that the book originally intended for the session was also from the Culturally Generic Category and had a publication date of 2013. In this book each page portrayed children in national costumes positioned alongside items commonly associated with that culture: For example, children in China represented in national dress, standing on the Great Wall of China alongside a Chinese dragon and children in Germany wearing lederhosen, standing outside a stall

selling sausages. Interestingly when this missing "Multicultural Book" was subsequently located it did not contain the celebration Taste of Portugal Day, so it may be possible that the book selected instead would still have been chosen for the session. The educators' intention of using this book is important to note, as this book was that referred to by educators as "The Multicultural Book" and, as confirmed by interview data and member checking, had been purchased for this centre for the specific purpose of focusing on cultural celebrations in order to attend to cultural diversity in the curriculum.

8.4.3 Attention to Diversity Findings

The preceding sections have reported on the practice of educators when using books containing cultural diversity in two main contexts. Those book sharing sessions in which the stated or identified focus of the session was not explicitly related to exploring or promoting diversity, and those book sharing sessions in which the stated or identified focus of the session was to address or promote consideration of cultural diversity. Comparison of these analyses with each other and with interview and member checking data leads to several findings relating to educators' attention to diversity.

First, it was apparent that when educators used books containing some level of cultural diversity but without an intention or focus on exploring or promoting diversity they overlooked opportunities to attend to cultural diversity as an implicit aspect of practice. This appeared to only change if a child initiated attention to diversity suggesting that educators may be more likely to attend to diversity implicitly if a child initiates this. This leads to the following two findings:

Attention to Diversity Finding One: Opportunities for educators to attend to cultural diversity were overlooked when using books containing some cultural diversity but without a specific educator purpose of addressing cultural diversity.

Attention to Diversity Finding Two: Educators may be more likely to address diversity implicitly when a child draws attention to diversity.

Second, in three of the centres, educators used books with an intention of focusing on the preservation or acknowledgment of minority group languages and that this was with the intention of also making the children from the relevant cultural background feel included. This leads to the following finding:

Attention to Diversity Finding Three: Attention to language = inclusivity. Some educators indicated that they focused on non-dominant culture languages in order for the children from the relevant cultural background to feel included.

Third, when educators used books containing cultural diversity with an intention of addressing diversity they placed a strong focus on drawing children's attention to the more visible aspects of culture such as food, clothing and appearance. This leads to the following finding:

> **Attention to Diversity Finding Four:** Educators placed a strong focus on food, clothing and/or appearance when drawing children's attention to cultural diversity.

Fourth, educators appeared not to consider that to some children the clothing or food presented in the books might be a part of their everyday experience and this leads to the following finding:

> **Attention to Diversity Finding Five**: Some educators presented cultural diversity as outside the lived experience of the children in the centre.

Fifth, educators in this study appeared to consider the addressing of diversity as being a particular part of the curriculum to be addressed. This was reinforced both in observed sessions and in interview and member checking data and leads to the following finding:

> **Attention to Diversity Finding Six:** Some educators focused on diversity because it was in the curriculum.

Sixth, while educators focused strongly on the different or exotic nature of cultural diversity, this appeared to be at the expense of promoting children's exploration of similarities between their own lives and those of others and this leads to the following finding.

> **Attention to Diversity Finding Seven:** There was limited attention to helping children make connections between their own lives and those who live differently to them.

8.5 Chapter Summary

This evidence presented in this chapter related to two types of book sharing with books portraying cultural diversity. The first of these related to book sharing using books with some cultural diversity but in which the educator's identified focus was not specially related to cultural diversity. In these sessions, the educators' focus related to the Overarching Themes of the books themselves and there appeared to be no attention initiated by the educators on diversity. In one instance where a child from a minority group drew attention to diversity the educator attempted to engage the child in conversation but when the child immediately left the session the educator returned her focus to the themes promoted in the book.

The second type of book sharing reported in this chapter related to when educators used books containing cultural diversity with an explicit intention of focusing on an aspect of cultural diversity. In these sessions it was evident that the educators placed importance on sharing these books, even though this was a minority of their overall book sharing time.

The practice reported in this chapter reflected the three patterns first reported under Key Finding Two. That is that some educators showed or expressed limited confidence and fear of "getting it right" or being "politically correct". Some saw attention to diversity as relating to promoting or preserving minority culture languages and thus this was the focus of their practice. Others saw, and reflected in their practice, attention to diversity as emphasising the "special" or "different" nature of cultural diversity especially in relation to celebrations, food or clothing.

As this current chapter has reported under *Attention to Diversity Finding One,* opportunities for educators to attend to cultural diversity were overlooked when using books containing some cultural diversity but without a specific educator purpose of addressing cultural diversity. This chapter has also shown evidence that educators promoted a viewpoint of non-dominant cultures as being special or exotic with a focus on the "different" nature of lifestyles.

There were two exceptions to this. One related to when the focus was language preservation. In these sessions, while Culturally Authentic books were used in two of the four observed sessions, the educator practice reflected a viewpoint that promoting language preservation was all they needed to undertake in order to give children from those language backgrounds a sense of inclusivity.

The other exception to this was in the practice of Bethany, in Community House, who, even though her practice largely focused on the "special" nature of the African village lifestyle, did note similarities between the children's own lives and those represented in the book. This contrasted with other observed practice of highlighting cultural difference rather than similarity. As reported earlier, the book used by Bethany was from the Culturally Authentic Category.

Therefore, it appears that educator practice when addressing diversity is influenced by the type of book being used and whether the book itself promotes dominant culture viewpoints or authentic viewpoints of the culture/s represented in the book.

KEY FINDING SIX: The practice of educators when addressing diversity as a specific focus was linked to the viewpoints and ideologies presented in the selected book.

As found in this chapter, another factor that appeared to impact on educator focus on diversity was that educators' attention to diversity may be impacted when a child draws attention to diversity. While there were only two incidents of this – one in a session with no identified focus on diversity and the other in a session with an intentional focus on diversity – this leads to the following Key Finding which, however, is necessarily tentative given the small incidence of this.

KEY FINDING SEVEN: Educators' confidence and focus on diversity may have been impacted by children's attention to diversity.

This chapter has also highlighted some educator beliefs or understandings that impact on their practice when addressing diversity. *Attention to Diversity Finding Three,* reflected a viewpoint that promoting language preservation was all they needed to undertake in order to give children from those language backgrounds a sense of inclusivity. And, *Attention to Diversity Finding Five*, showed that some educators presented cultural diversity as being outside the lived experience of the children in the centre. These findings have been synthesised into the following Key Finding:

KEY FINDING EIGHT: Educators' apparent beliefs about children from non-dominant cultures impacted on their practice when addressing diversity.

Finally, a noticeable theme linking many of the findings together was an expressed belief also evident in the practice, that attention to diversity was driven by particular curriculum requirements. This curriculum focus was reflected in practice, and in the books used for this purpose, as being restricted to surface features of a culture such as food, clothing and celebrations. This leads to the following Key Finding:

KEY FINDING NINE: Educators perceived and addressed diversity as a special part of curriculum.

Chapter 9: Discussion

9.1 Introduction

This study explored the factors, and the relationships among these, that influence the use of children's literature texts as a resource for meeting principles relating to cultural diversity in the kindergarten rooms of long day care centres. The study was conducted within an ontological perspective of constructivism and an epistemological perspective of interpretivism using a mixed methods approach. A variety of data collection methods were employed in order to maximise the scope and depth of information analysed and increase objectivity of the findings. The strength of this approach is that with multiple sets of data collected and examined, the complexity of the educational experience could be focused on while still being able to investigate the multiple factors interacting to create the whole experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

This chapter discusses the findings of the research as interpreted through a constructivist and interpretivist paradigm and drawing on relevant literature and the conceptual framework guiding the study. In doing so, it identifies new knowledge about the ways that educators use children's literature to meet principles of diversity. In addition, the general use of children's books in long day care centres is discussed. The findings from the study have important implications for using children's books to meet principles of diversity in early learning settings.

9.2 Findings and Themes

The previous four chapters identified nine key findings. Three main themes emerged from these findings which relate to the overarching research question: What are the factors and relationships that influence the use of children's literature texts as a resource for meeting principles relating to cultural diversity in the kindergarten rooms of long day care centres?

The three themes assist in exploring each of the sub-questions which are:

a)   What, and what types of, children's literature texts are selected?

b)   How are the texts selected?

c)   How are the different texts used by the educators?

d)   What interactions take place between the educators, children and the texts?

Due to the complexity of the findings, exploration of each of the sub-questions are embedded in one or more of the themes.

Firstly, several of the findings related to the educators' beliefs, understandings and level of confidence and how these influenced their thinking and practice related to diversity in general and to using books as a resource for considering or addressing cultural diversity. Further, these beliefs understandings and confidence influenced the selection of texts as well as the practices through which these texts were shared with children. Thus, the first key theme to be discussed in this chapter is: Educator, beliefs, understandings and confidence.

Secondly, several findings related to the nature of the book collections and the themes presented in the books as well as the construction and portrayal of diversity within them. The study found that the books available and selected for use in the study, including how and why these were selected, were central to the nature of the book sharing that took place and to the interactions between the educators and the children. Therefore, the second theme to be discussed in this chapter is: Availability and selection of books.

Lastly, several findings related to the practice of educators when selecting and sharing books with children including the impact of educator practice on children's participation and engagement in book sharing. Thus, the third theme to be discussed in this chapter is: Educator Practice.

These emergent themes are closely interrelated. The educator beliefs, understandings and confidence influenced how books were selected and used to address principles of diversity. In turn, what books were made available for educators and the influences on their selection and use impacted educators' beliefs, understanding and confidence. Three additional patterns emerged in the analysis of the influences on educators' use of books and these were Uncertainty, Language Preservation and Othering. The pattern of Uncertainty related to some educators' hesitation when addressing diversity through literature due to uncertainty or fear of not knowing what was authentic or "politically correct". The pattern of Language Preservation related to a focus of some educators' practice of promoting a minority group language through children's literature believing that this focus would result in children from the specific minority group feeling included. This was coupled with a fear of getting the language "right". The third pattern, Othering, related to educators' practice that focused on diversity as being different, special or "other".

The relationships between the three themes as well as the patterns evident in the theme of educator practice are shown in Figure 8.4.
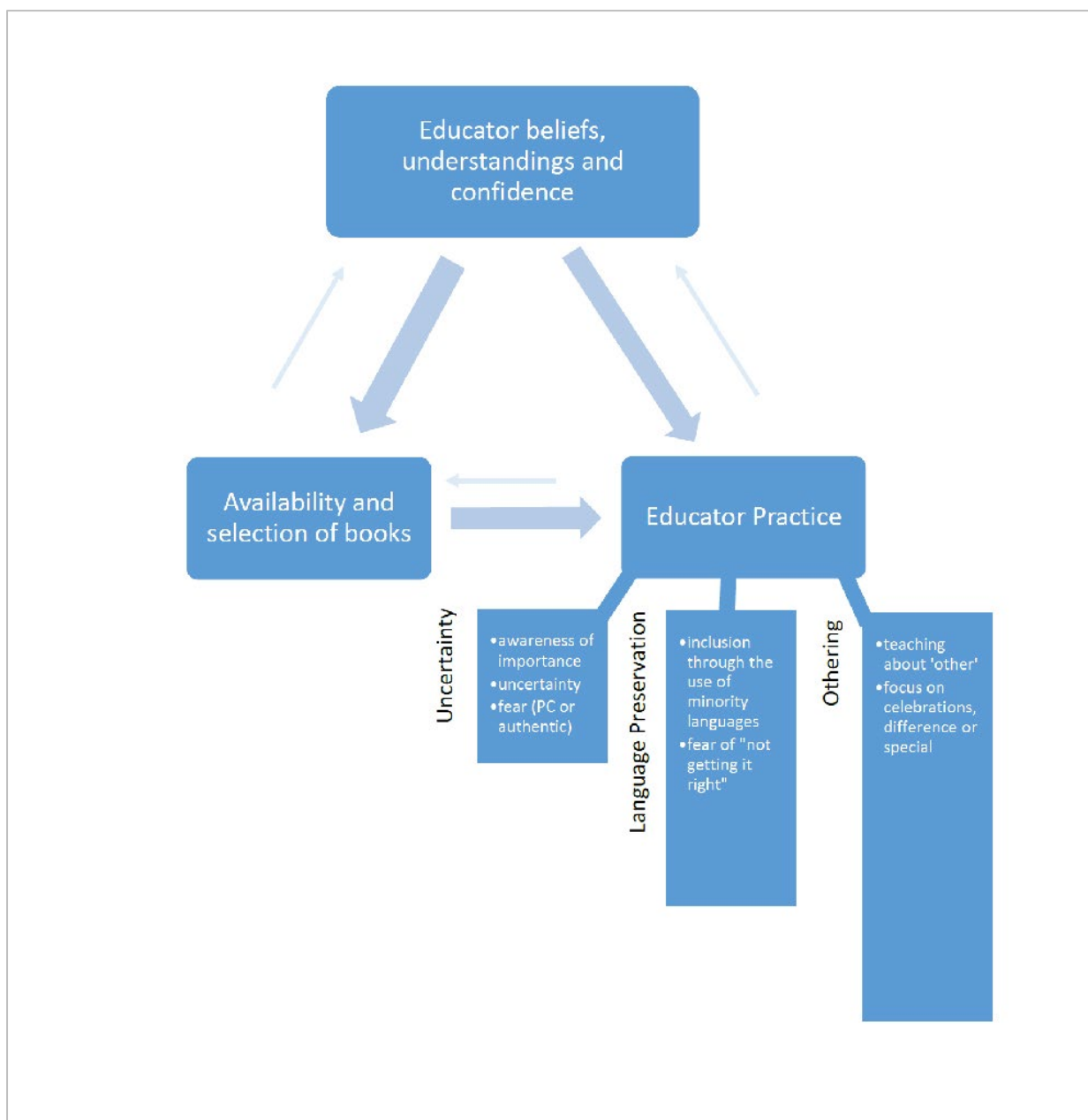
Figure 8.4 Themes and Relationships in this Study

9.2.1 The First Theme: Influence of Educator Beliefs, Understanding and Confidence on their Attention to Diversity

This study found that despite recognising the important role of children's literature in long day care, educators did not appear to consider the diversity of society or the children in their centres when selecting and using books. Instead, they appeared to see diversity as needing to be addressed in isolation rather than as an integral component of the curriculum. The educators' belief in the importance of children's literature was not only evident in documentation and interviews, but also in the extent of book collections, access to books and the provision of attractive book spaces in each room.

The educators' view of diversity impacted the range of purposes for which the books were used, as evident in interviews, observed sessions, planning documentation and learning journals. There was limited evidence of educators selecting or using books for purposes related to diversity. Further, where diversity was addressed, it was restricted to content about celebrations or what was special or exotic about a non-dominant culture. In this process, diversity was constructed as "other". Indeed, book sharing was mostly used as a means to develop children's literacy skills, as has been found in other research (Fleer & Raban, 2005; Hill et al., 2011; National Early Literacy Panel, 2008). In addition, the educators were found to value and use books to support the development of early childhood content and skills and to encourage children's imagination and use of fantasy or humour. Although the educators used books to teach children about morals, life values and attitudes, as found by Boutte, Hopkins and Watlaski (2008), these purposes mostly related to promoting self-management and positive social behaviour.

The educators were hesitant about expressing their beliefs and understandings related to diversity. They expressed concern that they did not know which books or approaches were suitable, being particularly worried about being "politically correct". In contrast, the educators confidently expressed their beliefs about and understandings of book selection and use related to literacy development, the teaching of early childhood content and skills and fostering children's social and emotional development.

Educators' Beliefs, Understandings and Confidence about Children's Interests

Educators' perceptions of children's interests appeared to be a key driver in the selection and use of texts, particularly for the purposes of developing early childhood content and skills and fostering children's imagination, fantasy or humour. While this is consistent with the value the current curriculum places on responding to children's interests (DEEWR, 2009), the educators appeared to see this concept as restricted to what the children expressed or showed an interest in, rather than a broader view that considers what is in their "best interests" (ACECQA, 2011b, p. 7). Given that the first of the seven guiding principles of the National Quality Framework states, "The rights and best interests of the child are paramount" (ACECQA, 2011b, p. 7), it could be argued that the best interests of children are at the heart of the principles of diversity within the EYLF as the approved national learning framework linked to the NQS. According to the EYLF, as "children participate in everyday life they develop interests and construct their own identities and understanding of the world" (DEEWR, 2009, p. 7). This statement reflects the view that children's interests are not fixed or unchanging but rather develop through daily experiences, including those in early learning settings. The educators in this study did not appear to recognise that they could use texts which reflect diversity to develop children's interests and contribute to the construction of

their "own identities and understanding of the world" (DEEWR, 2009, p. 9). Similar evidence from other researchers in Australia also highlights that educators need to leverage the interests of children in order to extend and support their learning and development (Siraj et al., 2019).

The study found the educators' narrow view of the role of diverse literature in meeting children's best interests was reflected in their practice. This was seen in the lack of representation of cultural diversity in most of the books available and used which, rather, promoted monocultural viewpoints and attitudes. Indeed, 78% percent of book sharing time used books containing only Caucasian or non-human (animal) characters.

In addition, on the few occasions where books were intentionally used to support principles of diversity, they related to theme of early childhood content and skills or religion, cultural customs, celebrations or beliefs. These books were not made available to the children afterwards. Hence educators did not appear to consider that children might show interest in, respond to, or use these books if they were made available to them after being shared. At times, children did request these books, which implies interest, but they were either not permitted to use them, or in one case, only permitted access for half a minute. In some of these instances, it appeared that educators had some doubt about whether children would be, or were interested, in the books reflecting diversity while in others the books in question were considered "special" books that only the educators could use. As children were highly likely to select books that had previously been read to them by an educator, it seems that by depriving them of access to these culturally diverse books they were also denied an opportunity to show interest or develop interest in these books and the concepts promoted within them. Furthermore, it appeared that educators may not have considered that the children might be interested in these books or that making these books available might support, or be in the best interests of, the children. This was in sharp contrast to contexts where children were perceived to have "enjoyed" or "loved" a "storybook", thus indicating "interest", where educators would frequently and intentionally make the books they shared available to children afterwards. These books were in the category of imagination, fantasy or humour and were also the most common type of books read or shared during the study.

Educators' Beliefs, Understandings and Confidence about Favourite Books

The data showed that educators frequently selected books that they "loved" themselves or were well known children's books when selecting "storybooks", what educators tended to call books related to imagination, fantasy or humour. This is despite evidence suggesting that selecting books on the basis of personal favourites or preference can lead to a predominance of texts that present

societal perspectives and themes familiar to the educators and reflect their own spatio-temporal background (Cremin et al., 2008; Hammett & Bainbridge, 2009; Johnston et al., 2010).

This suggests that educators believed that selecting books on this basis is a reliable and authentic approach for an early education setting, showing a possible lack of understanding and consideration of the diverse backgrounds of the children. This was evident when two educators from two different centres spoke passionately about their preference for books authored by Dr. Seuss and those published by Disney Books. The belief was also reflected in the book collections which all contained multiple Dr Seuss authored and Disney published books. This is despite the body of evidence that Dr Seuss books portray minority cultures in stereotypical or exotic ways and often in subservient roles to white characters and that Dr Seuss animal stories often transmit racist messaging through symbolism and allegories (Ishizuka & Stephens, 2019; Nel, 2014, 2017). Ishizuka and Stephens go so far as to claim that some of these messages are "Orientalist, anti-Black and White supremacist" (Ishizuka & Stephens, 2019, p. 14). Furthermore, evidence suggests that some Disney stories perpetuate racism (Beaudine et al., 2017), promoting a viewpoint of white, middle class and heterosexual being the acceptable norm (Giroux, 1994), and often serve to "reproduce sexist, racist and colonial ideologies" (Giroux, 1994, p. 32).

This suggests that educators may not recognise the potential of some of their favourite books to be counterproductive to principles of diversity. Furthermore, these educators may have approached the selection of such texts through an uncritical lens that did not consider the diversity of the children in their care or the potential impact of negative, stereotypical or exotic portrayal of diversity. Selecting well-known, popular or personal favourite texts may "serve to privilege particular kinds of texts over others" (Marsh, 2004, p. 259) and this appears to be the case in this study where book collections largely reflect dominant culture ideologies and viewpoints.

Educators' Beliefs, Understandings and Confidence Related to Using Books to Address Cultural Diversity

While educators confidently expressed their beliefs and understandings about selecting and using books which matched children's interests or were well-known or favourites, they expressed a lack of confidence about selecting and using books for the purpose of meeting principles of cultural diversity.

All educators used the terms "background" and "culture" interchangeably when talking about the children's backgrounds. Furthermore, the educators' assumptions about children from non-dominant cultures impacted on their practice when addressing diversity. While they acknowledged the need to consider children's diversity when selecting and using books, they

217

struggled to articulate an understanding of what that involved. Indeed, when describing how they responded to children's diverse backgrounds, they referred to aspects such as different family structures such as those with same-sex parents. While this consideration of differing family structures does show an understanding of the broader principles of diversity in the EYLF, it is a very narrow interpretation of cultural inclusivity.

Similarly, educators were positive about the importance of children being able to relate to situations or characters in books but seemed unaware of the importance and potential of this including their cultural identity. This view was evident in the examples educators used to describe how they included children with diverse backgrounds. For instance, an educator used the example of a book about a child with an allergy helping a child with allergies feel included (Lily: Community House). Another example was when Debbie (Argyle) stressed that children need to "see themselves or something they can relate to" and used the example of a child thinking that the boy in the Dr Seuss book, 'Fish out of water' "is him." This suggests a limited understanding of the notion of books being "mirrors" (Bishop, 1993; Glazier, 2005; Tschida et al., 2014). That is, the educators acknowledge the value of children being able to relate to portrayals in a book yet do not appear to see this as including cultural backgrounds nor to recognise that the vast majority of the characters in the centre collections were Caucasian.

Some educators in the study assumed that children develop respect, acceptance and tolerance for diversity by being part of a diverse environment. For example, one educator expressed this view by saying, "We have so many different cultures attending this service that, I mean, to the children it's just second nature to see someone that you know may look different or sound different" (Warren, Coordinator Community House). There is, however, a body of evidence suggesting that assumptions such as these are flawed. Pahlke, Bigler & Suizzo (2012) and Brown and Hewstone (2005) argue that children's racial attitudes are not related to the percentage of racially diverse people in their pre-schools, neighbourhoods or friendship groups and that mere contact with different races is insufficient to change racial attitudes. The assumption of educators in culturally diverse settings that the environment itself will naturally produce unbiased intercultural attitudes in children suggests a limited understanding of how cultural attitudes are formed in early childhood (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019). Furthermore, research suggests that avoiding discussions of race and difference leads to a "colour-blind" environment in which the unique histories, cultures, values and experiences of minority groups are ignored or forgotten (Pahlke et al., 2012; Schofield, 2007). Such an approach, therefore, places the very principles of diversity that lie at the heart of current policy and curriculum at risk of being overlooked.

Of further concern was an apparent belief that exploring or focusing on cultural diversity was a special part of the curriculum to be attended to at special times, usually when promoting cultural celebrations or focusing on preservation of minority languages. Others (Bush, 2008; Plastow and Hillel, 2010) caution against such approaches, warning of the potential of such practice to contribute to the "Othering" of those from minority cultural backgrounds. Bush (2008) argues that inclusivity, or social justice, should not be seen as an initiative requiring "special" attention but rather should be an integral part of the curriculum. Bush (2008) further argues that inclusive books should be part of every collection, display, reading list and read-aloud program.

The viewpoint of the educators in this study that diversity is "special" rather than intrinsic to the curriculum, is inconsistent with the principles of the EYLF (DEEWR, 2009) which calls on educators to provide an inclusive and equitable curriculum. In fact, the EYLF's definition of inclusion highlights that educators must consider children's cultural and linguistic diversity in all curriculum decision making processes (DEEWR, 2009). This narrow view of attention to diversity as a "special" part of the curriculum can render many children's worlds invisible or misrepresent them. Furthermore, as found by others (Adam et al., 2019; Dunlap, 2012; Jones-Diaz & Harvey, 2002; Morgan, 2009), this can impact on the participation of those children in the curriculum. Such exclusion, in turn, can impact on children's social, emotional and educational outcomes (DETYA 2000, Fleer & Raban, 2005; Koss & Daniel, 2018; Siraj-Blatchford & Clarke, 2000; Souto-Manning et al., 2018).

Different, Special or Exotic

Similar to other findings in Australia (Buchori & Dobinson, 2015; Hickling-Hudson, 2005) and worldwide (Boutte et al., 2008; David, 2001), when educators did consider cultural diversity, they expressed limited or tokenistic understandings of what it means. Furthermore, the dominant viewpoint and practice described involved a focus on the different, special or exotic nature of non-dominant cultures. Most educators had somewhat limited recognition of the potential for books to act as "windows into the lives of others" (Bishop, 1992; Glazier and Yung, 2005; Tschida et al., 2014), thus the windows in the ensuing practice promoted distorted and stereotypical views of minority groups (David, 2001; Roberts et al., 2005).

Interestingly, even the practice of Adina in Riverview, a member of a minority group herself, promoted the "othering" of children from minority groups. This is similar to the findings of Buchori and Dobinson (2015) that some educators from non-dominant backgrounds themselves hold a belief of a need "to integrate the children into the dominant culture" (p. 77).

Some educators perceived attention to cultural diversity as relating to the recognition or preservation of minority group languages, particularly Aboriginal languages. Similar attitudes were evident in the pilot study conducted prior to this research (Adam et al., 2019). Coupled with this was an assumption that by focusing on a language, children from that minority cultural background would automatically feel a sense of inclusion. While respecting and promoting respect for children's home languages is evidence of educators' attention to principles of diversity (MCEETYA, 2008; Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 1989; Zirkel, 2008), and of the requirements of the EYLF that educators "respond to … multiple languages spoken by children" (DEEWR, , 2009, p. 14), the risk of such a narrow perception of cultural diversity can contribute to the sense of focusing only on "different" aspects of culture and thus contribute to the "othering" of children from minority groups (Buchori & Dobinson, 2015). The limited instructional supports or encouragement of input from the children in these sessions appeared to overlook the potential of these picture books to allow for non-Indigenous children's engagement (Zeegers et. al, 2003). While the educators showed an understanding of the importance of inclusion and a desire to promote it and the preservation of the "Mother tongue", they seemed largely unaware of the potential of their practice to be counterproductive to their goals.

This focus on language preservation was coupled with a lack of confidence in "getting it right", with educators in two centres tending to rely on audio devices for fear of pronouncing the words incorrectly. The effect of this was similar to that in a third centre (Argyle) where Elders who were speakers of the local language led the sessions focused on language preservation. This reflected a view that attention to language preservation, and thus attention to cultural diversity, was the responsibility of members of the cultural group itself. A similar attitude was evident in the pilot study (Adam et al., 2019). This approach could be seen to be respectful in that educators were concerned that the language was used correctly and appropriately. However, their approach reflected a lack of confidence and resulted in superficial attention, evident in the lower quality practice in the sessions that focused on language preservation. It could be argued that such practice risks an avoidance of the responsibility to address the broader aspects of cultural diversity and in doing so contributes to the "othering" of those from non-dominant cultural groups.

Furthermore, the educators in the two centres in which culturally authentic books were sometimes used with a focus on preserving Aboriginal languages, seemed to lack confidence in, or awareness of, the potential of using these bilingual, culturally authentic books to educate non-Indigenous children about knowledge and culture specific to the local community. Thus, potentially

missing a powerful opportunity to explore principles of diversity (Gower and Byrne, 2012; Zeegers et al. 2003).

Authenticity and Political Correctness

Only two educators, both of whom were centre coordinators, involved in this study showed an awareness of the importance of selecting authentic books. However, they both expressed a lack of confidence and understanding of what literature to select when addressing principles of cultural diversity. They expressed a fear of not knowing what was culturally authentic and "politically correct", particularly in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. This contributes to the evidence that some early childhood educators find sourcing and evaluating the quality of diverse literature a challenging task (Adam et al., 2019; Harper & Brand, 2010; Mendoza & Reese, 2001)

Interestingly, two other educators in one of these two centres also had concerns about "political correctness". In contrast to the coordinators, these educators felt more confident when promoting the celebrations or religious customs of "other" cultures. However, they feared not being "politically correct" if they used books about their own culture or religious background, noting that they could be perceived as promoting these.

Summary of the First Theme: Educator Beliefs, Understanding and Confidence

Overall, this study found that the educators involved were grappling with an awareness of the importance of addressing cultural diversity and their developing understanding of what this means and should look like in practice. The educators were actively attempting to address the principles of diversity as described in the EYLF, but challenges were evident. Most educators showed no evidence of considering the potential of exploring and promoting cultural diversity through the selection and use of books and demonstrated limited understandings and confidence related to the doing so. Furthermore, the evidently limited understandings and confidence extended to their selection of children's books for the specific purpose of exploring and promoting cultural diversity and, more generally, to the recognition that diverse books should be an integral part of their book collections and book sharing practices.

Interestingly, the beliefs understandings and confidence of the educators as discussed here also related to their selection of books and to their practice. This highlights the interrelationship among the three main findings of the study.

9.2.2 The Second Theme: Availability and Selection of Books

The books available to be used in all centres overwhelmingly portrayed dominant culture ideologies and viewpoints, as has been found in other studies (Adam et al., 2017; Boutte et al., 2008; Crisp et al., 2016). The viewpoints and ideologies of people from non-dominant cultures were largely

absent because, as in other studies (Adam et al., 2017; David, 2001; Roberts, 2005), the majority of the books in the collection (82%) or used (80%) were not reflective of cultural diversity. Furthermore, most of the books in the collection (18%), and books used (20%) that did portray some cultural diversity, reflected stereotypical, superficial or outdated views of minority cultures presented from a dominant culture viewpoint. Only 2% of the total collection and 1% of books used were culturally authentic. Thus, 98% percent of the books in the collections and 99% of books used during the study presented dominant culture viewpoints and ideologies.

Of further concern is that the 1% of books used that did include culturally authentic representation and minority viewpoints were used sparingly and primarily with a limited focus on preservation of minority Aboriginal languages. In addition, the reliance on audio devices for the reading of these texts or an expectation that the cultural group itself was responsible for the teaching of the language risks further promotion of cultural diversity as being "different" or "other".

Additionally, almost 50% of the book collections analysed in the study, and 39% of books used during the study, contained no people, yet these too overwhelmingly reflected dominant culture viewpoints and ideologies. Evidence suggests that some educators mistakenly believe that using animal stories supports children's understandings of social problems and issues (Larsen et al., 2018; Richert et al., 2009; Richert & Smith, 2011,) yet there is compelling evidence from these same studies and that shows otherwise. Content analysis of anthropomorphised books in this study and in others (Borkfelt, 2011; Boutte et al., 2008) shows that the lifestyle, viewpoints and activities of non-human characters mirror those of the dominant cultures. In addition, evidence shows that animals, too, can be typecast or stereotyped into particular roles and thus reinforce notions of superiority and inferiority (Borkfelt, 2011; Dunn, 2011; Kohl, 1995). Research suggests that many children from ethnic minority groups are more likely to see an animal such as a dinosaur or rabbit as a main character in a book than a member of their own culture (CCBC, 2017) thus further contributing to the invisibility of minority groups in book collections.

Potential Impact of Limited Book Collections

This overall absence of the perspectives and viewpoints of minority groups resulted in the educators not having opportunities to use diverse texts as either "mirrors" to develop personal identity nor as "windows" into the diversity of the wider community and world (Bishop, 1993; Cox & Galda, 1990; Glazier, 2005; Tschida et al., 2014). This resulted in missed opportunities to develop cross cultural and intercultural understandings (Harper & Brand, 2010) including the chance for children to "make connections, form relationships and create community with others" (Short, 2012 p.9). This lack of access to diverse texts also meant that educators had limited opportunities to

provide vicarious experiences to broaden children's understanding of the world, as found by Lowery and Sabis-Burns (2007).

This lack of diversity in the book collections can lead to emotions such as fear, anxiety and doubt impacting on wellbeing in some children whose world is invisible or presented from a stereotypical, discriminatory or "other" perspective (Adam et al., 2019; Dunlap, 2012). This study found that children from minority backgrounds in the centres had little or no exposure to authentic and accurate representations or role models reflecting their cultural, linguistic and social backgrounds. This, in turn, can lead to these children being both intellectually and emotionally challenged when participating in the curriculum (Jones-Diaz and Harvey, 2002; Morgan, 2009). This is of particular concern given that the demographic data for these centres indicated that many were from diverse social and cultural backgrounds, with between 10% and 57% being from homes where a language other than English was spoken. Of further concern is that children from the majority culture are at risk of seeing their own culture as normal or superior and developing inflated viewpoints of themselves due to only seeing "reflections of themselves", (Bishop, 1997).

All children are disadvantaged when genuine diversity and cultural dominance are not critically examined or considered. Failure to critique dominant culture viewpoints in the books can have the potential to create an environment that avoids the complex and multifaceted aspects of power, inclusivity and representation. In turn, this contributes to a 'silence' which deprives children of the opportunity to actively engage with literature "to move between local and global cultures and to explore the ways in which people live and think in cultures that differ from our own" (Short, 2012, p. 9).

Increased Availability of Diverse Texts Countered with Limited Perspectives

Despite the overwhelming portrayal of dominant viewpoints and perspectives in the book collections, it was evident that there was some attempt by educators to intentionally select books to address principles of diversity. Eighteen percent of the total books in the collections contained portrayal of at least one character or person from a non-Caucasian culture. The pilot study for this study, carried out when the EYLF was first being implemented across Australia, found that only 11% of books had any portrayal of non-Caucasian cultures (Adam et al., 2017). This suggests that since the implementation of the EYLF and the assessment of quality standards through the NQS, educators may have an increased awareness and intention of addressing diversity through the provision of diverse children's texts.

However, this positive sign must be tempered with caution given that these books mostly represented dominant culture viewpoints and ideologies. And that the associated practice promoted

dominant culture viewpoints and ideologies and the "othering" of children from minority cultures. Furthermore, the intention behind the provision of these books appeared to be related to addressing diversity as a particular aspect of curriculum rather than providing exposure to diversity in books as part of everyday book sharing practices.

As with the pilot study (Adam et al., 2017), the majority of the characters or people of colour in the books with some representation of diversity had secondary roles with the main characters being Caucasian. In many of the books, these characters played no part in the text of the story and were only present in pictures as background characters. Evidence shows illustrations attract more visual attention than print from young children and that they use their working memory capacity to interpret these and link the story content with them (Mol & Bus, 2011). Thus, the portrayal of minority characters as background to the actions of white characters in illustrations can lead to children having the impression that Whiteness is of greater value and importance and this has been found to contribute to discrimination and prejudice (Bishop, 1997). Furthermore, most of these books contained either stereotypical portrayal of races, with few or no specific details to define these characters or people culturally, as also found by Bishop (1997). For example, tokenistic illustrations include those which repeat elements such as chopsticks or fans in books representing Asian Culture or use writing made to look foreign, such as a font mimicking Chinese or Japanese writing (Morgan, 2009). Such tokenism can contribute to a stereotypical or discriminatory perspective. While the 2% of books that portrayed non-Caucasian cultures in culturally authentic ways represented an increase on the <1% found in the pilot study (Adam et al., 2017), they remained a very small proportion of books in the collection, and, when used, were coupled with practices promoting "othering" of the cultures portrayed.

Also of importance was the age of books in the book collections. Over 50% of all books were more than ten years old at the time of the study. Collectively, this suggests that many books were likely to reflect outdated viewpoints and lifestyles. However, this was particularly concerning regarding culturally authentic books with 72% having publications dates prior to 2004. Similarly, 75% of books relating to religions, cultural customs, celebrations or beliefs had publication dates prior to 2004. Many of those categorised as culturally authentic were traditional stories and while these can shed light on the beliefs and customs of minority groups, when the age of these books is considered, there is the potential to contribute to the "othering" of these groups by portraying either outdated, or only traditional notions of these cultures (David, 2001; Roberts, 2005). Older books related to religion, cultural customs, celebrations or beliefs, too, can promote outdated viewpoints or understandings of these elements of cultures, thus compounding the concern of promoting only stereotypical or outdated viewpoints of minority cultures. This is particularly the case when there is

a dearth of recent publications which reflect the everyday lives of children from diverse cultural, social and linguistic backgrounds.

Furthermore, some of the recently published books which educators had purchased to address issues of diversity promoted stereotypical viewpoints of minority groups. These were often promoted to the centres by educational suppliers. This suggests that publishing houses may be producing books to address curriculum requirements and to "fill the gap" in the availability of diverse literature. However, they appear to do so without a deep understanding of what constitutes culturally authentic texts which will assist educators to address diversity in equitable and inclusive ways that will support positive outcomes for all children. It has been argued that this lack of awareness and understanding may be due to the lack of cultural diversity within the publishing industry (Deahl et al., 2016; Shukla & Flood, 2017) leading to unconscious bias which influences their practice (Deahl et al., 2016). This adds to the challenges facing educators when they are accessing and selecting authentic texts as many source their books through preferred publishers and suppliers. Therefore, book selection can be limited by what is made available by those groups.

In addition, there was a dearth of culturally inclusive books available in centres involved in this study and, despite this, these were the most likely books to be duplicated in book collections. This raises concerns for the building of inclusive books collections. Even if educators receive training and develop understandings, capabilities and confidence in evaluating culturally authentic books, where will they be able to source these books? And, will they be able to find and access a range and variety of culturally authentic books? In fact, the recent publication of a database of 340 culturally diverse Australian children's books ("The Cultural Diversity Database" [CDD], 2019) by the National Centre for Australian Children's Literature (NCACL), while having been developed to assist educators in accessing and selecting cultural diverse books, can also be considered as further evidence of the challenges facing educators seeking culturally diverse literature. Of particular concern is that only 50 of the 340 are listed as suitable for the early years. Included in this small collection are animal stories, books with Caucasian main characters and those by majority culture authors. Given that the overall collection of books held by the NCACL consists of over 45 000 books, this again highlights the challenges faced by educators when seeking culturally diverse books. The situations in the U.K. and U.S.A. are similar. In the U.S.A., only 11% of 3500 children's books received by the Cooperative Children's Book Centre (CCBC) in 2014 reflected minority group perspectives (Crisp et al., 2017). Furthermore, the CBCC found that the publication of multicultural books has remained constant for more than 20 years. Similarly, data released in 2017 by the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) in the U.K. showed that only 4% of the children's books published in 2017 featured characters

belonging to a minority ethnic background (BAME) with only 1% having a BAME main character (CLPE, 2018).

This evidence suggests that training educators in evaluating multicultural literature is not enough. The challenge of giving children access to authentic books showing equitable representation of cultural diversity is compounded by the dearth of suitable literature being published. Some responsibility for addressing these issues lies with the publishing houses and others involved in the publishing industry.

So while this study found evidence of increased awareness among educators that their book collections should reflect diversity and that culturally authentic books can assist in addressing principles of diversity, the quality of the books being sourced suggest that educators' have limited understandings of cultural diversity, a finding similar to that of Buchori & Dobinson (2015). In turn, this compounds the challenges they face in using diverse books to explore cultural diversity. The findings from this study add to evidence from Mendoza and Reese (2001) that many early childhood educators find sourcing and evaluating quality diverse literature a challenging task, resulting in little or no literature that represents the pluralistic nature of society being made available to children (Adam et al., 2017; Brinson, 2012; Crisp et al, 2016).

A "Tourist" Approach

In this study, the books reflecting cultural diversity were almost all written by members of the dominant cultural and aimed to "teach" children about other cultures. This was particularly true of non-fiction books used to develop early childhood content and skills and those relating to religion, cultural customs, celebrations or beliefs. It was mostly these books that were intentionally selected by educators when they focused specifically on cultural diversity. Examples of this included a series of books in Riverview written from the perspective of a tourist travelling in different countries. The wording of these books indicated clearly that they were about "other places". Dockside included a book in which each page portrayed children in national costumes positioned alongside items commonly associated with that culture. For example, children in China were represented in national dress, standing on the Great Wall of China alongside a Chinese dragon and children in Germany wore lederhosen and stood outside a stall selling sausages. Brinson (2012) and others (Morgan, 2009; Pang, 1992), have cautioned that educators should avoid books that rely heavily on characters wearing traditional clothing, further arguing that if using such books, educators should highlight that this clothing is only worn for special occasions.

Given that these books focus on superficial aspects of culture such as food, clothing and appearance, it is not surprising that educators subsequently emphasised these aspects when

drawing children's attention to cultural diversity during the sharing of such texts. Another concern is that these books were recently published books and had been purchased from educational suppliers for the specific intention of addressing diversity in the curriculum. As found by others (Crisp et al., 2017; CLPE, 2017; Tschida et al., 2014) if a "tourist" approach is to be avoided, it is imperative that publishing houses and suppliers address broader considerations of diversity themselves and that educators are trained in evaluating multicultural literature (Adam & Harper, 2010; Harper & Brand, 2010; Lowery & Sabis-Burns 2007).

In addition, in most collections there was only one book intended to represent one culture or even multiple cultures. Examples of this included the books referred to by educators as "The Multicultural Book" in Dockside, and the "Travel" series in Riverview. Educators saw these books as suitable for use in educating children about "other" cultures and diversity. Tschida et al. (2014) argue that a viewpoint and practice among educators that a single book can be used to represent accurately one or more cultures adds to the risk of stereotyping and marginalising children from those backgrounds. Tschida et al., (2014) warn that the use of a "single story" creates stereotypes which are both untrue and incomplete. When used repeatedly "these single stories become so much a part of our lives that we are often unaware of the ways in which they operate" (Tschida et al., 2014, p. 30).

The danger of such stereotypical and tokenistic portrayals is that they accentuate the exotic or "different" aspects of cultures and misrepresent, or completely overlook, the contemporary daily lives and ways of being of the people represented. Furthermore, many of the children in this study were from cultures represented in these tokenistic and stereotypical books and both the books and book use ignored or overlooked the lived experience of these children. Children's self–esteem may be negatively affected if they see only distorted or stereotypical representations of their background or colour (Bishop, 1997; Handoo, 1990; Roberts et al., 2005). In turn, this can result in fewer benefits from book sharing for these children than for those from the dominant culture who see themselves and their lives reflected consistently in books (Colombo, 2019; DETYA 2000, Fleer & Raban, 2005; and, Siraj-Blatchford & Clarke, 2000; Souto-Manning et al., 2018). In addition, children from the majority culture are at risk of developing an inflated sense of "White" being normal or superior, and this can lead to discrimination and prejudice (Bishop, 1997). It is important for children to see their own culture and those different to themselves represented in authentic and contemporary ways and in multiple books if they are to develop a strong sense of identity and of understanding and respect for others (Bishop, 1997; Boutte et. al, 2008; Colombo, 2019; Gollnick & Chin, 2009; Souto-Manning et al., 2018). In this way, not addressing diversity appropriately is problematic for all children.

These findings are consistent with others (Buchori & Dobinson, 2015; Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010; Schoorman, 2011) who found that when cultural diversity is addressed or examined in classrooms it remains at a superficial level. This again highlights the importance of sourcing and utilising children's literature texts that reflect authentic and contemporary portrayals of diverse cultures if books are to be used as resources to meet principles of diversity.

Books as Resources – Problems with Policy

Another finding from this research is that the centre policies did not explicitly mention children's books but rather, considered them as one resource of many. This is a concern, especially given the key role of books in early childhood. Further, evidence from the study suggests that books are not being adequately considered when addressing policy guiding the provision of resources sensitive to the background and cultures of the children. Related to this is the finding that educators talked about diverse books as something extra that must be added rather than an integral and equitable part of the centre book collection, as Bush (2008) also found. Indeed, in the current study and its pilot, there was a dearth of books in the collections that reflected cultural diversity and the few that did, portrayed one or more cultures in insignificant roles or in background illustrations only. In sharp contrast, analysis of observations, field notes and video recordings collected in the centres showed that other resources, such as dolls, toys and puzzles, were representative of cultural diversity. All of the centre polices were based on, and drew wording from, relevant policy documents and their legislated requirements, raising the question of how these official documents represent the role and nature of children's literature, particularly as it relates to supporting diversity in early childhood contexts.

Document analysis of the NQS Assessment and Rating Instrument (ACECQA, 2018) suggests it does not adequately recognise the role authentic culturally diverse literature can play in meeting the principles related to diversity clearly articulated in the NQF and EYLF. This lack of recognition is reflected in the criteria and processes used to assess centre practices against the NQS. That is, these standards do not adequately consider the importance of evaluating the book collections, especially in regard to the selection and use of culturally authentic literature.

Of additional concern is what appears to be a mismatch between the expectations and requirements of the EYLF and the assessment process of the NQS. The EYLF refers to texts as a means of exploring, valuing and encouraging appreciation and use of diverse language and cultural backgrounds; building on children's existing knowledge and language; providing print in home languages; and, exploring, listening to and appreciating diverse perspectives (DEEWR, 2009). The EYLF recognises that texts are culturally constructed artefacts that can promote consideration of

diverse perspectives (DEEWR, 2009) and encourages educators to share oral and written stories from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditions, those from our geographic neighbours and those brought by new citizens to Australia.

The EYLF also recognises that when children engage with literature, there is an emphasis both on 'sharing the enjoyment of language and texts and on beginning "to understand and evaluate ways in which texts construct identities and create stereotypes" (DEEWR, 2009, p.28). Despite the EYLF emphasising the critical role culturally authentic texts play in supporting diversity in early childhood, the NQS Assessment and Rating Instrument (ACECQA, 2018) does not. This could explain why none of the centres in this or the pilot study have policies which guide the provision of such books, but rather view them as one among many resources. That this approach was not noted nor impacted the quality assessment processes in the centres, with two being rated as Exceeding the NQS and a third earning the highest possible rating of Excellent, is further evidence of the discord between the two levels of government policy. It could be argued that the educators in these centres view their NQS assessment ratings as an endorsement of their practices when using literature to meet principles of diversity. Such a view was evident in Dockside, where the educators had a high level of confidence in their approaches to selecting and using literature to meet principles of diversity. This view contrasted to the findings from this study which found that the book selection and book sharing practices in this centre promoted a "tourist approach" and the "othering" of those from minority cultural backgrounds. According to the centre educators, the books recently purchased by this centre were intended to promote cultural diversity and demonstrate cultural competency. Yet, this study found that according to the accredited measures used, these books promoted stereotypical and exotic viewpoints of non-dominant cultures and consequently, in practice promoted "othering" of those cultures.

This is not to suggest that these centres do not deserve their high ratings, but rather raises important questions about the role of children's literature and the importance of recognising diversity in centre evaluation processes. Few would dispute that book sharing is an essential practice in early learning settings; indeed, this was not challenged by any of the participants in this study. There is also strong evidence such sharing can help build positive identities with appreciation, acceptance and respect for diversity and the associated benefits for literacy and learning for all children (Bennet et al., 2017; DETYA, 2000; Gollnick & Chin, 2009; Koss & Daniel, 2018). Indeed, evidence warns of the potential harm in the absence of inclusive practices involving the sharing of literature (Bishop, 1997; DETYA, 2000; Roberts et al., 2005; Handoo, 1990; Fleer & Raban, 2005; Koss & Daniel, 2018; Siraj-Blatchford & Clarke, 2000). These findings suggest that the requirement

to provide and use culturally authentic literature should be made explicit in policy and be assessed as part of the NQS accreditation processes for child care providers in Australia.

Recent research in Australia (Siraj et al., 2019) has argued that by including research based measures, the quality assessment processes of the NQS could be improved and strengthened. And that this improvement should include concrete and tangible indicators to provide more evidence of potential outcomes for children (Siraj et al., 2019).

Summary of Availability and Selection of Books

This study found that the books available and used in the participating early childhood centres overwhelmingly portrayed dominant culture ideologies and viewpoints, as has been found by others researching similar contexts (Boutte, Hopkins & Watlaski, 2008; Crisp et al., 2016). The representation of non-dominant cultural groups in the few remaining books was largely stereotypical or tokenistic and, in some cases, outdated. The current study found that since the pilot study was completed in the early stages of the implementation of the EYLF and NQS, the proportion of culturally diverse books in collections had increased marginally. However, these books remain a small proportion of overall collections. This finding raises important issues regarding the way in which the expectations and requirements for selecting and using literature in early learning settings has been constructed in current policy and practice at all levels of provision. This is particularly the case for literature that is inclusive of the worldviews and perspectives of children from non-dominant cultures. There are associated challenges relating to provision of culturally authentic texts for those in both the educational and general publishing industries.

Of interest and importance to this study are the interrelationships between this aspect of provision of culturally inclusive literature; that of educator beliefs, understandings and levels of confidence; and what has been found regarding practice. The educators' beliefs and understanding as expressed in this study do not provide the necessary foundation for making good decisions about selecting and using books to address principles of diversity and they expressed an associated lack of confidence in this area of their practice. The absence of diverse books in centre collections is both impacted by, and impacts on, the educators' practice which this study suggests did not promote inclusivity. These factors are likely to further contribute to continuing inequities for minority children (Bishop, 1997; DETYA, 2000; Roberts et al., 2005; Handoo, 1990; Fleer & Raban, 2005; Siraj-Blatchford & Clarke, 2000). Educators' practice is discussed in more detail in the following section.

9.2.3 The Third Theme: Practice

Overall, this study found that the current book sharing practice in kindergarten rooms of long day care centres promotes monocultural viewpoints and "othering" of minority groups. Furthermore, many children are not being exposed to the benefits of book sharing and engagement through high quality evidence based practice when considering all book sharing practice in the centres.

When educators' book sharing practice was analysed, three main themes emerged. The most dominant was labelled "othering", a term also used by other researchers (Borkfelt, 2011; Clarke & Watson, 2014; Buchori &Dobinson, 2015) to describe a focus on non-dominant cultures as different, strange or exotic. Another view dominated in two of the centres where Aboriginal children came from communities where a local language was spoken, and a third centre attempting to be inclusive of a Chinese speaking child, and was labelled "language preservation". In these centres, attention to diversity was restricted to promoting the local language, with assistance from Aboriginal language speakers and/or audio recordings of texts produced in the target language. The third theme concerned educators' lack of confidence when addressing issues related to diversity.

The preamble to the Melbourne Declaration, from which the NQF, NQS and EYLF were developed, calls for the disparity in the educational achievement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and those from low socio-economic backgrounds to be addressed. The researcher does not assume that children from CALD, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and/or low socio-economic environments, including those children who participated in this study, are automatically at an educational disadvantage. However, it is clear from the Melbourne Declaration, and from other evidence, that such socio-economic factors can be indicative risk factors for educational disadvantage. It is of concern that this study found that many children from culturally diverse backgrounds and those from low socio-economic areas did not have access to the benefits of high quality book sharing practice. It could be argued that this is a case of the early childhood care system unintentionally disadvantaging them.

This section will discuss educators' book sharing practice in light of principles of diversity and examine the quality of book sharing sessions and children's engagement in them.

Book Reading Practices and Principles of Diversity
Book Reading Practice Promoting Monocultural Viewpoints

The educators' practice was found to reinforce dominant culture ideologies and viewpoints. The key focus of language development dominated educators' practice when sharing books with children, reflecting the importance placed on supporting the development of literacy skills, an

emphasis found by other researchers (Fleer & Raban, 2005; Hill et al., 2011; Logan et al. 2018; National Early Literacy Panel, 2008). Educators also frequently used books to teach early childhood content and skills, encourage children's imagination and use of fantasy or humour and teach children about dispositions, morals or life lessons, a similar finding to that of Boutte, Hopkins and Watlaski (2008). Given the dominance of these purposes, it is of concern that 78% of this type of book sharing practice used texts containing either solely Caucasian characters or people (34%) or no people (mostly animal stories) (44%). In the sub-group of mandatory planned book sessions, these figures were 28% (solely Caucasian) and 44% (no people). Most of the educators' accompanying talk with these books either focused on language development or, to a lesser extent, on abstract thinking or elaborations relating to the themes or content of the book being used.

Portrayal or themes relating to minority groups were absent and, as such, invisible, in the books used for these purposes. Therefore, it is not surprising that, while there were no overtly negative viewpoints of minority cultures conveyed in educator practice, neither were there any that were positive. It could be argued that educator practice was founded on the assumption of shared understandings and that the themes explored in the books would be of interest and relevant to all children. This suggests that the lived experiences of those children from minority backgrounds are largely ignored. In the few cases where educators shared books reflecting some cultural diversity with children, the focus remained on language development, imagination, fantasy or humour, or dispositions, morals or life lessons, with no attention given to diversity. In most of these books, non-Caucasian characters played a secondary or minor role, often simply being present in illustrations. The presence of characters from various races can to some extent "normalise" diversity by providing children with images more likely to reflect the diversity of the playgrounds and community of the children. However, the background and incidental portrayal of minority cultures can further accentuate the key role and dominance of Caucasian characters and thus promote dominant culture perspectives. Such promotion of monocultural viewpoints results in the "othering" of those from minority culture backgrounds (Borkfelt, 2011; Clarke & Watson, 2014; Buchori & Dobinson, 2015). As mentioned earlier, the pattern of "othering" was the most common approach in educators' book sharing practice. While the educators' teaching experience varied from less than five to close to 30 years, with some having several years' experience in culturally and linguistically diverse settings, they were not found to promote culturally responsive practice when using children's books. This is in contrast to the findings of Blakeney-Williams and Daly (2013) who found that some experienced educators working in culturally and linguistically diverse education settings can promote inclusive practice even when using books that do not reflect diverse cultures and languages when they "help children to make connections between the ideas in picture books and their own worlds" (p. 49). In

contrast, the educators in this study largely assumed shared understandings of all children and did not encourage or model the making of connections to the diverse lives and backgrounds of the children.

Intentional Focus on Diversity

In the limited time that educators focused on diversity, their practice reinforced majority viewpoints and promoted the "othering" of minority groups as described earlier. Furthermore, it was evident that educators considered a focus on diversity was a specific aspect of the curriculum rather than an integral part of everyday practice. This belief was reflected in an emphasis on the special, exotic or different aspects of cultures, often promoting misconceptions about "other cultures" through generalisations such as, "In Portugal they like to wear fruit on their heads" (Rhiannon: Dockside). Educators, also appeared not to consider the possible lived experience of the children in their care, preferring instead to further promote "othering" through the frequent use of terms such as "special". This practice highlighted and reinforced educators' perceptions of difference. For example, Betty's comments, "See he's wearing a special scarf on his head", or, "This mummy dresses differently to me or to your mummy because she comes from another country so she wears different clothes" (Betty: Riverview), appeared to overlook the possibility that the children might see such dress as usual in their lived experience. Such comments risk confusing or demeaning children whose family or community members wear similar clothing as part of their contemporary life. For other children, this could promote a viewpoint that those people they see in the community wearing this type of clothing are "different" or "other".

Additionally, educators made incidental reference to superficial aspects of culture such as dress, food and clothing in book sharing sessions focussed on language development, thus reinforcing stereotypes. This was a concern particularly given the dominance of this type of book sharing session. These findings are similar to those of others (Buchori & Dobinson, 2015; Schoorman, 2011; Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010) who found that when cultural diversity is addressed or examined in classrooms, it largely remains at a superficial or perfunctory level.

When educators' practice included promotion of abstract thinking or elaboration, it was driven by the content and themes of the book which, in turn, most often promoted dominant culture viewpoints, including in relation to minority cultures. In turn, educator talk reinforced these ideologies and viewpoints, contributing to the "othering" of minority cultures. Such approaches fail to provide children with accurate and current information or insight into the daily lives of people from different cultures and backgrounds (Buchori and Dobinson, 2015). The strong relationship between the nature and quality of book collections and the types of practice favoured by educators

who use them is evident in these findings. So, too, are the beliefs, understanding and level of confidence of the educators which underpin their practice. That is, they demonstrated far more confidence and deeper understandings related to concept building than to diversity.

Furthermore, educators' practice showed that while they met the EYLF requirement of "sharing the enjoyment of language and texts" (DEEWR, 2009, p.28), they neglected that of using books to begin "to understand and evaluate ways in which texts construct identities and create stereotypes" (DEEWR, 2009, p.28). It could be argued that in order to meet this requirement, educators would need to draw children's attention to the construction of stereotypes in the books they used. Rather, this study found that educators' practice actively contributed to further promotion of stereotypical viewpoints related to minority cultures.

The educators' expressed beliefs and understandings related to cultural diversity impacted on the selection of books which they saw as intentionally focused on diversity. The evidence showed that most books chosen for this purpose were classified as culturally generic; that is, they promoted dominant culture viewpoints and ideologies. As discussed earlier, this encouraged book sharing practices which contributed to the "othering" of minority groups by promoting practices and lifestyles of the minority culture as being different or special. This evidence suggests that the type of book chosen by educators directly impacts the resulting practice when using these books, as others (Boutte et al., 2008); David, 2001; Roberts, 2005) have found.

Another pattern of practice evident was that of Uncertainty. This was evident in the observation discussed earlier of Betty in Riverview sharing a book about cultural celebrations around the world and the marked change in practice when she turned to a page about Easter. Her personal discomfort and uncertainty were obvious and her response was to skip over that page with no extra-textual talk or engagement with the children and then continued with the practice discussed earlier of drawing attention to the "special" or "other" nature of differing celebrations. Similarly, when Bethany in Community House, twice ignored Levi's comments relating to a "black girl" she appeared reluctant or hesitant to build on these observations or engage in discussion, preferring instead to continue to point out the "special" nature of the dress and activities of the group represented in the book. Thus, the pattern of Uncertainty resulted in a defaulting of practice to the pattern of Othering. This uncertainty was also evident in, and linked to, the beliefs and understandings of the educators discussed earlier in this chapter.

Even when educators used culturally authentic texts, the book sharing practice which followed reflected the "othering" of minority cultures. This was seen where educators used culturally authentic books with the intention of preserving or acknowledging a minority group

234

language. In these cases, educators' fear of "not getting it right" or not being "politically correct" resulted in lower quality book sharing practice with the partial or complete transfer of responsibility for the sharing session to members of the non-dominant culture familiar with the language.

These educators' intention of valuing and recognising the language backgrounds and mother tongues of some of the children in their centres showed respect (Zeegers et al, 2003). They were well motivated in intending to support the use and preservation of local Aboriginal children's mother tongue. The partnering with the local Aboriginal language centre and the use of their culturally authentic bilingual books and accompanying audio pens was evidence of Argyle working towards "the participation of Indigenous Australian education workers in the delivery of non-SAE, in partnership with classroom teachers who do not have non-SAE expertise" (Zeegers, et al., 2003, p. 58). It could be argued that the use of the specially purchased culturally authentic bilingual texts with accompanying audio recordings in Community House is evidence of a similar goal and sensitivity.

However, the apparent reluctance of the educators in both centres to use the texts beyond a narrow linguistic focus not only ignored the essential cultural context of language use, but resulted in missed opportunities to draw the majority group of monolingual English speaking children in these centres "into the multilingual and linguistically rich world of Indigenous Australian languages" (Zeegers et al., 2003, p. 56). It also appeared that the educators may have not recognised the opportunity for such book sharing to bring benefits to all children in the centres by encouraging critical appreciation of Aboriginal culture and tradition (Zeegers, 2011). For example, when Lily in Community House pointed to a character in traditional dress holding a spear and asked the children "Oh, does he look scary?" She appeared to promote a stereotypical viewpoint. Additionally, she overlooked the potential of this image and the children's interest in it as an opportunity to educate the children about some Aboriginal people being hunter gathers or their role as custodians of the land (Zeegers, 2011). In this way, the practice defaulted to that of "othering".

"Othering" was seen in another example where a culturally authentic book was selected by a child and shared with an educator. While the educator, Bethany, made some attempts to help the children participating to see similarities as well as differences to the lifestyles portrayed in the book, her overall practice highlighted the "different" and "special" nature of the cultural group represented in the book. This suggests that even when using culturally authentic books, well intentioned educators may lack the understandings, beliefs and confidence needed to promote principles of diversity.

Educators' confidence about and focus on diversity appeared to be influenced by children's attention to aspects of it. For instance, Yaz (a Riverview child) pointed to a book character with similar visual features to herself and remarked, "That's me", Louise, an educator, attempted to engage her in conversation, saying "Is that you Yaz? Does she look a bit like you?" Similarly, another educator, Bethany, appeared more confident discussing similarities between minority and majority cultures when a child (Levi) drew her attention to activities or objects in the books by making connections between them and what was familiar with statements such as, "It's like a toothbrush". This suggests that one possible way to address principles of diversity using literature could be to allow children's voices to be heard through giving them control of some of the talk around books. Evidence demonstrates that when educators encourage children to respond to and discuss characters, situations and events in inclusive books it "helps children to identify with their own culture, exposes children to other cultures, and opens the dialogue on issues regarding diversity" (Colby & Lyon, 2004). Furthermore, this engagement helps children to connect to characters which assists in developing empathy and intercultural understandings (Klefstad & Martinez, 2013). These types of approaches would be enhanced by access to culturally authentic books which reflected a range of cultural viewpoints, including those familiar to children attending the day care centre.

However, the lack of educator confidence and understandings related to diversity could still possibly inhibit the effectiveness of this type of approach. For instance, when Levi twice pointed out a "black girl" in text illustrations, Bethany ignored this reference to colour, and directed attention to activities and objects represented instead. Bethany appeared to avoid or "silence" the topic of colour or race, an educator behaviour also identified by Beneke and Cheatham (2019). Such avoidance can contribute to a "colourblind" approach that misses opportunities to influence and develop positive attitudes towards race in children (Pahlke et al., 2012). Furthermore, colour is one of the most divisive issues in society and failing to include or address it constitutes a "glaring omission" (Bishop, 1997, p. 35).

Of interest in these two examples of a child drawing attention to the visual features of a character and the educators' response, is that Yaz had a minority culture background and when she commented, "That's me," Louise appeared to be confident to attempt to discuss visual features associated with race. However, when Levi, a Caucasian child, twice pointed out and commented on a "black girl", Bethany ignored his comment, preferring to discuss other aspects such as objects and activities. There is evidence suggesting that educators may avoid talking about race and racial issues because they either believe children are too young for such discussions (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019; Whittingham et al., 2018), or that they may have concerns that such a discussion might be

considered racist in itself (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019). While Bethany's reason for ignoring Levi was not clear, it is possible that it could be indicative her holding similar beliefs or concerns.

Interestingly, the contrast between the response of Louise and of Bethany suggests that educators may be more confident to talk about race when the talk is initiated by a child from a minority background. However, as there are only these two isolated examples from this study, more research is needed to investigate this aspect of practice.

One Book, One Story

As discussed earlier, in book collections and book sharing, there was a reliance on a single text to provide appropriate representation of one culture or more cultures. Furthermore, when focusing on minority cultures, both the books and the educator practice were likely to focus on aspects such as celebrations, clothing and food. Without multiple books to represent non-dominant cultures, educators were unlikely to have the opportunity to provide counter narratives to the children or to show contemporary depictions of these minority groups (Mendoza & Reese, 2001; Tschida et al., 2014). Furthermore, rather than meeting the EYLF expectation that educators will assist children to understand and critique the structure of identities and stereotypes in books (DEEWR, 2009, p.28), book sharing practices evident in this research were likely to contribute to the perpetuation and reinforcement of stereotypes.

For many children from minority cultural backgrounds in the centres involved in this study the lack of authentic and accurate representations of their "worlds" could result in a sense of exclusion or "othering". Additionally, this lack of representation can have implications for children's social and emotional wellbeing, impact their sense of identity and self-efficacy and affect later academic achievement (DETYA, 2000; Gollnick & Chin, 2009).

Minority Children and Minority Educators

Some educators from minority backgrounds appeared to assume that children from non-dominant cultural backgrounds would automatically identify with, and know information relating to that background. This was seen in Riverview when an educator (Adina) assumed that a child (Emma) would know what crops were grown in her country of origin. Interestingly, when Adina referred to "your country" when addressing Emma, her response was, "I'm not from a country; I'm from Australia." These types of assumptions and the confusion which they can cause could lead to a feeling of alienation and exclusion for children from minority backgrounds. This is of particular concern when, as in this example, an educator from a minority group reinforces or perpetuates dominant culture ideologies or viewpoints through their practice, as also found by Buchori and Dobinson (2015).

This discussion of educators' book reading practices as related to principles of diversity has shown that while there were three patterns evident, these all resulted in "othering". Based on this evidence, it seems that current book sharing practice in kindergarten rooms of long day care centres promotes monocultural viewpoints and "othering" of minority groups.

Book Reading Quality and Engagement of Children
Variation in the Quality of Book Sharing

This study assessed the quality of a large range of book reading sessions in terms of both educator practice and the engagement of children through reliable standardised research informed and tested measurement instruments (SABR and COB). The use of these instruments will allow comparisons to be made with completed and future studies. This addresses a concern of the (U.S.) National Early Literacy Panel that the difficulty in making comparisons among studies of shared reading practices was "detrimental to understanding effective features of shared reading interventions … and how they have been delivered" (Pentimonti, et. al, 2012 p. 514).

This has the potential to support worldwide goals to provide all children with high quality shared reading experiences that promote positive literacy and language outcomes (Pentimonti et. al, 2012), as well as wider outcomes related to principles of diversity.

In this study, the quality of 16 educators' practice in 30 book sharing sessions across the four participating centres was evaluated. These sessions had a range of purposes and used 30 different books representing all the main themes found in the analysis of the centre collections. In addition, 55 of the 110 children in this study were evaluated for their engagement in book reading across 30 book sharing sessions with a total of 84 measurements taken. Thus, 50% of the children in this study were measured at least once and several were measured across multiple sessions and book sharing context. This allowed conclusions to be drawn regarding relationships between educator practice and children's engagement in book sharing as well as other possible influences on individual children's engagement in book sharing.

The findings from this aspect of the study showed that many children do not have access to high quality evidence based book sharing practice and few showed high levels of engagement. This has the potential to reduce the positive outcomes of book sharing for all children, particularly for those who may already be at risk. This may include children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and minority groups who may already be at increased risk of educational disadvantage. Not only are children from these groups likely to be "othered", but they have limited access to minority group viewpoints and perspectives given the dominance of the majority cultural views found in this

study. This potential disadvantage is compounded by their limited opportunities to engage in high quality reading practices considered vital to the development of children's literacy skills, social and emotional development, and sense of identity and inclusion.

Evidence regarding quality book sharing practice consistently shows that the literacy activities young children are involved in from an early age substantially contribute to their language development and later reading comprehension (Fleer and Raban, 2010; Mol et al., 2008; National Early Literacy Panel, 2008; National Centre for Family Literacy, 2008;). Related findings suggest that children from early literacy environments that do not include school-based literacy practices such as adults reading to children, enter school considerably behind their peers who have had storybooks read to them frequently (Mol & Bus, 2011). These findings have implications for those who provide long day care for young children. Despite this, the frequency and amount of time given to book reading experiences for children varied greatly both within and across the centres involved in this study and this also impacted on the engagement of the children. Educators in the two centres catering for most children from backgrounds more likely to be considered at educational disadvantaged or risk, spent an average of 44% less time reading to them than did those in the centre catering for children more likely to be considered from educationally advantaged backgrounds. The engagement scores of the children in these centres when they were involved in book sharing were concerning, with up to 40% of them scoring the lowest possible engagement ratings. This disparity has the potential to contribute to the disadvantage some of these children may face when entering school.

The finding that many children in this study had relatively limited involvement in book sharing is of further concern. Many children across all centres did not receive the amount of book sharing time recommended in research by Mol and Bus (2011). The range of time children spent in independent or educator led book sharing across five days was 7 minutes to 162.25 minutes, with an average time of 72 minutes, or 14.2 minutes per day. In these sessions, as already discussed, the educators strove to respond to what they perceived to be the children's interests. Therefore, children were largely free to choose whether they engaged in book sharing activities. This resulted in substantial differences in the amount of time individual children participated in book sharing activities led by an educator (range 0 minutes-137 minutes). Of note was the number of children choosing not to engage in educator led reading in two of the centres. That is, 47% of the children in Argyle and 65% in Dockside chose not to be read to by educators outside of mandated book sharing sessions. Further, when these children were involved in book sharing their engagement scores were lower than those who were involved more frequently. This should raise concerns for educators and policy makers, as this appears to demonstrate that the current understandings associated with an

"interest driven curriculum" may in fact be disadvantaging those children who do not show spontaneous interest in books or book sharing. Furthermore, in this study, there was no evidence of educators attempting to capture the interest of children reluctant to engage in these vital literacy practices.

The centre with the greatest proportion of children opting out of being read to by educators had the highest time spent on book sharing or reading. However, this higher time commitment was due to longer mandatory whole group reading sessions. The dominance of large rather than small or individual reading sessions may be problematic as the study found children's level of engagement was higher in small group contexts. Powell et al. (2008) also found group size affected children's engagement in book reading and sharing, with less engagement being evident in larger groups. It may be the case that children who were disengaged in large group reading developed a negative view of book related experiences and so opted not to participate in small group reading with educators. Others (Kaderavek, Pentimonti & Justice, 2013; Powell et. al, 2008) found that whole group or large group reading sessions do not engage children in ways that encourage them to be highly involved and interested in book sharing. Conversely, Katz (1995), Bowman et al. (2001) and Wasik (2008) showed that effective small group instruction is one of the key components of high-quality early learning experiences for young children.

This raises additional challenges for educators in knowing how to provide more opportunities for small group reading and how to interest and engage children in small group reading opportunities. The centre (Riverview) with the greatest time commitment to small group reading and highest overall level of child engagement in book sessions, had a practice of one educator at any given time having the role of being available to offer to read whenever a child showed interest in a book. Thus, there was always at least one educator alert to opportunities to read to children and to encourage children to engage with books. This was possible as the centre was large and had at least three educators in the room at any given time, a provision not practical in smaller centres. In contrast, in the two centres where most educator led book sharing took place in large or whole group contexts, children's access to books was sometimes restricted in response to perceived behavioural issues. Further, the approach in these centres was more structured with educators more engaged in organised activities, creating fewer opportunities for them to recognise or encourage children's interest in books. The children in these two centres also appeared to show less interest in accessing books individually or to being involved in educator led sessions even when the opportunity was available, suggesting a possible negative effect of these "rules" and guidelines on the children's interest in books and book sharing generally. This, in turn, adds to the challenges

faced by educators in providing opportunities for, and building children's interest in, small group reading opportunities.

Another important aspect of book sharing practice examined in this study was the number and length of reading sessions. Evidence suggests that children should be read to several times per day with an optimum time of 15 minutes per session (Dickinson &Tabors, 2001; Zucker & Landry, 2010). In the current study, the number of educator led sessions over the five observation days in each centre ranged from 21-51 with the time of each ranging from 0.5 to 22 minutes, suggesting that some children were read to multiple times a day. However, only 5% of educator led sessions matched the recommended session length (+or- 2 minutes) and all except one of these sessions occurred in the same centre (Riverview). The average overall session only lasted 5.50 minutes. Therefore, the children were not receiving the recommended frequency of book sharing of optimum duration, placing its potential benefits at risk.

In addition, the study found that the instructional supports for elaborations or abstract thinking were more common in sessions longer than the average and closer to the recommended length of time. As most sessions were considerably shorter than this, it was not surprising that the instructional supports were largely limited to attention to language. Research consistently demonstrates that to ensure book sharing improves outcomes for children, educators need to go beyond the reading of the text and stimulate "rich, literal and inferential extra textual conversations" (Zucker, et al., 2010, p. 81). Further, if educators are to use book sharing to explore, value and encourage appreciation of diverse language and cultural backgrounds; build on children's existing knowledge and language; explore and appreciate diverse perspectives; and to understand and evaluate ways in which texts construct identities and create stereotypes (DEEWR, 2009), they need to stimulate and support rich extra-textual conversations that include both literal and inferential questioning and discussion (Zucker and Landry, 2010). This would require frequent use of the instructional supports of elaboration and abstract thinking. Yet this appears only likely to happen in sessions close to the recommended length of time perhaps because this is a factor related to the depth of exploration that educators can achieve when sharing books with children (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001; McGee & Schickedanz, 2007; Mol & Bus, 2011).

The measures of book sharing used in this study showed that the use of instructional supports for book reading were similar across all centres and educators. However, the book reading contexts fell into two main types. One was characterised by high session climate support, high quality behaviour management and positive educator behaviour. The other was characterised by low session climate support, less effective behaviour management and evidence of negative

educator behaviour. Furthermore, the nature of the session climate and behaviour management were related to the level of engagement of children in book reading and sharing sessions. Where sessions were characterised by low session climate support, less effective behaviour management and evidence of negative educator behaviour, the children demonstrated low levels of engagement. Sessions with these characteristics all took place in the two centres more likely to cater for children from lower socio-economic and possibly marginalised backgrounds. These findings are similar to those of Pianta et al. (2002) who found that positive interactions between educators and children and positive instructional and child-centred climates in classrooms were less evident in areas where the concentration of poverty was high and family incomes low.

Observations in the study found that the educators in these two centres were often faced with challenging child behaviour and disruptions during books sharing sessions and this impacted on their responses during the sessions. This created an additional challenge in forming positive relationships with the children in their care. This is of concern, especially when other studies have shown the importance of positive relationships between the child and the educator (Wasik, 2008; Byrne & Munns, 2012). Indeed, Bowman et al. (National Research Council Committee on Early Childhood Pedagogy, 2001) suggest that, "if there is a single critical component to quality it rests in the relationship between the children and the teacher/caretaker and in the ability of the adult to be responsive to the child" (2001, p. 322). As highlighted by Pianta et al. (2002), these findings may have implications for "educational policies on class size and composition, and issues of equity in early school experience" (p. 225), especially given the evidence from this study and others that children from low socio-economic backgrounds may be less likely to access high quality pre-school settings. This is turn, has further implications for minority children including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, as found by Byrne & Munns (2012), and those children recently arrived in Australia as refugees or new immigrants. Children from these backgrounds may be already facing issues of inequity and "othering" through the lack of inclusive book sharing practices in early learning settings, as found in this study.

Summary of Book Reading Quality and Children's Engagement

This discussion of book reading quality and children's level of engagement in book sharing sessions has shown that while the children in this study had a range of book sharing experiences, few of these were frequent or of high quality. Of great concern is the finding that the children in this study most likely to be considered at risk of educational disadvantage were those with the least access to quality book sharing, raising concerns about equitable outcomes for them. Further, that none of the centres involved in the study consistently engaged children in book sharing sessions at or close to the recommended duration of 15 minutes, limiting the access to instructional supports

for the children. Finally, that the quality of educators' practices were related to the engagement of children in book sharing and to the relationships they built with them.

9.3 Chapter Summary

As discussed in this chapter, the educators in this study were well intentioned and showed an awareness of the importance of exploring and recognising the diversity of society and of the children in their care. However, they expressed limited understandings and confidence and had beliefs inconsistent with those which support selecting and using books effectively to address principles of diversity. The books available to be selected and used by the educators overwhelmingly portrayed monocultural viewpoints. In addition, both the books available and the beliefs and understandings held by the educators led to "othering" of minority cultures. Furthermore, the lack of quality book sharing sessions available to children in the study raises concerns about their access to equitable outcomes from such learning.

The educators expressed beliefs inconsistent with inclusive practices, limited understanding of cultural diversity and a lack of confidence in relation to catering for diversity. The impact on educator practice of these beliefs and understandings, together with their lack of confidence, was evident. Firstly, a limited understanding of the importance of cultural authenticity coupled with a lack of confidence was reflected in practices which either avoided or ignored diversity when selecting and using literature. Secondly, some educators perceived being inclusive of diversity as being limited to preserving a local Aboriginal language. However, as these educators lacked confidence or feared being "politically incorrect" in their practice, they avoided reading the minority language books, even though they were culturally authentic. Instead, educators used audio devices or deputised members of the language groups to read. As a result, there was very little or no talk during the reading and no post-reading discussion involving the educators and children. This was another form of "othering" the children from the minority language group. These practices deprived the children from other cultural backgrounds of the opportunity to engage with and learn about the local Aboriginal community who spoke the language being preserved.

In addition, when educators intentionally attended to cultural diversity through book sharing, their practices reflected limited, superficial or tokenistic understandings of diversity. The available books and those selected tended to either promote monocultural viewpoints and/or perpetuate or reinforce stereotypes of minority cultures. These type of texts encouraged the "othering" of those from non-dominant cultures.

This study found that while the nature and quality of book sharing varied greatly, many children had limited access to frequent, high quality book sharing practices. This is concerning as

evidence shows that these practices are important for the achievement of positive literacy, educational and social and emotional outcomes for children. Particularly concerning is the finding that children from backgrounds most likely to be at educational risk spent 60% less time in book sharing activities than did those from backgrounds considered as educationally advantaged and that these experiences were of lower quality.

Inequitable access to quality book sharing experiences together with the consistent "othering" of children from minority group backgrounds has implications for policy, practice and further research. These implications and recommendations will be discussed in the concluding chapter which follows.

Chapter 10: Conclusion and Recommendations

10.1 Introduction

The preceding chapters in this dissertation have presented the factors and relationships found to influence the use of children's literature to meet principles of diversity across four different early childhood kindergarten contexts. The constructivist and interpretivist paradigm through which this study was conducted allowed the use of multiple sources of data to create a rich and detailed picture of the complexity and nuances of these factors and the relationships between them. A constructivist and interpretivist paradigm was particularly suitable for this study as it allowed the researcher to "get into the heads" of the participants "to understand and interpret what the subject(s) is thinking or the meaning s/he is making of the context rather than the viewpoint of the observer" (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017, p. 33). In this way, the study has captured the viewpoints and understandings of the participants and how they perceive their practice in relation to the use of children's literature to meet or promote principles of diversity. Further, the constructivist and interpretivist paradigm has enabled conclusions to be drawn about the construction of diversity in education policy and formal quality evaluation processes. In addition, the sociocultural theory perspective which informed this study allowed the researcher to consider and understand the educational and social environments of the children in the study when engaged with, or exposed to, children's literature, including the world presented within these books. This allowed the potential impact of book sharing on the children in this study to be explored.

The conclusions presented in this chapter answer the research question and sub-questions established at the start of this study. Implications and recommendations are then presented and possible limitations discussed.

10.2 Answering the Research Questions

The research question which prompted this study was: What are the factors and relationships influencing the use of children's literature texts as a resource for meeting principles relating to cultural diversity in the kindergarten rooms of long day care centres? This question will be answered through the four sub-questions which guided the researcher in answering it.

Research Sub-Question a): What and what types of children's literature texts are selected?

The books used and available to be used in all centres in the study overwhelmingly portrayed dominant culture viewpoints and ideologies. The viewpoints and ideologies of people from non-dominant cultures were largely absent from the books used and the books available (Key Finding One). In addition, the type of children's literature texts mostly selected for the book

collections and for use in book sharing were those relating to developing and encouraging children's imagination, fantasy or humour. While 13% of these books portrayed some cultural diversity, providing an opportunity to explore diversity, only 1% of these were culturally authentic.

The second most common type of book in collections and in observed use related to early childhood content and skills. Seventeen percent of these books portrayed some cultural diversity but only 2% were culturally authentic. The third most common type of book related to dispositions, morals or life lessons. Of these books, 18% portrayed some cultural diversity but only 1% were culturally authentic. The least common theme in the book collections and book use were those relating to religion, cultural customs, celebrations or beliefs. While these books had the largest proportion (38%) displaying cultural diversity, only 16% of these were culturally authentic. This is of concern, particularly as this type of book only accounted for 3% of the collections.

When the types of books selected for use during the observation period were analysed, the study found that 61% of them related to imagination, fantasy or humour; 16% to early childhood content and skills; 21% to morals, disposition or life lessons; and 2% to religion, cultural customs, celebrations or beliefs. Of these, 20% portrayed some cultural diversity. However, only 1% of the books used were classified as culturally authentic. Therefore, 99% of the books observed being used with children involved in the study promoted dominant culture viewpoints and ideologies. Further, the remaining 1% of culturally authentic books were selected and used in only one centre (Community House) and accounted for only 14.5% of the educator led book sharing time in that centre. All of the books selected for use in the other three centres promoted dominant culture viewpoints and ideologies.

Research Sub-Question b): How are the texts selected?

The study found there was a strong link between the overarching themes in the books and the educator motivation when selecting the books (Key Finding Three). The key purpose of educators when sharing books with children was to promote or encourage the children's imagination, fantasy or humour, and their book selection was driven by this purpose. Similarly, the selection of texts for the purpose of developing or encouraging early childhood content or themes; dispositions, morals or life lessons; and, religion, cultural customs celebrations or beliefs influenced the selected of texts containing these overarching themes for each of these purposes.

The educators' perceptions of children's interests also played a key role in their selection of texts. Educators were likely to select, use and make available books perceived to interest the children. This was especially noticeable in the selection of books for the purposes of developing children's imagination fantasy or humour, and those focussing on early childhood content and skill

development. Further, when selecting texts related to imagination, fantasy or humour ("storybooks"), educators showed a preference for what they identified as their favourites.

Book selection and use for the purpose of developing positive dispositions, morals or life lessons was influenced by educator preference for particular books they saw as promoting appropriate socialisation or self-management skills and behaviours.

In contrast to the understanding and confidence educators demonstrated when selecting and using books for these purposes, they showed restricted understanding and low levels of confidence when selecting books to promote cultural diversity or to show consideration of children's diverse cultural backgrounds (Key Finding Two). This resulted in the majority of texts selected for this purpose promoting monocultural viewpoints and the othering of minority cultures.

When children selected texts themselves, either for their independent use or to share with an educator, they were highly likely to select books that had previously been read to them by an educator (Key Finding Four). In addition, the opportunity for children to select culturally authentic books or those educators had used to explore cultural diversity was reduced by protocols which denied children access to these types of texts.

Research Sub-Question c): How are the different texts used by the educators?

As already evident in the findings related to sub-questions 1 and 2, the main use of books with children was related to the overarching themes within the books. Thus, the most common use of books was to develop children's sense of imagination, fantasy or humour, followed by teaching or exploring early childhood content and skills; teaching dispositions, morals or life lessons; and, to a much lesser extent, educating children about religion, cultural customs, celebrations or beliefs. Importantly, when educators did use books for the purposes of educating children about religion, cultural customs, celebrations or beliefs, they did so with a belief that this was a specific part of curriculum to be addressed (Key Finding Nine).

When sharing books with children for each of these purposes, the educators largely focused their instructional supports on language development. This was seen in the frequent labelling of objects and events within the books and activities such as counting or pointing out features or concepts within the books. Other instructional support was related to the purpose of the session and so related to the main themes in the text selected with this aim in mind (Key Finding Three). This focus on language development was also evident when educators used texts with the specific intention of addressing or exploring aspects of cultural diversity. As a consequence, educators tended to highlight "special" and very visible features such as clothing or food in the illustrations and text.

Research Sub-Question d): What interactions take place between the educators, children and the texts?

The interaction between educators, children and the texts varied according to the nature of the book sharing session. Key factors affecting these interactions included group size, length of book sharing sessions, the books selected, implicit and explicit rules around book sharing involvement, and the purpose of the session. As already reported, the educators tended to focus on and support language development through their interactions with children around texts. The use of instructional supports was similar across all contexts. Further, the engagement and involvement of the children was strongly related to the educators' practice (Key Finding Five). Small group sessions that were longer than the overall average session and characterised by quality reading delivery together with positive session climate, behaviour management and educator responses/actions were associated with higher levels of instructional support for abstract thinking and elaborations by educators and higher engagement and involvement by children. It follows that positive interactions between educators and children were found largely in sessions of this nature. Conversely, sessions characterised by low session climate support, less effective behaviour management and negative educator responses/actions adversely impacted interactions between educators and children, and lessened children's engagement.

In addition, when children were expected or required to participate in whole group book sharing sessions this was associated with fewer book-related interactions between educators and children at other times, with these children being less likely to request or choose to be involved in book sharing with an educator. Furthermore, when educators used audio devices to "read" texts to children, there were fewer interactions between educators and children and markedly less engagement by the children.

It is important to note that the average book sharing session was less than six minutes long across the centres. Thus, most interactions between educators, children and texts were far shorter than the recommended books sharing session length of 15 minutes.

The nature of children's responses to books was related to both the key themes of the book selected for the session and the instructional focus of the educators, including their questioning. Consequently, children's responses were largely related to the educators' focus on language development skills such as naming and labelling. However, in the few longer sessions of 12-16 minutes duration more spontaneous talk took place and children were encouraged to elaborate and at times to use abstract thinking. However, these elaborations, educator questions and prompts were also linked to the key themes of the books. As there was little opportunity for discussion or interactions related to children's diverse backgrounds in most interactions between educators and

248

children, monocultural viewpoints or assumptions dominated. When focus was placed on diversity, this was largely related to the viewpoints and ideologies presented in the selected book (Key Finding Six) and as a result children were encouraged to see and point out "special" or exotic aspects of culture rather than make connections with their own experience or backgrounds. In this way, the possible lived experience of the children in the centres was overlooked.

In the few interactions where conversations did take place about, or related to, the children's diverse backgrounds, educators' assumptions about children from non-dominant cultures impacted on the interaction (Key Finding Eight). This was seen when some educators assumed that by focusing on non-dominant cultural language preservation, the children from those cultural groups would automatically feel included. Another example, saw an educator assuming that a child would automatically identify as part of her non-dominant cultural group and have specialist knowledge of her family's country of origin.

Finally, educators' confidence and practice when interacting with books was impacted by children's attention to diversity (Key Finding Seven). Educators appeared more confident to talk about cultural diversity when a child initiated the interaction. However, they appeared more likely to continue this interaction with a specific focus on difference when the interaction was initiated by a child from a minority culture. Educators appeared reluctant to explore further when prompted by a child from the dominant cultural background.

Answering the Research Question: What are the factors and relationships influencing the use of children's literature texts as a resource for meeting principles relating to cultural diversity in the kindergarten rooms of long day care centres?

This study found a range of factors which influence the use of children's literature as a resource for meeting principles related to cultural diversity. Furthermore, the relationships between these factors play important roles in the extent to which principles of cultural diversity are met or even explored by educators in the kindergarten rooms of long day care centres.

The key factors influencing the use of children's literature to meet diversity principles

The nature of the books: In the centres involved in this study, access to and the selection of books portraying cultural diversity was severely limited and those available and used overwhelmingly promoted monocultural, dominant culture viewpoints and ideologies.

The beliefs, understandings and confidence of the educators: The educators, while well intentioned, had limited understandings of the principles related to diversity or in how to meet these. This and a lack of confidence was reflected in their book sharing practice where they mostly

failed to explore or promote cultural diversity through the intentional use of culturally authentic books.

The nature of book sharing practices: Group size, length of book sharing sessions, the books selected, implicit and explicit rules around book sharing involvement, the purpose of the session and the quality of educator practice all impacted on the outcomes for children.

The relationships between these factors:

These factors were found to interact and impact on each other in several ways. The predominance of monocultural viewpoints in the books available and used in this study was both an outcome of, and a further contributor to educators' beliefs and understandings which did not reflect the nature of diversity as described in the policy and curriculum documents. The educators' lack of confidence in this area of their practice further inhibited their capacity to meet diversity goals. These factors, in turn, contributed to book sharing practices that promoted monocultural viewpoints and the "othering" of those from minority cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, the nature of educators' beliefs and understanding, together with their lack of confidence, impacted on the quality of their book sharing practice related to meeting diversity principles and more generally.

The relationships between the factors which influenced the use of children's literature to meet the diversity principles in long day care kindergarten rooms can be summarised as four overarching findings.

Overarching Finding One: Current book sharing practice in kindergarten rooms of long day care centres promotes monocultural viewpoints and "othering" of minority groups.

Overarching Finding Two: Educators lack the beliefs, understandings and confidence needed to promote principles of diversity through the use of children's books.

Overarching Finding Three: There is limited availability of books portraying inclusive and authentic cultural diversity.

Overarching Finding Four: Many children do not have access to the benefits of book sharing and engagement through high quality evidence based practice.

10.3 Summary and Implications

This study has identified practice that consistently promotes monocultural viewpoints and the Othering of those from minority cultural backgrounds. The potential impact on all children is of concern. For children to develop a strong sense of identity and an understanding and respect for others, it is important for them to see their own culture and those of others represented in

authentic and contemporary ways and in multiple books (Bishop, 1997; Boutte et. al, 2008; Gollnick & Chin, 2009; Souto-Manning et al., 2018). The findings of this study indicate that such practice is currently absent or severely limited. Further, evidence suggests that children from dominant cultures can develop an inflated sense of importance when the consistent promotion of monocultural viewpoints leads to a sense of 'White' being normal and of greater value (Beneke, et al., 2019; Bishop, 1997; Gollnick & Chin, 2009; Spina & Tai, 1998). This, in turn, can contribute to prejudice and discrimination.

In addition, the evaluation of the nature and quality of practice found in this study indicates that few children had access to high quality, evidenced based book sharing practices. This has implications for all children but particularly those from backgrounds which are likely to be considered at greater educational disadvantage. Furthermore, most children in this study had access to fewer book sharing sessions of shorter duration than what is recommended as a minimum. The impact of this deficit may be greater given that the children are in long day care for five days a week, the majority of their waking hours. For such children, a lack of exposure to frequent high quality book sharing can place them at further risk of disadvantage and increase the likelihood of inequitable outcomes.

10.4 Recommendations

The findings of this study have implications for early childhood educators and for those who train educators, develop policy, design, implement and accredit curriculum and recommend practice. In order to see changes that will result in more effective use of children's literature to address and meet principles of diversity several factors need to be addressed.

1. **The nature of the book collections** needs to be more inclusive and representative of the diversity in our society. In particular, the inclusion of more culturally authentic texts is required. This will require improved training and the development of guidelines for educators to assist them to recognise and select culturally authentic books suited to their purpose. Access to suitable texts has additional implications for the publishing industry where greater awareness of and attention to the demands of diversity may be needed to encourage publication of culturally authentic books which reflect Australia's diversity and are suitable for this age group. Those who select and promote books for educational institutions should also have access to appropriate training where it is required. Improved access to quality culturally authentic children's literature is important if the principles of diversity that lie at the heart of Australian education policy are to be achieved.

2. **Educator understandings related to valuing and addressing diversity principles need to be developed.** Findings from this study clearly indicate that educators' current values, understanding and attitudes towards addressing diversity principles are not conducive to effective practice. Educators may need access to further training in cultural competency to address this need. Such training should include the selection and use of authentic culturally diverse books. One way to address this is for the education of child care educators to include both cultural training and exploration of authentic multicultural children's literature to assist in building their cultural and intercultural understandings and competencies. This will assist in their preparation for working with children from diverse backgrounds as well as supporting them in the selection and use of this type of literature in educational settings. Such training is likely to lead to improved understandings and confidence that could translate into practices that would benefit all children.

3. **Educator understandings relating to "children's interests," and the place of principles of diversity as part of everyday practice rather than a specific or additional part of curriculum need to be addressed.** Attention needs to be given to increasing educators' understandings of what constitutes the "best interests" of the child to address the misconceptions related to "children's interests". This should include developing understandings of the importance of building on, extending and leveraging children's interests. Furthermore, the place of diversity at the heart of curriculum design and implementation rather than as an isolated "special" component needs to be promoted with educators.

4. **Educator understandings about the nature and place of shared book experiences should be developed.** Attention should be given to the influence of group sizes, book sharing instructional support practices and session length and frequency on children's engagement and the potential benefits they can access through book sharing. This would also require consideration of how to provide quality book sharing for all children, including those from minority backgrounds, when books are used to address diversity principles in the curriculum.

5. **Educational policies and quality assessment and rating processes that give greater attention to the provision and use of authentic culturally diverse and inclusive texts.** The absence of reference to the role of books in general, and diverse books in particular, in the policies and requirements for early learning centres is a serious oversight. That this is also largely overlooked in the assessment processes of the NQS is of further concern. If a centre is rated as Excellent or Exceeding, it is logical and justifiable for the educators to assume that they are not only meeting requirements but are doing so to an exceptional standard. Therefore, it is not surprising that they may be unaware that their practice with children's

books is likely to promote monocultural viewpoints and the Othering of minority children. The evidence of the value and potential of authentic culturally diverse and inclusive literature is too strong not to be given prominence in both policy and accreditation processes. One way this could be addressed is to use research based instruments, including quality rating scales requiring specific sources of evidence to be observed, as part of standard assessment processes. A recommendation also made by Siraj et al. (2019).

10.5 Limitations

Although the researcher followed consistent and recommended protocols and used research informed measures to ensure a robust study, there were still some limitations. First, the use of kindergarten rooms in long day care centres, although providing the benefit of examining contexts which operate under similar structures, guidelines and policies, limited the sample as other kindergarten contexts such as those which were school or community based were not included. Therefore, the findings may not be as generalisable or transferable as they might have been had the sample included a more diverse range of kindergarten contexts.

Second, the relatively small size of the sample (21 educators from four centres) necessarily limits the generalisability of the findings. It could be argued, however, that the rigor of the study allows for implications to be relevant to similar contexts.

Finally, the observation period of five days in each context provided a snapshot of practice in each of these contexts and there is a possibility that this may not be indicative of the longer term and regular practices in these centres.

Future Research

Given the scope, limitations and findings of this study, recommendations can be made for future research which may provide deeper insights into how children's literature is, and can be used, to promote principles of diversity. Further studies could take the research into differing educational contexts, including community and school based kindergartens as well as other early learning environments such as early childhood classrooms in primary schools. Such research could also extend into longer time periods to gain insight into whether the findings in this study are indicative of longer term practice. Larger scale studies may provide more extensive data which would present a more extended picture.

Since this study was undertaken, some positive signs have emerged through movements such as the We Need Diverse Books Movement (WNDB, 2014) and the publication and promotion of resources such as the Cultural Diversity Database (CDD, 2019) by the National Centre for Australian Children's Literature, with similar databases also available in other countries. Further research could

investigate whether and to what extent these initiatives are impacting the use of children's literature to address principles of diversity.

Further studies should consider including the voices of children and their families to provide access to their emic perspectives.

In addition, studies that investigate other ways in which educators are addressing or promoting principles of cultural diversity would add valuable insight into how educators are supporting development and valuing of children's diverse backgrounds and identities.

10.6 Final Comments

This study examined the factors which influence attention to diversity principles using children's literature, collecting and analysing data from every book sharing session across a typical week in four differing early learning settings. Thus, this study contributes to the body of knowledge for each of these factors, and importantly, new knowledge on the relationships between them together with the impact they exert on children's engagement in book sessions. The study contributes additional knowledge to previous studies as described here. Those which have explored the nature, quality and availability of diverse books (Bishop, 1993, 1997, 2012; Boutte et al., 2008, Cox & Galder, 1990; Crisp et al. 2018). Others have investigated educators' understandings, belief and confidence related to cultural diversity (Gollnick &Chin, 2009; Robinson & Jones-Diaz, 2006). Some have looked at how educators can engage children in explorations of cultural diversity (Bigler & Liben, 2007), including through the use of inclusive literature (Bush, 2008; Beneke & Cheatham, 2019; O'Neill, 2010; Zeegers, 2011). Still others have studied the quality and nature of book sharing practices with young children (Dickinson & Tabor, 2011), with many of these examining a small number of sessions or the use of one book across differing contexts (Halsell & Green, 1995; Kaderavek et al., 2014; Landry & Zucker, 2010; Zucker et al., 2010).

This study has also raised important issues concerning policy requirements and the accreditation related assessment of early childhood education provision as related to meeting diversity principles through the use of children's literature. In particular, the absence of specific reference to the provision of books, including those which are culturally authentic, in policy documents is a concern. Further, this absence is reflected in the assessment and rating processes of the NQS where the omission would seem to be in conflict with its underpinning principles and those at the heart of the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (1989).

Furthermore, the findings from this study suggest research informed actions which could improve the application of principles of diversity in book sharing practices in early childhood

contexts. The findings suggest that this improvement would lead to children's greater engagement in book sharing sessions and subsequent access to improved outcomes and future life trajectories of all children.

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APPENDIX A: Book Audit Recording Sheet

Centre _____   Sheet No _____

ISBN	Title	Tags/notes from centre	OT	CD	Notes

Tags/Notes: any tags, labels etc. assigned by the Centre. OT – Overarching Theme. CD – Cultural Diversity Category

APPENDIX B: Semi-Structured Interview Framework

This framework represents the key content and topical areas of focus – the actual questions and the exact wording may vary)

A. **Background and qualifications:**
   1. Please tell me about your background, qualifications and experience in working in child care?
   2. How long have you worked in this centre/room?
   3. Where did you obtain your qualifications from? When?
   4. Can you recall in your training what emphasis and importance was place on using children's literature when working with children?
   5. Can you recall or have you subsequently learn any pedagogy or theory regarding using children's literature with children?

B. **The role of children's literature in your centre/room:**
   1. Could you tell me about the role and place of children's books in your centre/room?
   2. Do the centre polices and curriculum requirements have specific mention and emphasis on selection use of children's books – can you tell me about this and what it means to you in your role?
   3. Could you tell me about what you believe the importance of children's literature is in the experience of a child in your care?
   4. How does that influence your approach to using children's literature?

C. **Selection of children's literature texts for the centre/room:**
   1. Who selects the children's literature texts for your room/centre?
   2. What considerations do you make when selecting texts?
   3. Do you face any particular challenges when selecting or accessing books for the centre/room?
   4. How do you decide where to store books and which books to make available for children to select and use?
   5. Are there any challenges associated with this?
   6. How often do you rotate the books for the children?

D. **Selection of texts for sharing with children:**
   1. Could you tell me about the activities you plan for using children's literature?
   2. How do you select the texts for these?
   3. What types of unplanned activities take place with children's literature?
   4. Who selects the texts for these?

E. **Using children's literature with children:**
   1. Could you tell me about some of the activities you do with children's books?
   2. How do you engage the children?
   3. What types of books do the children prefer? Why do think this is so?
   4. What books do you like to use the most? Why?
   5. How often do you conduct planned activities with books?

6. How often do you conduct unplanned activities with books?
7. What other opportunities do children have to interact with children's literature texts?
8. Do you ever do follow up activities with children after sharing a book with them? Can you give me some examples?
9. Do you ever link children's literature to other activities learning within the curriculum? Could you give me examples
10. Do you ever make spontaneous or incidental links to children's interests or other activities?
11. Could you tell about some examples of sharing books with children that you think were most successful?
12. Can you tell me about some of the response to literature that you have observed in the children?

F. **Children's literature and the EYLF:** I have here the Learning Outcomes of the EYLF and I would like to ask you about where you see children's literature playing a role and examples of those where you have perhaps used a book in regard to any of these outcomes:
(Note: this will be a semi-structured discussion rather than item by item interview)

1. Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity
   i. Children feel safe secure and supported
   ii. Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency
   iii. Children develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities
   iv. Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect

2. Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world
   i. Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation
   ii. Children respond to diversity with respect
   iii. Children become aware of fairness
   iv. Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment

3. Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of well-being
   i. Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing
   ii. Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing

4. Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners
   i. Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination, and reflexivity

     ii.   Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating

    iii.   Children transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another

    iv.   Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies and natural and processed materials

5. Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators
   i. Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes
   ii. Children engage with a range of texts and gain meaning form these texts
   iii. Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of media
   iv. Children begin to understand how symbols and patterns systems work
   v. Children use information and communication technologies to access information, investigate ideas and represent their thinking.

G. Challenges or difficulties with using children's literature with children
1. Do you face any challenges in regard to working with books and young children?
2. Do you encounter any challenges in regard to making books available to young children for their own use?

APPENDIX C: Screenshot of Book Collectors Database Information

Author	Title	Location	Genre	Subject	Overarching Theme	Cultural Diversi...	Tags	ISBN	Index	Publica...	Publisher
Annabel Karmel	Top 100 Finger Foods	C5 In room - low shelves	Non-Fiction	Cooking; General	a) Early childhood c...	Caucasian		9780091925079	2609	2009	Ebury Press
Carol Kaufmann; Dan Kainen	Safari: A Photicular Book	C5 Educator's Storeroom	Non-Fiction	General; Maasai M...	a) Early childhood c...	Caucasian		9780761163800	2556	2012	Workman Publis...
Carol Kaufmann; Dan Kainen	Safari: A Photicular Book	C5 Educator's Storeroom	Non-Fiction	Maasai Mara Natio...	a) Early childhood c...	NA		9780761163800	3408	2012	Workman Publis...
Keller, holly	A bear for Christmas	C3 Shed Crate 4	Fiction	Christmas	d)religious/cultural c...	Caucasian		780590709453	3002	1986	William Morrow ...
Bollard Kellie	In The Bin	C1 Library	Non-Fiction	Recycling (Waste, E...	a) Early childhood c...	NA	science, envi...	9780646500584	24	2008	K. Bollard
Kent, Frits W	Life Nature Library - the plants	C1 Library	Non-Fiction	Juvenile Nonfictio...	a) Early childhood c...	NA	science, envi...		623	1971	Time-Life Books
Tony Kerins	The Brave Ones	C3 Shed Crate 3	Fiction	Animal Stories	b) imagination/fanta...	NA		9780744544251	1628	1996	Walker Books, L...
Judith Kerr	The Tiger Who Came To Tea (Colli...	C5 Educator's Storeroom	Fiction	General	b) imagination/fanta...	Caucasian		9780006640615	2555	1992	Picture Lions
Robin Kerrod	The sky at night	C1 Library	Non-Fiction	Space	a) Early childhood c...	NA	space, histo...	1865053715	210	2000	Five Mile Press
Robin Kerrod	Mapping The Skies (The Sky At Ni...	C1 Library	Non-Fiction	Juvenile Nonfictio...	a) Early childhood c...	NA	space, histo...	9780764115875	629	2000	Barron's Educati...
Robin Kerrod	The Star Guide: Learn How To Rea...	C1 Library	Non-Fiction	Astronomy, Astron...	a) Early childhood c...	Caucasian	space, histo...	9780671874674	630	1993	Wiley
Jensen Kiersten	Possum In The House	C2 Room	Fiction	Dwellings; Juvenile...	b) imagination/fanta...	Caucasian		9780949130020	765	1990	Childerset
Kightly, rosalinda	My Favourite Colours	C3 Shed Crate 4	Fiction	Animal Stories; Ge...	b) imagination/fanta...	NA		9780862726553	1603	1991	Kingfisher
Eric Kincaid	Kenneth Grahame's The Wind in T...	C3 Central Books rotati...	Fiction	Animal Stories	b) imagination/fanta...	NA		9781741246698	1112	2005	The Five Mile Press
Dorling Kindersley	Jumbo Shaped Board Book: Duck...	C3 Central Books rotati...	Fiction	Animal Stories	b) imagination/fanta...	NA		9780751330939	1094	2001	Dorling Kindersl...
Dorling Kindersley	Play and Learn Shapes	C3 'Library' Borrowing ...	Non-Fiction	Shapes	a) Early childhood c...	NA		9780751357202	1298	1998	Dorling Kindersley
Dorling Kindersley	Sparkly Princess	C3 Reading Room	Fiction	Princesses	b) imagination/fanta...	Caucasian		9781405361552	1306	2005	Dorling Kindersley
Jeanette King; Julie Greig; New ...	One Sleepy Day	C1 Library	Fiction	Emotions; Emotion...	c) dispositions/mora...	3 Culturally neut...	Feelings, All...	9780478212099	35	1998	Learning Media
Stephen Michael King	You	C2 Storeroom - rotational	Fiction	Fiction / General; F...	c) dispositions/mora...	NA		9781741696226	700	2010	Scholastic Press
King, Sue	A Day on Safari	C3 Books behind 'room...	Fiction	Animal Stories	b) imagination/fanta...	NA		9781906243142	1561	1970	Allied
David Kirk	Miss Spider's Tea Party	C2 Storeroom - rotational	Fiction	Animals - Juvenile ...	c) dispositions/mora...	NA		9780141500546	705	2005	Ladybird Books, ...
Ann-Marie Kishel	Recycle (First Step Nonfiction)	C1 Locked Storeroom St...	Non-Fiction	Recycling (Waste, E...	c) dispositions/mora...	Caucasian	Protective b...	9780822556763	475	2006	Lerner Publicatio...
Ann-Marie Kishel	Reuse (First Step Nonfiction)	C1 Locked Storeroom St...	Non-Fiction	Recycling (Waste, E...	a) Early childhood c...	2 Genetically Au...	Protective b...	9780822556756	477	2006	Lerner Publicatio...
Satoshi Kitamura	Millie's Marvellous Hat	C3 'Library' Borrowing ...	Fiction	Juvenile Fiction / C...	b) imagination/fanta...	Caucasian		9781842709481	1163	2010	Random House ...
Sandy Kleven	The Right Touch: A Read-Aloud St...	C1 Library	Fiction	Sexual Abuse - Fict...	c) dispositions/mora...	3 Culturally neut...	Feelings, All...	9780935699104	48	1998	Illumination Arts...
Timothy Knapman	Eleanor's Eyebrows	C1 Locked Storeroom St...	Fiction	identity; wellbeing	c) dispositions/mora...	NA	Protective b...	9780857078414	99	2013	Simon & Schuster
Timothy Knapman	Princesses who love to share	C2 Room Shelves_super...	Fiction	Behavior Sharing	c) dispositions/mora...	Caucasian		9781781710173	958	2003	QED
Timothy Knapman	The Pirate who said please	C2 Room Shelves super...	Fiction	Behavior Manners...	c) dispositions/mora...	Caucasian		9781781710166	959	2012	QED

APPENDIX D: Cultural Diversity Categories Framework

Adapted from: Bishop, R. (1992). Multicultural literature for children: Making informed choices. In V. Harris (Ed.), *Teaching multicultual literature in grades K-8* (pp. 37-53). Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon.

Categories	Indicators
Culturally Authentic	• "illuminate the experience of growing up a member of a particular, non-white cultural group" (Bishop, 1992) • Have potential to increase appreciation and understandings of those not from this culture • Books are written by people of the culture reflected in the book
Culturally Generic	• "featuring characters who are members of so-called minority groups, but contain few, if any specific details that might serve to define those characters culturally." (Bishop, 1992) • Assumed audience is White • Themes present White European/American/ Australian values and activities • Characters may be portrayed in stereotypical ways in illustrations
Culturally Neutral	• "feature people of colour but are fundamentally about something else (Bishop, 1992) • "cultural authenticity is not likely to be a major consideration" (Bishop, 1992) • The character/s of "colour" could be replaced with a white character with no impact on the overall story
Solely Caucasian	• All humans/characters are Caucasian
NA	• Non-human characters or no characters at all • E.G.: Animal Stories Concept books

APPENDIX E: Overarching Themes Framework

Overt messages/themes or surface "lessons" to be learnt.

a) Early childhood content and skills
   Indicators:
   - "Books that taught ECE content and skill such as colour, shapes and sequence" (2008)
   - "Features designed to engage young readers such as predictability and repetition" (2008)
   - Presenting information about the world - living and innate; the universe etc.

b) Imagination, fantasy or humour
   Indicators:
   - "Books that encouraged children's imagination and use of fantasy and/or humour" (2008)
     ("While these books may have also taught skills and contents, these were judged as being secondary to imagination, fantasy or humour)

c) Dispositions, morals or life lessons
   Indicators:
   - Books in which there is "embedded a moral lesson aimed to teach about life, values and attitudes" (2008)
     e.g.: being a good friend, not being afraid of going to hospital etc.). (Often this was made explicit on the blurb of the book)
     Again, these may have had secondary purposes but were judged by primary purpose.

d) Religion, cultural customs, celebrations or beliefs
   Indicators:

   - Books with subject matter or themes relating to religion or cultural customs, celebrations or beliefs.

APPENDIX F: Viewpoints and Ideologies Framework

Title:

Author:

Publication Date:

Main character			
Ethnicity:	Caucasian		
Notes/indicators:			
Gender:	Male	Female	neither/both
Notes/indicators:			
SES:	Low /working	Middle	Upper
Notes/indicators:			

Secondary character 1			
Ethnicity:	Caucasian		
Notes/indicators:			
Gender:	Male	Female	neither/both
Notes/indicators:			
SES:	Low /working	Middle	Upper
Notes/indicators:			

Secondary character 2			
Ethnicity:	Caucasian		
Notes/indicators:			
Gender:	Male	Female	neither/both
Notes/indicators:			
SES:	Low /working	Middle	Upper
Notes/indicators:			

Secondary character 3			
Ethnicity:	Caucasian		
Notes/indicators:			
Gender:	Male	Female	neither/both
Notes/indicators:			
SES:	Low /working	Middle	Upper
Notes/indicators:			

Unspoken underlying messages – passive ideologies and assumptions.

Guiding Notes:

Categorization of Main Character for Ethnicity, Gender and SES.

> *Ethnicity*

> **Indicators:**

Note references to race or ethnicity

Illustrations used as indicators of above.

> *Gender – male/female/neither/both*

Indicators:

Gender noted through storyline and/or illustrations. Use of pronouns such as "he" "she" used in case of animal stories or non-human characters.

> *SES – upper, middle, low/working, uncertain/not indicated.*

Indicators:

Indicators of SES – language use, context use such as furniture, dress, home and nature of activities performed by characters

Adults with white-collar/blue collar positions

Linear/sequential routines or other

Categorization of Secondary Characters for Ethnicity, Gender and SES.

Secondary characters selected and analysed **only** when more than one race included;

Chosen by ethnicity – if more than one of same ethnicity selected first to occur in either image or text – subjected to similar assessment as above.

Unspoken underlying messages – passive ideologies and assumptions.

Does the book affirm non-mainstream lifestyles and perspectives either covertly or overtly **OR**

Does the book facilitate the internalization of the ideologies and values of the dominant group (Freire 1970/1999)

Indicated either overtly or covertly by story and/or illustrations as below:

- Characters and actions; thoughts and feeling of the characters.
- Furniture, dress, home and nature of activities performed by characters

Assessing Informational Texts

Information texts are analysed for:

Racial representation: E.g.: Chinese, Australian, mixed etc.

Gender: male, female, both, neither

SES: one or more e.g. middle, lower, middle and lower etc.

Minority/Dominant – this category classifies the overall viewpoint of the book e.g.: promoting authentic, contemporary, stereotypical or exotic viewpoints of races, ethnicities represented

Classification of Majority/minority with room for comment e.g. Outdated.

APPENDIX G: SABR Coding Sheet

Instructional Support Codes—
Page 1

Field	Value
Teacher ID	_____ □ Sub, □ Aide, □ Other
Video #	_____
Coder ID	_____
Coding Date	_____
Title of Book	_____
Author	_____
Group	□ Large group (7+), □ Small group (3-6), □ Two C, □ One C
Language (other than English)	_____
Genre	□ Narrative, □ Informational, □ Mixed
Book features	□ ABC, □ Counting, □ Chapter B., □ Reference, □ Rhyming, □ Pattern
Dual language text	□ No, □ Yes _____
Special text	□ Electronic Book (computer), □ Book on tape, □ Big book

I. Instructional Support

CONSTRUCTS / CODING CATEGORIES

START TIME: Time book-related discussion began if not start of video – _____ (min, sec)

Language Development
- 1a. [L] Notice, label, or describe story actions (i.e., verbs); perceptually present
- 1b. [L] Ask for or provide noun label, locate, or notice (no modifier, but can include preposition; includes rote counting)
- 1c. [L] Ask for or provide noun description/characteristics (any modifier, including possession; selective focus on parts of noun)
- 1d. [L] Ask for or provide a word definition ("this means"; "this is" + essential quality/synonym/category; example/non-example)
- 1e. Expands/extends C's utterance (includes change in grammatical form, adding an idea, or tag Q added to C's utterance)

Abstract Thinking
- 2a. [I] Model or ask to compare and contrast (show differences and likenesses)
- 2b. [I] Model or ask for judgments, evaluations, inferences or character's point of view
- 2c. [I] Model or ask for hypotheses or predictions about future story events, or revisit/confirm prediction
- 2d. [I] Model or ask for reasoning, analysis, or explanation (e.g., conditions, cause, effect, draw conclusions, explain how/why)
- 3a. Ask for or provide a word elaboration (rich discussion, contextualize, dramatize for word meaning)

Elaborations
- 3b. Text-to-life connection (link to child or adult's personal experiences or to other texts)
- 3c. Encourage C to dramatize/imitate/pretend (includes pretend talk to characters)
- 3d. Follows C spontaneous initiation with contingent verbal response that continues C's topic (T must do more than repeat C's utterance or offer a vague acknowledgement)
- 3e. Emotion Modeling using feeling words to discuss character emotions; emotion words in text, or own emotive responses

Print/ Phonological Skills
- 4a. Discuss book or print conventions (title, author, illustrator, cover, spine, read left to right, read + page, how to read)
- 4b. Discuss letter sounds in the text (includes single letter sounds, digraphs – sh, ch, th, wh – or letter pairs/blends – e.g., sl, br, etc.)
- 4c. Discuss letters or words including counting words (letter, upper/lower-case, capital, ABC's, alphabet, word + print)
- 4d. Discuss sounds of words including rhyme, syllables, beginning sounds, phonemes

INTERVALS→ (numbered 1–30 in each cell, columns as below)

Category	:15	:30	:45	1:00	1:15	1:30	1:45	2:00	2:15	2:30	2:45	3:00	3:15	3:30	3:45	4:00	4:15	4:30	4:45	5:00	5:15	5:30	5:45	6:00	6:15	6:30	6:45	7:00	7:15	7:30	Total
1a	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
1b	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
1c	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
1d	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
1e	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	Lang Dev. Tot
2a	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
2b	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
2c	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
2d	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
3a	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	Abstract Thinking Tot
3b	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
3c	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
3d	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
3e	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	Elaborations Tot
4a	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
4b	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
4c	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
4d	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	Print/Phonological Tot

Page # →

Sum

284

SABR: Systematic Assessment of Book Reading

II. BR

CONSTRUCTS / CODING CATEGORIES

- Session Climate
- 5a. Models respect (please, thank you, you're welcome; respond to C's agree/sensitively and promptly)
- 5b. Positive feedback (Do not code: Yeah, Yep, Uh huh, Okay; must include a positive/affirming word or phrase)
- 5c. Children touch book (excludes C touching book without T's encouragement)

Page # →

Block 1 (INTERVALS →)

5c	5b	5a	INTERVALS
91	91	91	22:45
92	92	92	23:00
93	93	93	23:15
94	94	94	23:30
95	95	95	23:45
96	96	96	24:00
97	97	97	24:15
98	98	98	24:30
99	99	99	24:45
100	100	100	25:00
101	101	101	25:15
102	102	102	25:30
103	103	103	25:45
104	104	104	26:00
105	105	105	26:15
106	106	106	26:30
107	107	107	26:45
108	108	108	27:00
109	109	109	27:15
110	110	110	27:30
111	111	111	27:45
112	112	112	28:00
113	113	113	28:15
114	114	114	28:30
115	115	115	28:45
116	116	116	29:00
117	117	117	29:15
118	118	118	29:30
119	119	119	29:45
120	120	120	30:00
			Total
	Session / Climate		Sum

Block 2 (INTERVALS →)

5c	5b	5a	INTERVALS
61	61	61	15:15
62	62	62	15:30
63	63	63	15:45
64	64	64	16:00
65	65	65	16:15
66	66	66	16:30
67	67	67	16:45
68	68	68	17:00
69	69	69	17:15
70	70	70	17:30
71	71	71	17:45
72	72	72	18:00
73	73	73	18:15
74	74	74	18:30
75	75	75	18:45
76	76	76	19:00
77	77	77	19:15
78	78	78	19:30
79	79	79	19:45
80	80	80	20:00
81	81	81	20:15
82	82	82	20:30
83	83	83	20:45
84	84	84	21:00
85	85	85	21:15
86	86	86	21:30
87	87	87	21:45
88	88	88	22:00
89	89	89	22:15
90	90	90	22:30
			Total
	Session / Climate		Sum

Block 3 (INTERVALS →)

5c	5b	5a	INTERVALS
31	31	31	7:45
32	32	32	8:00
33	33	33	8:15
34	34	34	8:30
35	35	35	8:45
36	36	36	9:00
37	37	37	9:15
38	38	38	9:30
39	39	39	9:45
40	40	40	10:00
41	41	41	10:15
42	42	42	10:30
43	43	43	10:45
44	44	44	11:00
45	45	45	11:15
46	46	46	11:30
47	47	47	11:45
48	48	48	12:00
49	49	49	12:15
50	50	50	12:30
51	51	51	12:45
52	52	52	13:00
53	53	53	13:15
54	54	54	13:30
55	55	55	13:45
56	56	56	14:00
57	57	57	14:15
58	58	58	14:30
59	59	59	14:45
60	60	60	15:00
			Total
	Session / Climate		Sum

Block 4 (INTERVALS →)

5c	5b	5a	INTERVALS
1	1	1	:15
2	2	2	:30
3	3	3	:45
4	4	4	1:00
5	5	5	1:15
6	6	6	1:30
7	7	7	1:45
8	8	8	2:00
9	9	9	2:15
10	10	10	2:30
11	11	11	2:45
12	12	12	3:00
13	13	13	3:15
14	14	14	3:30
15	15	15	3:45
16	16	16	4:00
17	17	17	4:15
18	18	18	4:30
19	19	19	4:45
20	20	20	5:00
21	21	21	5:15
22	22	22	5:30
23	23	23	5:45
24	24	24	6:00
25	25	25	6:15
26	26	26	6:30
27	27	27	6:45
28	28	28	7:00
29	29	29	7:15
30	30	30	7:30
			Total
	Session / Climate		Sum

SABR: Systematic Assessment of Book Reading

Score Form, Duration, Global Rating Scales, & Comments – Page 6

SCORE FORM

Language Development (LD)

1a Describe the Events.	Pg1 _____ + Pg2 _____ + Pg3 _____ + Pg4 _____ =	Sum Score 1a
1b Noun Label.	Pg1 _____ + Pg2 _____ + Pg3 _____ + Pg4 _____ =	Sum Score 1b
1c Describe Noun.	Pg1 _____ + Pg2 _____ + Pg3 _____ + Pg4 _____ =	Sum Score 1c
1d Word Definition.	Pg1 _____ + Pg2 _____ + Pg3 _____ + Pg4 _____ =	Sum Score 1d
1e Expand Content.	Pg1 _____ + Pg2 _____ + Pg3 _____ + Pg4 _____ =	Sum Score 1e

☐ LD Total

Abstract Thinking (AT)

2a Compare/Contrast.	Pg1 _____ + Pg2 _____ + Pg3 _____ + Pg4 _____ =	Sum Score 2a
2b Judgment/Inference.	Pg1 _____ + Pg2 _____ + Pg3 _____ + Pg4 _____ =	Sum Score 2b
2c Prediction.	Pg1 _____ + Pg2 _____ + Pg3 _____ + Pg4 _____ =	Sum Score 2c
2d Reasoning/Explain.	Pg1 _____ + Pg2 _____ + Pg3 _____ + Pg4 _____ =	Sum Score 2d

☐ AT Total

Elaborations (EL)

3a Word Elaboration.	Pg1 _____ + Pg2 _____ + Pg3 _____ + Pg4 _____ =	Sum Score 3a
3b Text-Life.	Pg1 _____ + Pg2 _____ + Pg3 _____ + Pg4 _____ =	Sum Score 3b
3c Dramatize/Pretend.	Pg1 _____ + Pg2 _____ + Pg3 _____ + Pg4 _____ =	Sum Score 3c
3d Follow Ch's Imitation.	Pg1 _____ + Pg2 _____ + Pg3 _____ + Pg4 _____ =	Sum Score 3d
3e Discuss Emotions.	Pg1 _____ + Pg2 _____ + Pg3 _____ + Pg4 _____ =	Sum Score 3e

☐ EL Total

Print & Phonological Skills (PP)

4a Book/Print Organiz.	Pg1 _____ + Pg2 _____ + Pg3 _____ + Pg4 _____ =	Sum Score 4a
4b Letter Sounds.	Pg1 _____ + Pg2 _____ + Pg3 _____ + Pg4 _____ =	Sum Score 4b
4c Letter/Word Ident.	Pg1 _____ + Pg2 _____ + Pg3 _____ + Pg4 _____ =	Sum Score 4c
4d Phonology.	Pg1 _____ + Pg2 _____ + Pg3 _____ + Pg4 _____ =	Sum Score 4d

☐ PP Total

Session Climate (SC)

5a Mindful Respect.	Pg1 _____ + Pg2 _____ + Pg3 _____ + Pg4 _____ =	Sum Score 5a
5b Positive Feedback.	Pg1 _____ + Pg2 _____ + Pg3 _____ + Pg4 _____ =	Sum Score 5b
5c Ch touch book.	Pg1 _____ + Pg2 _____ + Pg3 _____ + Pg4 _____ =	Sum Score 5c

☐ SCT Total

TIME

Duration: _____ min: _____ sec

OTHER VIDEO INFORMATION

For how much of the session was the book itself clearly in the camera view?
____ All/most ____ Some ____ Little/None

For how much of the session were you able to clearly hear and parse the teacher's utterances?
____ All/most ____ Some ____ Little/None

GLOBAL RATING SCALES

√ Reading Delivery:
① ____ Low quality reading with overall monotone voice or frequent miscues

② ____ Moderate reading quality with intermittent dramatic reading.

③ ____ High quality reading delivery with overall dramatic reading.

√ Behavior Management:
① ____ Low quality behavior management approaches or typically reactive.

② ____ Moderate quality behavior management with a combination of effective and less effective approaches or a combination of proactive and reactive approaches.

③ ____ High quality behavior management approaches or consistently prevents misbehavior with praise or proactive approaches.

COMMENTS SECTION: Positive

Comments, evidence, questions. (e.g., Unusual or excellent instructional techniques, Noteworthy/exceptional behavioral or emotional supports)

COMMENTS SECTION: Negative

Comments, evidence, questions. (e.g., Teacher sarcasm, disrespect, harsh language, threats, anger, over-controlling, OR instances of extreme child misbehavior, such as biting, hitting, etc.)

APPENDIX H: Children's Orientation to Book Reading Scale (COB)

Note: From Kaderavek, J.N., Guo, Y., & Justice, L.M. (2014). Validity of the Children's Orientation to Book Reading Rating Scale. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 37(2), 159 – 178. Used with permission.

Table 2. Rating guidelines for the COB scale.

Behaviours associated with child's level of literacy orientation	COB Rating			
	Rating of 1	Rating of 2	Rating of 3	Rating of 4
Overall impression	The child is clearly not engaged during the book interaction	Overall impression is that the child is not very interested in book interaction	The child is generally engaged with occasional moments of lower engagement	Child is interested in the book reading throughout the reading session with minimal/no display of low orientation
Persistence	The child is engaged less than 30% of the book interaction	The child is engaged during 30–50% of the book interaction	The child is engaged during 50–70% of the book interaction	The child is engaged ≥70% of the book interaction
Posture	A lack of forward leaning posture (i.e., away from the book or reader); child may position himself/herself at the periphery of the group of children	Intermittent forward leaning posture; child may initially place himself/herself in good position to participate but moves towards the periphery of the group as the session continues	Intermittent forward leaning posture but demonstrates engaged posture for the majority of the book reading session	A consistent forward leaning posture. Child is likely to place himself/herself in a good position to participate in the book reading and may move closer to the teacher so he/she can see the book more clearly
Facial expressions	Child's facial expression is likely to be nonrelated to the story	Intermittent/rare/brief affective facial responses tied to the story	Demonstrates positive facial affect tied to story sometimes/often during the book reading session	Demonstrates frequent and positive facial affect tied to story
Eye gaze	Child may look blankly around the room, looking at other children or preoccupied visually with a toy or other object. Child does not look at the book	Intermittent attentive eye gaze. Child may be interested in discussion about the illustrations but look away or appear uninterested in discussions about text or print or book-related concepts	Eye gaze is focused on reader and text much of the time (over 50% of the book reading session); attends to story as well as illustrations	Eye gaze is focused on reader and text ≥70% of the story. Child may be observed moving or adjusting posture to maintain eye gaze with book
Distractibility	Child is fidgeting, rocking or moving during the reading session; easily distracted by other events in the classroom	Intermittent distractibility during the book reading session; often fidgeting, rocking or moving throughout the story. Following distractions, child does not easily re-engage with the book reading	Occasional distractibility during the book reading session but child is engaged for the majority of the book reading. Following distractions, child may show low orientation but will re-engage with the book reading	If there are major distractions in the book reading the child is minimally distracted and easily transitions back to the story reading session

Table 2. Continued

Behaviours associated with child's level of literacy orientation	COB Rating			
	Rating of 1	Rating of 2	Rating of 3	Rating of 4
Verbal communication	The child does not communicate verbally in response to storybook reading	The child minimally verbally responds. Note: *The lack of verbal responsiveness in and of itself is not to be seen as a deficit and should not (by itself) lower the child's engagement score*	The child may or may not respond verbally but is generally attentive to the verbal interactions of others	The child may volunteer relevant information and thoughts during the book reading; he or she is attentive to the verbal interaction of others. Note: *A lack of verbal interaction in and of itself is not sufficient to lower a child's engagement rating*
Response to adult support	Adults may provide support (e.g., the teaching assistant puts the child in his/her lap, the teacher moves the child closer and keeps a hand on his or her shoulder) but even with support, the child is minimally engaged throughout the book interaction	When the adult gives redirection (with moderate levels of support) the child is re-engaged. Engagement may be reduced when support is discontinued (e.g., when adult is not physically close)	May require mild levels of adult support (e.g., a specific question directed to him/her; occasional physical prompts) to stay engaged throughout the book reading. Does not need consistent adult support to stay engaged	Minimal/no adult support is required

Notes: COB, Children's Orientation to Book Reading. Child is assigned one overall rating (1, 2, 3 or 4); specific behavioural descriptions (eye gaze, posture, etc.) are provided to guide rater in establishing the child's overall global literacy orientation rating. The rater should assign the rating that best captures the child's overall orientation during the entire book reading session.

APPENDIX I: Observation Framework for Use of Children's Literature

Observation No:
_____Participant_____Date_____

	Component 1: Environment/climate				
A	Many different types of authentic children's literature are displayed and are available for children to "read" independently	Y	N	P	
B	The "room" has a reading area such as a corner or classroom library, where children are encouraged to go to "read" for enjoyment.	Y	N		
C	An area is available for small-group book sharing.	Y	N		
D	Active participation and social interaction are integral parts of book sharing in this room.	Y	N	P	
E	The room environment indicates that children's books and their use by children are valued and actively promoted (e.g., book talks and read-alouds by teacher occur regularly).	Y	N	P	
Comments:					
	Component 2: The nature of this session				
A	This was a session planned by the Educator	Y	N		
B	The Educator's planned/stated focus was:				
C	This was a spontaneous session initiated by the Educator	Y	N	P	
D	This was a spontaneous session initiated by a child/children	Y	N	P	
E	Any observed/stated focus of spontaneous session				
Comments:					
	Component 3: The selected book for this session				
A	The book was selected by the educator	Y	N		
B	The book was selected by a child (note which child – does this vary between obs sessions)	Y	N		
C	The book was from the child accessible resources	Y	N		
D	The book was selected from the "teacher's collection"	Y	N		
E	This book fits into the Cultural Diversity Category *	N	SC	CA	CG / CN
F	This books fits in the Overarching Theme*		EC	IF	MD / RC
Comments:					
	Component 3: Educator Practices				
A	The Educator focused on reading as a meaningful process	Y	N	P	
B	The Educator read with "voice" and expression.	Y	N	P	
C	The instructional techniques used by the educator and the ways they were executed reflected an awareness of recommended practices	Y	N	P	
	Reading materials and tasks reflected a sensitivity to the diversity of children's experiences and their social, cultural, ethnic, and linguistic needs of the children	Y	N	P	
D	The educator's management of the book sharing lesson provided for active student engagement.	Y	N	P	
	Educator often asked open-ended questions that encouraged children to enhance and extend their understanding of the selection.				
E	The educator asked Literal questions	Y	N		
F	The Educator asked Inferential questions	Y	N		
G	The Educator asked evaluative/applies questions	Y	N		
H	The Educator provided/allowed follow up activities (planned) (spontaneous)	Y	N		
	Children were encouraged to respond personally or creatively to the reading material.	Y	N	P	U
I	The educator's instruction was sensitive to the diversity of children's experiences and their social, cultural, ethnic, and linguistic needs.	Y	N	P	U
	Where a focus was identified the Educator's practice reflected consideration of this focus	Y	N	P	
	Educator adjusted focus according to responses of children.	Y	N	P	
Comments:					
	Component 4: Children involvement and response				
A	Children were encouraged to select books for their own use	O	R	N	
B	Children were encouraged to select books for group sessions	O	R	N	

Key: Y = Yes,

       N = NO,   **P = Partially**

       U = Unclear   **U = Unclear**

       O = Often   **R = Rarely**

*to be completed after text is analysed using the Cultural Diversity Categories

Other comments/observations:

APPENDIX J: Observation Framework for Use of Children's Literature (Modified)

Observation No: _____
Participant_____Date_____

The nature of this session				
This was a session planned by the Educator	Y	N		
The Educator's planned/stated focus was:				
This was a spontaneous session initiated by the Educator	Y	N	P	
This was a spontaneous session initiated by a child/children	Y	N	P	
Any observed/stated focus of spontaneous session				

The selected book for this session					
The book was selected by the educator		Y	N		
The book was selected by a child (note which child)		Y	N		
The book was from the child accessible resources		Y	N		
The book was selected from the "teacher's collection"		Y	N		
Cultural Diversity Category	N	SC	CA	CG	CN
Overarching Theme		ECCT	IFH	DML	RCCB

Children Involved:

Other comments/observations:

APPENDIX K: Observation Spreadsheet Sample

Date	Session nc	Child	lependent	I initiated)	Educator	Who selected	Book	Overarching Theme	Diversity Category	Individual Time	Total Teacher Time	Notes on session
25/09/2014	1	Katy	X			Katy	King Mida	b	SC	3.00		discussing with Mum
26/09/2014	2	Wilson	X			Wilson	My Little P	b	NA	1.00		interested in the fluffy mane
26/09/2014	3	Wilson	X			Wilson	Giraffe	a	NA	0.50		board book
26/09/2014	4	Logan	X			Logan	Sesame St	a	NA	6.00		
26/09/2014	4	Margie	X			Margie	Sesame St	a	NA	3.00		after other child pretend reading
26/09/2014	5	Margie	X			Margie	Incy Winc	b	NA	2.00		singing along
26/09/2014	6	Logan	X			Logan	Never Smi	b	NA	2.00		in toddler room
26/09/2014	7	Markus	X			Markus	Never Smi	b	NA	3.00		after other child
26/09/2014	8	Logan	X			Logan	A nice wal	b	3	7.00		
26/09/2014	9	Logan	X			Logan	Return to	b	SC	9.00		
26/09/2014	10	Margie	X			Margie	A nice wal	b	3	2.00		
26/09/2014	11	Wilson		X	Debbie	Debbie ED	The Grufa	b	AS	7.75	7.75	
26/09/2014	11	Kim		X	Debbie	Debbie ED	The Grufa	b	AS	7.75		
26/09/2014	11	Maggie		X	Debbie	Debbie ED	The Grufa	b	AS	7.75		
26/09/2014	11	Logan		X	Debbie	Debbie ED	The Grufa	b	AS	5.00		not very engaged Debbie offere