STOP, LOOK & LEARN: RE-VISIONING PEDAGOGY IN EARLY YEARS' RELIGION SETTINGS

Abstract

This paper argues that the early years' religion program and pedagogy can learn much from effective and appropriate early childhood education theory and practice. A number of early years' approaches and frameworks are investigated in terms of their worthwhile and sometimes challenging contributions for the early childhood religion program. A transformational curriculum that is play-based, incorporates a social constructivist approach, includes aspects of developmentally appropriate practice and considers an anti-bias curriculum approach is suggested. However, further exploration and continued wrestling with early years' childhood education is encouraged, as definitive answers are not yet possible.

When considering appropriate and effective religious education pedagogy in early childhood settings, it is crucial that deliberation is informed by, and in part emerges from reflective and critical discussion regarding contemporary early childhood education theory and practice. The nature, role and appropriate practice of the early years' religion program cannot be separated from early childhood education. To do so would enact an inappropriate pedagogical model that would contradict effective early childhood practice. We must stop, reflect on what we are now in fact doing; look at and consider critically, contemporary early childhood theory and practice for some directions that will help us to review our approach to early childhood religious education; and then as we learn from that process, we can begin to revision and redesign effective and appropriate pedagogy for the early years' religion program. This article reviews and reflects on essential elements of contemporary early childhood theory and practice that in turn raises challenges, issues and implications for religious education. However, the article does not presume to answer or solve all these challenges, as the redesigning process requires, indeed demands, further review. Hopefully continued vigorous discussion, debate and deliberation regarding appropriate early childhood religious education pedagogy will be pursued.

Contemporary Approaches and Frameworks in **Early Childhood Education**

Approaches and frameworks that underpin curriculum and pedagogy in early childhood education continue to develop effective and appropriate ways to meet the learning styles of young students. A helpful way to distinguish between the terms approach and framework is that an approach is "a reflection of our philosophy and values" whilst a framework provides the structures that support the approach (Arthur, Beecher, Dockett, Farmer, & Death, 1996, p. 157). For example if a teacher's philosophy was that the students themselves should construct their own knowledge then it is said that s/he follows a constructivist approach. S/he then plans a

framework to support young students' active engagement in their own learning process wherein they will be building knowledge themselves through the many different learning activities s/he implements.

Teachers' underlying philosophies and values concerning the nature and construction of knowledge, that is, their approaches, directly influence their planning and programming models, that is, their frameworks. Following is an overview of some of the current viewpoints, approaches and frameworks regarding early childhood education theory and practice. They offer a number of worthwhile contributions as well as raise some challenging implications to the discussion regarding early years' religious education pedagogy.

Curriculum Viewpoints

Teachers' approaches and subsequent frameworks for planning and implementing the early childhood curriculum are influenced significantly by how they view curriculum. Curriculum has been conceptualised in many ways. One set of such conceptualisations can be identified as the transmission, transactional or transformational viewpoints of curriculum (Arthur et al., 1996; Sandstrom & Tonkin, 1999). Transmission curriculum values content in the program and implements a teacher-directed approach, whereas transactional curriculum places more emphasis on the actual interaction between the teacher and student, where "knowledge is seen as constructed and reconstructed by those participating in the teaching-learning act" (Sandstrom & Tonkin, Transformational curriculum 1999, p. 328). however, is much more than simply transmitting knowledge to students or constructing knowledge with students. Its emphasis is on how it transforms students or as Sandstrom and Tonkin (1999) argue:

> Knowledge is constructed by a process of inquiry and moving into the realm of facilitating personal and social change. Transformation occurs when concepts of equity and justice combine with inquiry and

action in an attempt to realise and expose that which is oppressive and dominating (p. 329).

A religious education program that emphasises equity and social justice should be underpinned by a transformational view of curriculum. In addition it is essential to emphasise that the religion program cannot itself become 'oppressive and dominating'. It must respect the backgrounds, rights and dignities of all students (more will be said about this in a later section regarding the antibias approach).

Teachers' viewpoints of curriculum affect their pedagogies in as much as they direct their approaches to how they will implement their programs. For example, the teacher who views curriculum as transmission will direct all learning, giving students little chance to negotiate and construct their own learning. This setting will be a traditional one in which the teacher is seen as the vessel of all knowledge; knowledge that is to be imparted or transmitted to the students who are seen as empty vessels to be filled. However, the teacher who views curriculum transformational, will implement a pedagogy that is more child-centred recognising the child herself/himself not only at the centre of all learning, but as capable of constructing that learning him/herself and with others. This pedagogy, to be both appropriate and effective, considers elements from several approaches and frameworks. The following overview includes some of the approaches and frameworks implemented at varying degrees in contemporary early childhood settings that support a transformational viewpoint of curriculum. (It is acknowledged that whilst there are many more approaches considered and implemented in early childhood education, those identified here are done so as a means to demonstrate how early childhood theory and practice can and indeed should impact upon effective pedagogy in the early years' religion settings.) Each of the following is analysed in terms of its contributions to and challenges for early years' religious education and include:

- 1. the social constructivist approach, which also considers teacher-centred / childcentred approaches:
 - 2. play-based learning,
- 3. developmentally appropriate practice, and finally
- 4. the anti-bias approach which considers the nature of an inclusive curriculum as opposed to an exclusive curriculum (Arthur et al., 1996; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; Dau, 2001; Gordon &

Williams-Browne, 2000; Lambert & Clyde, 2000; MacNaughton & Williams, 2004; Nixon, 2000; Sandstrom & Tonkin, 1999).

Constructivist/Social-Constructivist 1. The Approach

A constructivist approach sees learning as an active process, based on the belief that the learner constructs knowledge. It is reliant on Piaget's theory of learning. A constructivist model actively engages a child in tasks designed to create personal meaning. A social-constructivist approach views learning as being socially constructed, that is it emphasises the role of the child's social and cultural world in their construction of meaning and is evident in the work of Vygotsky (MacNaughton & Williams, 2004, p. 213). Lois Malaguzzi founder and director of early childhood education in the town of Reggio Emilia, Italy, encouraged children to create their own material representations of their understanding by using many types of media such as drawing, sculpture, stories, puppets, and so on (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1998). Gordon and Williams-Browne (2000) suggest that constructivist classrooms may be more effective in promoting children's social, cognitive and moral development than do more teacher-centred programs (p. 140).

"In constructivist models of learning, procedural knowledge is given 'dominance' over factual knowledge" (Chase, 2000, p. 86). Chase goes on to say that despite the fact that it is harder to teach procedural skills the effort is well worthwhile, as "once taught, they are typically used more often and remembered more easily" (p. 86). Procedural knowledge is characterised by divergent outcomes and involves "learning that is accomplished by trial and error, is acquired by copying and doing, is characterised by engaged behaviour, is directed towards making meaning. These outcomes might constructing, writing, presenting, or interviewing, rather than just filling in a worksheet" (Cardellichio, 1995 in Chase, 2000, p. 86). The young student 'baptising' the dolls in the home corner or the one who reconstructs the Temple in Jerusalem with blocks or other construction materials after hearing about Jesus being lost there, is engaged with the subject matter in much more involved and concrete ways than the student who can answer the question, "What are the symbols for the sacrament of baptism" or "Where did Mary and Joseph find Jesus when he was lost?"

An important aspect of the social constructivist approach is scaffolding. Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory valued the role of the adult who can support children in their move to a higher level of performance which he called the "zone of proximal development" (ZPD) (Williams, 1999, p. 21). This

is the direct support an adult provides for a child that assists in his/her learning:

the child's skills are more advanced and their learning is now richer through the supportive intervention of an adult. Vygotsky would say that their zone of proximal development (ZPD) has been extended. The ZPD is the level where the child has potential to learn with assistance (Nixon, 2000, p. 9).

Scaffolding is particularly critical in the religion classroom as children's previous religious knowledge and understanding can be limited. Scaffolding is more than being available to assist the child to answer or solve a problem at a crucial moment. It is also providing the resources and materials, such as vivid images of the Temple in Jerusalem, or of people wearing the clothes of the day, wandering through the laneways of Jerusalem. These images help children to imagine what life was like and how Jesus could have become lost in such a huge building that had so many sections and rooms. Scaffolding requires the religion teacher to be alert to the individual child's needs in terms of concepts, language and experience. It is being in tune with their thinking and being ready to step in at opportune times to supply that missing piece of information needed to go beyond the present moment, or to ask the right question that guides children to further learning without 'taking over'.

The social-constructivist approach is a valid one whose philosophy is recognised and valued by many early years' teachers. At the same time however, it presents challenges for teachers of religion. For many children their life experiences do not include religion. It would not be a natural progression for such children to suggest on their own accords a religious topic or event that they wished to investigate. So in terms of the type of curriculum religious education is, it could well be described as an impositional, teacher-directed curriculum rather than an emergent, child-centred constructivist curriculum. However, this need not be the case, for religious education could be a negotiated curriculum in which children are supported to construct their own learning. It would be up to the teacher to stimulate children's interest in a particular topic. A balanced approach is called for. Teachers can construct experiences from eventbased learning. An example of this could be taken from the Holy Week events wherein children are immersed in many whole school celebrations and reenactments of such events as Palm Sunday, or the Last Supper. After a Prayer Assembly by a particular year level that reenacted Palm Sunday, the early years' teacher, upon return to the classroom, could retell the story using props or

puppets. A puppet theatre could then be set up with the same figures so that the young students could perform the story themselves at their own pace. The story could also provide the stimulus for a process drama activity (Grajczonek, 2003). Costumes and props could be provided and the room could be set up as part of the road leading into Jerusalem and parts of Jerusalem itself. The children themselves could paint backdrops. The young children then can be involved in 'playing' with and in the procession, using the props and costumes to construct their own understanding of the event. Much rich language would also be generated from such activities; language that could then be the basis of the students' own retelling of the event in the form of a big book.

Social constructivism has much to offer the religion program in the early years' settings. However, it must also be noted that there is a place for individual learning in the religion classroom. Asmitia and Perlmutter (1989 cited in Lambert & Clyde, 2000) question the view that all learning has to be socially constructed arguing that Vygotsky placed too much emphasis on the social mechanisms of learning and failed to acknowledge the very important contribution of solitary (unmediated) approaches (p. 77). A study by Perlmutter, Behrend, Kuo, and Muller (1989 cited in Lambert & Clyde, 2000) found that peer interactions were more effective with school aged children between the ages of 7 and 11, but for younger children peer interaction was only positive in simple problem solving tasks. This raises further issues to be considered by the religion teacher. Opportunities for individual learning need also to be provided and those times when young children wish to work alone should be respected. Indeed observing children's responses to different topics may present their own opportunities of providing individual idea-based constructivist challenges. Perhaps one such approach could be to ask the child who displays particular interest in the story of Jesus getting lost, to construct a model of the path Mary and Joseph took through Jerusalem to find him. This would necessitate the child's careful consideration of the types of buildings, including the temple s/he would need to represent through using various construction materials and allows for an individual response to the task. Upon completion of the model the child could then show and explain his/her model to the group.

The contributions social constructivism can make to the religion program are significant and with some careful planning could be implemented so that children's engagement with the construction of their own knowledge is a reality. At the same time it is recognised that social constructivism poses challenges in so far as religion for a number of young children is not part of their everyday world. They have no natural starting points for construction of their own knowledge. Teachers are therefore required to initiate circumstances and to that extent it is also recognised that a balance is needed between teacher-directed, or more correctly teacher-initiated, learning and child-directed learning.

2. Play-Based Learning

The place of play in early childhood settings is universally recognised as it is now widely accepted that young children learn through play. As Arthur Beecher, Dockett, Farmer and Death (1996) argue, "Active learning occurs as children construct and co-construct various concepts, processes, attitudes and values, individually and with others, in relation to the concrete resources offered" (p. 162). The National Association for the Education of Young Children in the United States of America explicitly outlines the place and importance of play in all programs in its Position Statement (cited in Bredekamp & Copple, 1997):

> Play gives children opportunities to understand the world, interact with others in social ways, express and control emotions and develop their symbolic capabilities. Children's play gives adults insights into children's development of new strategies. Vygotsky (1978) believed that play leads to development, with written language growing out of oral language through the vehicle of promotes symbolic play that development of symbolic representation abilities. Play provides a context for children to practice newly acquired skills and also to function on the edge of their developing capacities to take on new social roles, attempt novel or challenging tasks, and solve complex problems that they would not (or could not) otherwise do (Mallory & New 1994b, p. 14)

Preschool children can be involved in a variety of ways of playing including onlooker, solitary, parallel, associative and cooperative play (Arthur et al., 1996). Sociodramatic or pretend play becomes more complex at this age (Arthur et al., 1996; Hymans, 1996). Bretherton (1984 cited in Hymans, 1996) suggests that such play is both reality-based and make-believe. She goes on to describe pretend play, the first level of make-believe play, as the 'as if' dimension wherein preschoolers are involved in familiar situations such as shopping, having a party and so on. Here they actually shop or eat or play party games 'as if' they were actually in the event itself. The second level is the 'what-if' dimension in which children transform the real world into a fantasy one wherein spoons become telephones and children become mothers and fathers (p. 374).

The early childhood religion program can reflect upon the role of play in early years' settings and redesign similar situations. Just as teachers set up the home corner to become at various times, such settings as a restaurant, a post office, a doctor's reception area and so on wherein 'as-if' and 'whatif' play can occur, it needs to be recognised that the home corner can also be set up as a simple mudbrick home from the times of Jesus with such props as sandals, tunics, such as those worn in the times, clay lamps, a low table, (but no chairs), a cardboard box as the simple fire place or oven, and so on. Alternatively it could be set up as the Baptismal area in a church with dolls, baby or dolls' bath tubs, white garments, candle sticks, some oils and water (Hymans, 1996). This could flow from the event of an actual Baptism of a child's sibling or from a video of one of the children's baptisms. A visit to the church to explore the area and the symbols associated with the sacrament would activate much new language. This language could be written onto labels and displayed in the room or setting and also in the corner to be set up as the Baptismal area. As children role-play baptisms many new concepts and language terms would be learned and they would have the opportunity of using the language in nonthreatening ways. Staff could become involved in such play and hence "increase children's cooperative play through participating in it and using language to model to children how to extend their play and negotiate and share roles" (Hintz & Stomfay-Stitz, 1999 cited in MacNaughton & Williams, 2004, p. 88). Teachers and staff would also be modelling how to use specific language associated with baptism. Young children learning a new religious language are similar to children learning English, as a second language, and should be given opportunities of solitary fantasy play which "provides a safe space for children ... to practice their new language" (Pelligrini & Boyd, 1993 cited in MacNaughton & Williams, 2004. p. 89).

Play-based learning can provide young children with opportunities for active investigating, questioning, practising, testing, risking and clarifying many key aspects of the religion program. It allows them to experiment with new language and concepts in non-threatening ways. As much as possible teachers should facilitate children's learning in the religion program through play.

3. Developmentally Appropriate Practice

Approaches are determined by learning theories regarding child development. Over recent decades the most influencing theories have been those offered by Piaget and Vygotsky. Piagetian theory underpins the Developmentally Appropriate Practice (henceforth referred to as DAP) stemming from the United States (Bredekamp & Copple,

1997). The National Association for the Education of Young Children's revised Position Statement on Developmentally Appropriate Practice defines DAP as:

> the outcome of a process of teacher decision making that draws on at least three critical, interrelated bodies of knowledge: (1) what teachers know about how children develop and learn; (2) what teachers know about the individual children in their group; and (3) knowledge of the social and cultural context in which those children live and learn (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. vii).

However, DAP has attracted criticism from both Australian and overseas early childhood circles for a number of reasons which include the limitations of Piagetian theory and for its inability to consider the critical role children's social contexts have upon their learning, as outlined by Arthur, Beecher, Dockett Farmer and Death (1996, p. 49) and Lambert and Clyde (2000, pp. 5-8).

Whilst these criticisms are legitimate, there are some aspects of the revised DAP statement of 1997 that provide early childhood teachers of religion with worthwhile reflections to be considered. Regarding children's development Bredekamp and Copple (1997) argue that because all domains of development, physical, social, emotional and cognitive, are interrelated, development in one dimension influences and is influenced by development in other realms, and if the focus remains on one area, such as cognitive, other areas are violated (p. 144). The implication for the early years' religion program is that pedagogy must include activities that go beyond the cognitive domain. It is not enough to have young children only sit and listen to stories from the Bible or to be told how they should act like Jesus by telling the truth or not speaking during liturgical celebrations. They also need to be active, interactive and involved. They need to be engaged in the story, building models of homes and villages in Jesus' times as part of their construction/ building skill development, dressing up as biblical characters in the dress-up corner that is outfitted with clothes representing that period in time. They need regular tours of the church that focus on different elements each time, such as the altar and those vessels that sit on the altar - the chalice, wine goblet, candles and so on. Follow this up by setting up an area in the room as an altar in which young students can use the vessels and role-play aspects of the celebrations. The language generated can be written onto labels and displayed. This develops religious literacy and helps to contextualise it. It also engages and develops a number of domains beyond the cognitive.

Another challenge raised by DAP regards the integrated curriculum, as it argues that "the human brain seeks meaningful connections when presented with new information" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 144). Most young students entering the Catholic or church school for the first time are faced with enormous amounts of new information in religious education unfortunately have no previous knowledge with which to connect it. Often there is limited or no previous experiences that young children can reach for to assist them in making sense of this new area. Teachers need to be aware of this situation and allow young students much time and many experiences with religious knowledge, concepts and language. This does not imply however, that teachers treat the religion program in an abbreviated fashion, 'skimming it' so to speak. Bredekamp and Copple (1997) argue strongly that young children "need opportunities to explore deeply and attend in great detail to subjects of interest to them" (p. 99).

A further challenge offered by DAP is that young children's vocabulary in particular topics must be developed explicitly by providing opportunities for children to talk. Adults need to listen carefully to children, so that they can offer, "well placed expansions of their sentences to enhance meaning" (p. 107). This is challenging for young children in the first months of school. They need a starting point in religion, as some may have limited or no previous experiences or language to initiate conversations about religion. It will be left to the teacher to initiate this. The challenge is to be aware of the importance of the discussion and to initiate it without manipulating the children. A variety of approaches already in place for other areas can be implemented to also develop religious literacy. Language and literacy skills are developed through meaningful experiences, such as listening to and reading stories, not only Bible stories but also children's literature; seeing classroom charts and posters; participating in dramatic play and other experiences requiring communication, talking informally with other children and adults, and experimenting with writing by drawing, copying and using their own 'invented' spelling (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 131). Providing rich physical environments that includes print-rich displays is strongly promoted by Vukelich, Christie and Enz (2002), "Rich physical environments do not just happen, the creation of a classroom environment that supports children's learning, teachers' teaching and the curriculum requires forethought" (p. 8). DAP argues the need for challenging and changing environments that provide opportunities for independent and interdependent interaction.

Developmentally appropriate practice raises a number of implications for the religion program in terms of its multi-developmental approach that goes beyond developing the cognitive domain, the importance of explicitly connecting all facets of learning for young children so that they can make sense of new learning, and the explicit development of a specific vocabulary within new disciplines. These are important implications to be considered within reviewing and revisioning religious education pedagogy in the early years' settings.

4. The Anti-Bias Curriculum

The anti-bias approach that underpins all early childhood pedagogy also provides the religion program with issues that could be considered. This approach had its beginnings in the United States of America and was put in place to explicitly discourage bias in any form. Dermon-Sparks (1998, cited in MacNaughton & Williams, 2004) describes how the term 'anti-bias' originated:

> The term 'anti-bias' has a similar meaning to 'education without prejudice'. We chose it because we wanted to say this work requires a very active stance in relationship to challenging racism, sexism and all other

forms of systematic oppression ... we also need to look at the power relationships that interfere with the possibility of true diversity - the institutional structures and beliefs that systematically result in less resources, power and status for large numbers of people because of their racial and ethnic group membership, their gender, their sexual orientation. (p. 371)

Those words, "the institutional structures and beliefs that systematically result in less resources, power and status for large numbers of people because of their racial and ethnic group membership, their gender, their sexual orientation" require closer scrutiny in light of children's religious practices or lack thereof. It is worth considering the following examples. As part of their Holy Week activities, two teachers in different preschool settings are seeking to develop students' understandings about the significance of the Last Supper. Both see the value in assisting students to make connections between what the priest does during the Mass and what Jesus did with the bread and wine at the Last Supper, but in quite different ways.

Teacher A:

Jesus took the bread, held it up to his disciples saying, "Take and eat this is my body." He then took the wine, held it up saying, "Take and drink this is my blood." Who can remember Father holding up the bread and wine in the church when we went to Mass with the whole school a little while ago?

Let us look more closely at these two statements. Teacher A's question makes no assumptions about students' faith development or practice of their religion. It is an inclusive question, as it refers to an experience in which everyone shared at the same time. No one student is prevented from being able to make the connections between what the priest did at the school Mass and what Jesus did at the Last Supper. No one is unable to answer the question on the grounds that s/he was not present at the shared experience. This teacher has not positioned some students in a more privileged way than others, nor has s/he made students feel

Teacher B:

Jesus took the bread, held it up to his disciples saying, "Take and eat this is my body." He then took the wine, held it up saying, "Take and drink this is my blood." Girls and boys when you went to Mass on Sunday who remembers Father holding up the bread and wine?

inadequate or 'less' than others. His/her choice of words does not exclude any student on any basis.

Teacher B is also seeking to assist students make connections between the two experiences. However, s/he does not make reference to a shared experience of the Mass. S/he presumes that all students were at Mass on Sunday. Given current statistics of the nature of student populations at church schools, this group would be a pluralistic and diverse one. Not all students would be at Mass on Sunday, not all students would belong to the same faith and some perhaps would not belong to

any particular religious group at all. How do such students become involved in such discussions? From experience I would suggest that they would simply nod their heads and answer, "Yes". Young children do not wish to appear different from their peers and also they do not wish to disappoint a significant adult in their lives; many do not want their teacher to feel let down by them for any reason. Does this type of question by the presumptions it makes exclude and disempower some students?

The task force that led the anti-bias curriculum in the late 1980s in the United States of America argued, "that early childhood education needs to (among other things) help children to:

- continue learning with an enhanced sense of self-worth, identity, confidence and enjoyment; and
- to be active in confronting and challenging inequality and injustice." (cited in MacNaughton & Williams, 2004, p. 371).

In what ways have the above teachers promoted and developed students' self-worth, identity, confidence and enjoyment? In some respects an anti-bias approach does challenge many realities within the Catholic setting but it cannot be denied that such an approach strongly and explicitly supports social justice, as well as enables and indeed empowers all children:

to construct a knowledgeable, confident selfidentity and group identity irrespective of how the dominant society views their group and their particular distinguishing characteristics. All children also need to feel comfortable with groups other than their own (Glover, 2001, p. 12).

Perhaps the time has come for the religion program to reconsider critically some of the assumptions and presumptions that occur daily in many preschools. Perhaps by examining the anti-bias approach we may be able to learn some lessons not only about providing a more inclusive environment, but also about teaching in more inclusive ways.

Conclusion

Appropriate and effective pedagogy in the early years' religious education setting must consider and reflect effective early childhood theory and practice which in turn both contributes to and challenges the religion program. No one clear and concise approach can be cited as the most appropriate. As in any other educational sector, early childhood education consists of a combination of approaches implemented through a variety of frameworks. These are decided upon according to teachers'

underlying philosophies or curriculum viewpoints about how children learn and how knowledge is constructed. A transformational curriculum with its emphasis on justice and equity supports in part, the philosophy that underpins religious education. Transformational curriculum demands a particular set of practices that are child-centred, value a constructivist approach to learning as well as acknowledging the social constructivist nature of learning, is play-based, implements aspects of developmentally appropriate practice and finally considers aspects of an anti-bias curriculum approach. These are by no means definitive. The implications each of these approaches poses for early years' pedagogy in the religion setting must be carefully and critically considered. There are some elements within them that can be implemented with ease so that appropriate pedagogy is realised whilst other issues require further reflection. The process demands additional investigation as further questions and challenges continue to be raised.

References

Arthur, L., Beecher, B., Dockett, S., Farmer, S., & Death, E. (1996). *Programming and planning in early childhood settings* (2nd ed.). Sydney: Harcourt Brace.

Bredekamp, S., & Copple, C. (Eds.). (1997).

Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs. (Revised ed.).

Washington: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Chase, L. (2000). Language development. In D. Nixon & K. Gould (Eds.), Extending: Child development from five to twelve years (pp. 79-99). Katoomba, NSW: Social Science Press.

Dau, E. (Ed.). (2001). The anti-bias approach in early childhood. (2nd ed.). Frenchs Forest, NSW: Pearson Education Australia.

Edwards, C., Gandini, L., & Forman, G. (1998).

Introduction: Background and starting points. In C. Edwards, L. Gandini & G. Forman (Eds.), The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia approach - advanced reflections. (2nd ed., pp. 5-25).

Greenwich, Connecticut: Ablex Publishing Corporation.

Glover, A. (2001). Children and bias. In E. Dau (Ed.), *The anti-bias approach in early childhood.* (2nd ed., pp. 1-14). Australia: Pearson Education.

Gordon, A. M., & Williams-Browne, K. (2000).

**Beginnings and beyond (5th ed.).

Australia: Delmar Thomson Learning.

Grajczonek, J. P. (2003). The drama of teaching the scriptures: What works in the early years' religion classroom. *Journal of Religious Education*, 51(3).

Hymans, D. J. (1996). Let's play: The contribution of the pretend play of children to religious education in a pluralistic context. Religious Education, 91(3), 368-381.

Lambert, E. B., & Clyde, M. (2000). Re thinking early childhood theory and practice. Katoomba, NSW: Social Science Press.

MacNaughton, G., & Williams, G. (2004). Techniques for teaching young children: Choices in theory and practice. Frenchs Forest,: Pearson Education Australia.

Nixon, D. (2000). Theories of child development. In D. Nixon & K. Gould (Eds.), Extending: Child development from five to twelve years (pp. 1-19). Katoomba,: Social Science Press.

Sandstrom, R., & Tonkin, L. (1999). Curriculum: Programming, planning and evaluation. In F. Briggs & G. Potter (Eds.), The early years of school: Teaching and learning. Australia: Longman.

Vukelich, C., Christie, J., & Enz, B. (2002). Helping young children learn language and literacy. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Williams, L. R. (1999). Determining the early childhood curriculum: The evolution of goals and strategies through consonance and controversy. In C. Seefeldt (Ed.), The early childhood curriculum: Current findings in theory and practice. (3rd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.

*Jan Grajczonek lectures in the School of Religious Education at McAuley at Banyo Campus, Australian Catholic University. She is currently completing her doctorate in early childhood and religious education.

ECHO AND SILENCE

Contemporary Issues for Australian Religious Education

Maurice Ryan, Editor

This book brings together a number of leading Australian religious educators to present their research and reflections on the present state of religious education in Australia. The book provides scholars and practitioners in schools, parishes, diocesan offices and universities with a rich selection of material with which to further their work. Attention has been given to historical topics in addition to current research on spiritual development among young people and adults. As well as a focus on the context of Australian religious education, a chapter by Gabriel Moran offers an international perspective on issues raised by the various authors.

Contributing authors include:

Sandra Carroll, Marian de Souza, Dan Donovan, Barry Dwyer, Kathleen Engebretson, Graham English, Joe Fleming, Peta Goldburg. Chris Harris, Kevin Lawlor, Terence Lovat, Gabriel Moran, Graham Rossiter, Maurice Ryan, Kevin Treston, Anne Tuohy, Louise Welbourne

SOCIAL SCIENCE PRESS