

Feel Less Alone! Emerge as Educators!

This topic is essentially about mentoring and networking. Presenter - Anne Houghton

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Together we grow – creating collaborative landscapes

Presented by KPV in partnership with LGCC

Outline

- Why we often feel isolated as early childhood educators
- Questions we need to ask ourselves
- What happens when we are mentored?
- What happens when we form networks?
- How might we make a difference for ourselves and others?
- Ways you might share, network and find support
- Opportunities to participate, contribute and share

Why might we feel isolated?

- Type of Settings we work in (e.g. stand alone services, rural, other)
- Inexperience
- Roles and positions we undertake
- Expectations & responsibilities placed upon us
- Not part of a community or larger organisation for collegial support

If you do feel isolated, are there other factors leading to this?

- What might they be?

What does this lead to?

- Feelings of frustration
- Being overwhelmed with workload
- No outlets for release to off load!
- Lack of avenues for information and knowledge
- Unable to keep up to date with current trends in education
- Burn out!

How might this change? What can you do about it?

- Take Action!
- Find a mentor
- Be a mentor
- Find networks

What is a mentor?

- According to Oxford Dictionary – “an inexperienced person’s adviser”.
- What does a mentor mean for you?
- Before we look at mentoring for ourselves, think about the ways we mentor children?
- What difference might it make for the child?
- Stories to share

The ways we work with children and families

Think about -

- what sort of relationship you have
- your responsibilities as an educator
- how might you make a difference?

Ask yourself whether *you* –

- are getting this kind of support?
- give this kind of support to students, co workers and colleagues?

What happens when we are supported through mentoring and networking?

- Someone listens & understands
- Develop confidence
- We feel valued
- We rethink theories
- Our passions are rekindled
- We are inspired
- We feel less alone!
- Like minded people get together
- We get braver to change practices
- Develop our professional identities
- Transition to professional expertise and authority
- Cultivate continual reaffirmation and reflection

Stories to tell

- Exchanging stories

Shaping Identities

- “We are more of who we are because of the connections we have made”.
(Adele Basheer)
- “People will forget what you said. People will forget what you did. But people will never forget how you make them feel”.
(Bonnie Jean Wasmund)

Taking steps to make a difference. What you may need to ask yourself?

- Are you living out your philosophy? If not why not?
- Are you keeping up with current trends and research in early childhood education?
- What kinds of ideas and energies do you want to develop?
- Is what you knew in the past, supporting the way you wish to work with children now?
- What knowledge and skills do you need, to work with children now?
- Do you need to make changes to support your role?
- What do you strive for in your practice?
- What helps maintain your passion in your career?
- What contributions do you make to the workplace?

What you owe to yourself and others. A reason for mentoring and networking.

Revisit ECA Code of Ethics

www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au

We have a responsibility in relation to:

- children
- students
- families
- employer
- self as a professional
- colleagues
- communities
- the conduct of research

"Conversation is not just about conveying information or sharing emotions, not just a way of putting ideas into people's heads. Conversation is a meeting of minds with different memories and habits. When minds meet, they don't just exchange facts: they transform them, reshape them, draw different implications from them, engage in new trains of thought. Conversation doesn't just reshuffle the cards: it creates new cards".

Philosopher, historian and author Theodore Seldin

“We believe, as Palmer describes, that we emerge as beings through our interactions and relationships with others. And, if our identities are shaped through our relationships with certain people, then they are equally influenced by our lack of contact with others”.

(B. Seidl, G.Friend/ Teaching and Teacher Education 18 (2002) 421 – 433)

Getting networks

- Find out if there is a local teacher's network or group to meet with in your municipality
- Follow your passions and interests
- Keep abreast of current issues
- Join and support organisations through subscriptions e.g. ECA, OMEP, CEIEC, Graduates in Early Childhood Studies, FKA Children's Services, EEEEC, AEU
- Phone a local colleague and suggest meeting over coffee
- Make a connection with another centre (local, rural, national, international)
- Use email for conversation forums (Vicnet support)
- Start something!

**“Enthusiasm is infectious,
be a carrier!”**

**Professor Barnabas Otaala
XXIV World Congress of OMEP, 2004**

Conclusion: Find a mentor, be a mentor, be part of a network

Participants are invited to:

- exchange email addresses
- request support to get networked or mentored
- offer to be a mentor