

**Continuity and Change in Curriculum and Pedagogies
as Children Start School**

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www.csu.edu.au/faculty/educat/murrayed/**Information Sheet: Overall Project****Contacts:**

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Continuity and Change in Curriculum and Pedagogies as Children Start School is an Australian Research Council funded Discovery Project that is designed to evaluate the impact of the *Early Years Learning Framework* and *The Australian Curriculum* on transition to school in Australia. The introduction of two new curricula across the transition to school is a unique opportunity to reflect on the influence of change in policy and practice on pedagogies of educational transitions.

The researchers have designed this study around three areas of influence/context and across four phases.

Phase One: National level.

During 2013, data have been collected through interviews with former ministers and bureaucrats at the federal level and with personnel involved in the development of *The Australian Curriculum*, and *The Early Years Learning Framework*. This phase of the study is now complete.

Phase Two: State and territory level.

Data collection will involve interviews with key personnel from all major state and territory school and prior-to-school education systems and groups representing specific communities.

Phases One and Two will identify the policy and practice intentions of national, state and territory policy makers in terms of curricula development, interpretation and implementation, specifically in relation to *The Australian Curriculum*, and *The Early Years Learning Framework*.

Phase Three: Local level.

A draft survey instrument will be piloted in two educational communities (one in NSW, one in Victoria). The final survey will be distributed from mid-2014 to a snowball sample of school and prior-to-school educators involved in 2014/2015 transition to school programs, with the aim of 550 returns each group across Australia. This will involve a purposive sample of communities in each state and territory according to the contextual variables: socio-economic status, cultural diversity, early childhood education provision, and geographical location. Follow-up focus group interviews with about ten early childhood educator networks identified through the questionnaires will complete this phase.

Phase Four: Theory building.

In May, 2015, a theory building workshop will be held involving Australian and international transition to school researchers. Later in 2015, search conferences will be held involving researchers, policy makers and practitioners. Further details of these will be generated after phase three.

With informed consent from all involved, data for this project will be gathered from the participants in the following ways;

1. Individual interviews with key people involved in the planning for, and development of, the curriculum documents and approaches. The focus of the interviews will be the design, intentions, development and implementation of the two curriculum documents. (Interviews are expected to be no longer than 1 hour in duration, arranged at the convenience of participants).
2. Survey of early childhood practitioners in schools and prior-to-school settings designed to identify how each new curriculum document has been interpreted and implemented in different practice contexts. This phase will occur in 2014.
3. In each state and territory small focus group interviews will be conducted with educators. Included in this data generation phase will be a specific regional and rural focus on educators' experiences in three states.

We welcome your participation in this research project. However, there is no obligation to be involved. Even if you choose to participate it is still possible to withdraw from the project. It is also possible for you to be involved for whatever parts of the project you choose. There are no negative consequences should you choose not to participate or you can only participate in some aspects of the project.

Permission from all participants will be sought to audio record interviews. It is important that you know if you choose to be involved in a focus group interview, and chose to withdraw from this aspect of the project part way through such an interview, all information you have contributed up until that point cannot be removed from the data generated in the project.

We are not seeking organisational perspectives or asking people to represent specific organisations. Rather, we are interested in understanding the influences and the changes that have been undertaken in recent years. Results from the project will respect confidentiality.

The researchers will be using the data generated in the project to produce both professional and academic publications. PhD Candidate Jessamy Davies is also working on this project. Jessamy's major role will be the completion of her doctoral project which will focus on the questionnaire data drawn from rural sites included in the overall sample. Jessamy will analyse these data in order to provide a specifically rural perspective on the project research questions. In particular, Jessamy will investigate whether there are any particular challenges to continuity and change within these rural locations. Jessamy is being supervised in her PhD by Chief Investigators Perry and Dockett.

All participants in the project will receive a summary of the findings at the completion of the project.

We can be contacted using the details listed above if you would like any further information.

NOTE: The School of Education Ethics Committee has approved this project. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this project, you may contact the Committee through the Executive Officer:

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Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully and you will be informed of the outcome.