

**The relation between individual and collective  
development of social competence**

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## Summary

This thesis seeks to present the academic journey of how the concept of social and emotional development was re-theorised as social competence from a cultural-historical perspective. Emotional development in the field of early childhood education has traditionally been conceptualised as part of a suite of domains of child development – social-emotional, cognitive, language, and fine and gross motor. As such, emotional development has traditionally been studied independently of the other forms of development. Through exploring a range of impacts and contexts on children’s emotional and personality development from trauma to cultural difference, the content of this staff thesis moves from the orientation of *social and emotional development* towards a *cultural-historical conception of emotion regulation as a collective practice*, where a new conception of social competence is theorised.

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#### Declaration for thesis based or partially based on conjointly published or unpublished work

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In accordance with Monash University Doctorate Regulation 17.2 Doctor of Philosophy and Research Master's regulations the following declarations are made:

I hereby declare that this thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

This thesis includes 5 original papers published in peer reviewed journals and 1 unpublished publication. The core theme of the thesis is social competence in early childhood. The ideas, development and writing up of all the papers in the thesis were the principal responsibility of myself.

The inclusion of co-authors reflects the fact that the work came from active collaboration between researchers and acknowledges input into team-based research.

In the case of Papers 3; 4; 5; & 6 my contribution to the work involved the following:

Thesis chapter	Publication title	Publication status*	Nature and extent of candidate's contribution
3	Repertoires of Cultural Practices for Enacting Play and Learning in a Playgroup	Published	50% collaboration
4	Emotions in Imaginative Situations: The Valued Place of Fairytales for Supporting Emotion Regulation	Published	50% collaboration
5	'Perezhivanie' in group settings: A cultural-historical reading of emotion regulation	Published	50% collaboration
6	A Cultural-Historical Reading of the Emotional Development of Young Children	Published	33% collaboration

I have / **have not** renumbered sections of submitted or published papers in order to generate a consistent presentation within the thesis.

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## PART B: Suggested Declaration for Thesis Chapter

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In the case of Paper 3, 4 & 5, the nature and extent of my contribution to the work was the following:

Nature of contribution	Extent of contribution (%)
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Name	Nature of contribution	Extent of contribution (%) for student co-authors only
Marilyn Fleer	Shared collaboration	

The undersigned hereby certify that the above declaration correctly reflects the nature and extent of the candidate's and co-authors' contributions to this work\*.

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# SECTION I

## 1.1 Introduction

As has been ascertained by psychological research the human personality is formed basically under the influence of social relations, i.e. the system which it is part of, from the earliest childhood onward—‘My relationship to my environment,’ says Marx, ‘is my consciousness’. (Vygotsky, 1994, p. 181)

This thesis seeks to present the academic journey of how the concept of social and emotional development was re-theorised as social competence from a cultural-historical perspective. Emotional development in the field of early childhood education has traditionally been conceptualised as part of a suite of domains of child development: social-emotional, cognitive, language and fine and gross motor. As such, emotional development has traditionally been studied independently of the other forms of development. The content of this staff thesis moves from this orientation of social and emotional development towards a cultural-historical conception of emotion regulation as a collective practice, where a new conception of social competence is theorised.

A cultural-historical reading of development cannot reduce the whole into the sum of its parts and then seek to make sense of a child’s development. Rather, what is foregrounded is a more holistic perspective on development, where social forms of engagement and living in the world become part of how the individual is constituted—that is, as a form of cultural development. This thesis argues that social and emotional development must sit within a framework of social competence, where emotion regulation is theorised differently from the traditional individual constructions of emotional development found in the longstanding literature on early childhood education.

The traditional literature presents traits of social development as an individual phenomenon (see Vadeboncoeur & Collie, 2013). Less attention is given to the social and cultural contexts in which the development of social competence occurs (Holodynski & Wormann, 2013). A more holistic view of social competence is needed.

A twofold approach to problematising emotional development is presented.

It is argued that:

1. One cannot reduce emotions to a set of organic traits that are housed within the individual, and
2. Emotions are not something that are performed by an individual, somehow removed from the society in which social interaction and emotion regulation is given meaning.

There is a conceptual need to redefine emotions and emotion regulation, and therefore social competence, as collectively enacted and understood in early childhood education. In this thesis, the nomenclature and theorisation moves from social and emotional development, to social competence and on to the concept of '*perezhivanie*'. Introducing the concept of *perezhivanie* gives a new reading to the concept of emotional development. This is understood through both the earlier work of Vygotsky on the Psychology of Art (Vygotsky, 1971), and his later work on the problem of environment (Vygotsky, 1994), where the concept of *perezhivanie* is discussed explicitly. It is the relationship between the earlier work and the later work that allow for an advancement of thinking on social competence. It is only recently that the scholars of cultural-historical theory have come to realise the importance of Vygotsky's concept of *perezhivanie* (e.g. Ferholt, 2010).

Gonzalez-Rey (2011) reminds us that much of contemporary Western literature concerning cultural-historical theory emphasises Vygotsky's focus during the 1928–1931 period, or the 'cultural-historical period', around the notions of 'sign; semiotic mediation; internalisation; and higher psychological functions' (p. 35). In addition, Gonzalez-Rey (2011) states that:

[Vygotsky's] earlier notion of a psychological system capable of integrating emotions and cognitive processes, ideas that reappeared in his last works, are today underconsidered if not ignored... Vygotsky's orientation towards cognitive-emotional synthesis or 'unities', the generative character of emotions, and the idea of psyche as a dynamic system together marked an ontological definition of human psyche based on cognitive-emotional processes grounded in culture. (p. 35)

These critical ideas of 'unities' and the linking of cognitive-emotional processes within the context of culture give rise to the key concepts of *perezhivanie* and the social situation of development:

Through the concepts of *perezhivanie* and the social situation of development, Vygotsky introduced a theoretical representation of human development

underscoring the self-regulatory movement of personality in the face of lived experiences from which appear *perezhivaniya* leading to ruptures and consequently, the beginnings of new development. (Gonzalez-Rey, 2011, p. 33)

This thesis, as a staff thesis, collectively maps this academic journey. What underpins this development in scholarship for me, as an academic, is the need for a more inclusive view of education, where children with perceived emotional difficulties do not become the victims of poorly theorised concepts and labelling.

The role of the adult is to create the conditions where children can practise the cultural tools needed for interpersonal interactions—reading the signs, using the signs in ways that progress their development, and in ways that work within their everyday social life, preschool context and the cultural mores of communities. In this cultural-historical reading, the social becomes the individual (see Vygotsky, 1994). As such, early childhood education scholars have a significant role to play in progressing traditionally conceptualised views of social-emotional development and social competence. The concept of *perezhivanie* is important for this theoretical work, this concept is explored further on page 25 of this thesis. As might be expected in a staff thesis, the use of this concept for thinking differently about social competence has only been realised in the latter part of my work.

## 1.2 Overview of papers

The published and unpublished papers presented in this thesis examine a range of cultural devices for realising the development of social competence. The papers are presented as follows:

### **SECTION I: Introduction (journey; introducing the paper)**

1. Hammer, M. (2007). A validation of a measure of social-emotional development and identification of impacts of child abuse and neglect. *Journal of Australian Research in Early Childhood Education*, 11(1),
2. Hammer, M. (2007). A tale of two cultures: Comparing two countries' responses to children's trauma—a report to the Yachad Scholarship Foundation of a study tour conducted in Israel (*documentation of observations of practice*) Report delivered to Yachad Foundation Directors, Melbourne, 2007.

3. Fleer, M., & Hammer, M. (accepted, April 2014). Repertoires of cultural practices for enacting play and learning in a playgroup. *International Journal of Research in Early Childhood Education*.
4. Fleer, M., & Hammer, M. (2013). Emotions in imaginative situations: The valued place of fairytales for supporting emotion regulation, *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, 20(3), 240–259.
5. Fleer, M., & Hammer M. (2013). Perezhivanie in group settings: A cultural-historical reading of emotion regulation, *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 38(3), 127–134.
6. Fleer, M. Hammer, M., & March, S. (2014). A cultural-historical reading of the emotional development of young children. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Research in Early Childhood Education*, 8(2), 47–67.

## **SECTION II: A model of social competence**

This section of the thesis puts forward a model of the conceptualisation of social competence as it is comprised of the sense of self and the utilisation of cultural tools through the prism of *perezhivanie*.

The next section narrates the academic journey that was realised through the development of these papers over a period of ten years. This is followed by the actual papers themselves, as published pieces, and finally, at the end of the thesis, is a chapter that brings together the thinking that has emerged collectively from these papers into a model which shows the relation between the individual and collective development of social competence for preschool aged children.

### **1.3 Research journey: A slow and circuitous journey**

*Chasing shining things:* It is the shining things that I have noticed along the way which have kept me going off track, chasing yet another shining thing. This is the sort of a long and arduous demonstration of a number of chronological shifts; from where I started, to where I am now; to think about the causes and impetuses of my development, and the movement of basic philosophical positions over ten years. It's a bit odd, hard to get into a kind of

structure. (Reflections on social competence over 10 years, Presentation to Monash PhD community, 2013)

My academic work represents a series of chronological shifts. The shifts in my own conceptual development have resulted from both empirical work (Papers 1–6) and from theoretical reading (e.g. Elias & Berk, 2002; Holodynski & Seeger, 2013; Kitzmann & Howard, 2011; Magiolino & Smolka, 2013; Roth, 2007; White, 2013; Willford, Whittaker, Vitiello & Downer, 2013).

The first turn in my conceptual work came as I reflected on how emotions had been conceptualised in my work on *Child Abuse and Trauma*. When I started observing children, I came to it from the perspective of abuse and trauma (Kitzmann & Howard, 2013). I was interrogating child abuse and neglect, looking at the impact these experiences have on the emotional and social development of children who have been mistreated (Gerstein, Arbona, Crnic, Ryu, Baker & Blacher, 2011) and how those experiences can be seen through the child's acting out of particular behaviours (Hammer, 2007; Howse, Lange, Farran & Boyles, 2003).

Like most early career researchers, I initially came to research from the point of view of a teacher, trying to survive a day with children who behave violently, kicking and biting among other actions. As a teacher-researcher, my focus was on investigating how to deal with such behaviours, and to examine the impact of abuse on the child (see critique by Barblett & Maloney, 2010). The research at that time focused on individual constructions of the child, their development, and where the learning and developing child was divided into social, emotional, cognitive and physical developmental domains. This was consistent with the thinking at the time, and is well reflected in the literature of that period (Commonwealth of Australia, 2013).

When a child does not fit the expected norms or developmental stages, then a deficit view of the child emerges (Vygotsky, 1987). Through further reading and my own empirical work, the perspective I had of the child was changing. I began problematising how we think about the developing child. I asked: Can we conceptualise the child in terms of the group? What might be the collective conception of learning in the teaching-learning situation in early childhood? These questions led to a new research need and a

method that involved mapping children's emotional competence in the context of their preschool experience.

### 1.3.1 Social-emotional/social competence behaviour checklist

In order to understand a child growing up in traumatic conditions, I started by looking at social emotional development and social competence in the context of the assessment tools available at the time (Barblett & Maloney, 2010; Cole, Martin & Dennis, 2004; Graziano, Calkins & Keane, 2011). The original socio-emotional checklist that I was drawn to was the *Status of the child behaviour checklist and related materials* (Achenbach, T.M., 1987).

Like many other tools available at the time, this had limitations:

I was using the Burden developmental tests to measure children's developmental progress. I remember very clearly a lesson taught to me by a 4 year old child. Some of the questions in the Burden test have different options. I chose the third option, one that would traditionally not be used until much later. The four-year-old child told me: 'That's not what comes next in the test.' She had been tested often. She knew the questions and just performed. So the fact she told me about the question order alerted me to a problem with testing and with the use of particular tools for gaining insights about children. That is, the results were not going to be of any real value or be a guide to development. My conclusion was that this child must be far in advance of what the test was seeking to examine. She had been referred into the centre as having an intellectual disability. (Reflections on social competence over 10 years, Presentation to Monash PhD community, 2013)

A checklist that is observation-based provided the way forward for understanding children's emotional development and overall social competence. I wanted to move away from anything that *tests* children as its approach to documenting and determining social competence. This led to the search for alternative tools.

The process of the assessment of social competence in the early childhood years is complex, and has been further complicated through a focus on social-emotional development as a singular domain of child development, which is overshadowed by emphasis on the cognitive domain of development—highlighting school readiness and academic success (e.g. Blair, 2002). An intensive review of the literature (Barblett & Maloney, 2010) added further complexities in conceptualising assessment, namely:

Children from diverse cultures and backgrounds, the importance of the teacher, the influence of context, lack of consistency in terminology, including

the voice of the child and ethics associated with assessment. (Barblett & Maloney, 2010, p. 14)

Early attempts to measure social competence gained impetus from attempts to evaluate the Head Start programme in the United States, the original goal of which was to ‘enhance children’s social competence so that they would be able to perform effectively in school and beyond’ (Raver & Zigler, 1991, p. 17). Early efforts proposed a four-factor model that included health/physical status, cognitive development, social-emotional factors and assessments of motivation, curiosity, initiative, persistence and task orientation. While optimistic in its intentions, the implementation of such a model is very difficult, despite providing a useful framework for making assessments of children’s development. It is also the case that the analysis of ‘maladaptive behaviours’ provides a better understanding and guidance for intervention strategies and programme design. That is, an understanding of the negative can provide direction and focus for the positive.

However, the notion of social competence is fundamental to the education process; generally, the literature at that time finds that four broad elements constitute social competence: wellbeing, relationships with people, language and communication and exploring and learning (Hendricks & Meade, 1993). Indeed, the World Bank highlights the importance of social development in lifting more people out of poverty; its report titled ‘Early Childhood Development From Measurement to Action: A Priority for Growth and Equity’ (Young, 2007) also states that outcomes are better when development projects promote social change along with addressing economic issues. This notion becomes pivotal in determining the values and consequent responses that are relayed to children that serve to establish the framework of meaning that children construct in their world.

Another ‘shiny thing’ that emerged on the horizon during the early part of my career was working with children who came to Australia for safe haven after the uprisings in Kosovo and the East Timor wars. What I noticed was that these children displayed similar kinds of behaviours to the children who had been neglected and abused. It was at this point that the concept of abuse was, for me, broadened to encompass the idea of trauma.

This is where my research took a major turn. I wanted to look at what was inside the child at what sits under the acting out behaviours, which generally are considered 'naughty'. This criterion of examining both the social context and the child's behaviours in that context (Kärtner, Holodynski & Wormann, 2013) became pivotal in my search for a better tool. I found the Social Competence Behaviour Evaluation (Preschool Edition) Instrument (SCBE) (LaFreniere & Dumas, 1995). The SCBE assesses characteristic patterns of affective expression, social competence and adjustment difficulties in situations with peers and adults.

The profile was developed especially for preschool teachers to identify emotional and behavioural signals in order to describe behavioural tendencies for socialisation and education, rather than diagnosis for clinical intervention. Eight dimensions were identified as central to the quality of a child's adaptation: depressive-joyful, anxious-secure, angry-tolerated, isolated-integrated, aggressive-calm, egotistical-prosocial, oppositional-cooperative and dependent-autonomous; these along with four summary scales (including a general adaptation score) make up this comprehensive assessment tool. Each basic scale consists of five items describing successful adjustment and five items describing adjustment difficulties. Basic scales 1–3 describe each child's manner of emotional expression; basic scales 4–6 describe interactions with peers, and basic scales 7–8 assess teacher-child relations. The 80 items are rated on a six-point scale.

The original French version of the scale was standardised on 979 children in Quebec and subsequently in English on 1,263 children in the United States. The internal consistency of each scale was assessed by Cronbach's alpha and all were highly consistent, with scores ranging from .79 to .87. Data on test-retest reliability was based on a subsample of 29 subjects selected at random and re-evaluated 2 weeks after the initial evaluation. Pearson correlations for the eight scales ranged from .74 to .91 (LaFreniere, Dumas, Capuano & Dubeau, 1992).

Over my research journey, the SCBE tool became streamlined. At the time, the revised version of the assessment tool was developed and applied internationally, in eight different cultural contexts, and substantial levels of consistency were achieved. (LaFreniere et al., 1992). The emphasis of the study that was the focus of my research at

that time is presented as the first paper in this thesis. This first paper uses the first component of the scale for examining a child's emotional adjustment.

**A validation of a measure of social-emotional development and identification of impacts of child abuse and neglect.** (published ARECE Journal 2007)

This study measures the social and emotional development of three groups of preschool aged children using the Social Competence Behaviour Evaluation (Preschool Edition) Instrument (SCBE) (LaFreniere & Dumas, 1995). The groups were drawn from preschools catering for children from a middle class area, a working class area and a special facility for child victims of abuse and neglect in a major metropolitan city in Australia. The SCBE is a screening instrument designed for use by teachers in preschool settings to identify emotional and behavioural signals of children in educational rather than clinical settings. The SCBE yields eight subscale scores and a general adaptation score. In the present study, all scores showed significant differences between children at the two regular preschool groups and those at the special centre. The results and the scale's utility for preschool teachers are discussed in the light of the sample sizes and differing preschool environments and qualitative comments by the researcher-observer.

The research approach at that time drew upon an observation continuum for conceptualising social emotional development, as shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1.1**

**Observations of Children's Play**

• Depressive	-	Joyful
• Anxious	-	Secure
• Angry	-	Tolerant
• Isolated	-	Integrated
• Aggressive	-	Calm
• Egotistical	-	Pro-social
• Oppositional	-	Co-operative
• Dependent	-	Autonomous

This research instrument compartmentalises social-emotional development along a continuum, where the particular constructs are conceptualised into a checklist. The construct continuum has a positive pole and a negative pole for each emotional dimension. Through my research I noted that these constructs were really difficult to assess: how do we determine how others are feeling? How do we talk about children's emotions? We know from research into the images of children and the concept of childhood (e.g. Prout, 2011) that there is often a romantic view of children and that childhood is considered through rose-coloured glasses. The poets of the Romantic era 'imagined childhood as a lost Eden, a magical realm from which adults were excluded

and for which they could only yearn' (Brockliss & Montgomery, 2013, p. 84). Traces of this romanticism continue today—as a community we are often quite dismissive of children's negative feelings. What was interesting to note when looking at children who had been victims of abuse, was that there was an expectation that a lot of aggression might be expressed, but the findings of my research showed something quite different. The key indicators were anxiety, isolation, and to a certain extent, dependence or autonomy. Children who have been victims of abuse in fact were much more dependent, seeking out adults' attention, pursuing adult guidance and constantly seeking adult approval. They were looking for information to help them and were very dependent on guidelines and instructions from adults. This led to a follow up study undertaken in Israel, where the same findings were evident in children who had experienced trauma.

### 1.3.2 Israel

The second paper presented in this staff thesis is a report provided to *The Yachad Scholarship Foundation*. The report brought together an analysis of observational data gathered on the practices of the Yachad Foundation supported preschools, which care for children with experiences of trauma. I had the opportunity through this scholarship to document select programmes in Israel, and the findings supported the findings of my previous research—that children who had experienced trauma displayed dependence, sought adult approval, and followed guidelines closely.

**A Tale of Two Cultures: Comparing Two Countries' Responses to Children's Trauma—a report to the Yachad Scholarship Foundation of a study tour conducted in Israel (documentation of observations of practice)—Report delivered 2007**

Social and emotional development is the cornerstone of children's developing personalities. An insight to this development offers early childhood professionals an opportunity to understand children's individual needs and the means of addressing maladaptive behaviours. However, it is also an invisible element of children's development: the observer must rely on children's behavioural cues as a means of indicating developmental progression and maturity. The issues of social and emotional development go beyond basic moods and feelings such as happiness, anger and sadness. They extend to the realms of self-concept and relationships with peers and adults, permeating the very essence of children's capacity to cope with their social world—in other words, their social competence. When we step back from this and examine the general literature, we note four areas of benefit to positive social and emotional development to children's growth. These are:

- The capacity to build positive relationships with peers and teachers as a crucial component of learning success;

- The foundation for positive mental health, since positive social skills are attributed to a positive quality of life;
- A link between emotional development and academic learning
- The importance of social-emotional development in its effects on other domains of development, in particular, language development. (Barblett & Maloney, 2010)

My study of two cultures investigated the work of early childhood professionals in assessing and supporting children who have experienced trauma. Utilising the SCBE to identify children's social and emotional competence as it impacts on children's learning, the paper explores teachers' perceptions of the needs of young children and the responses teachers develop to these needs.

In addition, the study reported in this paper compares and contrasts professionals' interpretations and practice in the development of strategies for planning appropriate curriculum for traumatised children in Australia and Israel. The paper also explores various sources of trauma for children, ranging from child abuse and neglect to the outcomes of living in war-torn areas. The outcomes of the study have application to newly arrived refugee children in Australia as well as those children living in the volatile conflict areas of Israel; however, they are equally applicable to children who have been victims of abuse and neglect in their own homes.

The paper gives insight into the role that Early Childhood professionals can play in supporting and ameliorating the negative effects of trauma in young children and provides a sense of hope that early childhood services can make a difference. The observational study determined three major findings. First, the connection between the social structure of the country—in this case Israel, which is comparatively newly developed, created after the decision by the United Nations to partition Palestine in 1947, and which has been involved in territory disputes with its geographical neighbours since its inception. Second, the preponderance of teacher-directed preschool programmes where free play is seen as a break from learning, and is provided as an alternative during 'free time'. Finally, the apparent focus on social participation and the concept of the collective, which could be attributed to the early idealism of the kibbutzim established by the country's founding fathers.

The scholarship funded activities and the writing process of the report for the Yachad Foundation, pushed me into thinking about how early childhood teachers approach the development of emotions and social competence for traumatised children. Questions that arose were: what is the role of educators in supporting traumatised children? What are we trying to do? Are we trying to get children ready for reading and writing, or is

there something else that is the main game that is never achieved in a finished form? The research undertaken in Israel did, however, contain basic ideas that, when later systematically developed, opened paths toward knowledge about what Vygotsky considered to be the most important problem of psychology—knowledge of human personality (Vygotsky, 1925). My reflections illustrate my thinking at the time:

When I went to Israel, although interested to observe the style of preschool programmes, I was certainly unimpressed with their early childhood programmes. They seemed to be very conservative. On the surface, they are play based and had traditional play equipment, however, it was very teacher directed. Children were given particular activities that they had to complete. On one of the days I was there, it was a festival day celebrating the new year for trees, ‘Tu B’Shevat’. The children were engaged in activities related to oranges. There was one group squeezing orange juice. On the next table, they were cutting up orange peels into small shapes, and pasting the orange peel onto a pre-fabricated tree. What do they learn by pasting orange peels onto the tree? So again, it was quite strongly framed from a Piagetian theoretical framework, and I was quite dismissive of it. The play component of the programme was seen much more as free time or spare time, rather than the actual learning, and the teachers were disengaged from the play activities, allowing the children to explore the toys and develop their own games with supervision limited to behavioural guides and enforcement of rules. At the end of a specified time, the children were drawn back to the set activities designed by the teachers. However, on reflection, it was more around the idea of social participation that these activities were structured. The more programmes that I saw, the more this became evident to me.

In a community of newly arrived Ethiopian refugees, many of them were from rural villages with no educational services. Many of these families had experienced extremely difficult immigration: they had walked the Sudan desert to wait in transit camps, where many family members perished along the way, before the Israeli government arranged airlifts to bring them to Israel. There were a number of programmes set up for refugee children, where the children learn quickly in the Israeli context and parents begin to feel left behind; this leads to a crisis for the family. This was the impetus to develop family inclusive programmes that included language instruction for the children and various ancillary programmes for parents such as drop-in sessions for traditional craft activities and training workshops to develop work skills, as well as after school homework clubs to assist older children to achieve success at school.

A further programme in Afula with equal enrolments from the Arabic Druze community and Israeli community focused on the children’s programme, with a number of projects developed at the centre to support and include families. The centre is overseen by a steering committee that reflects the same demographics as the participants, ‘representative of the mosaic of Israeli population’; the programmes have an overarching principle that the episodes of warfare are not discussed within the centre, and are bilingual—in Hebrew and Arabic—thus promoting harmony and acceptance.

Israel is a country that is trying to establish its own identity, encouraging a range of activities so that people could forget trauma and move forward. One could postulate that this is perhaps homogenisation, but it was evident that families' cultural practices and tools were not disregarded. The programmes foregrounded ethical approaches and principles that valued what refugee families brought with them. The education system was about everyone fitting in and belonging. The earlier ideas of the kibbutzim appeared to underpin the contemporary programmes observed. Reflecting on the report, it is interesting to note that many of the early establishers and fathers setting up that system in Israel were Russian refugees. There is quite a strong link between that school of Russian psychology, socialism and what was happening in the 40s and 50s, and in the practice of setting up the early education programmes in Israel where they were trying to achieve communal living through the kibbutzim. So the more I read about the Russian psychology, the more I can start to distil some of the things that were happening. It is intriguing to see that where they were going is much more about participating in a social group and having competences in the social group. It was in these reflections that the notion of social competence started to emerge for me as one of the key areas that educators need to think about in terms of this whole picture of providing meaningful education experiences for disaffected children and what they need for achieving and developing competence, so that they are able to negotiate within existing social structures, and their cultural settings. (Reflections on social competence over 10 years, Presentation to PhD community, 2013)

The programmes studied in Israel bring attention to attempts at socialising the children, while children are active participants in their socialisation. The meaning they assign to their experiences and feelings are largely dependent on the meanings given to them through their teachers' responses and gestures (Eisenberg, Valiente & Eggum, 2010). To a great extent, children come to see and feel about themselves as they perceive their primary caregivers feel about them. Teachers and caregivers then are significant emotional associates in children's lives, defining the emotional culture in which children develop understandings about themselves, others and their worlds (Leavitt, 1995, p. 4).

Meanings and significance of interactions are tied to children's interpretations of events as they experience and make sense of them within the context of community and culture (Hannikainen, 2014; Rabago-Mingoa, Estacio & Perlas, 2014; Son, 2014). The 'effects' of the teachers or caregivers' action and inaction may lie less in the set of actions per se than in the child's constructions of these actions, which is the child's own emotional experience (Vadeboncoeur and Collie, 2013).

Libesman (2004) suggests that a culturally competent programme ‘appreciates and values diversity; understands the cultural forces which impact on the program; understands the dynamics which result from cultural differences; institutionalizes cultural differences and adapts its services to fit the cultural context of the clients it serves’ (Libesman, 2004, p. 15).

These concepts were further developed through my participation in a research project exploring an Indigenous children’s playgroup in outer Melbourne. In that context, parents and children were engaging in traditional preschool activities, learning to play with traditional preschool equipment in order to be successful in the cultural institutions of education. This experience is captured through the study named as ‘Montana’ in my work. This was another moment in my research journey where the empirical work brought me to a new place in my thinking.

### 1.3.3 **Montana**

The third important turning point came in my research when I used the SCBE tool as a basis of analysis of the social competence of children attending a playgroup in an Indigenous community in a southern community of Australia. I was interested because the environment resembled a traditional preschool setting, with free play materials, a home corner, a block corner, art area, table activities and outdoor play equipment such as sand pit and trestles. However, traditional structures were used in non-traditional ways, which resonated with the concept of a third space for theorising social competence.

In the first phase of this period in my conceptual journey, I started to explore the notion of third space. I really was quite excited by this because it created an understanding or perception of environment, although it is not a real space, but as a conceptual bubble that allowed a range of cultures to operate in one space, interacting, developing and flourishing. Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez and Turner (1997) define this concept of a third space in learning environments as ‘a place where two scripts or two normative patterns of interaction intersect, creating the potential for authentic interaction and learning to occur’ (p. 372). The concept of third spaces is discussed further below.

The work of Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez and Turner (1997) opened up a deeper understanding of the nature of studying emotion and social competence within particular cultural contexts, something that the work of Vygotsky does not explicitly address. Using digital video tools (Fleer & Ridgway, 2014) to document children's everyday interactions within the setting of traditional preschools allows the researcher to conceptualise both the social and emotional competence of the playgroup children and their cultural context created in attending playgroup. The theory of third space allowed for both to be examined concurrently.

Röttger-Rössler, Scheidecker, Jung and Holodynski (2013) have argued that:

1. Some emotion qualities play a prominent role in learning social conformity.
2. Cultures differ according to which emotion qualities are used as socializing emotions to motivate their members to behave according to their moral standards and social norms.
3. The use of culture-specific socializing emotions leads to different pathways of emotional development, and thus to a different emotional repertoire. (p. 263)

Putting culture centre stage in my work was important. Paper 3 closely examines the repertoires of cultural practices for enacting play and learning in a playgroup. Third space theory was important for conceptualising the categories used in my data analysis. However, a deeper understanding of cultural-historical theory was needed if my work was to develop further.

In the second phase of this period, I brought third space theory together with the cultural-historical study of the arts (Vygotsky, 1971). What was interesting for me was that the third space as discussed by Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez and Turner (1997), is drawn from the dramatic arts for theatre, which is perhaps coincidental or not. A direct link to Vygotsky's early work on the psychology of art (Vygotsky, 1971) was conceptually possible: Vygotsky wrote specifically on the emotional nature of the engagement a viewer has when looking at a painting or audience experiences when engaged in theatre. We are challenged to move beyond analytical or visual perception, to a sort of special perception that moves beyond the traditional one-sided view of specific qualities of artworks. In conceptualising the arts in this way, Vygotsky (1971) addressed what he considered to be the more generally significant elements of artistic quality and emotional experiences. While there is some criticism that Vygotsky

attended to the more of the 'elitist' art forms (Smagorinsky, 2011), I believe his work was an attempt to define art as artistic in his quest to determine what it is that allows art to be considered art:

This concept gave Vygotsky the means of penetrating the secrets of the lasting value of great works of art, of discovering that force by which a Greek epic or a Shakespearean tragedy still continues, in Marx's words, 'to provide us with artistic enjoyment and, in a certain respect, to serve us both as a norm and an unattainable model'... (Leontiev, 1991, p. vii).

There is a close union that can be drawn between the expressive arts and everyday life and cultural traditions. Here, Vygotsky's theoretical work on studying the arts for better understanding psychology gave new insights into my research. Researching the whole performance (or the whole cultural context) is critical for understanding what's going on culturally. In the words of the Bard himself, 'All the world's a stage and all the men and women merely players' (Shakespeare, 1967). I reflected on this unlikely union in my reading of the theoretical discussion of emotions in the arts and the theory of third space.

When I started to think about the notion of third space, then I came to realise that what is being conceptualised as the third space is the process of setting the stage for the performance. So that becomes a really critical key to thinking about what we were talking about from the play 'As You Like It'. What's interesting is that the rest of the poem in the play goes on to talk about the seven stages of a man, infant, schoolboy, lover, soldier, justice, Pantalone and old age, facing imminent death. Nothing is new. Nothing is original. So it is interesting that within that there is the beginning of some kind stages of life (Reflections on social competence over 10 years, Presentation to PhD community, 2013).

Cultural-historical theory had provided different conceptual tools for developing my research, and the tools were particularly valuable for working in cross-cultural contexts. My conceptual and empirical journey led me to further my theoretical understandings of cultural-historical theory. In engaging with the *Collected Works of Vygotsky* (Volumes 1–6), where emotions, imagination and creativity were being conceptualised in the *Psychology of Art* (Vygotsky, 1971), and in his chapter on *Imagination and Creativity* (Vygotsky, 2004), led me to a study of fairy tales and imaginative play (El'koninova, 2002; Zaporozhets, 2002). Imaginative play underpins the next phase of my research, particularly in relation to children who have suffered trauma. Here, work on therapeutic play informed my research. Therapeutic play is a critical component of interaction that allows children to act out play in a range of different ways. The idea of stage and theatre is equally strong in providing and supporting a view of imaginative play being

important for representing the world (Vygotsky, 1966). Through play children act out the world (Kravtsov & Kravtsova, 2010). One paper and one conference presentation resulted from this research:

**Repertoires of Cultural Practices for Enacting Play and Learning in a Playgroup** (Published IRECE Journal 2014)

Variations in cultural practices between families and schools have emerged as central to many studies (Rogoff, 2003) and these dynamic variations have been named as repertoires of cultural practice (Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003). Emerging from this literature has been recognition of the dynamic tension between the cultural practices of Western education and the cultural practices of communities who have a different cultural heritage. This tension and its resolution have been captured through the concept of third space (Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez, & Turner, 1997). Going beyond third space theorisation, this paper draws on the cultural-historical concepts of demands and motives (Hedegaard, 2012) in order to understand the development of new repertoires of practices evident in an Australian playgroup, where traditional early childhood practices are used by Indigenous families. Nineteen families were video recorded interacting together at a local playgroup (20h). The findings show how participation structures for learning supported by the families, and the demands they placed upon children's day-to-day interaction, highlight new understandings of playgroup practices that go beyond the dominant Western early childhood education cultural repertoires of practice.

**Conference presentation**

**Social competence in the preschool years from a cultural-historical perspective: pretend play as a window to children's social skills** (unpublished paper delivered to EECERA Conference, Geneva 2011)

Social competence, the capacity to successfully negotiate the structures of the social system, is multi-faceted, encompassing literacy, numeracy, self-regulation, capacity to relate to others, communication skills and problem solving skills. Current trends focus on literacy, often in its narrowest sense, decontextualising the skills of multi literacies and reducing these to onerous tasks and simple practice exercises without meaning or relevant application.

By returning to the fundamental premise of play as the most effective learning medium in early childhood and repositioning this in the paradigm of cultural-historical theory, the notion of conceptual play provides a logical context for the growth of social competence with realistic applications.

One of the defining features of Vygotsky's theoretical position focused on the significance of the social context. Vygotsky and Luria (1994) argue that 'Social forms of behaviour are more complicated and are in advance in their development in the child' (p. 153). That is, children engage in activities within their social world and through this interaction work collectively with others, often above what they could do independently. Social competence as conceptualised from a cultural-historical perspective examines the relations between social context as cultural practice and an individual's emotional development. However, most research within the early childhood period has focused on an individual construction of social competence or resilience. This paper draws upon a cultural-historical theory of social competence and, through this, elaborates how social and emotional development in the early years can be reconceptualised.

The paper explores the nexus of children's social-emotional development and imaginative play in promoting social competence skills and conceptual growth. Through play experiences, the development of skills occurs as a means of supporting the play from the child's perspective as a natural extension of the child's interests and strengths, rather than the imposed notion of arbitrary benchmarks in narrow, skill based development.

Both studies were enriched by the concept of third space. Greenwood's adaptation of Bhabha's (1990) proposal of a third space attempts to redefine the notion of multiculturalism and to look more carefully at the interface between cultures that co-exist but remain intact rather than become homogenised. In analysing the activities of this playgroup, we are confronted by the very traditional, Westernised activities and play materials on offer, yet throughout the play there emerges the influences of traditional Aboriginal culture. This sense of a third space is reflected in the parents' participation and their hope that their children will be successful in the dominant learning culture

Greenwood (2001) first proposed the idea of third space where connections between cultures emerge through cultural encounters and cannot be defined in advance. This work sought to go beyond a simplistic, tourist-like view of culture. My study examined the interface between cultural co-existence where each culture can remain intact within a framework of coexistence without becoming homogenised. This links back to what I found in the observational study of preschooling in Israel, whereby the goals for a new nation were dominating how the children were taught to participate in the institution, but there was still recognition of difference.

This concept provides a useful beginning point in observing the interactions of an Aboriginal community playgroup in regional Victoria. The literature around the notion of a third space emphasises the concept of connectedness. Such a view provides a spotlight on the interconnectedness of language, culture and learning. In this sense, language is a tool for social interactions and this notion can be reconfigured in looking at interactions between parents and young children to include the language of children's play.

Language is a tool for social interaction and, thus, indexes or signals particular identities and membership in groups (Rogoff, 1990; Cole, 1996; Ochs, 1992; Gee, 1990). Language is also a tool we use to express and make sense of our experience; it is a tool that transforms our thinking (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986; Wertsch, 1985). Thus, language is fundamental to the constitution of self and is at the core of our social, emotional and cognitive experiences (Gutierrez et al., 1997).

In drawing upon a cultural-historical reading of play, it was determined that the children in that playgroup were being offered traditional Westernised play tools. For example, table cloths, teapots, teacups, and the traditional practice of making a cup of tea. I wondered what were the connections between the preschool tools, institutional practices, and interactional patterns that were being promoted through the preschool. Did they reflect or were there strong patterns and connection to community, to history, to stories, culture and so on? Was there an awareness of both family and preschool cultures being lived side by side? What kinds of social competence were being developed?

**Figure 1.2**



Observations at the playgroup revealed an overall trend of joyfulness and autonomy in the children's play activities. The presence of many adults who shared in and actively supported the children's play provided an atmosphere that was conducive to play and overall enjoyment.

In Figure 2, we find a spontaneous musical activity that incorporated elements of traditional Indigenous dance, where Montana (who was engaged in a fishing rod game) demonstrated a cultural connection when he heard the rhythm sticks being beaten by a staff member. The relaxed environment of the playgroup and the interactions between the children across a range of age groups was a significant part of the safe environment that allowed the children to participate in both traditional indigenous activities and the typical Western preschool constructions of play that they experience in the education system. Thus, the notion of social competence as an umbrella term for conceptualising development was significant in this study, because it reflects a broader and more positive reading of a child's development, rather than being conceptualised as a specific set of behavioural competencies.

Talking to the parents, they talk about the importance of children learning how to play the games in the dominant culture. Their success through those institutions and schools was critical to being able to make a cup of tea, or play those home corner games, and so on. That was a central component of their learning, so that they needed to have opportunities available for what children are doing (Reflections on social competence over 10 years, Presentation to PhD community, 2013).

Greenwood, Bhabha (2001) and others discuss a place where two scripts or two normative patterns of interaction intersect and create the potential for authentic interaction and learning to occur. There is a real reason for that kind of language with the sorts of things we see in cultural-historical theory of having meaningful interconnections between language, culture and learning (Vygotsky, 1987). Here, language acts as a tool for social interaction. The social and cultural heritage of the children underpins their capacity to play, allows them to transform their thinking and to redefine and make connections. This is about the constitution of self; it opens up the notions of self-image, self-identity and a sense of self (Crafter & de Abreu, 2010; Roth, Tobin, Elmesky, Carambo, McKnight & Beers, 2004; Vagen, 2011).

I used the emotional scale checklist with the children in the playgroup as part of the context of Paper 3. What was really interesting to find was an overview of traits of

joyfulness and autonomy in the children's play activities. Rather than a focus on the results of research that maps how Aboriginal children are faring in relation to health indicators, the study focused on the positive outcomes and strengths of the children, which led me to pay more attention to the concept of social competence. As raised in the introduction, the concept of social competence refers not just to social mores, but also the cultural tools and the negotiation of social structures, such as literacy and numeracy, self regulation, manners, humour and religion. The list is broad, because it is intended to encompass all life events.

While there is variation in the types of terms used, there is general consensus regarding the major aspects of social and emotional development in early childhood and the key achievements in this domain. They are:

- Emotional competence: defined as 'the ability to effectively regulate one's emotions to accomplish one's goal' (Squires, Bricker & Twombly, 2003, p. 6).
- Social competence: described as 'the ability to integrate thinking, feeling and behaving to achieve interpersonal goals and social outcomes' (MacKay & Keyes, 2002 cited in Kostelnik et al., 2006, p. 2).
- Wellbeing: referred to as 'children's physical, social and emotional welfare and development' (Department of Education and Children's Services, 2005, p. 3) (Barblett & Maloney, 2010, p. 13).

As educators, we are looking towards helping children to achieve a level of social competence. The working definition used in this thesis foregrounds the capacity to effectively negotiate the structure of systems and institutions within society. It is not just social mores, but the skills of the negotiation of the structures. This conceptualisation helped me to put it into perspective the other dimensions of the child: their education, gender, literacy, numeracy, self-efficacy, self-strength, manners, self-regulation and so on. Those elements are all components of social competence. As early childhood teachers, we need to invert the way we teach and conceptualise literacy and numeracy as simply tools, for instance, how to fill in a form, to read street signs, to understand currency, to tell the time. All these things are very important parts of how one negotiates social structure; together they constitute social competence.

The findings of these studies (Papers 1–3 and conference presentation) led me to bring together and conceptualise emotion regulation within the context of social competence. In particular, I began to examine how different cultural practices could be deliberately used in early childhood settings for the social and emotional development of children to build social competence. In working with children from European heritage backgrounds, I examined the place of fairy tales for supporting emotion regulation, as an important dimension of social competence. I now turn to Paper 4, which is a theoretical paper that explored this area.

#### **Paper 4**

##### **Emotions in imaginative situations: The valued place of fairy tales for supporting emotion regulation (published in MCA, 2013)**

Fairy tales represent a longstanding cultural practice used by early childhood teachers for supporting children’s social and emotional development. Yet, contemporary practices see governments demanding a more academic curriculum. In drawing upon cultural-historical research, we theorise how fairy tales help children to *collectively* develop *emotion regulation*, where the unity of emotions and cognition are foregrounded during the telling, re-telling, and role-playing of fairy tales, allowing for a dynamic interplay between interpsychological and intrapsychological functioning. It is suggested that fairy tales have a valuable place within early childhood programmes, because they introduce emotionally charged imaginative situations that we believe support children’s emotion regulation in group care situations.

This third and final turn in my work was achieved because I studied the Collected Works of Vygotsky. This phase in my research supports the development of new understandings about the nature of social competence. Central to Vygotsky’s theory was the concept that new, systematic structures are formed during the process of ontogenesis—individual development—and that the process of ontogenesis has its source in the social world. These new structures are the outcome of the individual having assimilated the products of human culture. Vygotsky saw the essence of this development as follows: Mental or psychological functions that initially are elementary (natural) are mediated in the process of activity and social contact with others through a socially elaborated system of signs.

One of the defining features of Vygotsky’s theoretical position focuses on the significance of the social context. Vygotsky (1994) argues that ‘social forms of behaviour are more complicated and are in advance in their development in the child’ (p. 153). That is, children engage in activities within their social world, and through this

interaction work collectively with others, often above what they could do independently. Social competence, as conceptualised from a cultural-historical perspective, examines the relations between social context as cultural practice and an individual's emotional development. However, most research within the early childhood period has focused on an individual construction of social competence or resilience.

This understanding of social competence originates from a personal or individual sense of a social situation. What is the essence of applying the traditional psychology to personality development? What is the individual? What constitutes the individual such that each individual is different from the other? But yet, this is still the connection between the individuals. From that point, I started to construct the idea of social competence, even perhaps the element of resilience. But I think the resilience literature goes to a different place, and it becomes another form of literacy and numeracy that is another tool to cope with different situations. It doesn't actually go to the essence of the individual and the individual's connection with their cultural and social beings. The relationship between the social context as cultural practice, and an individual's emotional development therefore is the essence of cultural-historical social competence.

I do not believe that we can talk about the self as individual without also talking about the individual as the relationship between the material and social context. This is a double view. You can be yourself, and be a person, but you cannot be a person on your own. Are these elements of personality development, personal sense and sense of self? So it is starting again to make connections. This refers to some of Vygotsky's early work, where he discusses the phenomenon of 'child primitives', describing children disconnected from the social system; specifically, he was referring to groups of children wandering Russia immediately after the Revolution who had endured 'severe cultural deprivation and educational neglect' (Gindis, 2003 p. 205). While the terminology is unfortunate in its translation, these children could best be described as 'vulnerable children' in modern parlance; however, the concept is critical to the development of thinking about cultural-historical social competence and refers us again to that disassociation of groups of children and young people: even though they have a subculture, they need a sense of self to connect. In the whole range of different kinds of places in our community, groups try to be different to be individual, but they need to have connection with like-minded individuals to develop that subculture and develop a

sense of self. Similarly, we can draw strong similarities with children who have experienced trauma.

Children learn the models of the meaning of activities, and the models of relationships among people. The cultural devices most readily available for the investigation of the models of interactive behaviour and moral behaviour are stories, particularly fairy stories (notwithstanding the fact that children need support and guidance from adults to help them identify good and evil deeds and how to achieve self-regulation as part of choosing good deeds). For instance, according to the findings of El'koninova (2001), older preschoolers dressed as fairy-tale characters acted morally in play; that is, they helped younger children and were able to test the meaning of the activity, but when play ended and they discarded the roles of the fairy-tale character, the children disregarded the requests for help from the younger children.

In play, children link their own emotions to those of the adults (Vygotsky, 1966). In this context, meaning making is heightened for children, and the purposes and meaning of adults' activities become better understood. This conception of play takes us back to our discussion of the theatre and the stage (Mitchell, 2014). Everything children see in the grown up world comes from the stage of life. According to El'konin (1995), this is the content of children's play. In the context of the adults using the tools of literacy and numeracy (Vadeboncoeur & Collie, 2013), these cultural practices have meaning to children because they observe or are participants in a world where these tools are valued. Children use the cultural devices that are made available to them, they have particular forms of interactive behaviour modelled to them, and moral values are replicated through stories and narratives, and these experiences can be seen in children's play.

In play a child accomplishes the transition to the developed world of higher forms of human activity, the developed world of the rules of human relations (El'konin in El'koninova, 2001, p. 68)

In fairy tales, there is a strong message of moral behaviour. Fairy tales provide opportunities for children to have doubt about different kinds of interventions and human interactions, and give messages of moral accord. What are the responsibilities of educators for creating the stage through the fairy story? According to El'koninova (2001), fairy tales offer children a much richer capacity to engage in social interactions,

to play out the social and human connections, cultural contradictions and relations evident in their social world.

Fairy tales provide children with a play framework for moving between real and imaginary situations. The children will be introduced to a fairy tale, and a unit of work will be established around an event (Kravtsova, 2008). For example, ‘the wolf has lost his fairy tale. Children, can you please help the wolf’s find his/her fairy tale?’ In my research, fairy tales have acted as vehicle for imagination, emotions and the development of social competence in ways that inspired complex play. My research also sought to identify new directions for staff in a long-day childcare centre to use fairy tales to create the conditions for an engaging experience, where emotionally charged situations were presented in a condensed form in the fairy tale. Here, the concept of *perezhivanie* provides a new way of analysing social competence in such situations.

#### 1.3.4 The concept of *perezhivanie*

Vygotsky writes:

The emotional experience *perezhivanie* arising from any situation or from any aspect of environment, determines what kind of influence this situation or this environment will have on the child. Therefore, it is not any of the factors in themselves (if taken without reference to the child) that determines how they will influence the future course of his development, but the same factors refracted through the prism of *perezhivanie*. (Vygotsky, 1994)

Bozovich (2009) translates *perezhivanie* as this emotional experience. Smagorinsky (2011) describes it in terms of artistic experience, and this returns us to the theatre analogy, equating the sensation felt when engaging with a sculpture or dramatic performance, where art reflects life, as it were.

Vygotsky tells us that experiences arise from many situations or aspects of environment, and determines the influence the situation will have on the child. So it is not the factors in themselves that determine how they will influence the child, but the factor itself. Vygotsky (1994) discusses these factors as being refracted through the prism. He is actually not talking about the prism as *perezhivanie*:

Paedology does not investigate the environment as such without regard to the child, but instead looks at the role and influence of the environment on the course of development. It ought to be always capable of finding the particular prism through which the influence of the environment on the child is refracted, i.e. *it ought to be able to find the relationship which exists between the child*

*and its environment, the child's emotional experience [perezhivanie], in other words how a child becomes aware of, interprets, [and] emotionally relates to a certain event.'* (Vygotsky, 1994, p. 341)

The work of Bozovich (2009) looks at personality development. All of her writing that has been translated has conceptualised *perezhivanie* as an emotional experience, returning to the concept of the theatrical stage, the kind of thing that you see from art, the feeling that is engendered. When we talk about hearing a particular piece of music, or seeing a piece of artwork that creates empathic feelings, this is *perezhivanie* as an emotional experience. Smagorinski (2011) talks about the statue in Vatican City of Mary holding a dead Jesus after he has been crucified, Michelangelo's *Pieta*—a very powerful piece of sculpture. More powerful because it is made from marble but at the same time it has incredible softness.

It can be argued that each of us has different experiences, which is what Vygotsky says about *perezhivanie*; we bring our cultural and historical experience to a particular situation and our reactions and responses in certain situations or to certain stimuli will be each different; however, these experiences are absolutely fundamental. Those responses and our actions in response to whatever else we will do are fundamental to that sense of personality.

In contrast to classical developmental theories, 'which explain development as a process determined by two groups of factors—biological and social—cultural-historical theory characterizes social environment not as a factor, but as a source of development' (Vygotsky, 1998, p. 203). Vygotsky claims:

The social environment is the source for the appearance of all specific human properties of the personality gradually acquired by the child or the source of social development of the child which is concluded in the process of actual interaction of 'ideal' and present forms, (Vygotsky, 1998, p 203) (Veresov, 2013, p. 3)

In exploring this source of development, we are guided by Bozovich (2009), who provides the following approach:

True to the principle that analysis of complex phenomena should be conducted not in terms of elements but in terms of 'units' that preserve in simplest form properties intrinsic to the whole, Vygotsky began to seek a corresponding 'unit' to use in studying the 'social situation of development.' He identified emotional experience (or the child's 'affective relationship to the environment) as such a unit. Experience from Vygotsky's perspective is a 'unit' that, in indissoluble unity, represents on the one hand the environment,

that is, what the child experiences, and, on the other, the subject, that is, what introduces the child to this experience and, in turn, is defined by the level of mental development the child has already achieved. From this it can be concluded that in order to understand exactly what effect the environment has on children, and, consequently, how it affects the course of their development, the nature of children's experience must be understood, the nature of their affective relationship to the environment. (Bozovich, 2009)

As with Vygotsky (1994), Bozovich has also conceptualised *perezhivanie* as a unit. The unit represents the relationship between what the child brings to the environment and how the child is interacting with the environment. *Perezhivanie* represents the smallest relational unit of child and environment. *Perezhivanie* is what the child experiences, and what/who introduces the child to that experience. This may be the provocation the teacher provides, the activity, another child or a material artefact with which the child engages. How this is experienced is always defined by what the child already knows and brings to the situation—that is, their social situation of development (Bozovich, 2009). Knowing what children bring with them, their knowledge, experience and understanding may not be considered by all teachers when noting particular emotionally charged situations. In order to look at the effect of the environment on the child, we have to know the nature of the child's experiences, and the nature of their relationships with the environment, and their emotional connection with the environment. This is also the concept of *perezhivanie*. What might be the empathic response to the artwork, for example? The difference between how my husband saw a block of stone and what I saw was a tangible expression of emotion, a very different experience, a different set of morals, values and understandings. We both experienced the same social situation differently based on our own social situation of development. This led me to ask another set of questions: who am I as an individual? How do I connect socially and emotionally to the same situations? How can we determine children's social situation of development? What is their individual and collective *perezhivanie*?

Vygotsky (1994) felt that the nature of experience in the final analysis is determined by how children understand the circumstances affecting them, that is, by how developed their ability to generalise is. If, he said, children will understand (perceive, conceptualise) one and the same event in different ways, it will have absolutely different meanings for them and consequently they will experience it differently.

Cultural-historical theory aligns the child with a notion of social competence rather than deconstructing the individual into elements of skills. The view of the child is as a complete member of the social group, and active participant in social and cultural activities.

The contrast between this approach and the ‘primitives’ (who do not obviously belong to a social group) as a point of reference allows a useful exploration of the child’s sense of self and gives rise to considerations of how this might apply to learning situations. This also refers to the tension between the dominant institutional discourse and the individual discourse. The key ingredient here is *perezhivanie*, because it is through *perezhivanie* that the social becomes the individual.

I am looking at social competence as a kind of action on the ‘theatre stage’ of the world. This is the space where *perezhivanie* can take place. Within that space, the actors and the self interact. Fairy tales in my research allowed for the creation of different selves, emotionally experiencing situations, consciously rising above the self to be someone else, as children do in play, and creating a new space and new experience, a new sense of belonging for children. Understanding the circumstances that develop the ability for children to consciously consider a raw emotional expression not just in art, but in everyday life in a preschool setting, represents a form of social competence in my work. This is the essence of my final paper. When children generalise their feeling state, and think about their emotions, then children can also begin to see how the same event can be experienced in different ways, and this can lead to the development of different meanings and actions.

As discussed previously, cultural-historical theory aligns the child with the notion of social competence, rather than segmenting the child into particular skill sets or elements as part of social competence. In revisiting the idea of ‘the primitives’, or vulnerable children, that was the focus of my first paper, how we shape and reform the institutions of education to accommodate children from a broader range of cultural and social contexts becomes a key consideration. It is the tension between the dominant institution and individual discourses or social situations of development that we need to pull together. Therefore, in my research I propose that *perezhivanie* acts as the enzyme for supporting the social or collective cultural practices to become part of the individual,

where the individual must be conceptualised as being constituted socially. It is in collectively supported contexts that the individual can and does develop social competence.

## **SECTION II**

### **PAPER 1**

Hammer, M (2007) A validation of a measure of social-emotional development and identification of impacts of child abuse and neglect. *Journal of Australian Research in Early Childhood Education*, Vol 11, No 1

## **A validation of a measure of social-emotional development and identification of impacts of child abuse and neglect**

**Marie D Hammer – Monash University**

### ***Abstract***

*This study measures the social and emotional development of three groups of pre-school aged children using the Social Competence Behaviour Evaluation (Preschool Edition) Instrument (SCBE) (LaFreniere & Dumas, 1995). The groups were drawn from preschools catering for children from a middle class area, a working class area and a special facility for child victims of abuse and neglect in a major metropolitan city in Australia. The SCBE is a screening instrument designed for use by teachers in pre-school settings to identify emotional and behavioural signals of children in educational rather than clinical settings. The SCBE yields eight subscale scores and a General Adaptation score. In the present study all scores showed significant differences between children at the two regular preschool groups and those at the special centre. The results and the scale's utility for preschool teachers are discussed in the light of the sample sizes and differing preschool environments and qualitative comments by the researcher-observer.*

### ***Introduction***

Abuse and neglect of children can take many forms and from any perspective it can be seen that the implications go beyond physical injuries. There needs to be consideration of the degree to which abuse and neglect impairs children's developmental progression both in the short and long term. Injuries and deprivations as a result of abuse are the visible aspects of what has been described as 'a more endemic process affecting child development' (Wolfe, 1987, p. 496).

For the majority of teachers in early childhood the understanding of children's social and emotional development is within the area of tacit knowledge even though it is this knowledge which is used to make the assessments of children they are frequently called upon to make. These assessments are used to note individual progress, to assess readiness for school or to detect abuse and neglect of children. It is knowledge which is difficult for many teachers to articulate or define in precise terms even though there are now more and more calls upon them for such assessments. Decisions which are particularly difficult to make, are those relating to the identification of child abuse and/or neglect.

As such preschool teachers need in situations of this sort are reliable and valid means of identifying indicators of child abuse or neglect before behaviours become entrenched to the point where intervention and/or remediation becomes extremely difficult, if not impossible. This paper reports on an assessment whether the Social Competence Behaviour Evaluation Instrument (Preschool Edition) (LaFreniere & Dumas, 1995) can be used by teachers to make assessment of child abuse and neglect. It is a further purpose of the study to determine if the SCBE can be generalised to provide early childhood professionals with a useful tool that assists them in the organisation and analysis of their observations of children's play. By providing an overview of social-

emotional indicators, such a framework can become a defensible basis of recommendations for long term planning of a child's future education.

### *Context of the Study*

The definition of the construct of social competence encompassing affect/emotion, popularity and social behaviour measures, as well as consideration of the notions of attachment history is basic to any assessment of children's behaviour. LaFreniere and Stroufe (1985) drew together several of these elements in their early analysis of peer competence in pre-school. Their work revealed two distinct dimensions of child-peer behaviour. The first of these were characterised by emotional traits of warmth, openness and flexible/positive interpersonal styles which lead to popularity among peers and recognition of social and emotional maturity by teachers. The second dimension is characterised by an effective, assertive interpersonal style that may be positive or negative in affect, that leads to high status among peers and less positive teacher ratings of social-emotional maturity. Underpinning these conclusions was a clear link between mother-infant attachment and peer competence for girls. For boys there were no such clear links.

Early attempts to measure social competence gained impetus from attempts to evaluate the Head Start program in the United States, the original goal of which was to 'enhance children's social competence so that they would be able to perform effectively in school and beyond' (Raver & Zigler, 1991, p. 17). Early efforts proposed a four factor model that included health/physical status, cognitive development, social-emotional factors and, assessments of motivation, curiosity, initiative, persistence and task orientation. Whilst optimistic in its intentions the implementation of such a model is very difficult even as it provides a useful framework in which to make assessments of children's development. It is also the case that the analysis of maladaptive behaviours is seen to provide a better understanding and guidance for intervention strategies and program design. That is, an understanding of the negative can provide direction and focus for the positive.

Attachment theory suggests three domains that may be affected by abuse in early childhood: effectance motivation; relationships with novel adults; and, cognitive maturity. Insecure attachment relationships have been found to predict impairments in a number of stage-specific child competencies. Aber and Allen (1987) believed two constructs affected by abuse are secure readiness to learn and outer directedness. The former is comprised of high effectance motivation, high cognitive maturity and low dependency, a cognitive organisational construct of development, and the latter, is comprised of verbal attention seeking, approval seeking smiles, wariness and imitation. Outer directedness can be interpreted as an orientation to problem solving from external cues rather than the child's own cognitive resources. Crittenden (1989) found abused children are less competent in problem solving and use a variety of distancing mechanisms as part of their language. Similarly Kinard (1980) identified aggressive behaviour and detachment as significant indicators of abuse.

Two studies considered maltreated children's reactions to educational settings. Erikson, Egeland and Pianta (1989) found neglected children displayed the most severe and variable problems in the educational setting being anxious, inattentive, unable to understand concepts and demonstrated both aggressive and withdrawn behaviours. They

rarely expressed positive affect or humour, were unco-operative with teachers and insensitive and unempathic with peers. Children who had been victims of sexual abuse tended to have marked levels of anxiety, were inattentive and unable to comprehend group expectations. Excessive dependency was displayed to teachers with a strong need for approval, high incidence of seeking assistance and physical closeness. Eckenrode, Laird and Doris (1993) considered the academic outcomes for 420 maltreated children. They found significantly lower scores on the Iowa standardised tests of reading and mathematics. Neglected and abused children demonstrated difficulties in social adjustment and were more likely to engage in fights with peers and show indiscriminate compliance or wariness of adults.

### *Study Design*

#### *Participants.*

The sample comprised 48 children (27 boys and 21 girls) aged between 30 months and 62 months. The children were attending three pre-schools catering for children from a middle class area (N = 19), a working class area (N = 20) and a special facility for child victims of abuse and neglect (N = 9) in a major metropolitan city in Australia. The special program was of a therapeutic nature specifically designed as multi-faceted to address the needs of parents and children where there was confirmation of abuse and neglectful parenting.

#### *Instrument*

The Social Competence Behaviour Evaluation (Preschool Edition) (SCBE) (LaFreniere & Dumas, 1995) assesses characteristic patterns of affective expression, social competence and adjustment difficulties in situations with peers and adults. The profile was developed especially for pre-school teachers to identify emotional and behavioural signals in order to describe behavioural tendencies for socialisation and education rather than diagnosis for clinical intervention. Eight dimensions were identified as central to the quality of a child's adaptation: depressive-joyful; anxious-secure; angry-tolerated; isolated-integrated; aggressive-calm; egotistical-prosocial; oppositional-cooperative; dependent-autonomous; and, four summary scales including a general adaptation score. Each basic scale consists of five items describing successful adjustment and five items describing adjustment difficulties. Basic scales 1-3 describe each child's manner of emotional expression, basic scales 4-6 describe interactions with peers and basic scales 7-8 assess teacher-child relations. The 80 items are rated on a six-point scale

The original French version of the scale was standardised on 979 children in Quebec and subsequently in English on 1,263 children in the United States. The internal consistency of each scale was assessed by Cronbach's alpha and all were highly consistent with scores ranging from .79 to .87. Data on test-retest reliability was based on a subsample of 29 subjects selected at random and reevaluated 2 weeks after the initial evaluation. Pearson correlations for the eight scales ranged from .74 to .91 (LaFreniere; Dumas; Capuano & Dubeau 1992)

#### *Procedure.*

Following consent of the auspicing management body of the pre-school services, individual letters seeking informed consent were distributed to all children enrolled in

the three pre-school groups. Signed consent forms were returned to the preschool centre. Of a total population of 60 children, 48 (80%) parents gave permission for their child to be included in the study.

The approach of non-participant observer was adopted by the researcher to ensure consistency of interpretation of the indicators and uniform evaluation of targeted behaviours. The presence of a new adult in the centre was not unfamiliar to the children as all centres continually experienced a range of visitors over the school terms. There was no interaction between the researcher and the children throughout the data collection process.

### **Results**

Scores for each of the eight basic scales and the general adaptation score were analysed in a two factor analysis of variance across two variables, gender and abused. Where significant differences were indicated *t* tests for independent samples compared the abused group with the non-abused. Table 1 shows the mean scores for the eight scales across the three groups; the group designations are as follows – NBK middle class; TAK working class; AKH special facility for child victims of abuse and neglect.

**Table 1: Mean scores for the eight scales**

<b>Basis Scale</b>	<b>Mean - NBK</b>	<b>Mean - TAK</b>	<b>Mean – AKH</b>
<b>Depressive/ Joyful</b>	40.68	38.55	31.55
<b>Anxious/ Secure</b>	39.31	39.8	28.55
<b>Angry/ Tolerant</b>	37.15	33.1	30.55
<b>Isolated/ Integrated</b>	28.1	31.55	18.77
<b>Aggressive/ Calm</b>	35	31	28.88
<b>Egotistical/ Prosocial</b>	29.84	25.4	21.77
<b>Oppositional/ Cooperative</b>	43.26	41.5	38.55
<b>Dependent/ Autonomous</b>	39.89	36.45	29.44
<b>General Adaptation</b>	293.78	277.35	231.22

Note: \* A high score indicates a position closer to the lower pole; a low score indicates a position closer to the upper pole.

The first three scales concerning the manner of each individual child’s emotional expression all indicated that gender contributed little to the variance in each equation but abuse did so to a statistically significant degree. In all three cases the abused group (AKH) scored significantly lower than the non-abused groups

The second group of scores concerning interactions with peers shows similar trends except that the abused group of children scored significantly closer to the negative, and less desirable, pole than the other two groups. Notwithstanding the clear results based on means, the individual scores for Angry-Tolerant were scattered across the three groups, which suggests that giving expression to anger in group situations may not be confined only to those who have suffered abuse.

The lowest individual score on Aggressive-Calm was obtained by a boy in the abused group but the boys in that group had a wide scatter of scores hence no critical value could be defined. This was not so for the girls where a critical value of 31 was established as the point where concern was clearly called for as to how peer interactions were being accomplished.

In the third group of scales, those relating to teacher-child interactions, clear critical values indicating cause for concern could be established for Egotistical-Prosocial and Oppositional-Cooperative items where a score of 31 indicated a critical cutoff point.

The general adaptation score is a sum of the eight scales and the three group means were 293.78, 277.35 and 231.22 respectively where it is speculative to suggest that scores below 231, or the general mean of the abused group, warrant further consideration. This seems especially the case for girls.

### *Discussion*

Scores on all the basic scales and the general adaptation rating of the SCBE (Preschool Edition) demonstrated significant differences between the NBK/ TAK, non abused groups and the AKH, abused group of the sample. As the development of the scoring structure within the test instrument made provisions for socio - economic differences, this was unlikely to have been a significant, confounding variable. However, other variables, such as cultural differences and teacher practices and expectations may have played a confounding role.

The AKH abused sample groups scored at markedly lower levels than the non-abused sample groups in four of the eight basic scales: Anxious - Secure, Angry - Tolerant, Dependant - Autonomous and Isolated - Integrated. In particular the AKH boys group scored well below the 30th percentile on the Isolated - Integrated scale.

The overall General Adaptation scores of the non-abused groups realised a few individual scores that registered within or below the range of scores attained by the AKH, abused sample groups; two girls in the TAK sample and one boy in the NBK sample. It is possible that these individual scores of 'non-abused' children are the result of the effects of the trauma of abuse and neglect. This is consistent with records of substantiated reports of serious child abuse and neglect in 1996, which estimate that these represented 7.5% of the population, although this figure is regarded as conservative and many cases are believed not to be reported (D.H.C.S. Annual Report, 1996).

Thus definitive statistical data are difficult to obtain about levels of child abuse and neglect. Within Australia, each of the States and Territories maintain differently structured registers of recorded cases that make comparisons complex and somewhat unreliable as there is no uniformity in definitions of what constitutes abuse and neglect.

Additionally, statistics recorded relate to reported cases and the number of reports substantiated by the investigations of child protection services and the courts. These records do not address the instances of abuse and neglect that are not reported.

In 1979, Finkelhor published a benchmark study of the levels of child sexual abuse defined as sexual experiences between children and older persons. The study was retrospective in method and relied on reports by adults of their recollections of such experiences during their childhood. However, the openness of definition of 'what is a sexual experience' and the reliance on subjects' memories of the experience suggest that the levels of abuse in the population are very high. Notwithstanding the limitations of the study, Finkelhor's work has been used as a guide for public policy development and has influenced the development of legislation in Australia to improve levels of reporting of abuse to more realistically approximate the levels of abuse determined by Finkelhor's study that is, that 20% of females and 10% of males have experienced some form of abuse (Finkelhor, 1979).

For the purposes of this study the more conservative figure of 7.5% of the child population experience abuse and neglect, was adopted. This level is based on the number of substantiated reports per capita of the pre - school population dealt with by the Child Protection authorities in Victoria in 1996 (Victorian Department of Health & Community Services, 1996).

Measuring of emotional states is only useful if the resultant scores provide a tool that is helpful to those taking the scores, in the case of this research, early childhood teachers and professionals. This study looks at the impacts of child abuse and neglect, and the usefulness of this data stems from its potential capacity to determine a critical value that can indicate the presence of abusive and negligent trauma that has elicited particular affective responses in young children.

For each basic scale, abused children tended to score more negatively than the non-abused children that exhibit a range of emotions that are described as depression, anxiety, anger, isolation, aggression, egotism, opposition to adults and dependence upon adults. The results broaden the range of emotions that are key indicators of abuse. These are identified in the literature as aggression and isolation, albeit that these more generic descriptions could encompass some of the more specific elements detailed in the SCBE (Preschool Edition). For instance the emotional states of anxiety and anger could broadly be described by early childhood teachers as aggression; similarly the emotional states of depression and egotism could be broadly represented as components of isolation. The Dependent/Autonomous scale stands as an additional dimension, not addressed by the literature.

Generally, researchers agree that manifestations of maladaptation of social and emotional development stemming from abuse and neglect are exhibited in behaviours that are either aggressive or withdrawn, fewer relations with peers, engaging in more fights with peers, and compliance and indiscriminate wariness of adults (Kinard, 1980; Crittenden, 1989; Erikson, Egeland & Pianta, 1989; Eckenrode, Laird & Doris, 1993).

Scores on the basic scales for Anxious - Secure; Angry - Tolerant and Aggressive - Calm for boys realise a substantive difference between the non abused and abused groups, as significant variance was achieved in both the analyses of variance and the *t* test. This study's findings must be considered within the limitations of the small sample

size and is consistent with the body of established theory, demonstrating the clear distinctions that had been hypothesised at the outset of this research project.

The Dependent - Autonomous scale demonstrated the clearest delineation between the abused and the non abused samples. This is consistent with the work of Aber and Allen (1987), who cite a 'secure readiness to learn' construct as a disposition that is particularly affected by abuse. This is evidenced by behaviours indicative of low cognitive maturity and high dependency on adults, factors measured by this scale.

Results of the Angry - Tolerant basic scale warrant further discussion in light of anecdotal observations made by the researcher when assessing the TAK sample group. During observations of the TAK group, the researcher noted a general impression of anger and intolerance among the group members which was indicated by frequent episodes of angry shouting, contradiction of peers and indignation. However, this is not supported in the statistical analysis of scores and the individual raw scores of children in the sample. It could be hypothesised that these group interactions may have been acquired within the setting linked to such influences as teacher expectations. The diversity of ethnicity and child rearing practices represented in this group may also be an influencing variable. The scope of this study does not permit consideration of these issues, which would warrant further investigation.

In all sample groups, the scores on the Oppositional - Co-operative scale did not elicit a clear delineation of critical values for the girls' scores. This result could reflect a generalised acceptance of the education establishment rules and conformity to these. The higher level of scores obtained by the AKH groups could be attributed to the children's familiarity with the educational setting and the expectations of teachers, or they could reflect a tendency of abused children to be over compliant with adult expectations as a means of self protection by not enraging adults who may punish them. In this context, the social interactions of co-operation with adults are not necessarily a positive attribute in abused children but rather a result of anxiety and insecurity, also consistent with the concepts of attachment theory as elaborated by Aber and Allen (1989). However, critical values were able to be identified that clearly distinguished abused boys from the non abused boys' samples and included less than 7.5% of the non abused girls sample groups, thus rendering this scale a possible indicator of abuse and neglect.

Delineation of critical values in the Dependent - Autonomous scale were below the 7.5% cut off criterion for the raw score level of 31. This score also represents the lower range of the average scores expected in the norming data of the SCBE(Preschool Edition), and is just above the tenth percentile rank of the Evaluation tool of the measuring instrument. That is, the results score slightly higher than the expected scoring level of 7.5% of the population used to standardise the scores established in the development of the SCBE (Preschool Edition). The Dependent - Autonomous scale yielded the most marked delineation between the abused and non abused sample groups.

A summary of the critical values determined in the study across all the basic scales is outlined in Table 2 below. These are based on the frequency distributions which provide a clear representation of the delineation between scores for the non abused and abused sample groups incorporating the abused sample and no more than 7.5% of the non-abused sample groups.

**Table 2: Scores Indicating Critical Values for Abuse and Neglect**

<b>BASIC SCALE</b>	<b>GIRLS</b>	<b>BOYS</b>
<b>Depressive/ Joyful</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>Anxious/ Secure</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>Angry/ Tolerant</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Isolated/ Integrated</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>Aggressive/ Calm</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>Egotistical/ Prosocial</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Oppositional/ Cooperative</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Dependent/ Autonomous</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>General Adaptation</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>231</b>

Despite the high levels of significant differences between the sample groups, the size of the sample would suggest that conservatism in the interpretation of the scores is warranted. It could be suggested that the two score levels represent a range of results that could alert Early Childhood professionals to undertake further investigation on behalf of those children with scores at this level. Indeed, LaFreniere and Dumas (1996) emphasise that at no time should the SCBE be used as the sole basis for any clinical decisions regarding intervention with the child. They recommend that interpretations based on the Profile checklist should be viewed as hypotheses that require further corroboration from other data sources as well as the exercise of sound professional judgement.

It is important to note that due to the small sample size, while scores at or below those in Table 2 are likely to indicate abuse, an absolute indication of abuse that could be applied to the whole population would require further investigation. This is particularly an issue for the TAK sample group where many children have recently arrived in Australia from countries engaged in warfare. The impacts of trauma therefore may not be limited to the conventional definitions of abuse and neglect which rely on the 'non - accidental' nature of the trauma but may need to be extended to other experiences. Notwithstanding this, the TAK group remained within the parameters of no more than 7.5% of population who have experienced child abuse and neglect

The underlying premise of this study that social and emotional development in pre - school children underpins children's optimal development and is impaired by abuse and neglect is substantiated by the results of the study. The SCBE (Preschool Edition) has provided an effective mechanism to record and articulate children's behaviours as indicators of their social maturity and emotional states.

Final scores in each of the basic scales realise particular descriptors of the consequences of abuse and neglect and demonstrate a framework of the developmental needs of children who have been victims of abuse and neglect. These outcomes represent a

potentially useful tool for early childhood educators to more confidently identify abuse and to develop appropriate curricula to ameliorate the impact of child abuse and neglect.

### *Conclusions*

The data gathered in this study provide a measurable and tangible definition of the effects of child abuse and neglect on children's social competence in the early childhood years. The utilisation of the SCBE (Preschool Edition) has been shown to be effective in the identification of the impacts of child abuse and neglect on the social and emotional development of children in early childhood.

The study described and analysed in detail the results on the eight basic scales and the global General Adaptation scale of the test instrument. Analyses of variance of the results of the eight basic scales realised significant differences at the  $\alpha = 0.001$  degree of probability for group differences.

Examination of the group mean scores identified the impacts of abuse and neglect across all areas of young children's social and emotional development measured by the SCBE (Preschool Edition). *t* tests realised significant results at the 0.01 level.

It is acknowledged that the small sample size limits the generalisability of the findings, however the consistency of the findings of this study with the general population trends and norms identified as part of the standardisation and validity of the SCBE (Preschool Edition) provide some additional credibility to the results. Selection of the sample relied only on the children's enrolment in early childhood education programs, one of which was a designated specialist service for children who had been identified as victims of abuse and neglect. Children in the remaining sample groups who may have been victims of abuse and neglect were not specifically identified. Probabilities of the occurrence of abuse and neglect across the population suggest that some children in the NBK and TAK sample groups were abused and neglected. Individual low scores in each sample group suggest this may have been the case. The presence of other variables beyond abuse and neglect were not investigated, however during the actual observations the researcher noted anecdotally the presence of other factors that could influence social competence such as cultural differences within Westernised education settings and a number of children newly arrived to Australia from various war zones around the world who could be presumed to have experienced trauma of a different kind to child abuse and neglect. These observations warrant further study and additional research.

The results of this study are sufficiently convincing to support the further investigation of this assessment process as there is the potential to utilise the outcomes of the evaluation as a mechanism of objective assessment as evidence in child protection matters generally and possibly before the Children's Court.

This study has identified critical values of score levels at or below which there are grounds for concern and would warrant further investigation on the part of early childhood teachers with a view to appropriate intervention.

The research results indicate that the SCBE (Preschool Edition) is a useful measure that may be implemented by early childhood teachers to observe children's behaviour and to effectively guide interpretation of the behaviour as symptomatic of the trauma children who are victims of child abuse and neglect have experienced warranting further, careful

investigation. The elements of the SCBE (Preschool Edition) also set parameters for the nature of curriculum planning and therapeutic interventions that are focussed on the dimensions of social and emotional development where negative impacts have been observed.

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## **PAPER 2**

Hammer,M. (2007) A Tale of Two Cultures: Comparing Two Countries' Responses to Children's Trauma – *a report to the Yachad Scholarship Foundation of a study tour conducted in Israel (documentation of observations of practice)* – (Report delivered to Yachad Foundation Directors, Melbourne, 2007)

**A Tale of Two Cultures: Comparing Two Countries' Responses to Children's Trauma**  
**L'Histoire de Deux Cultures: Comparant les Response de Deux Pays Concernant Le Trauma des Enfants.**  
**La Historia de Dos Culturas: Comparando las Respuestas de Trauma de Ninos entre dos Paises**

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This paper is a report of the initial findings from a study tour conducted in Israel in February, 2004 as a result of a Yachad Scholarship funded by the National Australia Bank. The focus of the tour was to explore early childhood services designed to support children who have experienced trauma and the issues related to this work. In particular, the role of the early childhood educator was investigated and analyzed.

Abuse and neglect of children can take many forms and from any perspective it can be seen that the implications go beyond physical injuries. There needs to be consideration of the degree to which abuse and neglect impairs children's developmental progression both in the short and long term. Injuries and deprivations as a result of abuse are the visible aspects of what has been described as 'a more endemic process affecting child development' (Wolfe, 1987, p. 496). Trauma provides another perspective to this early work on child abuse and neglect and the sources of trauma in this current context extend beyond the family to the community where war and terrorism is evident. The study of trauma in Israel is a microcosm of the range of sources and effects of traumatic events children are witnessing throughout the world. Between 320,000 and 350,000 children in Israel are defined as at high risk.

The Australian community is not excluded from these events, along with on-going and increasing levels of abuse and neglect children are joining the Australian community from war zone countries and thus have the added trauma of relocation to a new country in a strange social context and some are further traumatized by incarceration upon their arrival in this new country. Similarly, Israel has many new arrivals to the country and issues of establishing family units in a new social context during the current intifada brings extraordinary stresses to young children and their families, if indeed their families are with them, as many refugee children from Russia and Ethiopia are unaccompanied, or have lost family members in the trek to find safe haven.

A case in point is the Gruss Community Centre in Afula. The centre caters for all ages and socioeconomic groups and is located in an impoverished neighbourhood. There are 41,000 in the municipality. 40% are new immigrants, this has doubled in the last 10 years, mainly from Russia, 10% from Ethiopia and South American immigrants are the newest group to arrive in Afula.

Sixty per cent of the population are in need, there is high unemployment, above the national average, they have no skills and there are no vacancies.

The town is close to Jenin and the border, with many nearby Arab villages.

The ripple effects of the 'three circles' of the impact of terror are evident in this community. (see figure 1)

Programs have been established in the elementary and middle schools, a separate room has been set aside with a teacher to provide holistic treatment for trauma from terrorism and family violence. The programs focus on conflict resolution; relaxation and self expression for the children.

A psychologist supports staff, teachers and children as often the trauma is 'too much to include into your soul' there is a need to ventilate and legitimize feelings, many people need to be reassured that it is ok to cry in Israel. The structure and budget for these programs is overseen by the community centre and special equipment has been purchased for each room depending in the ages of the children using the facility, eg. Visual stimulation such as spirals etc for relaxation; soft furnishings and music; sports materials for older children.

The centre provides 5 months Hebrew studies for all new immigrants, part of the National program for new arrivals. This is taught in the context of lifestyle, traditions etc.

Courses for unemployed people both professional and vocational are also offered areas such as computer design, sewing and jewellery making are offered along with technology preparation and job seeking skills and civic studies.

Enrichment courses are available for all community members children – adults. Tutoring is provided for 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade children with needs but not with disability, the needs stem from low self esteem; parents too tired and children needing some caring help. This is provided by teachers and volunteers from the national service and youth community service programs in the schools. One room is set up for learning and one for relaxation.

Within this program smaller projects have been undertaken such as food for the elderly on festivals, preparation of parties/celebrations in aged persons homes, investigation of the Holocaust where participants collected materials, explored their family roots and recorded personal stories from survivors, follow up discussion with a holocaust survivor who was the same age when incarcerated revealed a number of the same feelings of loneliness and fear that are present today. At the conclusion of this project a memorial service was conducted at the community centre.

The program is overseen by a steering committee which reflects the same demographics as the participants. The fundamentals of the service is to be inclusive of the whole community with young children as an integral part of the community and all moving towards a common goal of social competence where individuals develop a positive self image and the skills to negotiate the structures of the society in which they are now living.

Respect is also given to the cultural background that the children and families have brought with them which has lead to the establishment of programs such as the Joint Project for the Ethiopian Community, Children and Parents

This is an enrichment program for parents and their children to prepare the children for school.

However, there are conflicts around expectations of what is 'good enough parenting' and the identification of specific issues in child rearing practice that are considered by Israeli social standards as potentially abusive or neglectful. Staff need to 'nudge' fathers to be involved as well as mothers. The parents have no experience of the educational system and need support so that they can be included in their child's class. Parents are taken through the same learning experiences as the children in a respectful way.

There are major issues of trust with this sector of the community; there are family structural differences and different child rearing practices that must be acknowledged for instance the use of corporal punishment. Parents sit passively if told what not to do need to be shown alternatives to do. Issues are addressed as they arise, e.g. Dental hygiene.

Similar tensions are experienced in Australian children's services, where some child rearing practices are attributed as cultural norms but are deemed by the Australian community as abusive. This raises interesting questions that are addressed in a study by Shor (1999), where comparisons were made between traditional child rearing practices in communities where immigrant families had originated with the practices of those families who had remained. He found that many of the abusive practices were deemed abusive within the original communities and had evolved among the immigrant families as a result of significant stressors on the family endeavoring to resettle. He also noted that such abusive practices are more likely to be tolerated by workers in the new community than would normally be the case.

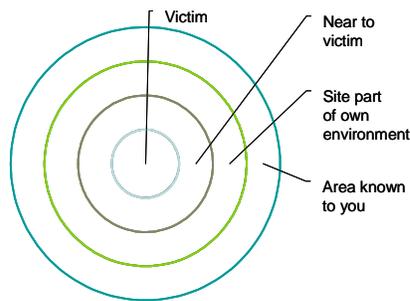
The Gruss Community Centre group is conducted in the local elementary schools to be close to the residential areas (although I met one mother who travelled quite a long distance to attend because she believed it was good for her three children)

The program is staffed by a coordinator, an Ethiopian broker who liaises with the families and a preschool teacher from the education department. The activities utilize low cost materials. There is also a storyteller on occasions to follow up specific issues such as the non explanation from doctors etc

The groups focus on how parents can instruct their children, so while parents are inclined to cluster into little groups this is not encouraged as the parents are required to interact with their children.

The program uses three rooms, one for dramatic play and sensory materials such as water and sand, one for a specific and directed craft activity, (when I visited they were preparing gifts for the forthcoming parents day) and a room for parent discussion forums. Older children also participate as helpers with the children and this is clearly beneficial to them, watching a 14 year old boy help an 18 month old toddler with a smock for water play and demonstrating the features of a spray bottle, both how to operate it and the sensation of having water sprayed on the arm was clearly a delightful experience for both participants. Whilst this is not actively encouraged as parents opt out and send an older sibling rather than attend themselves thus is self defeating as these older children are often parentified. However, there are clear benefits in balancing the involvement of older children in the nurturing of the younger children.

## Levels of Trauma:



**Figure 1**

This diagram provides a visual representation of the ripple effects of terror. The degree of trauma experienced by the individual can vary, the diagram serves to remind us of how far reaching the impacts of an act of terror may be and alerts professionals not to restrict their view of concern to the victim and their immediate family, indeed Israeli welfare professionals report that those in the most remote circle may experience more intense and debilitating trauma than those in the inner circles, although this is highly unusual for very young children.

The exploration of the dimensions of fear is also significant in understanding and ultimately developing appropriate programs for children experiencing these emotions. Rational fear of the sort that can be readily recognized and empathized by outsiders is the result of direct relevance to actual damage, whereas irrational anxiety is not connected to the actual level of threat. The perceptions of early childhood professionals determine the responses to children's fears and can potentially have a damaging effect on children's ultimate capacity to develop coping mechanisms and achieve social competence.

For the majority of Australian teachers in early childhood the understanding of children's social and emotional development is within the area of tacit knowledge even though it is this knowledge which is used to make the assessments of children they are frequently called upon to make. These assessments are used to note individual progress, to assess readiness for school or to detect abuse and neglect of children. It is knowledge which is difficult for many teachers to articulate or define in precise terms even though there are now more and more calls upon them for such assessments. Decisions which are particularly difficult to make, are those relating to the identification of child abuse and/or neglect. (Hammer, 2003)

Early attempts to measure social competence gained impetus from attempts to evaluate the Head Start program in the United States, the original goal of which was to 'enhance children's social competence so that they would be able to perform effectively in school and beyond' (Raver & Zigler, 1991, p. 17). Early efforts proposed a four factor model that included health/physical status, cognitive development, social-emotional factors and, assessments of motivation, curiosity, initiative, persistence and task orientation. Whilst optimistic in its intentions the implementation of such a model is very difficult even as it provides a useful framework in which to make assessments of children's

development. It is also the case that the analysis of maladaptive behaviours is seen to provide a better understanding and guidance for intervention strategies and program design. That is, an understanding of the negative can provide direction and focus for the positive.

The importance of the role of early childhood educators cannot be underestimated and is multi faceted. The Israeli programs demonstrate also a multi dimensional nature to the tasks undertaken and programs devised for young children and their families. Such roles encompass functions on a range of different levels of interactions including advocacy at the macro or wider community level and the provision of therapeutic play experiences at the micro individual programming level with specific children. Perhaps the most significant role for the early childhood educator is the contextualization of children's play which acknowledges the child's previous experiences and accommodates the child's need to play through these experiences to develop understanding and coping mechanisms. This notion of contextualization requires early childhood educators to rethink some of the mantras they apply to their programmes such as 'War Toy Free Zones'. When children have lived through the terror of war zones they need to have opportunity to play through their anxieties. The challenge for early childhood educators then is to provide for this without unduly impacting on the other children in the group attending the service.

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### **PAPER 3**

Fleer, M and Hammer, M. (2014). Repertoires of Cultural Practices for Enacting Play and Learning in a Playgroup, *International Journal of Research in Early Childhood Education* Vol 5 No 1

## **Repertoires of Cultural Practices for Enacting Play and Learning in a Playgroup**

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### **Abstract**

Variations in cultural practices between families and schools have emerged as central to many studies (Rogoff, 2003) and these dynamic variations have been named as *repertoires* of cultural practice (Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003). Emerging from this literature has been a recognition of the dynamic tension between the cultural practices of Western education and the cultural practices of communities who have a different cultural heritage. This tension and its resolution have been captured through the concept of *third space* (Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez, & Turner, 1997). Going beyond a third space theorization, this paper draws upon the cultural-historical concepts of *demands* and *motives* (Hedegaard, 2012) in order to understand the development of new repertoires of practices evident in an Australian playgroup where traditional early childhood practices are used by Indigenous families. Nineteen families were video recorded interacting together at a local playgroup (20h). The findings show how participation structures for learning supported by the families, and the demands they placed upon children's day-to-day interaction, highlight new understandings of playgroup practices which go beyond the dominant Western early childhood education cultural repertoires of practice.

### **Keywords**

Cultural-historical theory, Third Space, Early Childhood, Repertoires of cultural practice

### **Introduction**

Research which has examined participation structures in learning has focused on the participation of children in everyday routines (see Rogoff, et al., 2003). These research studies have identified the dynamic nature of cultural practices within and across learning communities (Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003), such as those found in schools, homes and communities. What is evident in the literature is the variations in cultural practices between families and schools (Rogoff, 2003) and these dynamic variations have been named as *repertoires* of cultural practice (Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003). Central here has been the way in which children are part of, rather than excluded from, all community activities and family events, where participation takes the form of keen attention to ongoing events, and learning by observing and eavesdropping. These studies, particularly those from North and Central America (Paradise & Rogoff 2009; Rogoff, Moore Najafi Dexter Correa-Chavez, & Solis, 2007), have conceptualized these cultural repertoires of practice in the context of education, as learning through *intent community participation* (Rogoff, 2011).

The North and Central American research has also identified that the cultural repertoires observed as part of family interactions change in relation to the number of years of schooling of the mothers. The suggestion here is that the practice of schooling impacts on traditional family practices. This research foregrounds the special cultural relation or dynamic between the *repertoires* of cultural practices of the home and the cultural practice of Western schooling. Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez

and Turner (1997) capture this dynamic through the concept of *third space*. Here third space means not the cultural practice of the school or the cultural practice of the home/community, but rather the zone in which these two cultural practices interact, morph or colonise each other. The research of Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez and Turner (1997) examines how these 'third spaces come into existence in classrooms' and 'what sparks and sustains robust cycles of learning' including examining 'what gets appropriated, created, and rejected by individuals and collectives' (Gutierrez, 2005, p. 10). Drawing on the concept of third space, these studies provide important directions for understanding the cultural relations between homes and schools. However, what is missing from this research is an understanding of how the cultural dynamic begins in early childhood settings where families and children first experience Western schooling.

Going beyond a third space theorization, this paper draws upon the work of Hedegaard (2012), who has examined the relations between the institution of the family and school in the context of societal, institutional and personal motives, values and cultural traditions. Hedegaard's (2012) cultural-historical concepts of demands and motives are used to analyse the development of new repertoires of practice evident in an Australian Indigenous playgroup where traditional early childhood resources and structures were used by Indigenous families for running their playgroup.

As with the North and Central American research, this study found that the families in the playgroup supported the *repertoires* of cultural practices of exhibited simultaneous attention management, non-verbal modeling participation structures supported by ongoing dialogue, with limited question-answer pattern, and an embedded collective orientation which maintained the autonomy of individuals, particularly the youngest children in the group. As was expected, the study also found that families enacted cultural practices within the activity settings they set up that were different to the expected cultural Western early education practices.

It is acknowledged that across and within the broad range of Indigenous communities within Australia that diversity rather than similarity will exist. It has been the intention of this study to capture both diversity and cultural regularities, in order to better understand how families make demands upon their children in playgroups for supporting their children's development in the context of the demands and motives associated with the cultural practice of Western early childhood education. Here we use Hedegaard's (2002) cultural-historical concept of motives. Motive is defined as the personal goals that come to characterize someone's actions. Motives are not biologically determined or inherent in the child. But rather, communities develop or orient children in particular ways, and through these social interactions children develop a motive orientation. We begin this paper with a detailed discussion of demands and motives. This is followed by a brief overview of the study design, and the relevant literature into the cultural *repertoires* of practice in the context of the findings. How the motives of the children and the demands of the cultural *repertoires* of practice support, or otherwise, a range of participation structures for learning in playgroups, was central to the overall analysis of the data.

### **Theoretical Focus**

Hedegaard (2012) put forward a theory of learning and development that features the perspectives of the society, the institution, and the child. She argued that the transition between institutions, such as preschool and homes creates new demands upon children and affords new possibilities for children's development (Hedegaard, 2009). Central to the child's transition from one institution to another, as occurs when children enter into Western education system, is how new demands are successfully resolved. Hedegaard (2012) argues that the 'dialectic between the child's orientation

within an activity setting and the demands from the setting and other persons influence the child's activities within the child's zone of proximal development' (Hedegaard, 2012, p. 127). That is, development occurs when the demands and support within the concrete situation, and demands and actions from the child her/himself, lead to a new motive orientation. In the context of early childhood, we see development when the child's motive for play transitions into a learning motive and becomes the child's new leading activity within the particular activity setting. Here leading activity captures the particular motive orientation of the child (e.g play motive, a learning motive). In the context of playgroups we see resources and expected practices that follow Western beliefs about the nature of play and learning. How children and families deal with the new demands of learning in a playgroup setting determines the possibilities for their children's development. When children's leading activity is play (Vygotsky, 1966), the early childhood curriculum practices create new demands and possibilities for children to develop from play to learning. Hedegaard and Fleer (2013) argue that development occurs 'When children's motive orientation and engagement in different activity settings change qualitatively' so that their leading motive changes (i.e. from play to Learning) (p. 183). Learning is defined as a change in the child's 'relation to another person and activities in specific settings' (Hedegaard & Fleer, 2013, p. 183).

In the context of playgroups where resources and suggested activities follow that of Western constructions of an early childhood curriculum and a particular set of pedagogical practices, families are charged with the responsibility for supporting a particular kind of development and learning. What this means for a range of cultural traditions is not well understood, particularly in the context of Australian playgroups.

In order to understand how the demands of the institution are being met, in the context of the child's motives and competences, the analytical concept of the child's perspective is needed. As previously introduced, motives are not internally developed but are culturally shaped as result of a child's participation in everyday life. Hedegaard (2002) argues that we know very little about how institutional goals become children's personal motives. As children enter an institution, such as a playgroup, often 'the motive that lies behind the school [or Western early childhood education] activity is hidden from the child' (p. 61). The motive a playgroup leader has for the particular activity setting s/he creates and the child participates in, may be very different to the motive the child has for entering into that particular activity setting. The playgroup leaders may create a motivating situation in order to engage the child in the activity setting, hoping that through the child's participation the child will appropriate learning or a play motive. Hedegaard (2002) argues that "Already appropriated motives develop and change in connection with the developments and changes in the child's awareness and cognitive capacity, as well as with the introduction of new activities" (p. 64). Significant here is being aware of the motives the child brings to the activity setting. That is, play may be the dominating motive when children begin playgroup. For the playgroup leader to support the transition from a play to a learning motive as part of the child's development, s/he must not only be aware of the child's actual motive, but must keep in mind the ideal motive that 'should develop through the school [playgroup] activity' (Hedegaard, 2002, p. 66). The ideal motive and how this is enacted by the playgroup leader is shaped by the cultural practices of the educator and the expectations of society for what should occur within the institution of the playgroup. Hedegaard's (2012) model of societal, institutional and personal values, motives and demands, also foregrounds the possibility of different cultural values shaping institutional practices. How these different cultural values and practices are realized in practice in playgroups has yet to be researched.

### Study Design

We know very little about how institutional goals associated with Western education in Australia become families' personal motives for learning in playgroups. Similarly, the demands these goals place upon families in playgroups run by Indigenous families is also not well understood. This study sought to examine the organization of children's participation within everyday playgroup routines in one Indigenous community within rural Victoria.

#### *Community and Family Background:*

The Indigenous community is located within a Western rural region of Victoria. All the children attending the playgroup are from the same Indigenous group. The playgroup leaders are also from the same Indigenous community. The playgroup ran each day within a purpose built preschool building. Only the playgroup used the building. The community expressed interest to the researchers about undertaking a study of their playgroup.

#### *Procedure:*

All families who attend the particular community playgroup were invited to participate in this study. Families were informed about the project through the playgroup leaders and through a barbecue lunch where the researchers met the families.

Two research assistants filmed family interaction in the centre from the beginning of the playgroup session until it concluded (approximately 2.5-3 hours) over a period of five visits. Video recording sessions took place once per week over a period of five weeks. When possible, session set up time, where the playgroup leaders' children were already in attendance, were also recorded.

Video recordings of participating families were organised so that one camera tended to focus on the babies and toddlers and the other camera followed the preschool children. In most cases the two cameras were able to capture all the adult and child interactions occurring within the centre over the session times.

Table 1: Playgroup routine

10.30	Session set up time
11.00	Children and families arrive.
11.00-11.45	Free play in the centre. Table activities (when the full group is in attendance, 3 tables are set up; when only a small number are in attendance, one double table is set up).
11.45	Families pack up and clear and clean tables; lunch is prepared. Story is read to the children.
12.00 – 12.30	Lunch time at the tables.
12.30	Lunch is cleared and tables are cleaned, children and families go outside.
12.30-1.30	Outside play.

*Interpretations*

<b>Cultural-historical concepts</b>	<b>Activities</b>
Motives and demands	<i>Social relations:</i> Mother and father/teacher/pedagogues Siblings Friends/Visitor Conflicts/Problems Parents response to demands Children's response to demands

Analysis focused on *identifying regularities* in the participation structures for learning in Indigenous families, particularly those dimensions identified in previous research in other cultural communities in line with previous research (see Rogoff, et al., 1993). All video data were downloaded to a computer and two files were created. One data file was kept intact, and interpretations were generated from this material using the following categories, derived from Hedegaard (2010) as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Motives and Demands

<b>Cultural-historical concepts</b>	<b>Activities</b>
Motives and demands	<b>Social relations:</b> <b>Mother and father/teacher/pedagogues</b> <b>Siblings</b> <b>Friends/Visitor</b> <b>Conflicts/Problems</b> <b>Parents response to demands</b> <b>Children's response to demands</b>

The second data file was broken up into data clips of activities (Hedegaard & Fler, 2010). The activities that were generated into clips commenced and concluded around a particular theme, such as, being at the water trolley; being in the sandpit; eating lunch; story reading; playing with a toy/equipment, etc. The activities were based on either the planned routine organised by the playgroup leaders, or what the families and children generated from the available resources and spaces within the playgroup centre. These clips within the second data file were linked directly to the interpretations already made (see Table 2).

A further interpretation of these clips were then undertaken using the categories, derived directly from Rogoff et al. (1993) and shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Cultural repertoires for participation

<b>Cultural repertoires for participation</b>	<b>Interaction patterns</b>
Simultaneous or successive interactions:	child attends simultaneously child attends alternately child appears unaware of events caregiver attends simultaneously caregiver attends alternately caregiver appears unaware of events engagement embedded in group
Verbal and non-verbal communication	caregiver orients the child verbally caregiver orients the child non-verbally caregiver simplifies by adjustment of object or child's hands caregiver simplifies by gesture caregiver simplifies by gaze, touch, posture, or timing cues child seeks assistance verbally child seeks assistance with gestures child seeks assistance with gaze, touch, posture, or timing cues child seeks clarification with gaze
Explanation and demonstration	Extending to other situations Demonstration before child participates Demonstrations during child participation Directing attention to process Turning task over to child
Language	child vocabulary lessons child vocabulary lessons caregiver uses baby talk

Interactions	caregiver mock excitement caregiver poised ready to help caregiver overrules child caregiver acts as playmate adult converses with child as a peer child converses with adult as a peer caregiver praise
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*Reliability*

As Hedegaard (2010) states ‘In the classical experimental tradition which is based on the natural science research tradition, researchers obtain reliability and achieve a truthful description independent of the describer, through the elimination of the researcher’s influence by specifically using devices which will not influence participants’ view on the phenomena being studied’ (p. 56). In contrast, cultural-historical theory considers reliability of the data as being dependent upon capturing both the conditions and how the child participates in the activities. These conditions and the child’s participation are gauged through checking the role the researcher is taking. That is, the researcher is a member of the group, being observed by the children and the adults. Although the researcher is conceptualised and positioned as a ‘researcher in that context’ they are still a partner in the activities. In this study, the research assistants were focused on capturing the everyday interactions of children and families, and through this they were in close proximity, being called upon for assistance, or being used as an audience for particular child performances on the equipment. Other times they were simply ignored. However, their presence was keenly observed, and this was coded for in the interpretations. Although the researchers did not solicit interactions, they did maintain a relationship with the children and the families as is expected in many Indigenous communities (see Flear & Williams-Kennedy, 2002). However, they were always positioned as researchers, and in the analysis of the video data it is possible to distinguish their motives and intentions in the research context.

*Validity*

Hedegaard (2010) has argued that ‘Validity is not the operationalisation of the child’s reactions in relation to different inputs, as is common in classic experimental designs. Rather, the focus of a dialectical-interactive approach is the practices, activity settings and activities.’ (p. 55). How children participate in activities and their relation to the practice traditions in the playgroup and in the family culture becomes the focus of attention in cultural-historical research. For instance, ‘in this type of research the validity is connected to how well the researcher can explicate the historical tradition of the practice and the preconditions that are anchored in the values that integrate and specify different perspectives’ (Hedegaard, 2010, p. 56). Having categories which explicitly feature activities, motives, relations to particular participants, including the researcher, become important dimensions of ensuring that the interpretations and coding are valid. In dialectical research, all dimensions of the coding are relational. It is not possible to understand the participation structures for learning if the activity is not foregrounded, or the motives, interest and values are not considered as the child enters the activity. In this study, the unit of analysis was the activity

where the relations between the motives, goals, interests of the interacting participants was always coded, ensuring that validity was optimised.

### Findings and discussion

The dynamic tension between the cultural practices of Western education and the cultural practices within the Indigenous community were highlighted in this study. The findings present different cultural regularities for how learning was framed for the Indigenous children. These cultural structures for participation in learning were particularly evident in the context of a traditional Western early childhood education centre where particular interactional practices would be expected. For instance, one of the consistent practices of the adults for orienting children to an activity was to sit down at the table and simply begin the activity. This was augmented with a verbal invitation to the children to 'Make something for mum' or a statement such as 'You want to play ball' (no inflection at the end of the sentence).

Adults sit at the collage table, and say "Come on Bubba. Make mum a robot".  
The preschooler immediately goes over to the table. (GP V1T1CL)

In each of the playgroup sessions observed, the adults continued to work together with the children constructing things or undertaking tasks. The adults were physically active and would participate in all the activities. In the context of the adults performing the task, the adults would show the children how to use equipment, such as a stapler or glue brush, or show them techniques for joining, such as how to glue patty pans or match sticks to a box. The demands made on the children for participating in the full performance of the task, created the social conditions for engaging in craft activities as a valued form of activity for adults and children, as is shown below when the adults also participate in and demonstrate how to walk on a balancing beam:

The adult has put out a series of balancing beams, forming a long line of approximately 10m. She walks towards the beams and says "Can you balance Janalie?" Janalie responds by saying "No". The carer says "You can't. I am going to see if I can. Do you think I can balance and swing this (hoop) at the same time?". She looks to all those around, including the adults. She then balances and says "That's hard". Janalie becomes engaged and says "Can you change it over for me?". Janalie and the adult change the balancing beam into a U shape, and continue to balance on the beam. Later the adult changes the shape again and invites one of the other preschool children to balance with her. (GP V1T3CL)

The amount of verbal communication that accompanied the modeling actions varied across adults. Some adults tended to rely more on non-verbal communication, as was evident in the interactions between a child and his mum when at the play dough table:

The mother suggests that they make a snake with forked teeth. This is explained visually with the fingers held close to the face, simulating a fierce snake tongue, the child responds by making the exact same gesture and hissing sound. Later a non-Indigenous adult early childhood advisor to the centre is told that they are making snakes and he asks if they can make a snake as long as or longer than the one

hanging from the ceiling. The child looks at the 10m snake and smiles in disbelief.  
(GP V2T1CL)

Keen observation of the adults by the children is expected, generating different kinds of demands upon children than when just listening to adults speak. Support for paying keen attention was noted through the common feature of family interactional pattern related to tapping fingers to orient children to points of interest. Tapping was often accompanied with a brief statement, such as "Mummy will show you". This has also been noted in research by Rogoff et al. (1993) who showed San Pedro caregivers were twice as likely to direct children's attention to critical aspects of the process than Salt Lake City caregivers. However, some adults also provided a great deal of verbal communication with their physical demonstrations, as the following transcript shows.

A group of children are seated at the collage table with an adult. The adult has just invited a new arrival (child) to sit down and make a robot from the boxes and collage materials. The child does not speak, but the adult provides a series of statements as she works together with the child gluing materials on to a box:  
Would you like to stick them on there? Where the glue is.

They are the same colour as your jumper.

Good boy. Beautiful. That's it, stick on there. Good boy.

Beautiful. Good boy. Muscles.

There you are. Eyes.

Nose. What can we use for his nose? (looks over the table)

Through there. Hold him.

There you go. Now stick it there.

There we go.

What do you think we can use for a mouth?

What about an icy pole stick?

You stick it on where you think his mouth should go.

Around there.

Good boy... (V1 C1T1CL)

For the participants of this study, talk was primarily used in the service of engaging in an activity rather than as a substitute for involvement. This is consistent with earlier research undertaken in Indigenous communities. For example, de Haan (1999) in her study found that observation is viewed not in isolation, or as a means for learning, but rather 'as something that is related to *being apart* of the activity, *being involved* in it, *experiencing* it and to *developing the will and capacity to become involved* in the activity in more direct ways, that is, while taking up responsibilities or while exploring in different, more substantial ways' (de Haan, 1999, p. 98). In this context 'instructional talk' is a part of normal work talk, rather than as something sitting outside of work activity, and therefore 'individual children are not directed differently, nor are they treated differently from adults' (de Haan, 1999, p. 105).

The findings of this study are also consistent with research by Mejia-Arauz et al. (2005) who showed that US Mexican heritage children from families with basic maternal schooling, were more likely to observe demonstrations without requesting additional directions when involved in craft activities of creating an origami frog. In this study, variations in verbal and non-verbal communication were also noted across the children, with a great deal of non-verbal communication evident. For instance, the following observation was commonly noted:

The playgroup centre has several large plastic vehicles which were used by the children throughout the entire indoor area. The space available for driving vehicles was not large, and had many obstacles, such as tables, baby play equipment on the floor, and walking/crawling babies and toddlers.

Thomas drives his car across the room and passes by the baby, who looks towards him and leans his arm gesturing to him. Thomas shakes his head giving a 'no' response, which is accepted by the baby. No words are spoken. (GP V2T2CL)

Non-verbal language was used extensively between children as a form of simultaneous attention management as is illustrated through the following example. In this observation two drivers are moving back and forth over the carpet area, the children regularly scan as they drive, and move their vehicles carefully around the obstacles on the floor or in the room. Their interactions with the babies are sensitive, always stopping and checking to see if they are touching or gesturing that they wish to participate.

Thomas stops when the 13 month old baby toddles near his car, and interacts non-verbally with the baby to determine her intentions.

Baby stands near Thomas, who is sitting in his toy car. The baby has signaled with her arm that she is interested in joining Thomas inside the car. He opens the door and moves his body over slightly. The baby looks in (and appears to believe there is not enough room for her) and then moves back, stumbles, and the mother says softly and kindly "Be careful of the little girl". Thomas looks to the mother and back to the baby. Once the baby looks away and becomes engaged in something else, Thomas closes the door and drives off. (GP V1T2GQ: 22)

The children's motive for play in the context of keen non-verbal attention to others, places great demands upon the children to thoughtfully move about the playgroup centre so as not to collide with the infants and toddlers. The mixed age context of playgroups places great demand upon the older children who are expected by their families to attend to non-verbal communication when interacting with the younger children. This finding is in line with research by Chavajay and Rogoff (2002) where the children's use of non-verbal language is central for successfully engaging in multidimensional ways during simultaneous attention interactions.

In contrast with studies that have focused on everyday situations where the intention is not necessarily for instruction (see Rogoff, 2003), this study took place in an institution designed specifically for learning but within a Western designed centre. However, the findings actually parallel the outcomes of studies in everyday situation for guided participation in Indigenous communities. What was intriguing about the findings of this study, was that even in the centre

where learning tasks had been set up at the tables, the adults predominantly displayed cultural regularities unlike those of formal preschooling. That is, the adults introduced the learning experiences to the children by simply sitting down and beginning work themselves on a project or they would invite participation by suggesting a project to a child. The adults continued to work with children, helping each child complete the project or would work alongside of children on a project of their own (like parallel work), such as making name cards for the children. This finding is consistent with research undertaken in many Indigenous communities in Australia where groups of people, including children, participate together to perform or complete a project. For instance, Fler (2006), Fler and Williams-Kennedy (2002) and Williams-Kennedy (2001) have shown that valued cultural knowledge included a focus on 'observational learning' rather than reliance on talk. This was particularly pronounced in communities where children participated in ongoing cultural activities, such as learning the 'crow dance'. Demonstration within the context of mature adult performance was important. Children joined in and performed aspects of the dance, whilst adults monitored their performance, stepping in occasionally and demonstrating particular steps, but only within the context of the full dance (see Fler & Williams-Kennedy, 2002).

In the present study, the greatest variation in verbal communication was noted across the families when working together on a task. For some, the non-verbal communication through modeling to children what to do was supported by ongoing dialogue. However, the interactions were more directive, and featured less question-answer interaction. The question-and-answer genre so prevalent in schools today, has been problematised in previous research. In some studies, questioning was deemed to represent a 'questioning of authority'. To ask a question, meant you were showing disrespect. The changing nature of participation structures for learning were also noted by Fler and Williams-Kennedy (2002). In addition, it has been shown that some families specifically teach their children to 'ask questions' so that they can succeed at school. For instance, 'you have to ask questions and you have to know the questions to ask' in order to engage effectively in Western schooling (Fler & Williams-Kennedy, 2002).

In a number of Australian studies of Indigenous cultural practices, researchers have noted the sense of community that is evident within a group of children who are interacting. At the same time, these researchers have also noted the strong sense of autonomy displayed by children, particularly young children. In this study, it was evident that there was a dialectical relationship between individual autonomy and an embedded collective orientation. Older children were responsive and respectful towards younger siblings and younger children. They looked out for each other, and they actively nurtured younger siblings and other younger children. In the centre, many of the older girls and boys actively helped the younger babies, even though no one had asked them to do this. The active caring was expanded also to modeling acceptable behaviour (i.e. kissing not hitting), and staying physically close if a younger baby required protection or help. Similarly, the older children also displayed behaviours similar to the adults, where they put out of sight or out of reach objects that needed to be looked after. However, if a baby was insistent, they did not persist, but let the younger child have what they wanted. This childrearing practice was also noted amongst all of the adults in the study, who extended this practice by trying again later to encourage the child to comply with the adult's wishes. This cultural regularity appeared to support a strong sense of collective community, whilst at the same time also respecting individual autonomy. However, this autonomy was framed within a strong sense of social responsibility to the group, and particularly to younger children. Younger children were given more freedom and discretion, and older children supported the adults with the childrearing of younger children. In previous research by Fler and Williams-Kennedy (2002), the importance of the interdependence of children

with each other and other members of the community was strongly foregrounded. For instance, homework was viewed as the responsibility of the whole family, not just the child who had been assigned the work (Fleer & Williams-Kennedy, 2002). Each member of the family took responsibility for those aspects of the homework that they were deemed proficient in, such as writing or drawing.

When taken together, these important cultural repertoires for learning as valued forms of cultural practice were visible within the playgroup located in an institutional context of a Western early childhood centre where different ways of interacting would usually be expected (e.g. question-answer genre; observing children work at the tables rather than children observing adults; successive rather than simultaneous attention management). The study drew upon the cultural-historical concepts of demands and motives (Hedegaard, 2012) in order to better understand the repertoires of practices evident in the playgroup where traditional early childhood resources were used by the Indigenous families.

### Conclusion

Through a systematic study of Indigenous Australian children and their families it was possible to examine the participation structures organised for learning within one particular community in Australia where the demands and motives of expected interactions were made visible. As noted by Fanshawe (1999), 'much of what has been written about appropriate learning environments for Aboriginal children and other minority groups tend to be rather general' (p. 44). This study gives a more detailed account of how learning is organised by some Indigenous families. The findings have the potential to help educators re-think Western pedagogical practices which have traditionally dominated their work. Fanshawe (1999) suggests in his review of the literature into effective teaching of Indigenous students, that much of the evidence available in Australia has been built on 'informed opinions, experience, or extrapolation from North American findings rather than empirical investigations conducted in Australia' (p. 45). Knowing more about the range of participation structures and the demands these place upon children during learning activities has the potential to provide new direction for early childhood education in acknowledging and building upon the existing cultural repertoires of practice associated with learning.

Early childhood education is a cultural practice, but what dominates is only one participation structure for framing learning (see Boulton-Lewis, Marton, Lewis, & Wilss, 2000). This study has identified patterns and variations rather than to make generalisations across populations. What is needed for Australian early childhood education is a broader perspective of pedagogical practices that goes beyond Western cultural repertoires of practice. The study outcomes add to this important and under researched area where the demands placed upon children in their day-to-day interaction, highlight new understandings of cultural practices within the activity setting of playgroups.

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## **PAPER 4**

**Emotions in imaginative situations: The valued place of fairytales for supporting emotion regulation** (paper published in MCA, 2013)

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## Emotions in Imaginative Situations: The Valued Place of Fairytales for Supporting Emotion Regulation

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Fairytales represent a long-standing cultural practice used by early childhood teachers for supporting children's social and emotional development. Yet contemporary practices see governments demanding a more academic curriculum. In drawing upon cultural-historical research, we theorise how fairytales help children to *collectively* develop *emotion regulation*, where the unity of emotions and cognition are foregrounded during the telling, retelling, and role-playing of fairytales, allowing for a dynamic interplay between interpsychological and intrapsychological functioning. We suggest that fairytales have a valuable place within early childhood programs because they introduce emotionally charged imaginative situations which we believe support children's emotion regulation in group care situations.

### INTRODUCTION

There has been increased growth in the numbers of children who attend preschool centres in many European heritage communities (OECD, 2006), matched with a push for greater cognitive outcomes for children (e.g., literacy and numeracy) who attend these programs (Einarsdottir & Wagner, 2006; Heckman & Masterov, 2007). Arguments centre on the predictive value of early cognitive competence for later school and lifelong achievement (Belfield, Nores, Barnett, & Schweinhart, 2005; Schweinhart & Weikart, 1997; Sylva, Mehuish, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford, & Taggart, 2010), with “public resources devoted to fostering school readiness” in relation to “children's thinking, reasoning, and number skills” (Thompson & Raikes, 2007, p. 13). But most kindergarten teachers seek to develop the “whole child,” not just the “thinking child” within group care and education settings (Gormley, Phillips, Newmark, Welti, & Adelstein, 2011).

Long-standing practices in educational programming for young children's development in Western communities have primarily been framed from an individualistic and maturational perspective (Fleer, 2010), which have traditionally reduced child development into domains, such

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as cognitive, social, emotional, and physical (e.g., Elliott, 2010), despite the fact that the day-to-day practices in centres problematise this reductionist approach (Government of South Australia, 2008). Vygotsky (1925/1971) used a metaphor to argue for not focusing on parts but rather the whole dynamic system of development when he said that a biologist “can compose an organic substance into its chemical components but is unable to reproduce the whole from its parts” (p. 205). Separating out development into domains, alongside the “schoolification” of kindergartens, creates a context in which it is possible for one domain to dominate over others, as has already been witnessed in school readiness debates in the United States (see Thompson & Raikes, 2007). We believe emotional development could potentially become an educational casualty, as greater literacy and numeracy outcomes are called for. Yet as Denham, Bassett, and Zinsser (2012) pointed out, “Young children’s emotional competence—regulation of emotional expressiveness and experience when necessary, and knowledge of their own and other’s emotions—is crucial for social and academic (i.e. school) success” (p. 1). For children to work and play collaboratively within group settings, a level of emotion regulation is needed. Understanding how others are feeling also supports a harmonious kindergarten environment, because children can more effectively work together. “Schoolification” tends to focus attention on the cognitive or intellectual domains, leaving affect to one side. To theorise the relations between affect and intellect, as put forward by Vygotsky (1934/1987), but within contemporary educational contexts, will give early childhood teachers greater insight into how to work within the growing “schoolification” of kindergarten programs evident in some countries.

Vygotsky (1934/1986) draws our attention to the interrelationship between thought and language and other aspects of mind. Although not widely acknowledged, Vygotsky also drew our attention to the search for the relations between intellect and affect (p. 10). He suggested that their “separation as subjects of study is a major weakness of traditional psychology” (p. 10; as cited in Roth, 2008, p. 2). Not much has changed since Vygotsky first put forward this line of enquiry. The schoolification of kindergarten continues to isolate rather than bring together affect and intellect. As Vygotsky (1934/1986) suggested, “Every idea contains a transmuted affective attitude toward the bit of reality to which it refers” (p. 10; as cited in Roth, 2008, p. 2). Schoolification either ignores or discounts the role of children’s emotional relations to academic concepts. As Roth (2008) so eloquently argued, “Consciousness in activity is participative thinking, which is inherently shaped by current emotional states and oriented toward higher emotional valence, both at the *collective level* [emphasis added] (motive and society) and at the individual level (goal)” (p. 6). Kindergartens function as collectives. The focus of our article is on the *collective* rather than the *individual* relations between affect and intellect because we are interested in how group settings can support emotion regulation. In the schoolification argument, policy writers and governments have lost sight of the fact that academic competence must have social meaning and be embedded within the overarching goals of being able to get along with others as a global outcome of education. It is ironic that calls for greater cognitive outcomes are called for, even though education goals generally seek to produce participative and valued members of communities, where individuals not only fit into but contribute to the development of society.

In this article we draw upon cultural-historical theory to examine the relations between affect and intellect within early childhood group settings. Specifically we seek to theorise the place of fairytales in educational programs because we believe they offer a *cultural*

*device for emotion regulation* in unity with conceptual development. We discuss how fairytales (El'koninova, 2001) can *collectively* develop *emotion regulation*, where emotions can *energize planned educational activities*, act as an *evaluative function*, and allow for a *reflection of the social and material world* of children. Although it is well understood that other imaginative situations, such as children's play (Vygotsky, 1933/1966) or play therapy (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2010), can support emotion regulation, in this article we focus on how fairytales can act as a useful cultural device for early childhood teachers who work in group care situations.

Emotional competence has traditionally reflected a collection of tools or skills that include academic competence, emotion regulations, self-esteem, social interaction or prosocial behaviour, cooperation (Amato, 1987), where earlier emotions, such as happiness, sadness, and anger develop to include shame, empathy, and culturally located concepts, such as interdependence, dependence, autonomy, and self-control (Choi, Han, & Kim, 2007). Emotional competence as conceptualized from a cultural-historical perspective examines the relations between social context as cultural practice and an individual's emotional development. However, most research within the early childhood period has focused on an individual construction of emotional development or resilience, mostly within family contexts. As noted by Denham et al. (2012), "next to nothing [has been] published about how *early childhood educators* promote such emotional competence" (p. 2). In this article we specifically focus on emotion regulation, drawing upon Vygotsky's theorization of inter- and intrapsychological functioning. We explore the relations between emotions (Vygotsky, 1925/1971, 1933/1999), cognition (Vygotsky, 1934/1987), and imagination (Vygotsky, 1933/1966, 1930/2004) to better understand emotion regulation in group care and early childhood education settings—but specifically we seek to understand emotion regulation. These settings are cultural constructions that artificially bring together children with adults for the purposes of care and education. We believe the collective communities that form offer a dynamic social situation for children's development (Bozhovich, 2009; Vygotsky, 1934/1998) that is different to nuclear family contexts, and as such, plays an important role in a child's development of emotion regulation (Ojanen & Little, 2010). Here we follow the definition of Holodynski (2009) where

emotion regulation is the ability to modify emotions in terms of their quality, intensity, frequency, course, and expression. In this case, it is not actions that are being regulated by emotions, but the individual (or another person) is performing an action with the goal of modifying the emotion. (p. 145)

Here we see that emotions regulate actions and actions regulate emotions (Holodynski, 2009, p. 146).

In this theoretical article it is argued that the situations that children meet in collective environments such as kindergarten and child care centres create multiple possibilities for children's self-awareness (Bozhovich, 2009; Kravtsova, 2006, 2008) where emotion regulation may be experienced differently than in the home (Cole, Dennis, Smith-Simon, & Cohen, 2009; Denham et al., 2012; Gabhainn & Sixsmith, 2005). We also believe that fairytales offer a way of making visible the unity of affect and intellect, which post-Vygotskians suggest still require more theorization (Gonzalez Rey, 1999, 2009, 2011, 2012) before it can be operationalised in practice within kindergartens in those countries where intellect and affect are being pulled apart (Warren,

Domitrovich, & Greenberg, 2011). Previous cultural-historical research undertaken in Russia (i.e., Zaporozhets, 1986/2002) points us in this direction. In this article we do not examine the cultural-historical literature on the place of children's literature, television, DVDs, or Internet games, even though we recognize that these could be a fruitful line of enquiry (e.g., Baumer & Radliff, 2010; Elias & Berk, 2002; Nicolopoulou, Barbosa de Sa, Ilgaz, & Brockmeyer, 2010). However, it is beyond the scope of this article to examine all mediums pertinent to young children in relation to kindergarten practice. We do note that these and many other programs and storybooks used in kindergartens act in a similar way to fairytales—that is, they create an imaginary situation that children experience and often expand in their play. But we believe that fairytales quite explicitly introduce an imaginary situation that is unlikely to be personally experienced by young children in their real lives (i.e., children are unlikely to ever meet a wolf wandering around their community). But what is important here is that introducing fairytales to children *provides an imaginary and predictable genre* that is *emotionally charged* and *contained*, allowing the teacher to use an emotionally imaginative situation for helping children to become aware of their emotions and feeling state when engaged in the storytelling and reenactment of fairytales, potentially leading to the development of children's self-regulation of emotions. We believe fairytales offer an engaging pedagogical approach for helping early childhood teachers who work with large groups of children, to more effectively develop young children's emotion regulation. In these care settings, teachers must quickly and continuously help children work and play with each other if the learning environments are to be productive and supportive of children's development.

Although not the focus of this article, it is acknowledged that fairytales are found outside of kindergartens and that fairytales seem to have become more prevalent in the community in recent years, appearing to be popularized in everyday life by electronic media and merchandising. Classical tales are presented through children's movies as well as adapted versions being shown on televisions, and even the theatre. Originally fairytales were expressed orally. However, over time the same plots have been presented through multiple channels, such as oral plus print, and more recently as oral, print, large screen, small screen, and even microscreens. For instance, fairytales are shown on handheld tablets, drawing on the plot or just the characters to support the games. As a result of the multiple channels available to children today, we see that there are many opportunities for the child to be immersed in fairytale images, stories, and other structural elements, where references to fairytale are made through motifs on T-shirts, figurines, and branding on products. Fairytale images even appear on lunchboxes, snack food, drink containers, and pencils as a form of advertising to attract children to particular products—suggesting that traditional tales still form part of children's lives outside of kindergartens.

This article is organised to begin with a brief overview of a cultural-historical reading of emotion regulation, followed by a more expansive discussion of the place of fairytales in the development of children's emotion regulation, concluding with both practical and theoretical points for the use of fairytales as a cultural device in early childhood educational programs. The latter seeks to respond positively to the challenge put forward by Denham et al. (2012) when they stated, "What the field needs is coordinated efforts to move from understanding *parental* socialization of emotion to *teachers'* contributions, [and through this] to move toward a theory of action that could inform early childhood" (p. 2) education more generally, and provide the theoretical arguments needed for the unity of emotions, cognition, and imagination within the early childhood curriculum.

## A CULTURAL-HISTORICAL READING OF EMOTION REGULATION

To establish the usefulness of fairytales as a cultural device for contemporary educational programs, we begin in this section by discussing the relations between emotions and feelings and the *consciousness of emotions* as a dynamic movement between interpsychological and intrapsychological functioning.

The legacy of Vygotsky's nonclassical psychology has paved the way for the conceptualization of emotion development as a dialectic between emotions and feelings. Vygotsky (1933/1999) stated that "to study the order and connection of affects is the principal task of scientific psychology because it is not in emotions taken in an isolated form, but in connections combining emotions with more complex psychological systems" (p. 244) that we gain insights into a dynamic system of concepts in which emotions are given meaning.

Like all other mental functions, emotions do not remain in the connection in which they are given initially by virtue of the biological organization of the mind. In the process of social life, feelings develop and former connections disintegrate; emotions appear in new relations with other elements of mental life, new systems develop, new alloys of mental functions and unities of a higher order appear within which special patterns, interdependencies, special forms of connection and movement are dominant. (Vygotsky, 1925/1971, p. 244)

How feelings develop and emotions are given social meaning is particularly important in group settings, such as kindergartens where specific cultural devices (e.g., fairytales, storytelling, dramatisation) are employed.

The directions put forward by Vygotsky (1925/1971, 1933/1999) and developed further by Zaporozhets (1986/2002) can be seen in expansive research and theorization of contemporary cultural-historical scholars focused on emotions, such as Gonzalez Rey (2009, 2011); Holodynski (2009); Sheffield Morris, Silk, Steinberg, Myers and Robinson (2007), and others. Of interest to our theoretical argument is Holodynski's (2009) use of Vygotsky's (1931/1997) conception of inter- and intrapsychological functioning as related to the emotional development of young children, because this theorization focuses on how emotions are given social meaning. In his research, Holodynski (2009) showed the dynamics of emotional development of young children as they come to self-regulate their emotions. Important in their research and theorization is how self-regulation becomes a conscious state or form of emotional awareness that arises within social practices programmed in kindergartens. We are inspired by Holodynski's (2009) position because it is a dynamic theory of emotional development, which we believe will allow researchers interested in early childhood education to look at children's development and learning in new ways. A cultural-historical perspective on emotion regulation as part of a broader reconceptualisation of emotional development in the early years presents a different approach for early childhood professionals to consider. For example, curricula in New Zealand and Australia have linked emotional development to children's "dispositions" (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009). "Dispositions" is a term that has gained momentum in recent years. We believe this term is limiting and positions emotion regulation as being located primarily within the individual, inadvertently reinforcing a view of emotions as being about "controlling desires and raw emotions" of the individual rather than as a culturally developed phenomenon (Vygotsky, 1933/1999).

Holodynski (2009), in using Vygotsky's (1934/1987) concept of interpersonal and intrapersonal functioning to show how development occurs in emotion regulation, gives new insights into

this important psychological area of research. It is this theorization that we believe is important for conceptualising emotion development, and it is this view that we think has most cogency for the work of kindergarten teachers. The dialectical concept of inter- and intrapsychological functioning helps explain the consciousness of emotions that we see occurring within social settings and therefore is a particularly useful concept in research within group settings. Consequently, we believe that this theorisation has the potential to more explicitly work with cognitive and emotion development within the framework of children's play (i.e., imaginary situations) where fairytales can act as a cultural device for the unification of affect and intellect (Vygotsky, 1934/1987, 1933/1999).

This cultural-historical perspective must be understood within the full conceptualization of the field of research, as offered by Holodynski and Friedlmeier (2006). They have conceptualized the literature and theories on emotion development into four paradigms: a structuralist paradigm, where emotions have a specific psychological state; a functionalist paradigm where emotions have psychological function; a dynamic system paradigm, where emotions are conceptualized as an evolving system, and a sociocultural paradigm, where emotions are framed as being coconstructed psychological functions. Holodynski (2009) created a fifth view of emotion regulation. His internalization model of emotion development takes an integrative socioculturally oriented approach, where central developmental tasks are associated with particular age categories. He referred to mechanisms within each phase and names these as milestones.

We are inspired by Holodynski's idea that the development of emotion regulation can be conceptualized as a dialectical relation between interpersonal and intrapersonal regulation, but we do not draw upon the developmental trajectory ascribed by him (e.g., milestones related to infants, toddlers, preschoolers) because we think in group settings, what might have been deemed to be an earlier developmental period or nominated milestone can arise with older children because the social context has changed from an often predictable nuclear family situation to a dynamic large group setting. Vygotsky (1934/1998) argued against using age as a central criterion for development. Instead we use the view put forward by Kravtsova about the relations between emotions and feelings as the source of development (Kravtsova, 2008) as conceptualised within a revolutionary view of development in which periodisation frames development (see Elkonin, 1971/1977; Kravtsov & Kravtsova, 2009, 2012; Vygotsky, 1934/1998). In this conceptualization (Kravtsova, 2008), *emotion* is viewed as the raw biological expression of a child and *feelings* as the conscious awareness and naming or bodily acknowledgment of those raw emotions. Please note that we do not link emotion to age but rather to cultural and social context. In Kravtsova's (2008) theorization, it is the relations between emotions and feelings that give rise to emotion regulation for the child (here we include toddlers, infants, and preschoolers, as some children may have limited experiences of particular emotions, depending upon their previous cultural experiences), which is always mediated by others, taking on the characteristics of the particular cultural community. This conceptualization of the dialectical relations between *emotions* and *feelings* has also been independently been put forward within other contexts. Damasio (2003) distinguished between feelings and emotions in exactly the same way as Kravtsova (2008), stating that "turning emotion and feeling into separate research objects helps us discover how it is that we feel" (p. 28). In drawing upon Spinoza, Damasio captured the relations between emotions and feelings when he said, "Emotions play out in the theatre of the body. Feelings play out in the theatre of the mind" (p. 28). In Damasio's conception emotions come first where feelings are "mostly shadows of the external manner of behaviour" (p. 29) and in these relations, "*a feeling*

*is the perception of a certain state of the body along with the perception of a certain mode of thinking and of thoughts with certain themes*" (p. 86).

Damasio (2003) also shares our concern for how emotions have been traditionally presented, stating that "emotions and feelings are so intimately related along a continuous process that we tend to think of them, understandably, as one single thing" (p. 28). The essence of how emotions develop in Vygotsky, Holodynski, and Kravtsova's theories centre upon the adults who create the conditions for making conscious the emotional expression. Consciousness of emotions is central to their work, and underpins Vygotsky's (1933/1999) premise that there should *not* be a "separation of emotions from all of our consciousness" (p. 156). Consciousness of emotions is linked directly to the cultural development of the child, to a child's higher mental functioning (Vygotsky, 1934/1987) or seen as "intellectualized" emotions (Zaporozhets, 1986/2002, p. 57). Exploring fairytales within group settings explicitly with teacher support, we believe has the potential for raising the consciousness of emotions for children. Being more aware of an emotional state allows children in group care settings to more successfully self regulate and hence interact more effectively with peers.

Vygotsky (1933/1999) suggested that it is a mistake to think that "intellect" gradually replaces "feelings as intellectual development progresses" (p. 152), or as "gradually fading away to almost complete demise" (p. 152) as though emotions were a "dying breed that is gradually being displaced on the stage of history as civilization and culture grow" (p. 152). Rather, Vygotsky (1931/1997) argued that "all higher functions were formed not in biology not in the history of pure phylogenesis, but that the mechanism itself that is the basis of higher mental functions is a copy from the *social*" (p. 106). Vygotsky had a specific scientific meaning for the term *social*, and this is important to understand because of the risk of reducing the interpretations of Vygotsky's theory when a more superficial or everyday reading of this term is used. Vygotsky (1931/1997) stated that

the word "social," as applied to our subject, has a broad meaning. First of all, in the broadest sense, it means that everything cultural is social. Culture is both a product of social life and of the social activity of man [*sic*] and for this reason, the very formulation of the problem of cultural development of behavior already leads us directly to the social plane of development. Further, we could indicate the fact that the sign found outside the organism, like a tool, is separated from the individual and serves essentially as social organ or social means. (p. 106)

With this reading in mind for the term *social*, a deeper interpretation of Vygotsky's (1931/1997) theory is now possible. Hence, all "higher mental functions are the essence of internalized relations of a social order, a basis for the social structure of the individual. Their composition, genetic structure, method of action—in a word, their entire nature—is social; even in being transformed into mental processes, they remain quasisocial. Man [*sic*] as an individual maintains the functions of socializing" (p. 106).

It is through the process of social relations between people that emotions become expressed, named and interpreted as feelings. That is, emotions become conscious through social relations. This plays out strongly in cross-cultural literature of emotion regulation. For example, anger in some cultural communities value this form of expression because it is considered appropriate to protect uniqueness, independence and self-expression, whereas for other cultures it is a source of great shame (Holodynski & Friedlmeier, 2006). Even within cultural communities we notice different forms of expression, such as the feeling of intimidation that a person from the country

might feel when people (e.g., a person from the city) stand close when communicating. Social meanings attributed to specific emotional expressions are not only important within families but also within group settings, such as early childhood care and education centres. At the interpsychological level these kinds of social interactions and emotional expressions are not necessarily conscious. Holodynski (2009) rightly stated that

a typical feature of an emotion is that the initial *appraisal processes* are generally involuntary and not conscious. They have to distinguish from any (subsequent) cognitions on the possible trigger of the emotion and its subjective significance because these are voluntary and conscious processes. (p. 141)

As suggested by Holodynski (2009),

Because of their expressive and body components, emotions are not purely mental situation appraisals. They embody an *active action readiness* that sets a subsequent *coping action* [emphasis added] in motion that should transform the current relation between the individual and the environment in line with the personal motives and concerns. (p. 142)

Like Baker, Fenning, and Crnic (2011) and Geangu, Benga, Stahl, and Striano (2011), Holodynski (2009) argued that these are learned through social context and are usually mediated by others. In considering the everyday interactional contexts between young children and their teachers, we agree with Holodynski's (2009) claim that "emotional experiences are mediated by the interpretations of their caregivers" (p. 149). Although Holodynski refers to infants in this quotation, we argue that in childcare contexts where there are a range of interpretations and mediations possible, due to collective and multipartner interpersonal relations that coexist, that not all previous regulations of emotions (i.e., emotion-specific expression signs) are going to be supported or mediated but may in fact be challenged. That is, the notion of a movement from interpersonal to intrapersonal may not be as straightforward or as unidirectional as Holodynski suggests, but rather that both interpersonal and intrapersonal functioning are in dynamic and dialectical flux.

We believe that Holodynski shows nicely for the infant–adult interaction, the kind of quality interaction needed for all children within the early childhood period. For instance Holodnyski (2009) stated, "the infant emotion process is initially shared between child and caregiver; they function together as a co-regulated system" (p. 151). We believe this also occurs for older children within a childcare context, where multiple perspectives and interaction sequences are brought to bear within and across activities (Vallotton & Ayoub, 2010). This is especially useful in the context of teacher created emotionally charged events, as occurs in the telling and role-playing of fairytales (see Baumer, Ferholt, & Lecusay, 2005).

Holodynski (2009) argued that

parents intuitively adapt their communication. . . . They make it possible for the infant to experience temporal, sensory, and spatial contingencies between the emotional trigger, emotional expression, and the action that led to the construction of situation-dependent, emotion-specific appraisal patterns in the infant that are determined by the meaning assigned to them and no longer by absolute stimulus qualities. (p. 150)

Once again, we believe that early childhood educators also demonstrate these kinds of adaptive techniques when communicating with preschool children in childcare settings, and these findings of Holoydnski (2009) are useful for kindergarten teachers.

A further important dimension for understanding emotion regulation is that displays of emotions by adults are culturally framed. That is, in many Western cultures, adults generally mask their feelings and do not show children or other observers their emotions. Holodynski (2004) termed the ability of children to hide their emotions as *miniaturization*. We believe children's capacity to do this is evidence that a conscious realization of one's emotional state gives rise to emotion regulation and therefore emotional development. How group settings where traditional practices, such as the telling of fairytales, support the *consciousness of emotions* requires further theorization and is focus of the next section.

### FAIRYTALES—DOUBLE EXPRESSION OF FEELINGS

In the previous section we examined the idea of the *consciousness of emotions* as a dynamic movement between interpsychological and intrapsychological functioning, where named feelings represented a self-awareness and self-regulation of emotions. The dialectical relations between emotions and feelings also speak to the concept of a *double expression of feelings*. In Vygotsky's (1925/1971) dissertation entitled the *Psychology of Art*, he discussed the concept of the "double expression of feelings" (p. 209). Vygotsky stated that "a work of art (such as a fable, a short story, a tragedy) always includes an affective contradiction, [which] causes conflicting feelings" (p. 213). In his later work, Vygotsky (1933/1966) remained curious about how two different kinds of emotions can interact with one another to create an emotional reaction or contradiction, such as when a child is experiencing being "happy because they are playing" but also "experiencing being scared" about the injection they are about to receive in their play of being at the hospital. Here a child experiences the emotion of fear and the emotion of joy simultaneously. We believe this doubleness of emotional expression in fantasy play and in drama are theoretically connected when they are consciously considered as feeling states. In free play where no adult involvement is planned, these emotions are experienced but not necessarily made conscious as feeling states. It is beyond the scope of this article to examine free play in relation to emotions and feelings or to review the extensive literature on storytelling and dramatization (see Holzman, 2009, for rich discussion of the latter). Rather, our focus is fairytales because these play scripts are mostly dramatic, accentuating the emotional states of the characters and the possibilities for doubleness of feeling expression as children identify with the hero, living and reliving the story in group care and education contexts, where the teachers actively work together with the children. This reliving can be seen by children through expressing contempt for an evil protagonist or fear in the lead up to a climax, as teachers read or tell the fairytales, support the role-play of the fairytales by the children, or create problem situations surrounding the fairytale that the children solve. For example, when the teacher supports the children to map new routes for *Little Red Riding Hood*<sup>1</sup> so as to avoid the wolf, or to create different endings to the story, or as the whole group relives the emotional state of Little Red Riding Hood as she becomes aware, step by step, that grandmother is a wolf, through the predictable text of "Grandmother what big ears

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<sup>1</sup>The common presentation in kindergartens of the story of Little Red Riding Hood involves a small child taking a basket of food to her sick grandmother and on the way meeting a wolf who diverts her along another path, allowing the wolf to go to the grandmother's house before the child and to dress up as the grandmother, with the view to eating the child. The child is saved by a woodcutter who chases off the wolf.

you have; Grandmother what big eyes you have; and grandmother what big teeth you have; to which the wolf replies “All the better to eat you with.” Fairytales also provide the opportunity for a double expression of feelings, engineered by the teacher in group care and education settings. For instance, in the storytelling and dramatization of *Little Red Riding Hood* where children and teacher re-create the plot and characters by means of making props, dioramas of scenes, the writing and drawing of books, the creation of video clips of children’s own dramatizations and even computer animations using self-made figurines gives more possibilities for a doubleness of emotional expression. We capture the practical pedagogical possibilities associated with engineering a doubleness of emotional expression in kindergartens in Table 1. However, the details of how this realized as *emotional reflection* on the part of the child are theorized throughout the article in *affective imagination*, the *dynamic relations between real and imaginary worlds*, and *emotional significance*.

### Affective Imagination

Vygotsky (1925/1971) suggested in his early work that a double expression of feelings is evident within fables as well as dramatic tragedy. He stated, “We can regard fantasy as the central expression of an emotional reaction” (p. 210). In this theorization, Vygotsky (1925/1971) discussed emotion and imagination not as two separate processes but, on the contrary, as the same process. We suggest that because social pretend play, or role-play, is the leading activity of preschool children (Elkonin, 1971/1977), that feeling expression and emotion regulation can be heightened through kindergarten children being involved in an educational program featuring fairytales. A kindergarten study of fairytales would entail the telling, retelling, acting, and role-playing of classical fairytales (see Bettelheim, 1976), and through repetition, as more contemporary studies have shown, help children create their own imaginary situation or “playworld” and reproduce existing story narratives with the support of their teachers (see Baumer et al., 2005; Hakkarainen, 2004; Lindqvist, 1995; i.e., joint adult–child dramatization of text; general discussion; drawings; free play). According to Lindqvist (1995), many “stories deal with the contrasts of feeling left outside, of feeling secure and insecure . . . often feel[ing] the threat of being eaten” (p. 139). In these “playworlds,” imagination is central to reliving these predictable but dramatic play plots. Knowing that the wolf in the story of *The Three Little Pigs*<sup>2</sup> is not going to eat the three pigs but rather that the wolf will be scalded in the hot water that is boiling in the fireplace at the bottom of the chimney, means that the children can engage in the emotional anticipation as the wolf tries to blow down each of the three little pigs houses in turn. The repetitive storyline of the wolf chanting, “Little pig, little pig, let me in,” and the little pig responding, “No, no, no, not by the hair on my chinny chin chin, will I let you come in,” is important for building emotional anticipation and the imaginary situation (Vygotsky, 1933/1966). Emotional anticipation and imagination can also be shown through the children and the teacher exploring different ways of expressing fear during role-play, such as when acting out being the pigs or being the wolf, or in role-play or animations

<sup>2</sup>In kindergartens a common interpretation of the fairytale of the Three Little Pigs is that it is a story about a family of five pigs, where each of the three little pigs leave home and build themselves a house—one from straw, one from stick, and one from bricks. A wolf goes to each house and tries to blow the house down with the view to eating the little pig. Each pig escapes and they all live together in the brick house. The wolf tries to climb down the chimney to get to the little pigs. They boil a pot of water, scalding the wolf, who runs away never to return.

TABLE 1  
Pedagogical Framework for Emotional Reflection

<i>Fairytale</i>	<i>Affective Imagination</i>	<i>Dynamic Relations Between Real and Imaginary Worlds</i>	<i>Emotional Significance</i>	<i>Emotional Reflection</i>
Red Riding Hood	1. Exploring ways of expressing fear in role-play.	1. Mapping alternative routes to Grandma's house. 2. Self-defense training for Little Red Riding Hood. 3. Re-presenting fairytales: Drawing props and scenes; writing books, video clips of dramatisations, and computer animations.	1. Exaggerated facial and bodily expressions of emotions shown by teacher during discussions and storytelling. 2. How could children make a puppet or prop to show this emotion?	1. Being frightened 2. Feeling safe
Goldilocks and the Three Bears	1. Imagining how Goldilocks feels when she wakes to find the bears. 2. Imagining how it feels when something is broken – recreating emotions in play (being upset).	1. Designing security system to keep bears safe. 2. Exploring locks in the environment (centre, home, three bears' house). 3. Writing and sending letters to the three bears pointing out their lack of security.	1. Analysing picture books to see what kinds of home security systems (or not) are shown by the artists and reacting to the outcomes in an exaggerated manner. 2. Facial and bodily expressions that represent the emotion of fear or feeling of being safe– discussing how to represent this.	1. Feeling safe 2. Feeling upset (angry; sad; sense of loss)
The Three Little Pigs	1. Imagining how the little pigs feel leaving home, and having the wolf knocking at their door. 2. Imagining and reenacting the ending scene of the wolf going down the chimney into the boiling water or other possibilities.	1. Examining materials and home building structures for strength and stability. 2. Exploring temperature and scalding and other forms of pain children may have experienced. 3. Designing and building first aid kits, creating home and centre evacuation drills/notices/plans.	In acting out possible alternative endings to the story (or for the wolf), exaggerating the emotional display, then discussing how this feels for the wolf, for the pigs, and for the children themselves– discussing what endings do they prefer?	1. Feeling frightened 2. Feeling pain 3. Feeling safe

where children must make figurines to show particular emotions, such as being frightened of the wolf (see Table 1).

Vygotsky (1933/1999) stated that in drama the feeling of “we” rather than “I” is created.

The actor creates on the stage infinite sensations, feelings, or emotions that become the emotions of the whole theatrical audience. Before they became the subject of the actor’s embodiment, they are given a literary formulation, they were borne in the air, in social consciousness. (p. 241)

This has relevance for children’s role-playing of fairytales in kindergarten settings. It follows that fairytales become a form of social consciousness that is experienced interpsychologically in these group settings, such as can be seen when children who are listening to the story of the Three Little Pigs cheer when the wolf is scalded and the little pigs are safe. Relevant here is Vygotsky’s (1925/1971) discussion of the idea of *co-affect*, where someone can be viewing a play, experiencing the fear, while the character may be unconcerned, not suspecting anything: “Only in part do we experience the affects as they are given to the characters in a drama; most of the time we experience them not with, but because of, the characters” (p. 208). This captures the idea put forward by Vygotsky of *affektive imagination*, where the child imagines the feeling state of the characters. This is also possible within playworlds where well-chosen stories or teacher-generated narratives and problem formulations allow for the feeling state of the characters to emerge and be made conscious to children in their dramatizations.

Zaporozhets (1994/2005) and his colleagues developed a line of enquiry into emotions that connected thinking with sensory-object activity/performance of the child. Through his empirical studies, he showed how fairytales provided children with the possibilities for emotional tension, engagement, and self-awareness. We argue that the latter intrapsychological state of self-awareness is directly relevant to emotion regulation. Zaporozhets (1994/2005) was able to show that “Vygotsky’s assumption about the higher, specifically human ‘intelligent’ emotions being cortical was confirmed” (p. 33). That is, his research showed the “existence of tightly-knit and sequentially evolving relations between the intellectual and the motivational-emotional aspect of child personality” (p. 33).

Zaporozhets (1986/2002) argued that “emotion is not itself an activation process, but a special form of reflection of reality used for the mental control of activation” (p. 53), where the child experiences some moral situation and “begins to evaluate his [*sic*] own actions, thus passing to the stage of self-regulating behavior” (p. 53). For instance, in drama

the actor’s awareness of his [*sic*] sensations, the data of self-observation of his acting and his general state do not lose their significance. . . . They show how the actor recognizes his own emotions . . . from the point of view of the actor’s self-awareness. (Vygotsky, 1925/1971, p. 241)

In the retelling or performing of fairytale stories, children have the opportunity to experience and act out the central characters and the plot, which Zaporozhets (1994/2005) and his colleagues have shown to bring together intellectual and motivational-emotional aspects of children’s development. Affective imagination also includes a second expression of human emotions, where “emotions are not only expressed, but are *transformed and developed*” (Zaporozhets, 1994/2005). El’koninova (1999/2002) suggested that when children begin to separate out the imaginary world from the real world, that they “find themselves on the borderline between them” (p. 47). The child is at the boundary line between a real and an imaginary world.

### The Dynamic Relations Between Real and Imaginary Worlds

Children *flicker* between real and imaginary worlds. Through the reenactment of fairytales over and over again, children test out “the sense of the main character’s actions but also clarified their own internal world of feeling and distinguished a real action on their part from its function in a role” (p. 47). This flickering is represented in Figure 1. Through the repetition of telling, retelling, and reenacting fairytales children distinguish between real actions and role actions. “A child seeks, clarifies, and comprehends sense in the process of repetitions” (p. 48). She argued that the story plot is mirrored in the acted out actions of the children. Children are not “*enacting the story, but really living in it*” (El’koninova, 1999/2002, p. 45).

Studies of young children engaged in role-play of children’s literature, such as Baumer et al. (2005), Ferholt (2010), Ferholt and Lecusay (2010), and Rainio (2008), have also noted the significance of living the story, named by Vygotsky and discussed empirically by Ferholt (2010) as *perezhivanie* (intensely-emotional-lived-through-experience; p. 164) offering new directions in research (see Smagorinsky, 2011). In El’koninova’s (1999/2002) research she was able to show that children reliving the storylines and plots of fairytales, did not use “as if” statements as is common in most social pretend play (see Garvey, 1977) where metacommunicative language is used to signal when children are in and out of their play world (see Bretherton, 1984). Unlike social pretend play, in fairytales, children have direct emotional relations to the main character through their participation in the events contained within the storyline. El’koninova (1999/2002) argued that children *want* to identify with the hero of the story, wishing to assist the hero, and through this, they *together reenact the ideal moral response to the given situation, along with all of the associated risks, in reaching the final victory*, as is the common ending for fairytales. Fairytales have been designed specifically for this accentuated emotional contradiction and intensity (Bettelheim, 1976), which is not always the case for children’s general literature.

When we bring the literature together, it is possible to see that through fairytale, children must hold on to two things simultaneously if they wish to self-regulate their emotions—the children must be inside of the plot living the story, and outside of the plot as a real person, if the children do not wish to feel fear—as shown in Figure 1. El’koninova (1999/2002) argued that a child must “gropingly look for a ‘territory’ where this is possible” (p. 41). It is the border of the imaginary world and the real world that creates this dialectical relation (Fleer, 2010). In Figure 1 we see that the child’s will becomes polarized between an imaginary magical world and a real everyday world. Through reliving well-known fairytales, emotional imagination is directly experienced in the reenactment, and conscious awareness of emotions as feeling states as children explicitly show in the performance expressions of emotions. For example, when children are role-playing being Little Red Riding Hood they must show the expression of being frightened of the wolf, and they must consciously consider this emotion and its expression, to successfully and convincingly role-play the fairytale character.

Similarly, El’koninova (1999/2002) has shown in her research that when the telling of the fairytale becomes too frightening for a child, the child ceases participation in the story content and the empathizing subsides. As the story continues and the frightening or anxious moment is resolved, then the child reengages, until the next frightening event occurs. Moving in and out of an imaginary situation and in and out of the real world (Fleer, 2010) during the fairytale reading allows children to build emotion self-regulation. El’koninova (1999/2002) stated that

*Affective imagination:* Emotions are not only expressed, but are transformed and developed

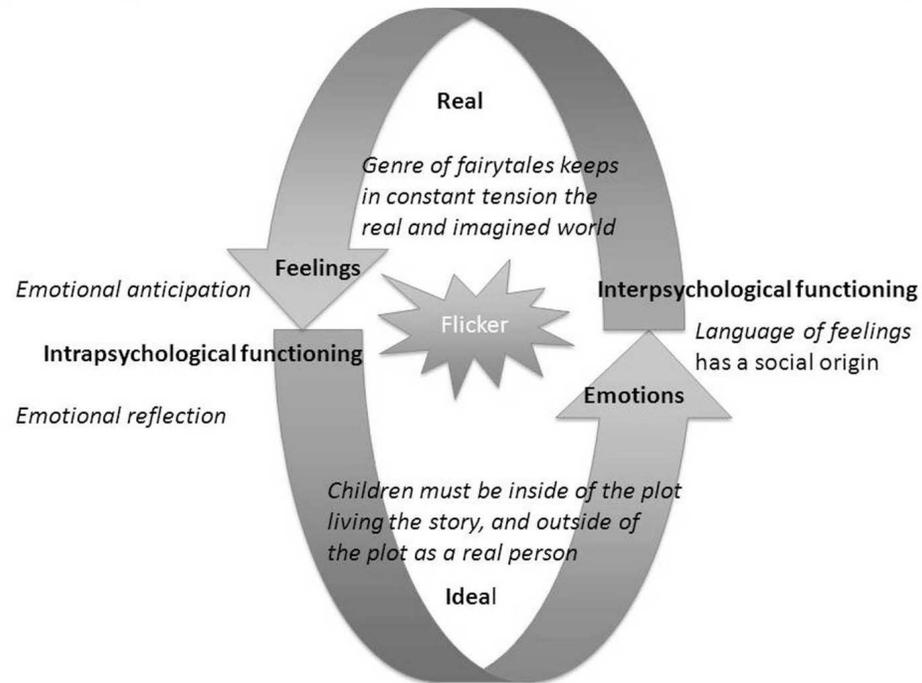


FIGURE 1 The dialectical relations between emotions and feelings accentuated through the collective study of fairytales.

as children listen to a story, they imitate the actions of the characters, repeat what they say, experience the various episodes as real, and cry. Sometimes they try to “switch off” if they are empathizing too strongly (they pinch themselves; they turn away from the storyteller; they ask that certain parts of the text be omitted, etc.). (p. 40)

When children make the story their own, they comprehend its sense, and when this occurs, El’koninova (1999/2002) argued that children “bring together the two worlds of space and time: his [*sic*] own real world and the other, imagined, make-believe world” (pp. 40–41). The genre of fairytales keeps in constant tension the real and imagined world through a unique rhythm that over repeated readings and performances becomes predictable and magical. In quoting Lotman (1996), El’koninova (1999/2002) summarised the special features of the fairytale genre:

A fairytale divides cultural texts into external and internal, ascribing magic properties to the external. A border represented in a text by a river (bridge, forest, seashore, etc.) divides space into a place close to where the main character is usually situated (internal) and a place that is distant from it (external). But there is one more division that is active for both the narrator and the listener: a place close to them (internal)—it cannot be contiguous with the magical space—and a place far from them (a distant kingdom) that borders on the magical world. This place is internal for the text of the story, but for the listener it is a part of the external make-believe world. Thus, both models function at the same time (p. 475). (pp. 39–40)

El'koninova (1999/2002), in citing the research of Zaporozhets and Neverovich, discussed the concept of the fairytale listener's "inner eye" where the children follow the story, feeling their way through the story with their whole body, so that the "child emotionally experiences and feels the actions of the main character as the events in the story unfold" (p. 40). In drawing upon this theorization, we argue that the kindergarten teacher re-creates the story, connecting the story and the children together in the imaginary situation, while not frightening the children so that the children do not equate the imaginary world directly with the real world in which they live. It is within the repeated retelling of fairytales that the emotional anticipation of what is to unfold develops (Zaporozhets, 1994/2002). Within this system "emotions are intellectualized, they become *intelligent*, generalized, and anticipatory, while cognitive processes functioning in this system, acquire an affective nature and begin to perform a special role in meaning discrimination and meaning formation" (p. 57).

When this literature on fairytales is brought together with the literature on emotion regulation outlined in the previous sections, it becomes possible to see how children in the telling and retelling of fairytales begin to self-regulate their emotional expressions in relation to the specific fairytale. It is through this emotional-cognitive activity, particularly as they begin to role-play the characters in the fairytale, that the child can position themselves in specific ways in relation to the fairytale events or circumstances. The child is able to participate in imaginary actions and accomplishments, acting out the ideal, and experiencing the meaning of a given situation, including the potential consequences for themselves and others within the role-play of the fairytale. Through emotional and cognitive participation in fairytales children reach "the ideal plane of *emotional imagination*" (Zaporozhets, 1986/2002, p. 58).

### Emotional Significance

Fairytales help *children collectively* begin to anticipate the results of one another's actions in their play. Fairytales also allow children to anticipate their own actions, including image-bearing dramatization, verbal descriptions, prop use, and transformation. It is important that the language of feelings are expressed and supported through the active role of the kindergarten teacher in the play. For instance, kindergarten teachers can deliberately provide *emotional significance* to an event within a fairytale, such as in the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears,<sup>3</sup> when the three bears return home: This moment in the teaching program can allow time for the children to express their thinking about the emotion of fear. For example, a teacher might ask, "Do you think if someone had broken your chair, you would feel angry or sad?" Children who are flicking between the lived experience of the fairytale and their real world lives might respond by saying, "But I would lock my door when I go out so that no one could come in and break my chair." The "*language of feelings* has a social origin" (Zaporozhets, 1986/2002, p. 58), and this social situation created through the fairytales can allow for an emotional scenario to be consciously examined, explored and labeled in group settings. Iakovleva (1997/2003) labeled this

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<sup>3</sup>Three bears leave their house to go for a walk in the forest while they wait for their porridge to cool. While they are gone a small child called Goldilocks enters their home and sits on each of the bear's chairs, breaking baby bear's chair. This is followed by Goldilocks tasting each bear's porridge but eating all of baby bear's porridge. Finally, Goldilocks goes upstairs and tries out all of the bears' beds, settling into baby bear's bed. Goldilocks falls asleep. When the bears come home they find the mayhem and Goldilocks asleep. Goldilocks wakes up frightened and runs out of the house.

as *emotional filtering* “where kindergarten teachers attribute emotional significance to events” (p. 93).

Emotions as a special form of reflection on reality helps regulate a child’s behavior. Opportunities for emotional reflection can also be planned within kindergarten programs. For example, in the storytelling of Goldilocks and the Three Bears, it is possible for teachers to explicitly create an imaginary situation where the children together with the teacher formulate ways of trying to keep Goldilocks out of the house so she cannot break little bear’s chair. Examining security systems and locks in the children’s everyday life allows for an explicit discussion about how people stay safe. Writing letters to the three bears to suggest they install locks or a security system provides further opportunities for emotional reflection on safety, giving emotional significance to specific elements within the fairytale (see Table 1). Similarly, consideration of how to insulate the bears’ porridge bowls or how to cool down the porridge more rapidly are problem scenarios that could be contemplated so that the bears do not have to leave the house unattended. Discussions about a range of feelings are possible, as are solving a range of science-related problems to deal with the emotional tensions inherent within fairytales. Children’s engagement in the imaginary situation actively supported through creating problem solutions, such as examining the bears’ security system, and advising the bears on the different ways they might keep their house safe, are *emotionally energising* learning experiences within kindergarten programs. The unity of emotions, imagination, and cognition is foregrounded within these programs where fairytales act as a cultural device for accentuating emotion regulation. But these kinds of educational programs also allow for the development of child agency (see Rainio, 2008) as children explore and control the emotional storylines within the fairytales.

## CONCLUSION

Zaporozhets (1986/2002), in drawing upon Lange (1914), stated that much has changed since this well-known Russian psychologist first used the metaphor of Cinderella to describe the unfair share of research attention that the study of emotions had in favor of her older sisters—Thinking and Will (p. 46). Vygotsky (1925/1971, 1933/1999) was unable to fully elaborate his theory of the unity of cognition and emotion, leaving much to be done by post-Vygotskian researchers (Bodrova & Leong, 2003; Gonzalez Rey, 1999, 2009, 2011; Holodynski, 2009; Roth, 2008; Zaporozhets, 1986/2002). In this article we have brought together a body of literature to give a rationale for, and to theorise how, fairytales when used by kindergarten teachers bring together emotions/feelings as a form of higher mental function as children collectively engage in emotion regulations with the telling, retelling, and role-playing of fairytales. In citing the findings of Zaporozhets and Neverovich (1986), Bodrova and Leong (2003) noted that cultural mediation in higher forms of mental development are pertinent to emotional development, supporting the dialectical relations between inter- and intrapsychological functioning for emotional development. However, more still needs to be understood about how the dialectical relations between inter- and intrapsychological functioning develop in group situations during the role-playing of fairytales for children growing up in the 21st century.

When we bring together the theoretical and empirical research on emotional development that comes from the cultural-historical literature, it is possible to see the potential for the concepts of imagination, affect, and intellect to act in unity to support emotion regulation during the telling

and role-playing of fairytales. Here the *evaluative function of emotions* can be seen, as children make emotional corrections in emotionally imaginative situations. As the imaginary situations become more complex, more cognitive emotionality is needed reflecting the child's own self and social awareness. Contemporary research is needed for determining what might be the most effective activities and emotional filtering techniques of teachers when introducing and studying fairytales with children in group settings.

In drawing the article to a close, we have theorized that fairytales help children to *collectively* develop *emotion regulation*, where emotions act as an *evaluative function*, *energize planned educational activities*, and allow for a *reflection of the social and material world* by children. The unity of emotions and cognition are foregrounded in the role-playing of fairytales, potentially allowing for a dynamic interplay between interpsychological and intrapsychological functioning, supporting both emotion regulation and conceptual development of children. We believe this is a fruitful line of enquiry and worthy of further research attention. We suggest that fairytales have a valuable place within early childhood programs and should not be lost within the current *schoolification* of kindergarten programs (Einarsdottir & Wagner, 2006; Perry, Kaufmann, & Knitzer, 2007; Thompson & Raikes, 2007) because they contain within them emotionally charged scenarios and tensions that foreground *emotions* and act as "the real driving force" for learning (Roth, 2008, p. 6) in emotionally imaginative situations.

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## **PAPER 5**

### ***Perezhivanie* in group settings: A cultural-historical reading of emotion regulation (Published in AJEC 2014)**

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## 'Perezhivanie' in group settings: A cultural-historical reading of emotion regulation

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**THERE IS AN OVERWHELMING AMOUNT** of research on emotion regulation (e.g. Barblett & Maloney, 2010; Koole, 2010). Much of this work has centred on experimental studies rather than group settings such as childcare centres and kindergartens. In drawing upon cultural-historical concepts, this paper presents a theoretical discussion on how fairytales help children to collectively develop emotion regulation. We specifically explore emotions and cognition during the telling, re-telling, and role-playing of fairytales. It is argued that fairytales can act as a pedagogical framework for helping children become more conscious of emotions as they role play. Cultural-historical theory is used to give a new perspective on both fairytales and emotion regulation.

### Introduction

It is well understood in practice that when children are emotionally competent and have emotion regulation, a harmonious kindergarten environment results because children work more effectively together in these group settings. Denham, Bassett and Zinsler (2012) point out that young children's emotional competence 'is crucial for social and academic (i.e. school) success' (p. 1). But this is also true of children in playgroups, kindergartens and childcare centres. Despite the avalanche of research into emotion regulation (e.g. Barblett & Maloney, 2010; Halberstadt & Lozada, 2011; Holodynski, 2009; Koole, 2010), little has been directed towards group settings and the role of educators and how they frame experiences to support children's development of emotions (Ahn, 2005; Davies et al., 2010; Galyer and Evans, 2001). According to Denham, Bassett and Zinsler (2012) most research examines individual resilience, with 'next to nothing published about how early childhood educators promote such emotional competence' (original emphasis; p. 2). Yet most international curricula focus on emotional development. For instance, the *Early Years Learning Framework* (EYLF) in Australia (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations [DEEWR], 2009) explicitly addresses emotional development. Consequently, more needs to be understood about supporting emotion regulation in group settings.

Within the scope of this paper, we limit ourselves to emotion regulation because central to a sociocultural or cultural-historical<sup>1</sup> reading of emotions is how children with the support of their social and material environment come to understand their emotions as particular feeling states. That is, how an emotion becomes named and expressed is directly shaped by the particular cultural communities from within which the child lives and develops (Cole et al., 2002; Halberstadt & Lozada, 2011). Emotions can only be understood in the context of *social others* who shape and are shaped by the social situation of children's development. This perspective of emotions is counter-intuitive to a developmental view of emotions where the focus is on examining the child socially, emotionally, cognitively and physically (sometimes spiritually) as discretely conceptualised areas of development. We see this in documents, such as the *Developmental Milestones and the Early Years Learning Framework and the National Quality Standards* (Community Child Care Co-operative Ltd, NSW, n.d.).

A cultural-historical reading cannot separate how a child thinks about their feeling state or how thinking is refracted

<sup>1</sup> The term 'cultural-historical' is foregrounded in this paper rather than the more commonly known term of 'sociocultural' because this more accurately reflects the theoretical work as named by Vygotsky and neo-Vygotskians in Russia.

through emotional lenses (Vygotsky, 1994). That is, how I feel about my learning, influences how I learn; how my learning is emotionally charged influences how I think. It is this *dialectical reading* of emotions that underpins a cultural-historical view of emotions (see also Warren, Domitrovich & Greenberg, 2011), and it is this view of emotion regulation that we discuss in this paper.

We begin this paper with a brief overview of how we define emotion regulation in the context of curricula, followed by a cultural-historical theoretical discussion of this area, concluding with a pedagogical framework for supporting emotion regulation in group settings where educators use fairytales as a cultural device for supporting emotion regulation.

### **Curriculum and the development of emotion regulation**

Most early childhood frameworks or curricula around the world focus on some form of emotional development (McLachlan, Flear & Edwards, 2013). For example, all of the outcomes outlined in the EYLF allude to the importance of emotion regulation as a key to successful interactions and learning. The introduction makes reference to Goal 2 of the *Melbourne Declaration of Education Goals for Young Australians*, emphasising the importance of success in learning; confidence in self and citizenship, all of which are underpinned by the skills and competence of emotional regulation. The EYLF specifically details the outcomes and goals as:

- Children have a strong sense of identity: Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect (Outcome 1).
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world: Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation (Outcome 2).
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing: Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing (Outcome 3).
- Children are effective communicators: Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes (Outcome 5) (DEEWR, 2009).

Emotional competence has been conceptualised by Denham, Bassett and Zinsser (2012) as the 'regulation of emotional expressiveness and experience when necessary, and knowledge of their own and other's emotions' (p. 1), and this view sits comfortably with the outcomes of the EYLF and many international curricula (see McLachlan, Flear & Edwards, 2013). Despite the huge body of literature discussing and researching emotional competence, particularly emotion regulation, we note that emotion regulation in group settings is still an under-

theorised and researched area:

*What the field needs is coordinated efforts to move from understanding parental socialisation of emotion to teachers' contributions [and through this] to move toward a theory of action that could inform early childhood* (Denham, Bassett & Zinsser, 2012, p. 2).

Cultural-historical theory moves the lens from individual emotion regulation to considering the broader social and cultural context of children in group settings.

### **A cultural-historical theorisation of emotion regulation and pedagogy**

Although a great deal has been written on the social and emotional competence of children in the early years (see Barblett & Maloney, 2010), and traditionally emotional competence has included a range of elements, such as academic competence, emotion regulation, self-esteem, social interaction or pro-social behaviour, and cooperation (Amato, 1987), there is no standard definition. In research on emotions we find that happiness, sadness, and anger are usually the focus and therefore prevalent in the literature (see Holodynski & Friedlmeier, 2006). In more recent times, cross-cultural studies have expanded our understandings to include shame, empathy, and culturally-specific concepts, such as interdependence, dependence, autonomy, and self-control (Holodynski & Friedlmeier, 2006). These latter studies suggest that there are culturally specific ways of not just naming raw emotions expressed by children, but social contexts which mediate emotions differently, suggesting that the interplay between emotions and context realise very different ways for children to learn to self-regulate. In conceptualising emotions as a social and cultural construction, rather than as a universal construct, we are more aligned with the central principles in many international curricula, such as Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2007) and the EYLF, where there is a strong acknowledgment of a diversity of cultural and social contexts for giving meaning to emotions for children. A cultural-historical reading of emotions actively positions adults as having a central role in children's development of emotions.

In group settings, emotion regulation is likely to be experienced and supported differently to that which takes place in the home (Cole et al., 2009; Denham, Bassett & Zinsser, 2012; Gabhainn & Sixsmith, 2005). But how this diversity plays out in group settings, such as childcare centres, playgroups and kindergartens, really matters for early childhood educators who seek to create harmonious and productive learning contexts in their centres. We believe the use of fairytales in these group settings offers a way forward for teachers to be able to bring together the potential range of ways that children have learned to express themselves at home, so that emotion regulation is further developed in productive and positive

ways. That is, rather than concentrating on emotional expressions as they arise in group settings as teachable moments (for example, when some children are upset or have experienced trauma), fairytales can be used to collectively, and in a sustained way, explore emotions with children (Bozhovich, 2009; Kravtsova, 2006, 2008). This is supportive of the concept of intentional teaching where the educator thoughtfully plans for shared and sustained conversations with children within play-based programs (see Siraj-Blatchford, 2007).

In a cultural-historical reading of emotion regulation we see that emotions regulate actions and actions regulate emotions (Holodynski, 2009, p. 146). Holodynski (2009) has suggested that:

*Emotion regulation is the ability to modify emotions in terms of their quality, intensity, frequency, course, and expression. In this case, it is not actions that are being regulated by emotions, but the individual (or another person) is performing an action with the goal of modifying the emotion (Holodynski, 2009, p. 145).*

This cultural-historical perspective invites us to consider the relations between emotions (Vygotsky, 1925/1971, 1933/1999) and cognition (Vygotsky, 1934/1987), but also to look at the place of imagination (Vygotsky, 1933/1966, 1930/2004), in order to better understand emotion regulation. Research from Russia has shown that fairytales offer a way of making visible the unity of emotions and cognition (i.e. Zaphorzhets, 1986/2002) within imaginary situations. In this context, emotion regulation has been theorised differently to that found in the Western literature (i.e. Bettelheim, 1976).

But these relations between imagination, cognition and emotions are complex. Vygotsky (1933/1999) suggested that it is a mistake to think that 'intellect' gradually replaces 'feelings as intellectual development progresses' (p. 152), or as 'gradually fading away to almost complete demise' (p. 152), as though emotions were a 'dying breed that is gradually being displaced on the stage of history as civilisation and culture grow' (p. 152). Rather, emotions always exist in all cognitive and imaginative contexts. We see this in early childhood education programs that use fairytales where children role-play fairytale characters, such as when they act out being the wolf or Little Red Riding Hood. With the support of the educator, children enter into the imaginary situation of the fairytale, imagining the characters and acting out the plot, with all the drama and emotional tension that is experienced and eventually resolved.

It is through the social relations between the players that emotions are expressed, named and interpreted as feelings—particularly when an early childhood educator works together with the children to realise the roles and to overcome the problems the characters experience in the fairytale plot. That is, emotions become conscious through these social relations. This plays out strongly during the

role play of fairytales and fantasy play when early childhood educators are involved. We begin with an example of an imaginary situation in order to discuss how emotions become conscious as feeling states. Brendan, aged four years and five months, was very popular as a playmate in the kindergarten group but would often lash out at his peers during play for no obvious reason. In discussion with Brendan it became clear that he felt tired and overwhelmed by the demands of the others and needed some space of his own. Rather than disciplining and withdrawing him from the play, staff created a 'nest' for Brendan in a more private area and furnished this with soft toys, books and small figures to support imaginative play. When Brendan showed signs of stress, staff would suggest that he might be feeling stressed and that he may wish to 'fly' into his nest. After some time with staff helping Brendan to name his emotions as feelings, staff were delighted to see Brendan run through the playroom at great speed to leap into his nest, rather than resort to violence. The nest was both a physical and imaginary space for Brendan to feel safe and to deal with his feelings, where emotion regulation was afforded through the support structures put in place. This strategy was continued by the school Brendan attended the following year and Brendan's level of emotion regulation also helped him to develop greater empathy towards others, and he quickly became a support person for new children arriving at the school. At the inter-psychological level (between people and situations) these kinds of social interactions and emotional expressions are not necessarily conscious. It is through the *intentional* pedagogical framing of the educator that we believe that the emotions are more likely to become conscious—that is, to be understood at the intra-psychological level (individual understanding of feeling state).

Holodynski (2009) argues that 'emotional experiences are mediated by the interpretations of their caregivers' (p. 149). We see this in group settings in the example of *Snow White and the seven dwarfs*, when the educator reads or tells the story and then invites the children to role-play the characters and the plot, supporting them in this process. It is through the repeated reading or retelling of the story that children experience the emotions prevalent in the story, such as jealousy and love. That is, children experience these emotions in the story initially at the inter-psychological level. It is through the *intentional teaching* of the educator that over time children come to name and conceptualise these emotions as feeling states, such as love and jealousy. When children can do this, they are thought to be interacting with feeling at the intra-psychological level (that is, with conscious understanding). A cultural-historical perspective suggests that emotions are learned through social context and are usually mediated by others (Baker, Fenning & Crnic, 2011; Geangu, Benga, Stahl & Striano, 2011; Holodynski, 2009) as noted in the example of Brendan (in an everyday fantasy situation in his centre) and in the example of using fairytales.

The dialectical relations between inter-psychological and intra-psychological functioning helps explain the consciousness of emotions that we see occurring within social settings where fairytales are being role-played (Vygotsky, 1934/1987, 1933/1999). Central here is the pedagogical practices of the early childhood educator. In Table 1 below we show examples of pedagogical practices that support emotion regulation in the context of fairytales. In Column 1 we give an example of common fairytales that could lend themselves to emotion regulation. Column 2 introduces the specific EYLF outcomes as a case example of how curricula can be aligned with, and supportive of, the imaginary and emotional situation of the particular fairytale introduced by the educator, and Column 3 focuses on the relations between the real situation and the imaginary situation where the child can consciously explore emotions. The emotional significance attached to aspects of the fairytale, or specifically created by the early childhood educator, is illustrated in Column 4, while Column 5 draws out elements of emotional reflection possible within the specific fairytale. Together, the five columns act as a pedagogical framework for developing emotion regulation in group settings.

We now draw upon these cultural-historical concepts to discuss the elements of the framework, examining each column and theorising the significance of fairytales for emotion regulation in group settings.

*Dynamic relations between real and imaginary worlds:* The genre of fairytales keeps in constant tension the real and imagined world through a unique rhythm that over repeated readings and performances becomes predictable. It is through repetition of storytelling and dramatisation that children create their own imaginary situation or 'play world', reliving story narratives with the support of their teachers (see Baumer, Ferholt & Lecusay, 2005; Hakkarainen, 2004; Lindqvist, 1995; Rainio, 2008). El'koninova (1999/2002) has stated that:

*As children listen to a story, they imitate the actions of the characters, repeat what they say, experience the various episodes as real, and cry. Sometimes they try to 'switch off' if they are empathising too strongly (they pinch themselves; they turn away from the storyteller; they ask that certain parts of the text be omitted, etc.) (p. 40).*

These experiences of fairytales linked with the formulation of a problem scenario to solve, such as trying out and then

Table 1. Pedagogical framework for emotional reflection

Fairytale	EYLF	Dynamic relations between real and imaginary worlds	Emotional significance	Emotional reflection
<b>Snow White and the seven dwarfs</b>	<i>Outcome 1:</i> Children have a strong sense of identity: Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Joint adult-child dramatisation of fairytale</li> <li>2. General discussion of different emotions in the fairytale</li> <li>3. Drawings of the fairytale—as a storyboard</li> <li>4. Use of texts with teacher and child modelling of emotional expressions as particular feeling states</li> </ol>	<p><i>Educator perspective:</i> Exaggerated facial and bodily expressions of emotions shown by teacher during dramatisation of fairytale</p> <p><i>Child perspective:</i> Exploring different ways of expressing emotions in role play</p>	Jealousy Love Sadness Grief
<b>Hansel and Gretel</b>	<i>Outcome 2:</i> Children are connected with and contribute to their world: Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discussion of feelings both positive and negative, such as fear, curiosity</li> <li>2. Problem solving ideas in dramatic play, 'what if?'; 'what else could you do?'</li> <li>3. Use of figurines or puppets</li> <li>4. Use of texts</li> </ol>	<p><i>Educator perspective:</i> Creating a diorama of the fairytale, using figures which have different facial expressions</p> <p><i>Child perspective:</i> Children create a storyboard which depicts the emotional expression of the different fairytale characters at different times in the story plot (emotional journey)</p>	Curiosity Fear Triumph Security

expanding upon the strategies for keeping Snow White safe from the wicked stepmother, allow children to move from the imaginary world to the real world, discussing both strategies and the emotions inherent in the story, such as fear, safety, and love. Through this children have the potential to learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect as discussed in most international curricula, but noted specifically in the EYLF (Outcome 1).

El'koninova (1999/2002) has captured the features of the fairytale genre as:

*... cultural texts into external and internal, ascribing magic properties to the external. A border represented in a text by a river (bridge, forest, seashore, etc.) divides space into a place close to where the main character is usually situated (internal) and a place that is distant from it (external). But there is one more division that is active for both the narrator and the listener: a place close to them (internal)—it cannot be contiguous with the magical space—and a place far from them (a distant kingdom) that borders on the magical world. This place is internal for the text of the story, but for the listener it is a part of the external make-believe world. Thus, both models function at the same time (p. 475/pp. 39–40).*

The use of figurines or small puppets offers children the opportunity to explore some of these emotions at arm's length. By manipulating the figurines they can verbalise their feelings without taking on the emotions as they would if they were the actor. The figures position children at the border between the real world and the imaginary world. The children's arms, acting as the mechanism for engagement or withdrawal from the emotionally charged play, give the child agency in the emotions that are being explored. In fantasy and fairytale play children flicker between the imaginary situation and the real world, but with the aid of the puppets or figurines, they have a greater distance or 'yard stick' for moving into and out of the imaginary situation they are playing out. That is, the child can physically flicker between the real world into the imaginary world with the puppet or figurines—controlling how long they stay within emotionally charged situations (for example, self-managing how long the figurines will interact with the wicked witch in Hansel and Gretel). We also see this flickering through the example of Marcus, aged five years, who was distressed by his parents' separation and had begun soiling when visiting his father's home. Marcus used the sand tray (the water trolley filled with sand, and a collection of natural and building materials with a range of non-descript figures) for play to act out his real feelings by entering the imaginary world of play, where he created a forest outside the town and took the 'naughty father' to be lost (as is also frequently noted in fairytales, such as Hansel and Gretel). Marcus repeatedly played this imaginary situation over several weeks, while his teacher encouraged him to talk about the feelings of

the characters as he played in the sand tray. Eventually Marcus resolved the crisis by sending an imaginary taxi/cab to bring the father figure back. He also stopped soiling when on access visits.

*Emotional reflection:* Zaporozhets (1994/2005) states that 'emotion is not itself an activation process, but a special form of reflection of reality used for the mental control of activation' (p. 53). In fairytales the child experiences moral situations and 'begins to evaluate his [sic] own actions, thus passing to the stage of self-regulating behavior' (p. 53). Emotional reflection captures how children and educators together come to understand specific emotions as a feeling state, such as fear, while also drawing upon these feeling states to study everyday situations found within the fairytale event. We see this when the child is listening to the story, anticipating the pending problem (for example, the wicked stepmother presenting the poison apple to Snow White), where the emotional tension builds (e.g. anxiety) (see also, Iakovleva, 1997/2003). Here we may find that the central character in the fairytale may be unconcerned (for example, Snow White accepting the apple), not suspecting anything: '[O]nly in part do we experience the effects as they are given to the characters in a drama; most of the time we experience them not with, but because of, the characters' (Vygotsky, 1925/1971, p. 208). A level of emotional reflection emerges as a result of the telling and re-telling, or reading and re-reading, or role-playing of fairytales. The fairytales become well-known by the children and the emotions that are expressed through the characters in the plot can be uncovered through discussion and role play (Smagorinsky, 2011). Through this experience in group role play children also have the possibility to develop a sense of belonging and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active participation as found in most international curricula, but as specifically discussed in the EYLF (Outcome 2).

*Emotional significance:* In group settings, multiple perspectives and interaction sequences are brought to bear (Vallotton & Ayoub, 2010) on the interpretation and role-playing of fairytales, such as *Snow White and the seven dwarfs*. Early childhood educators in the telling or reading of fairytales emotionally charge aspects of the storyline to make them come alive (see Baumer, Ferholt & Lecusay, 2005), and often the emotional response or expression is foregrounded, as seen when the educator tells the children about the prince seeing Snow White in the glass coffin and how he falls in love (for example, a hands on the heart gesture), or discussing the grief of the seven dwarfs, who decide to place Snow White in the glass coffin. Through exaggerated or explicit references to emotions, children notice emotions and begin to recognise their own raw emotions as particular feeling states that matter in their cultural communities. This is helpful for children in recognising the feeling state of others, thus supporting children in learning to interact in

relation to others with care, empathy and respect (see EYLF Outcome 1).

Fairytales always include feelings in the plot, which educators can give emotional significance—showing and naming them as particular feelings. Some emotions, such as jealousy, are far more difficult to show physically, while others are easier, such as feeling sad. In research with infants, Holodynski (2009) has found that adults can and do make links between the 'emotional trigger, emotional expression, and the action that led to the construction of situation-dependent, emotion-specific appraisal' (p. 150). Educators who explore fairytales within group settings can make conscious the emotions in the story, and in relation to how children might be feeling or have felt in the past. An awareness of one's emotional state potentially supports children to successfully self-regulate, and hence interact more effectively with peers (see also Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 of the EYLF).

It is through educators using fairytales in their programs that children are provided with the possibilities for experiencing emotional tension, engagement, and self-awareness in emotionally imaginative situations. It is through the pedagogical framing of fairytales as planned by the early childhood educator that emotional competence is supported and emotion regulation becomes possible, thus actively supporting the outcomes of most international curricula, including the EYLF. Fairytales provide a rich and engaging context for young children to explore emotions, think more consciously about their emotions as particular feelings, and through this, to self-regulate.

Vygotsky (1994) introduced the term 'perezhivanie'<sup>2</sup> to capture the idea of the unity of thinking and emotions. This term captures the dynamic system of the educator, the educator's program as illustrated here through fairytales, and the child(ren) within group settings (rather than only the family). In a cultural-historical reading of emotions we go beyond a universal view of emotions, where emotions are one of the domains that teachers observe and plan for in children's development. Rather, we conceptualise emotions in unity with thinking (Bell & Wolfe, 2004).

In a cultural-historical reading of emotions as 'perezhivanie', children come to think about their emotions as particular feeling states, such as fear or joy. How these emotions come to be expressed, named and understood by children as particular feeling states, is totally dependent upon the cultural community in which the child(ren) live. Fairytales provide educators with an intentionally planned genre and cultural tool (see Table 1) for affording a sustained

interaction about emotions. It is this dynamic system, conceptualised and created by the educator, where we find the unity of emotions and thinking. These pedagogically created conditions lead to a conscious understanding of emotions.

It is acknowledged that emotion regulation is but one dimension of children's emotional development (in unity with thinking). It is the dialectical relations between emotions and feelings (thinking about one's expressed emotions) within a pedagogical system of human relations, captured as the Vygotskian concept of 'perezhivanie', that give new directions for educators. As shown in this section, fairytales create the dynamic conditions for the development of emotions in unity with thinking in group settings.

## Conclusion

With more children attending child care than ever before (see OECD, 2006) the role of the educator in developing emotion regulation has become increasingly important. In this theoretical paper we have brought together some of the concepts associated with the development of emotions in unity with thinking. We have specifically drawn upon cultural-historical theory because it offers new ideas for how emotions and cognition (Ferholt, 2010) act in unity to support the emotional development of children during the telling, reading and role-playing of fairytales.

In this paper we theorised the place of fairytales for supporting emotion regulation in group settings, where fairytales offer a cultural device for making conscious children's feeling state. That is, we discussed how fairytale characters react to the emotionally charged situations they meet in the story plot (for example, feeling frightened by the wolf in Little Red Riding Hood), and how educators create the conditions for children to more explicitly explore emotions consciously. Through this the unity of affect and cognition becomes evident in ways not previously discussed in the emotion regulation literature (Bell & Wolfe, 2004; De Houwer & Hermans, 2010; Gimenez-Dasi et al., 2009). By consciously considering emotions in fairytales, a cognitive orientation to emotions results, which we believe supports children's emotion regulation.

In this paper we noted that fairytales can have an evaluative function for children, and educators can plan programs which emotionally energise children's play so that the feelings and emotions can be made visible and conscious to children. We have also discussed how cultural-historical theory can support the outcomes of curricula, such as the EYLF, in realising the development of emotions in unity with thinking. As argued by Sumsion, Barnes, Cheeseman, Harrison, Kennedy and Stonehouse (2009), the EYLF supports a range of theoretical tools for informing practice. A cultural-historical reading of emotion regulation supports this important agenda, and gives educators another tool for their pedagogical toolkit.

<sup>2</sup> 'Perezhivanie' is a Russian term. It is acknowledged as being difficult to translate into English (see Smagorinsky, 2011). As such, the term has been introduced at the end of this paper so that the reader has had an opportunity to see through the example of fairytales the complexity of this concept.

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## **PAPER 6**

### **A Cultural-Historical Reading of the Emotional Development of Young Children (Published in Asia-Pacific Journal of Research , May 2014)**

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# A Cultural-Historical Reading of the Emotional Development of Young Children

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## Abstract

The telling of fairytales has been a longstanding practice within the field of early childhood education in many communities across the Asia Pacific region. But what do we know about how educators use fairytales for the development of emotions for preschool aged children? In drawing upon cultural-historical theory (Vygotsky, 1971, 1987, 1999), this paper presents the findings of a study into how fairytales were introduced to preschool aged children (n=30; from 3.3 to 5.3 years with mean age 4.2 years) and theorises the value of fairytales for the development of children's emotions in the context of the pedagogical conditions that are created through the use of fairytales. A pedagogical framework is introduced which captures the unique characteristics of fairy tales in the context of the pedagogical features that were used by the educators in the study presented. The key concept of affective imagination or emotional imagination is used to discuss the fairytale of "Jack and the Beanstalk" from the data set of 74 hours of digital video observations gathered over 16 preschool sessions.

**Keywords** : emotion regulation, emotional development, cultural-historical theory, fairytales

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## Introduction

Much of the general literature into the emotional development of children treats emotions as an individual characteristic of the child (see Flear & Hammer, 2013; Quiñones, 2013). In contrast, Vygotsky (1971) in his analysis of the psychology of art stated that “The feelings and emotions aroused by a work of art are socially conditioned” (p. 21). In this reading, emotional development can only be understood as a social condition and relation between the child and their social and material environment. This perspective opens up new lines of thinking about the emotional development of children in the birth to eight years period.

As children experience more intensive social relations and are oriented to fundamental human activity within those relations, children acquire a new sense of the social situation, where new goals, motives and norms of relationships between people become more consciously experienced. Zaporozhets (2002) found that through engaging in specifically created social situations, that “children gradually form more complex kinds of anticipating emotional regulation of [their] behavior” (pp. 64-65).

Interestingly, Zaporozhets (2002) also argued that fairytales can provide the necessary conditions for intensifying and making explicit emotions in social relations. Fairytale scholars have long pointed to the affective appeal of fairytales for children (Bettleheim, 1977) and the emotional bond between teller and listener (Warner, 1995). The issue of emotions in fairytales is gaining increasing attention in different areas of the literature, including sociology (Costa, 2012), language technology (Mohammad, 2011), computational linguistics (Volkova, Mohler, Meurers, Gerdemann & Bülthoff, 2010), and the intersection of folklore and popular culture in Japan (Shamoon, 2013). In the field of early childhood education, the role of fairytales in emotion regulation is gaining prominence (Hohr, 2000; Flear & Hammer, 2013). According to Zaporozhets (2002), the fairytale acts as an ideal or developed form of emotional-cognitive activity. That is,

In the course of such emotional-cognitive activity, the child mentally occupies a specific position in the proposed circumstances, accomplishes certain imaginary actions, and acts out diverse variations of interaction with the environment in an ideal plane. Thus, he [sic] has an opportunity not only to envision, but also to experience the meaning of given situation, of the actions undertaken, and of their potential consequences for himself and for other people. . . in the process of children’s assisting of and

empathizing with a literary hero. . . this activity initially is formed externally and extensively, and presupposes participation in directly perceived and experienced events. Only later, and only on this basis, can such an activity acquire an internal nature and be realized in the ideal plane of emotional imagination. (pp. 57-58)

In line with Zaporozhets (2002), it is argued in this paper that emotional imagination is realized through social activity rather than as something internally derived.

In the empirical research of Zaporozhets (2002) he states that during the role-play or story telling of fairytales, where problem situations present themselves, such as how it is possible for Jack in the fairytale of “Jack and the Beanstalk” (see Table 1 for story line) to secure an income after selling the family cow, the child “first mentally acts out the “diverse variants of actions” and through doing this, feels the sense of “their consequences” in both the story plot and through the social relations in which the child exists. The emotional imagination is first experienced socially, and only with repeated experience (El’koninova, 2002) does it become internalized as a conscious feeling state (see Damasio, 2003). That is, emotional imagination forms when the necessary social conditions are present. Zaporozhets (2005) argues that the intensification and explicit consideration of these emotionally intense situations can be created through the telling and role-playing of fairytales in early childhood settings.

In this paper we present the findings of a study which specifically followed 30 children as they engaged in the reading, role-play and puppet play of a fairytale with their teacher and during free play. Through an analysis of both the psychological characteristics of fairytales as derived from the existing literature and pedagogical conditions created by the teacher, we theorise the role of fairytales for the emotional development of children. In the first part of our paper we discuss a cultural-historical theorization of emotional development in relation to fairytales. In the second part of the paper we introduce the study and examples of data in order to elaborate the unique pedagogical features of fairytales for creating the conditions for emotional development in the context of early childhood practice. A pedagogical framework is presented in the form of a table, where the example of “Jack and the Beanstalk” is shown to illustrate how fairytales may be used by teachers for the development of children’s emotions.

## A Cultural-Historical Reading of How Fairytales Can Create the Conditions for the Development of Children's Emotion Regulation

In his critical examination of the arts (literature, fables, poetry, fairytales, drama, and visual arts), Vygotsky (1971) noted that in the broader empirical literature, “scholars have excluded all intellectual processes from aesthetic analysis” (p. 33). In the studies of emotions the opposite has been noted. That is, traditional research seeks to study emotions devoid of its relationship to thinking. But thinking about emotions, as particular feeling states (Damasio, 2003), is foregrounded in a cultural-historical reading of emotion regulation (Holodynski & Friedlmeier, 2006).

Emotions, imagination and thinking were central concepts for Vygotsky. Vygotsky (1971) suggested that “Emotions play a dominant role in artistic creativity. They are generated by the content itself and can be of any sort or kind: grief, sorrow pity, anger, sympathy indignation horror, and so on.” (p. 33). This is particularly pertinent to children experiencing storytelling and role-play of fairytales, which the structuralists found to be replete with binary oppositions (Levy Strauss, 1978). In contrast, Vygotsky (1971) suggested that “the reader of the fable [and fairytale] will experience contradictory feelings and emotions which evolve simultaneously with equal strength” (p. 139). For instance, “The protagonist of a drama is therefore a character who combines two conflicting affects, that of the norm and that of its violation; this is why we perceive him [sic] dynamically, not as an object but as a process” (p. 231). Although this blending of fairytale dichotomies is noted in contemporary Japanese filmmaking by Cardi (2013), it has been noted in cultural-historical theory where dialectical logic is used, rather than Cartesian logic, that this blending is conceptualized as a synthesis of two relational dualisms.

In drama the conflicting affects emerge as a kind of emotional duality where “the hero weeps, while the spectator laughs. An obvious dualism is created” (Vygotsky, 1971, p. 232). This dualism only exists because there is an audience. This is also noted in the topsy-turvy world of nursery rhymes:

By dragging a child into a topsy-turvy world, we help his [sic] intellect work, because the child becomes interested in creating such a topsy-turvy world for himself in order to become more effectively

the master of the laws governing the real world. These absurdities could be dangerous for a child if they screened out the real interrelationships between ideas and objects. Instead, they push them to the fore, and emphasize them. They enhance (rather than weaken) the child's perception of reality. (p. 258)

Vygotsky (1966) also suggested that an emotional contradiction occurs in children's play where they experience the joy of playing, whilst also feeling frightened because the content of the play is scary. Kravtsov and Kravtsova (2010) highlight the importance of the dual position that children occupy when they are engaged in play. They state that the child can be the subject of the play, that is, acting out the play performance, whilst also being able to control the play at will, that is, acting as the director of the play. This dual positioning, they argue is important for both the development of the play script, but also for the development of the child as they are both the subject and director of the play. Kravtsov and Kravtsova (2010) argue that in play, as in role-playing fairytales, "The child learns to view the situation from two perspectives at the same time" (p. 32).

The "dual (or two)-positional" aspect of play allows the player to orient him/herself to the role of another, the character or hero being "represented" in the game. ... These two-sides of play (as the player and nonplayer) allow the participant to be the subject of the play, and the child to control the play at will. (p. 33)

It is argued by Kravtsov and Kravtsova (2010) that the development of higher mental functions occurs when children are both the subject and the director of their play – that is, they take on a dual position. Vygotsky (1987) referenced this development as the dynamic movement from interpsychological to intrapsychological functioning of the child (Vygotsky, 1997). Kravtsov and Kravtsova (2010) suggest "that the ability to master one's natural mind and behavior, in whatever form it is presented, represents the path toward human cultural development" (p. 28) where the "logic and laws governing the emergence and development of higher mental functions" are evident because "Natural functions become cultural functions through one's ability to self-regulate and master them" (p. 28). Taken together, the studies of Vygotsky (1971) and Kravtsov and Kravtsova (2010), suggest that in children's play and in role-play in the performance of the theatre (audience or player), the possibilities for children to take a dual position is heightened, and therefore it can be argued that the role play of

fairytale is likely to support children's emotional development.

El'koninova (2002) noted in her empirical studies of why children like to hear fairytale stories over and over again, that complex emotional-cognitive reflection is realized through the repetition of the fairytales, where emotional anticipation of events in the fairytale plot itself create the conditions for the emotional development of the child. The "mental activity" is achieved during the process of the reading of fairytales through the creation of what Zaporozhets (2002) calls an "emotional image". He argues that an emotional image lies in contrast with a "purely rational image". It is through the creation of an emotional image by the child that "emotional reflection" becomes possible (p. 63) and therefore the possibilities for emotion regulation are heightened. It was found by Zaporozhets (2002) that during children's emotional imagining that this "sets their special motivating, activating character and ensures their regulatory influence on the orientation and dynamics of subsequent practical activity. This influence, however, is not direct; it is mediated by internal mental activity, which develops in the image field, that is, in the field of the emotional-cognitive reflection of the surrounding reality" (p. 63). This theorisation has particular relevance for an analysis of the structure of fairytales for supporting the emotional development of young children.

But the history of fairytales is complex and transcultural (see Haase, 2010), with early versions emanating from Asia (Dundes, 1988), undergoing a long intertextual development which has been characterised as Eurocentric (see Jameson, 1988 on Cinderella in China), but being reincorporated in new and creative ways into, for example, Japanese fairytale collections, cinema and popular culture (Cardi, 2013; Fraser, 2013; Mayako, 2013; Ridgely, 2013). We take as the basis for our structural analysis of the fairytale, the story of "Jack and the Beanstalk", which has been popular with early childhood educators in Australia (see Fleer & Hammer, 2013) and on this basis present the findings of a study into the pedagogical conditions that were created. We theorise from this the value of fairytales for the emotional development of young children in preschool settings. However, we also note that other forms of storytelling can also have the same results, but the pathways and pedagogical conditions may be different (see Ferholt, 2010). We also suggest that modified versions of traditional fairytales are part of many young children's culture through on-line games, Disney films and the proliferation of DVDs.

## **Study Design**

We were interested to know what pedagogical conditions and psychological characteristics become evident when the fairytale of “Jack and the Beanstalk” is introduced to young children in a preschool setting. In order to answer this research question we set up a naturalistic study design where we specifically invited the educators to use the cultural device of fairytales (see Fleer & Hammer, 2013) in the centre as a basis of an extended science and technology program.

### **The research site**

The study took place in a university-run children's centre in a culturally diverse suburb in the south east of Australia.

The centre is well equipped with a variety of physical spaces that facilitate the collective social practice of learning. Prior to this project, children in the centre had been working with fairytales introduced and dramatised by the preschool children on an outdoor stage where younger children had participated. For this study the teachers introduced the story of “Jack and the Beanstalk” and framed a series of activities, such as making components of the story for the “Jack corner” (imaginary space), role play using puppets, and investigations into the science concepts arising from the story, including the concepts of sound and plant growth. The children made an animated representation of their understanding of the story and of the growth of the beanstalk.

### **Participants**

The study took place in the preschool room, with 30 children who were at the beginning of the research aged between 3.3 and 5.3 years (mean age 4.2 years). Some children attended between 1 and 5 days per week with most coming 3 days per week. The study ran over a period of 5 weeks (filming did not take place for one week during this period due to staff illness). Three teachers from the preschool room participated in the study. The preschool room leader has a Bachelor degree and 5 years' experience in this centre. The other teachers

are Diploma qualified.

### **Video observations**

A total of 16 preschool sessions were video recorded by a team of research assistants. This involved gathering data from the beginning of the day until the end of the morning preschool session on most occasions, and on 4 days the research assistants filmed the afternoon session. One camera video recorded the children and staff as they were engaged in aspects of the program which featured fairytales, and a second camera mounted on a tripod captured the broad interactions in the centre. A total of 74 hours of video observations were captured.

## **The Structure of Fairytales for Supporting Children's Emotional Development**

In this section we discuss important structural features of fairytales drawn from the literature, but in the context of the findings of the study where we examined both the pedagogical elements and the psychological characteristics evident for emotional development. We argue that fairytales have 'content'<sup>1</sup> (Kravtsova, 2009; Shopina, 2009) that gives the pedagogical structure for actively supporting the emotional development of young children in group situations. Bredikyte (2011), in her playworlds research, uses fairytales for raising questions and aggravating contradictions, noting 'there is always a dramatic collision in a good story' (p. 106). In particular, a synthesis of the literature suggests that there are eight structural elements of fairytales that support children's development (see Campbell, 1993; El'koninova, 2001; Hohn, 2000; Meletinsky et al., 1974; Propp, 1968; Tiffin, 2009; Vygotsky, 1971). They are:

1. Opening phrase
2. The initial situation

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<sup>1</sup> The word content in Russian, *soderzhanie*, denotes everything that is held within the fairytale: the plot, characters and structure of the fairytale, the real substance of the tale.

3. The preliminary test: misfortune befalls the hero
4. Counter action: the crossing of the border
5. The main test
6. The supplementary tests: mirror tensions (first and second tests)
7. Return of the hero
8. Closing phrase

These structural elements are used as an analytic for examining the data gathered for the possibilities for emotional development. We begin by introducing one example of the preschool children role-playing “Jack and the Beanstalk” during free play within the preschool room. This is followed by a detailed analysis of this example using the structural elements of the fairytale in the context of the whole program operating within the room where the extract from the full data set is discussed.

#### **Extract from Data Set of Free Play in the Jack Corner**

**Context:** One area of the preschool has been set up to represent the fairytale world of “Jack and the Beanstalk”. Two bookshelves give a boundary to the space. It is known to the children as the Jack Corner. Inside this area is a table where all the props for the fairytale are placed. A brightly painted cardboard box made by the children represents the castle. A bucket with sand which is used as a garden to plant the beans, and a brightly painted 1 meter cylinder with cardboard leaves representing the giant beanstalk, are placed near the table. Fabric glove puppets to represent the Giant, Jack and his mother, and a plastic cow are on the table. On a chair near the table is a CD player which plays the fairytale story of “Jack and the Beanstalk”.

**Video observation:** Two girls, Lara and Summer are in the Jack Corner. They each have a glove puppet on their hand and are facing each other. Lara is holding the Jack puppet and Summer is holding the Giant puppet. Playing on the CD is the fairytale story of “Jack and the Beanstalk”. The storyteller on the CD says “Fee Fi Foo Fum” as Summer screws up her nose, waves her glove puppet, and sternly and loudly says the words along with the storyteller “Fee Fi Foo Fum!” With each word, she waves the glove puppet up and down to accentuate the

drama of the moment. Lara moves her Jack puppet over to the castle and goes to hide him, when Summer quickly intercepts her actions and says “No! We are not hiding him yet”. Lara is anticipating the next scene in the fairytale. Summer is correcting her premature role playing by giving instructions to adjust the situation. Meanwhile the storyteller continues with the fairytale. Summer catches up to the place in the story by quickly moving her puppet and loudly saying “dead” and “bread” at the end of each part of the sentence told by the storyteller: “Be he alive or be he **dead**; I will grind his bones to make my **bread**”. Summer’s tonal quality for the word “dead” is firm and definitive, whilst for the word “**bread**” it is eerie and evil, mirroring the music which plays along with the storyline. The storyteller says “Where is he?” referring to the Jack puppet who is now hidden in the castle, to which Summer responds firmly and defiantly “Nowhere!”. ...As there are only two children, but 3 characters in the story (Jack, the Giant and the mother) Summer picks up another glove puppet and asks “The Mother?” followed by “This is the Mother. Dad doesn’t look after the Giant”... In the next part of the story, both children hold their puppets acting out the robbery that follows in the story. As the storyteller explains the robbery, Summer takes the Jack puppet and grabs the bags of money from inside the castle, she then takes the Jack puppet over to the beanstalk and purposefully and quickly runs Jack down the beanstalk, as Lara moves across to the bottom of the beanstalk with her Mother puppet and says “You got the money?” to which Summer replies “Yes” showing a smile. Later in the story the storyteller says: “Quick bring me the axe. The Giant is chasing after me. Jack grabs the axe and swings at the beanstalk which comes tumbling down”. Here Summer follows the storyline carefully by both saying the words and swinging Jack into the beanstalk, toppling the prop to the floor. As Summer does this, she smiles and throws the puppet violently to the ground saying “Bam” and laughs expressively.

It is possible to note an emotional quality to the role-play of the children during free play in the Jack Corner. In order to understand the emotional intensity that is represented by the children in their free role play, we turn to a cultural-historical analysis of the fairytale in the context of the full data set. We feature the traditional tale of “Jack and the Beanstalk” (Jacobs, 1890).

### **Opening Phrase**

Once upon a time and its many variants are opening stock phrases that together with the closing phrase enclose the tale and signal to the child they are entering an imaginary situation. In the analysis of the full data set for the introduction of an opening phrase, it was revealed that each time the teachers told, read or performed a puppet play of “Jack and the Beanstalk”, the phrase “Once upon a time” was heard. It was evident that this signaled to the children at the onset that the story they were about to hear was a fairytale. All other stories read to the children during the observation period did not begin with this sentence. Here the emotional experience they were about to embark upon through the fairytale was clearly marked for the children.

### **The Initial Situation**

The fairytale of “Jack and the Beanstalk” is set in the home of a widow and her only son, who are poor. They own a cow whose milk provides their income. These are the essential details of the story. There are no complicating extra details for the children to comprehend. The homely family setting resonates with the children. The missing family members establish a tension between Jack and his mother. It is suggested by Vygotsky (1971) that the problem situation is understood when an everyday and meaningful context is created for the children. An analysis of the data set showed the children actively engaged in making the props for the fairytale. They made the props with the story in mind, often role-playing elements of the story as they worked. The simplicity of the situation was also captured in the extract above, when Summer picked up another glove puppet and asked “The mother?” followed by “This is the Mother. Dad doesn’t look after the Giant.” Summer knew the storyline well and understood the initial situation that was captured through the role played by the mother puppet who was initially angry with Jack.

### **The Preliminary Test: Misfortune Befalls the Hero**

Fairytales usually contain a series of tests for the hero of the story. The first of these tests

triggers the action of the tale and is referred to as the preliminary or negative test: a misfortune or lack of a desirable object is introduced. For instance, in the fairytale of “Jack and the Beanstalk”, the cow’s milk dries up, and the family has no income. This sets up the central conflict of the story. This function mirrors the demands children face in their lives (Fleer, 2012). It is the preliminary test, in which the values and personal qualities of the hero are established (Hohr, 2000). We see this conflict played out in the role play in the extract when the children use the Jack puppet to take the bags of money from inside the castle and purposefully go down the beanstalk quickly, and where Lara says “You got the money” to which Summer replies “Yes”. Stealing is justified because of the misfortune bestowed on the family.

### **Counter Action: The Crossing of the Border**

In the fairytale the hero responds to the negative test and starts a counter action, a test of his or her qualities, and if he or she passes, the hero is given a magical object or magical assistance with the forthcoming main test. For instance, Jack crosses the threshold of the home and leaves by himself for market, meeting a ‘funny-looking’ man who negotiates to swap five magic beans for the cow. He establishes himself as simple and trusting in this exchange. When his mother finds out that he has sold the cow for 5 beans, she sends him to bed and throws the beans out of the window. Jack feels as sorry for his mother as he does for himself, establishing his pure motives and paving the way for children to empathise with him. We also see this border between the Giant’s castle and Jack’s home as exemplified by the beanstalk. Summer, smiling in response to being home safely with the bags of money, suggests a different emotional quality to that of being in the castle hiding from the Giant, as demonstrated through the quick descent down the beanstalk. The beanstalk acts as the border between these two emotionally charged contexts.

Both El’koninova (2001) and Hohr (2000) find Meletinsky et al.’s<sup>2</sup> work of relevance in the area of the tensions within fairytales: Hohr (2000) notes ‘the opposition between the preliminary test and the main test is fundamental in the fairytale’ (p. 91). It is suggested that

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<sup>2</sup> El’koninova (2001) and Hohr (2000) are referring to Meletinsky et al. Russian edition of 1969. In this paper we also refer to the English translation of 1974.

in the preliminary test, the values and personal qualities of the hero are always established.

### **The Main Test**

According to Hohr (2000) the main test results in balance being restored, often at a higher level. Zipes (2011) symbolises this restoration of balance in terms of the return to home. In the fairytale of “Jack and the Beanstalk”, the Beanstalk grows overnight up to the clouds and Jack wakes, gets dressed, and climbs out the window and up the Beanstalk. The actions happen sequentially and without explanation. Jack benefits from the magical assistance of the beans and is helped again in the magical realm by the Giant’s wife who initially feeds him and hides him from the Giant. She also warns him that the Giant eats boys for breakfast, establishing the Giant as the villain, and establishing an emotional tension between the Giant and Jack as the oppressed hero. As a result of successfully resolving the main test, the lives of Jack and his mother are reconstituted on a higher plane with the wealth provided by the bag of gold that Jack takes from the Giant. We saw this re-enactment of the tale through Lara simultaneously saying the words to the story with the storyteller on a number of occasions, but also at the end where the storyteller says: “Quick bring me the axe...”. We saw through Summer’s actions of swinging Jack into the beanstalk, toppling the prop to the floor, that she appeared to show pleasure at passing this main test through smiling and by throwing the Giant puppet violently to the ground saying “bam” and laughing.

### **The Supplementary Tests: Mirror Tensions**

The fairytale literature shows that there may also be further tests and responses which mirror the initial negative test and main tests. For instance, a new misfortune may befall the hero. The first of these supplementary tests generates a new problem. In the case of “Jack and the Beanstalk”, the bag of gold runs out. In mirroring the preliminary test, a new source of income is needed. The second test is concerned with identifying who is the worthy person in the story. Jack’s victory over the villain Giant re-establishes Jack as the hero. We saw the re-establishment of Jack as the hero in the extract through the forceful actions of Summer as she threw the puppet to the ground and laughed about the fate of the Giant at the end of the tale.

Thus a system of tensions occurs within the structure of the fairytale. The sequence of actions is hierarchical, and the formal goal of the fairytale is a resolution or unity, such as a wedding at the end, or as in Jack's case, being rich. The magical assistance serves this goal (Hohr, 2000).

### **Return of the Hero**

We know from the semantic structure described by Elkoninova (2001), that the Giant cannot be allowed to cross the border from his magic realm, delineated by the beanstalk, into the semantic space of Jack and his mother, the garden to their home. Some storytellers are tempted to eliminate killing or cruelty from the story and just have the Giant run away and never be seen again. In the extract the pleasure of being evil and reflecting an eerie quality to the voice during the role play was evident. The story line of potentially 'being dead' by Jack or the Giant dying adds to the emotional tension experienced by the children. Removing this ending or changing the storyline, however, violates the semantic structure and destroys the system of tensions within the tale as it means the magical realm has entered Jack's real world and in the child's mind there remains the nagging question of whether the Giant could return: The time of the tale is not contained within the plot and threatens to leak into the child's life (Elkoninova, 2001). The required cathartic experience (Vygotsky, 1971) allows the child to internalise the experience and begins the return to reality. But this is not possible if the Giant lives on.

### **Closing Phrase**

As with the opening, we also saw a closure to the fairytale: 'And they lived happily ever after'. This phrase signals the final transition from the story world to the child's concrete world. This requires careful mediation by the storyteller, as evident in the study by the use of the same story and phrasing in books, during teacher puppet dramatisation, and through the use of a CD, as was observed in this study. The fairytale is always presented between the opening phrase and closing phrase giving a level of predictability for the children.

### **Pedagogical Conditions**

In fairytales there is predictability to the texts and there is a structure that is consistently followed. This predictable structure allows children to consciously opt to be in the imaginary situation by following the well known storyline, or not, during free play time. This structure also provides educators with the opportunity to create the conditions for exploring with children the emotional tensions inherent in the tales. As was shown in the extract, there are many emotionally charged situations in the fairytale. In the example, both children dramatise the story, re-enacting not only the story actions but reproduce the emotional qualities associated with the emotional tension that is inherent in the fairytale. The story line itself includes: the Mother being angry with Jack for selling the cow for just a few beans; Jack and Mother being frightened by the Giant climbing down the beanstalk; and the emotional anticipation and fear by Jack as the Giant repeats at each phase of the fairytale “Fee Fi Foo Fum...”). The study showed through the example above, that the children re-live these emotionally charged situations during role-play. As such, educators can use the predictable and dramatic structure of fairytales for further developing children’s emotional development. In Table 1 an analysis of the structure of the tale of “Jack and the Beanstalk” is summarized as a pedagogical framework to support educators interested in using this medium for emotional development of children. However, this particular framework may well be applicable to all fairytales of this type (see Aarne & Thompson, 1928) across cultural communities when appropriate fairytales are selected.

A cultural-historical reading of emotions seeks to examine the social and material conditions in which emotions are embedded, rather than focusing on just the individual child. It was found that the playing of the CD of the fairytale created the conditions for role-play that involved explicit expressions of emotions. The narrative on the CD and the predictability of the fairytale genre, helped hold together the full tale, allowing the children to join in the emotionally charged situations easily and to act out the contradictions, where they were both happy in their play, whilst feeling anxious as they empathized with Jack as he tried to get away from the Giant.

Table 1. Pedagogical framework for emotional development

Structural elements	<i>"Jack and the Beanstalk"</i>	Significance	Pedagogical feature
Opening phrase	Once upon a time	Signals entry into the 'time of the tale', the imaginary situation	Teacher mediates the child's entry into the story world, directs children's thoughts to a separate place in their imagination
Initial situation	There was a poor widow with an only son and a cow. All they had to live on was the cow's milk	Jack established as oppressed hero – child identifies with hero. Setting in family home - resonates with child No father or sibling - creates tension	Establish a separate area in the preschool for children to imagine entering into the land of the story (the door of Jack's home). Extends the children's imaginings Use of puppets or figurines to represent the cast of the story
Preliminary or negative test / central conflict / dramatic event	One day the cow gives no milk. Jack and his mother must find a new way to earn a living	Lack of milk (i.e. income) triggers the action of the tale, establishes the central conflict as social (within the family economic situation), the dramatic event (no milk, no income).	Teachers mediate the child's emotional anticipation, for example, teacher comforts child during frightening parts of the tale. Help the child to speculate solutions
Counter action / hero crosses border	Jack sets off to market to sell the family cow. Meets 'funny looking' man who persuades him to swap the cow for five magic beans (magical object). Mother throws the beans out of the window in anger. Sends him to bed with no supper.	Crosses the first boundary (leaving home) – child lives through this with Jack Tests Jack's qualities (simple, trusting) – child further identifies with hero	Teacher supports the narrative by emphasizing the border crossing through physical features in the dramatization or storytelling, such as hoops, ropes or movements from one area to another. This mirrors transitions in the child's world.
Main test	Jack climbs out of the window and up the beanstalk (magical object), walks along the path and enters the castle  Giant's wife feeds and hides Jack from Giant (magical assistance)	The window marks the boundary of Jack's 'real' world, his home. The journey establishes the tension	The window is often overlooked in setting up for children's play, but is important for children to pretend to climb through. The teacher supports this process by asking the children to climb through a model window (e.g. cardboard box or block frame) having the children role play.
		The beanstalk (magical object) 'belongs' to the semantic space of the imaginary world  Familiar homely (if tall) helper makes child feel more comfortable in the story world. Magical objects serve the goal of the final union, i.e. they produce the wealth that Jack and his mother lack.  Fairytale models 'motives' of moral behaviour (oppressed Jack takes from villain Giant to help his mother)	Create an artifact that represents the beanstalk, so that children can imagine themselves as Jack climbing and crossing the border into Giant's world  Magical objects (especially golden ones) resonate with children and facilitate changing the meaning of objects in their fairytale play. Provision of a range of props, including the 'magical objects'.
First supplementary test	The bag of gold runs out Jack climbs the beanstalk again, is helped by Giant's wife (magical assistance) Makes off with the hen that lays the golden eggs (magical object)	Mirrors the preliminary test – a new conflict (no income) and dramatic event as Jack is compelled to cross the border again New tension created	Sequence and repetitions of Giant's 'fee-fi-foo-fum' help children follow the story line. These can be accentuated by the teacher during the storytelling.
Second supplementary test	Jack is 'not content' and makes the third and final ascent No help from Giant's wife Jack takes Golden harp (magical object) gives him away Giant gives chase threatens to enter Jack's realm	Motive for Jack to try a third time	Tension builds for the child. Teachers can emotionally charge these by slowing the pace of story reading, and deliberately building the tension with exaggerated expressions.
Return of hero and threshold struggle	Jack chops down the beans stalk and Giant is killed. Jack and his mother live in greater wealth	The border between the two realms is severed Home reconstituted on higher plane Catharsis as the tale resolves	Child is brought back to the real world in stages by the teacher.  Over time child experiences inner transformation with hero
Closing phrase	They lived happily every after	Signals the transition back to the real world of the child listening to the tale.	Skillful mediation by the teacher as storyteller

(This table draws on the work of Campbell, 1993; Elkoninova, 2001; Hohr, 2000; Meletinsky et al., 1974; Propp, 1968; Tiffin, 2009; Vygotsky, 1971)

## Conclusion

It was shown in this paper that the storyteller creates the conditions where ‘the world of the listener and the world of the story [are brought] together’ (El’koninova, 2001, p. 38). The nature of fairytales, as identified through our analysis of the structure of “Jack and the Beanstalk”, is at the heart of the characteristics described by Bredikyte (2011) in her playworld research. That is, the educator tells the story to create a highly motivating shared theme or imaginary situation; secondly the structure of the fairytale itself supports the active ‘in role’ participation of adults in the shared theme (imaginary situation) and as discussed in Fleer and Hammer (2013), the emotional nature of fairytales encourages a form of affective involvement of adults in the world of the child; and finally the dramatic tension in the play script as identified by Bredikyte (2011) and noted in the analysis of the data, supports the building of the dynamic tension. As has been theorized in this paper, and as shown through our analysis of the structure of fairytales drawing upon data from our study, these conditions created by the storyteller deliberately support the emotional development of young children. Rather than only dealing with emotionally charged situations as they arise in early childhood settings as opportunities to support children’s emotion regulation, this paper has introduced the idea of systematically using fairytales for creating the conditions for supporting children’s development of emotions. The cultural-historical perspective taken in this paper gives another reading of how educators can actively participate in creating the conditions for emotional development in early childhood settings through the use of fairytales.

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## SECTION III

In Vygotsky's original writings, he talks about the idea of 'defectives' and 'child primitives'. Translated at a particular period in time, these now politically incorrect terms capture some important ideas that are foundational for reconceptualising social competence from the individual to the collective construct. Vygotsky (1993) was talking about the consequences of cultural deprivation and emotional neglect: following the Revolution, there were a lot of homeless children wandering around, unattached, disengaged, without family or other social structures:

I permit myself to explain this in relation to cultural development. Both cultural development and practical development are connected with the use of cultural means of thinking, in particular verbal thinking. In recent times, psychologists have discerned a form of child thought which sheds light on the problem of cultural development; this is *child primitiveness*, where the degree of cultural development is minimal.' (Vygotsky, 1993, p. 147)

It is useful to commence this discussion from the perspective of 'child primitives' or vulnerable children, as we refer to these children today, because it is like looking at a photographic negative, allowing us to see the points of difference in the child's development of social competence. That is, we can see more clearly what is not there and bring into sharp relief the essential elements of social development. In particular, we are alerted to a disconnect that occurs for these children due to socio-cultural deprivation, which may, on the surface, appear to be a form of learning disability (Gindis, 2006). The inability of these vulnerable children to use appropriate tools (such as cognitive language) or to recognise social signs, often results in these children being positioned as 'naughty' and removed from social situations, exacerbating the disconnect and reducing any benefit from participating in social educational environments:

Functional cases of behavioral deviation from normal development must be regarded as problem children in the strict sense of the word. The nature of such cases consists for the most part of a *psychological conflict* between the child and his environment. (Vygotsky, 1993, p. 175)

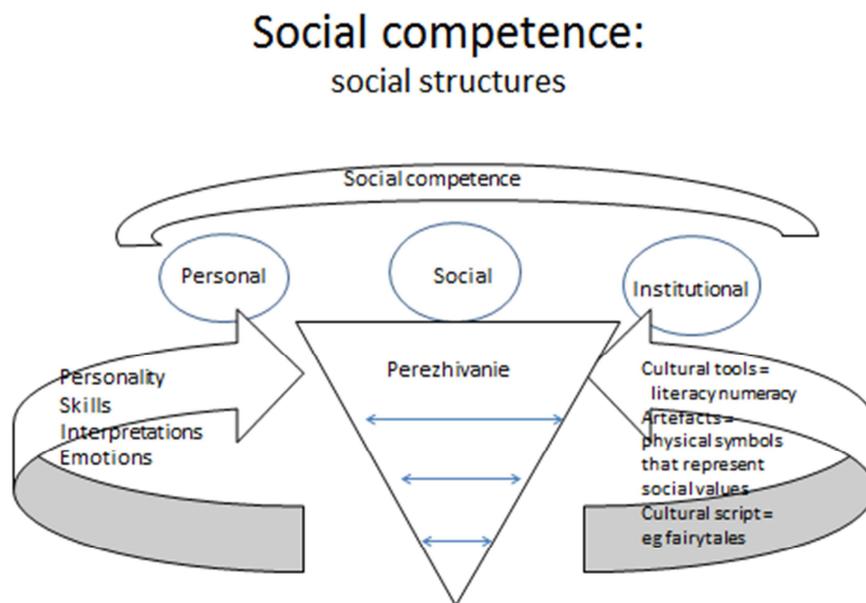
In his discussions of difficult children, Vygotsky emphasises the role of development as the 'key to understanding disintegration' and that disintegration is also 'the key to understanding development' (Vygotsky, 1993). Through this dialectic, we are returned to the notion of 'primitive reactions' as simple revelations of a range of reactions by the child. Vygotsky (1993) suggests that these reactions avoid the entity of personality,

indicating that these are a form of the individual's personal responses and coping mechanisms, borne from the child's earlier experiences. This is exhibited in the example Vygotsky cites of the girl of Tartar origin who is unable to answer assessment questions if she cannot see the subject being discussed. Vygotsky refers to this as 'the underdeveloped personality' (Vygotsky, 1993).

As a result of the studies undertaken and the theoretical works read during the course of this staff thesis, it has become evident that a new model of social competence is needed. In the following section, a model showing the relations between individual and collective development of social competence is presented.

#### 1.4 A new conception of social competence

Figure 3.1



The metaphysical poet, John Donne, famously wrote 'no man is an island entire of itself'. This strong notion of connectedness is pivotal to the consideration of social competence. Hedegaard (2011) in her introduction to the CHADOC seminar held in association with the International ISCAR Congress, stated:

Developmental psychology has often been characterised historically as the study of 'the general child', with a focus on developing a model that can be used to evaluate individual children and their changing relations to society as

they grow up. Childhood studies have focused on the study of children anchored in historical times and settings... Cultural-historical approaches seek to unite the general principles in relation to time and place. (Hedegaard, 2011)

Marianne Hedegaard's statement aligns the view of the child with a notion of social competence rather than a deconstruction of its individual skill elements or component parts. In other words, the child is an intact and complete member of the social group—not, as has become the trend, a 'future' member of the society or 'cultural investment' in the future. It is therefore necessary to create new social situations of development that provide for more interactions that support the child's social connectedness.

Hedegaard talked about the idea of the general child as an historical or traditional approach. She also talked about seeking to unite those general principles in relation to time and place. That, to me, is the real element of rather than deconstructing individual elements or component parts, we need to put them back together as a whole, which is what I am calling social competence. We need to look at it as a whole being. If we break it into parts, we lose that sense of the reality of the child and we start to talk about them as a future member of society as if they are not existent at the moment. Or even worse, people talk about children as cultural investments. Those kinds of approaches disembodify the whole child, and don't give that connection to the cultural group. In fact, the cultural and social interactions cannot exist without children in them. You cannot get the whole becoming, being, and belonging of the self without children being there. The whole thing becomes nonsense. So it is making connections and rebuilding the sense of wholeness that being put it as a package of social competence. The sense of self becomes important within the cultural context. (Presentation to PhD Community, 2014)

Several key scholars that have influenced my journey to this model; it stems from Dewey and his talks about the democracy of education to construct societies and social beings meaningfully. Vygostky, of course, has provided a new theoretical framework, and Fernando Gonzales-Rey has taken a leading role in highlighting the importance of grappling with sense of self in relation to the social self, as evidenced by Marcus in Paper 5 through the use of figurines in imaginary play he was able to 'flicker' between the real and the imaginary world and begin to resolve his anxieties about his parents' separation

Figure 3.2

**Social competence:**  
able to successfully negotiate the structures of society.



At the beginning of the model is the concept of social competence. Dewey questions the purpose of education—is it knowledge and understanding, the preservation of the status quo? Knowledge and understanding of what? It is also about being part of the social structure to which we belong. My working definition of social competence is the capacity to be able to successfully negotiate the structure of society; in order to do that, one must be able to participate in a whole collection of skills that underpin this process of negotiation. So, we need to consider such issues as:

- How do we think about ourselves?
- How we use tools and skills?
- What personal skills are needed?

These need to be considered in the context of relationships without emotions, how to regulation our emotions, but also literacy and numeracy, which are as I said subsets of social competence. (Presentation to PhD Community, 2014)

Character is the social imprint on personality. It is the hardened, crystallized, typical behavior of personality; it is the struggle for social position. It is a secession from the primary line, the leading line of development, the unconscious plan of life, from the integral of development of all psychological acts and functions. (Vygotsky, 1993, p. 156)

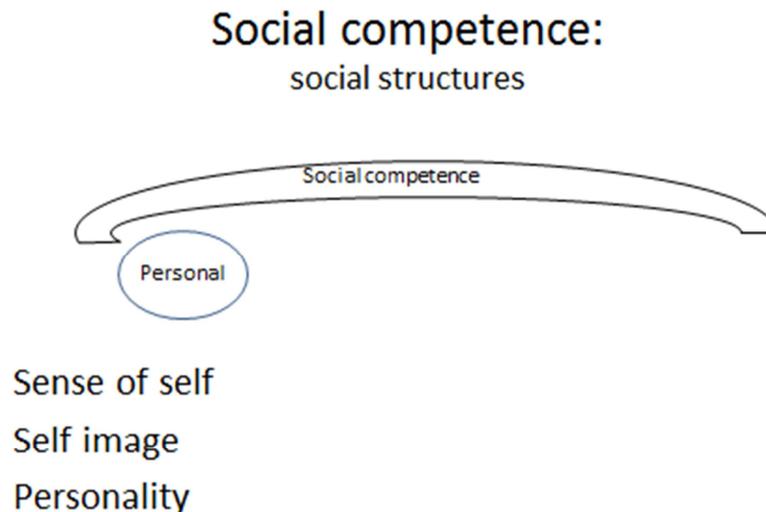
This, then, is my challenge to educators: to bring into focus life skills as fundamental to the daily educational programme. We need the skills to function effectively, not just in themselves, in the social context that brings relevance and meaning to the skill set. We also need social competence as an overarching goal and purpose of education, with the many underpinning components that I seek to explore, such as the notion of the sense of self and images of ourselves. Gonzalez-Rey (2011) tells us the concept of personal

sense is a new pathway that needs to be developed. He says it is an interesting psychological process but through the process it is a valuable and flexible concept. It is the idea of who you are that sits itself within the need to be mindful of relationships and interactions, as well as a view of self as being valuable and flexible. This is more than the traditional definition of the self. It is the notion of the self in relation to the world, and how the child is part of that world or cultural group. (Presentation to PhD Community, 2014)

This brings us to the question of what is culture in the frame of the educational experiences of the child. Luria (1994) suggests that it is a ‘unique system of ideal forms, values and motives in a child’s life’ (Luria, 1994). Cultural-historical theory can be viewed as an approach that is a general theory of culture and Wertsch (1985) suggests that this is the context in which Vygotsky’s work should be understood:

Vygotsky stands before us not as an isolated phenomenon or puzzle but as a representative of the most important and, in many respects, most significant period in our society’s culture and science. Several points in his approach reflect the atmosphere of creativity in which he lived and worked. For example, his notion of semiotic or symbolic nature of higher mental functions and consciousness is very closely tied to the theory and practice of Russian symbolism, which appeared most strikingly in poetry, painting, theater and film during this period. (Wertsch, 1985, p. iiv)

**Figure 3.3**



Gonzalez-Rey (2011) tells us that the concept of personal sense is a new pathway that needs to be developed. It is an intrapsychological thought process and is a malleable and

flexible concept. In this view, it is more than the traditional notions of self-worth and self-image; it has also a notion of self in relation to the world of the child, how the child participates as a part of the cultural group. He goes on to explain that personality is a difficult concept, with a long tradition but low level of definition, so the notion of personal sense is a new concept of consciousness that helps our thinking towards an understanding of personality. Luria adds to the thinking by suggesting that the education of children is reduced to the child being refitted with 'new cultural arms' and the 'forging of new psychological weapons':

A key to the problem of how the child's behaviour is transformed into the behaviour of a cultured adult living in complicated industrial-cultural conditions and armed with a complicated social-cultural outfit. (Luria, 1994, p. 55)

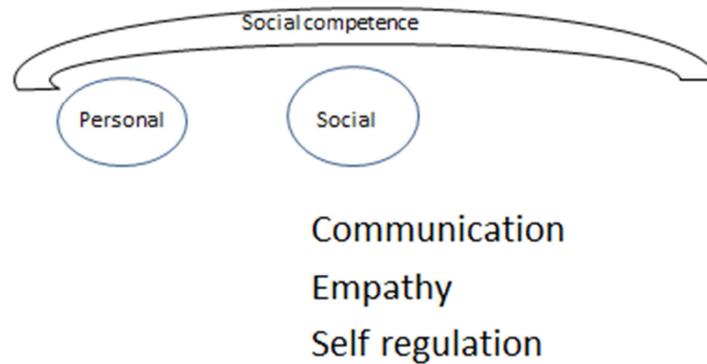
The second element of the model (Figure 3) is the social construct, because being socially competent necessarily demands social participation. Again, these contribute to that notion of personal sense as the social condition embodies the notion of personal sense. How this is indicated through interactions with others, and how behaviour is regulated are all considerations in exploring this element. Hedegaard (2011) reminds us that Vygotsky pursued the wholeness approach to the development of the child, and his concept of the child's social situation of development was a critical component:

When one turns to the sociocultural domain, a different force of development with its unique set of explanatory principles is seen at work. The locus of change shifts from organic evolution governed by natural selection to the stage of mediational means. (Wertsch, 1985, p 56)

The use of tools and signs are the means of enabling children to learn their cultural context and within the parameters of cultural-historical theory provide the mechanism for children to make changes in their own sociocultural participation. The role of signs in relation to the tools decontextualize mediational means and enable the child to transition from the everyday to advanced forms of higher mental functioning.

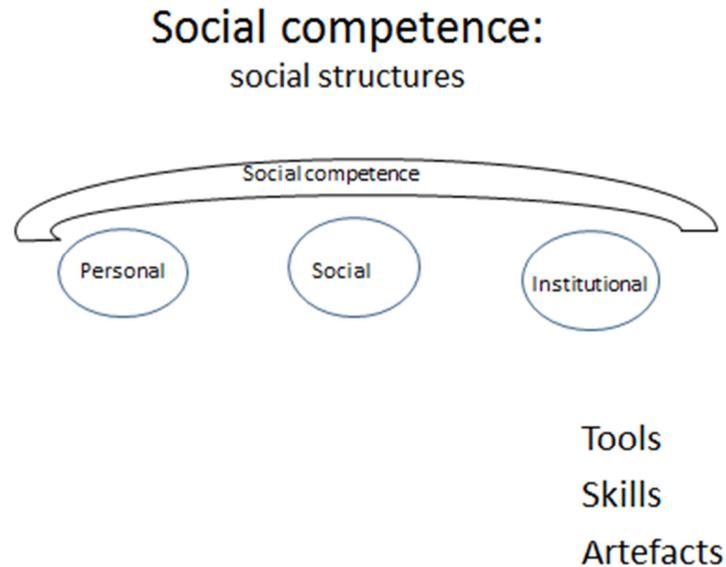
**Figure 3.4**

**Social competence:**  
social structures



This is the ‘theatrical stage’ upon which the elements of life are performed, and this is also the most challenging task for teachers: to create the space and opportunity for children to engage in meaningful and purposeful activities that connect with the third element of the model—the institutional. Hedegaard and Chaiklin (2005) help us to understand the role of the institution in helping the child to confirm the everyday. They build the argument on Vygotsky’s theory and also that of Bronfenbrenner to go beyond the understanding of culture and look to tools and the context that includes the activity settings within institutional practices where these tools might be applied. This is the essence that I am trying to establish in the model: that the institution builds the social structure, and the idea of providing the mediating tools/skills in the context of the social world is necessary to the educational model for children to develop social competence and is reflected in the discussion of Montana (Section 1.3.3), where the institution of the playgroup encouraged typical play scripts of the dominant culture whilst also allowing the children to engage in their own first culture games and dancing. The importance of the institutional parameters were evidenced in practice to support the children’s successful inclusion in the compulsory school system

Figure 3.5



Hedegaard & Chaiklin (2005) give us an inkling of the role of the institution in bringing the everyday to conform with the social structures; they extend the ideas of Vygotsky and others beyond an understanding of culture as meaning mediating tools or as context, to include activity settings within institutional practices:

The radical-local approach provides an integrated perspective for confronting the tension that arises between a universal goal to prepare all children for a satisfying and productive societal life and the historical fact that most contemporary societies have culturally and historically diverse populations. To realize both general societal interests and worthwhile personal development, the content of educational programmes for children must be grounded in the local conditions within which the children live. (Hedegaard & Chaiklin, 2005, p. ii)

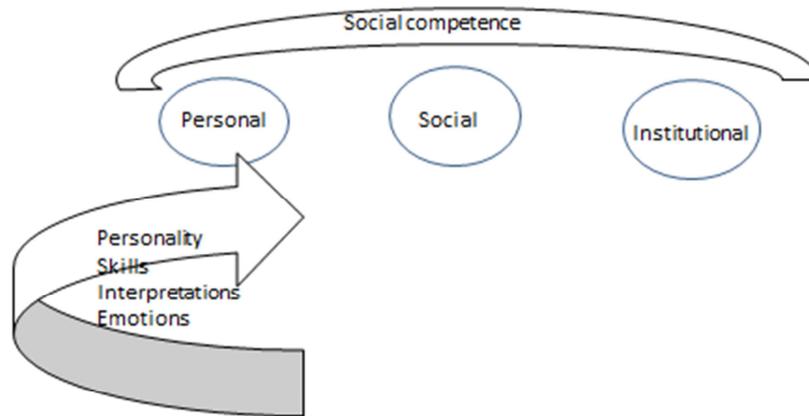
Children, through their motivated activities in different settings in institutional practices, acquire culture as competences with tools but also as values and motives for activities. The personal aspect of knowledge - everyday concepts - is located in the life setting of a person (sense of self). These personal concepts are the foundation for the child's appropriation of the subject matter, concepts that qualify the child's personal conceptions so they can function as theoretical concepts. However, subject matter concepts are not universal: they are related to curriculum traditions. (Hedegaard, 2005). This can also be applied to the practices of other institutions, such as religious observances and sporting clubs where traditions have developed and direct the nature of conceptual knowledge shared with the children as participants.

Teachers need to be sensitive to try to bridge the gap through children's activities in institutional practices to ensure that they are quite culturally competent and they use the tools, values and motives for activities. Therefore, the personal aspect of the knowledge—the everyday concepts—is located in the setting and in the sense of the self, and we start to see how these start to interplay with each other. Hedegaard also reminds us that the subject silos and content concepts of the institutions are not universal; they are related to particular traditions of curriculum. For example, a child's personal concepts are the basis for the child to function and develop theoretical concepts, which are in some ways met or contrasted with those subject matter concepts and the traditional curriculum views of their world. So there is the constant tension between what children already know about their lives and their understanding of the sense of self.

This does not end with the curriculum in schools. There are practices in other social institutions, such as religious practices and religious beliefs and rituals, a set of rules over everyday knowledge and understanding. The rules and games impose onto the personal self and insinuate themselves as another layer influencing the child and the child's sense of the self. It is the personality, the sense of the self and the importance of emotions in all these that are fundamental to the sense of self.

Figure 3.6

### Social competence: social structures



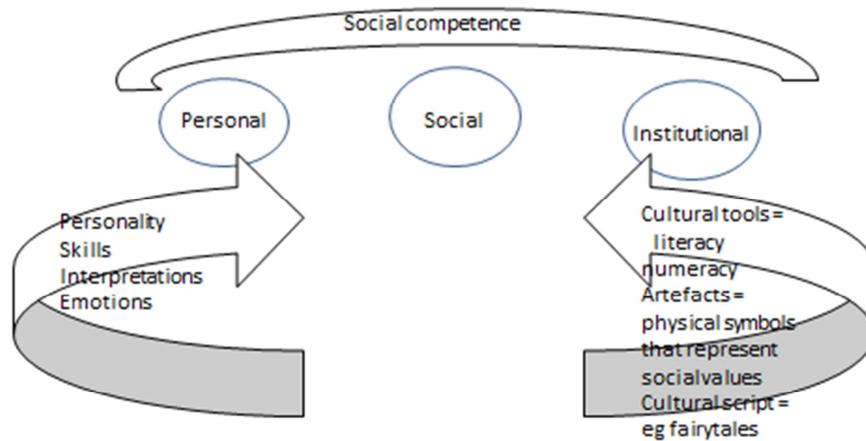
The importance of emotions is fundamental to this sense of self, and again it is particularly highlighted when we look at the photographic negative mentioned previously and consider Vygotsky's (1993) work about vulnerable children and also the work examining the impacts of trauma and abuse.

When Vygotsky talks about vulnerable children, where the emotions and the personal sense of the self completely disengage from the social and the institutional, there is a sense that these children have their own institution and their own perspectives of social competence that stand alongside the general view of such competence. The exploration of the issue of the disengaged children gives a strong message about the institution where communication skills and connection skills are developed in social situations. What practices need to be considered to bring the institution into part of the child's social construction require the creation of new social situations of development.

Such new social situations of development are explored in more detail in Paper 6 where the dramatic play of fairytales fosters the development of higher mental functions when the child is both the director and subject of the play (Kratsov & Kratsova, 2010). The possibilities for children to take this dual role in their play supports children's emotional development and indeed their capacity to regulate their emotions, integral to their positive social competence.

Figure 3.7

### Social competence: social structures



From the individual we add the cultural and we see this intersection of the demands and defining elements of the child as part of the local society, the notion of belonging stems from this connection.

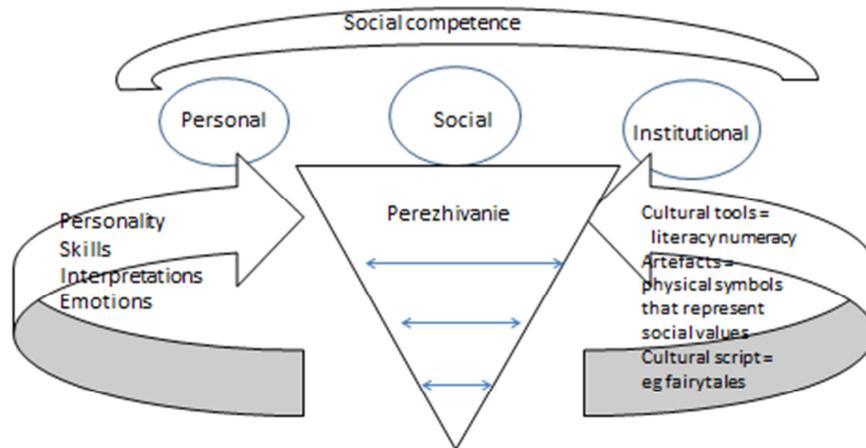
The model encompasses the whole cultural dimension. What is the richness of the culture? What are the cultural tools such as literacy and numeracy, and the artefacts that are the visible symbols representing cultural values? For example, Vygotsky heavily relies on the arts, the theatre; Thomas Merton (1955) says

‘...art enables us to find ourselves and to lose ourselves at the same time’.

These represent the cultural values and the social structure. There is also the cultural script, particularly evident in fairy tales. Fairy tales provide us the script through which children play imaginarily, using the various cultural tools, adding the sense of self and how together these fit into the social and institutional. They provide the framework of a performance space to pull together all the elements of life and put these elements together.

Figure 3.8

## Social competence: social structures



And so to *perezhivanie*—Gonzalez- Rey (2011) tells us it is the psychological concept to overcome the concept of mediation and internalisation. Van der Veer and Valsiner explain *perezhivanie* as:

The idea that one and the same objective situation may be interpreted, perceived. Experienced or lived through by different children in different ways. Neither ‘emotional experience’... nor ‘interpretation’... is fully adequate translations of the noun. Its meaning is closely linked to that of the German verb ‘erleben’. (Van der Veer & Valsiner, 1994, p. 354)

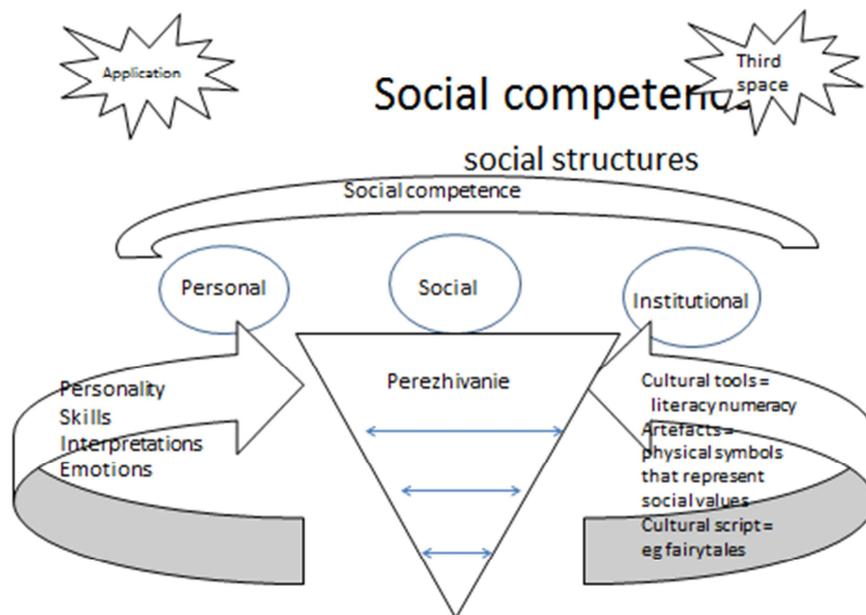
*Perezhivanie* is not internalised, it is produced by the child, the production of the personality of the child, the production of the human being in the social context. Hence my proposition of the notion of an enzyme that produces a scientific action/reaction:

Vygotsky uses the word ‘*perezhivanie*’ which means ‘experience’ or ‘interpretation’. *Perezhivanie* covers both the way and event is emotionally experienced and the way it is cognitively understood by the subject. (Reiber & Woollock, 1997 p. 390 in Veresov, 2014)

Gonzalez-Rey (2011) reminds us not to dogmatise concepts— that is, the element of imagination needs to be added, which he describes as creation/production in a dramatic sense and it is a very personal issue varying for each participant. Imagination is subjectivity configured, and cannot be separated from thinking, since motivation is internal to thinking and also stems from experience. Bozovich (2009) adds a notion of emotions to *perezhivanie*—‘an elaboration of the concept of *perezhivanie* [experience] as an emotional mechanism in personality development’.

Gonzalez-Rey (2013) claims that *perezhivanie*, in his words, “is a psychological concept to overcome the idea of mediation and internalisation.” I think this is useful to conceptualise this indefinable word in English. It is necessary to recognise that there is different *perezhivanie* for the child and the adult. Each of us goes into the same situation but comes away with different feelings. The notion of multiple constructions of reality comes to mind. In some way, there is a connection that makes you take on board what is happening and add to that sense of self so that relationship between the self and the broader community is intrinsic to the social construction. I therefore take the view that it is more useful to think of *perezhivanie* as an internal element that causes a chemical reaction, and depending on what chemicals you combine, reactions will be different. As Bozovich (2009) says the elaboration of *perezhivanie* as an emotional mechanism is part of personality development. That mechanism changes how we react to particular situations, how we deal with particular things. The imagination is described as the creation or production of senses and notions of oneself. Again, I was trying to pull out those ideas to best shape the model. (Presentation to PhD Community, 2014)

Figure 3.9



What I am left with is the concept of looking at the use of cultural tools and also the third space that comes from the observations of the playgroups for indigenous children, which offers a safe space where different cultures can co-exist without being homogenised, and the idea that that is a critical component to allow children to play out their worlds; also the sense of social competence: acknowledging that children are competent in their first culture. Certainly, what I saw in the indigenous playgroup was

parents participating in classic, out-of-date British games such as tea parties and fishing with rods. On the understanding from the parents' point of view, the children need to know how to play with the games of the dominant culture in order to be successful in educational institutions. In these circumstances, the dimension of third space, the capacity to have multiple social competences, becomes a very important part of the thinking and understanding of the role of early childhood educators, and would also apply in the situation of vulnerable children who have disengaged with the world, and set up their own alternative culture: we need educators to bring in these children as part of the connect.

The social environment is the source for the appearance of all specific human properties of the personality gradually acquired by the child or the source of social development of the child. (Vygotsky, 1998, p. 203)

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