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Play - lost in transition? Teacher beliefs about pedagogic continuity across the transition to formal schooling

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CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

“A child who moves from a developmentally appropriate preschool program to a content-focused kindergarten experiences a kind of whiplash”

(Graue, 2011, p. 15)

Introduction

Chapters Four and Five convey the findings in the current study. This chapter presents findings from the interview and document-based source analysis for each of the three subsidiary research questions and the resultant conceptual categories and corresponding themes. The initial section details the analysed cases and documents with the results displayed in table format and also as thematic maps. Firstly, the participants’ understandings of play-based pedagogy and their perceived roles within this are presented. Further, their constructs of pedagogic continuity and the importance of this across the transition process follow. Lastly, the influencing factors that relate to participants’ decision-making in using play-based pedagogy are depicted. Document and website analysis provided an additional lens, also representing a wider perspective on play-based pedagogy and pedagogic continuity. The curriculum documents, seminal to teachers’ work, were one of the influencing factors on teachers’ decisions in relation to practice.

4.1 Research Question One

How do prior-to-school educators and Kindergarten teachers view play-based pedagogy and how do they describe their role in play-based pedagogy?

Findings from this question specifically relate to the understanding educators have of play-based pedagogy and their role within this. This research question correlates to participant responses to interview questions one to six (see Appendix 2) and were analysed using thematic analysis. Each case was analysed separately and all subsequent interview questions were analysed using the same method of thematic coding. Thematic analysis was undertaken for each interview

question that related to research question one, as shown in Table 4.1 below. The unit of analysis was the sentence. Each sentence was written in full. Alongside is the summary analysis which is the interpretation of what the text said followed by a categorisation of what the text was about. The final part of the analysis was the generation of a theme or themes that captured the essence of the text.

Table 4.1 shows one such extract of the thematic analysis, followed by Table 4.2 and Figure 4.1 which show each of the three categories generated from the examples (Play as active exploration; Play as purposeful, child-focused pedagogy; and the Roles of the educator) and the themes identified within those categories. This information was then summarised and presented in Figure 4.2 as the themes identified. The findings for each case's responses to research question one are presented together to provide ease of comparison.

Table 4.1 Sample extract of summary table for thematic analysis of Research Question 1 (prior-to-school educators)

Res Ques 1. How do prior-to-school educators view play-based pedagogy and how do they describe their role in play-based pedagogy?			
Text	Summary	Category	Theme/s
So basically the children are learning what they need to learn, through play. That can be the materials that we provide, the experiences we provide, set up on our observations of those children, just the things that we've got set out to stimulate their learning through play. So that's my understanding of it, is at this age, that's the way they learn, is through their play, by engaging in play.	Viewed as the materials and experiences that teachers provide, based on observations of the children. That's how children learn - through play.	Role of the educator Provide materials, experiences. Play as purposeful, child-focused pedagogy Is based on observations of the children. That's how young children learn - through play.	Supportive behaviours- Educator as facilitator and planner Child-centred learning possibilities
You need the educators there interacting with the children to make that happen, to make learning happen. It doesn't just happen if you sit back.	For learning to occur, educators need to interact with the children during play.	Play as purposeful, child-focused pedagogy Need to interact with the children to make learning happen.	Responsive pedagogical interaction
A play-based curriculum involves children learning by actually doing something... their hands totally immersed into the - to understand it.	Play-based learning involves children doing something, using their hands to understand.	Play as active exploration Children learn by doing, getting their hands immersed into the play.	Experience based
I can see it, when we set experiences up for the children, when we organise our learning space, you can see what the children can learn from that. Just through observing them as well, and planning and learning from	Educators can see what children learn through observation and planning of experiences.	Play as purposeful, child-focused pedagogy Evidence of learning is seen in experiences and the organised learning space Role of the educator Provide experiences,	Child-centred learning possibilities Supportive behaviours-

what you've observed, you can see how much they can learn.		organise learning space, observe and plan for play	Educator as facilitator, planner and observer
So to me, having the play-based learning, means that they can learn it, but they can experience it, and they can practice it over and over again, until they're competent with it basically.	Play based learning offers children opportunities to experience and practice what they have learnt.	<i>Play as active exploration</i> Children can learn, experience and practice over and over again until they are competent	Experience based
It needs to come from a planning perspective, an observational perspective, but you can just see how much they can learn through play.	Needs to come from an observation and planning perspective.	<i>Role of the educator</i> Plan for play –it needs to come from observations.	Supportive behaviours- Educator as planner and observer
But it's coming from them; it's not coming from me. So that's the importance of it I think...it's important that they want to learn.	Needs to come from them, not me. Important that they want to learn.	<i>Play as purposeful, child-focused pedagogy</i> Motivation to learn needs to come from the children.	Child-centred learning possibilities
Instigator is one of the things that I think we do, instigate different learning through play. A supporter as well, like supporting children and encouraging children. I demonstrate some tasks and skills, so demonstrate and model.	Instigate learning, support and encourage children's learning, demonstrate and model.	<i>Role of the educator</i> Educator's role is instigator, supporter, encouraging, demonstrating and modelling.	Supportive and mediating behaviours
I see them really learn a lot from one another. In these informal play scenarios is often where I see the children learn the most skills through one another with teachers scaffolding.	Children learn a lot from one another, and from teachers scaffolding in informal play scenarios.	<i>Play as purposeful, child-focused pedagogy</i> Children learn a lot from one another in informal play scenarios. <i>Role of the educator</i> Educators scaffold learning.	Collaboration with peers Mediating behaviour- Educator as scaffolder

4.1.1 Case study one – prior-to-school educators

After analysis of the interview responses relating to this question, three categories were evident. They were (1) Play as active exploration; (2) Play as purposeful, child-focused pedagogy and; (3) Roles of educator in play-based pedagogy. From the three categories, seven themes were identified which can be represented as a summary of thematic findings included in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Summary of thematic analysis for Research Question 1 (prior-to-school educators)

Res Ques 1. How do prior-to-school educators view play-based pedagogy and how do they describe their role in play-based pedagogy?
<p><u>Play as active exploration</u> [category]</p> <p>[themes]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-discovery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - self-choice areas - discover

- uninterrupted time
- letting them find things out
- exploring
- **experience based**
 - hands-on
 - active learning
 - doing
 - using their senses
 - touching
 - practice
 - experience

Play as purposeful, child-focused pedagogy [category]

[themes]

- **child-centred learning possibilities**
 - child-driven
 - is relevant/meaningful to children
 - child-initiated learning
 - connects to children's lives and personal experiences
 - meaning-making
 - learning is evident
 - based on observations/interests of children
 - transfer of knowledge is possible
- **responsive pedagogical interaction**
 - using teachable moments
 - teaching strategies
 - educator's presence/being there
 - helping children form relationships
 - being involved/interacting
 - organise small group interactions
 - shape their play
 - talk with the children during play/give feedback
- **collaboration with peers**
 - involves peers
 - children interacting/supporting each other
 - teach each other/learn from peers
 - supported by peer scaffolding
 - social learning
 - peer relationships

Roles of educator in play-based pedagogy [category]

[themes]

- **supportive behaviours**
 - instigating
 - listening
 - guiding
 - modelling
 - facilitating play
 - encouraging
 - extending resources
 - supporting
 - observing
 - planning
 - documenting
- **mediating behaviours**
 - questioning
 - scaffolding
 - demonstrating

In order to provide a quick reference overview for the first research question, Figure 4.1 presents a summary of the three identified categories together with the corresponding seven themes as a thematic map for Case study one.

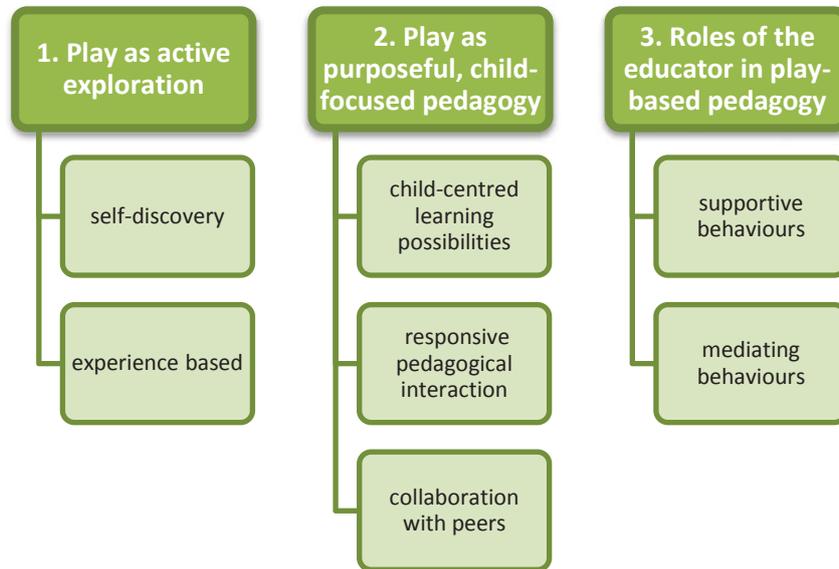


Figure 4.1 Thematic map of identified categories and themes for Research Question 1 (prior-to-school educators)

4.1.2 Case study two – Kindergarten teachers

After analysis of the responses for this group of participants relating to research question one, four categories were evident. They were (1) Play as active exploration; (2) Play as purposeful, child-focused pedagogy; (3) Limited place for play; and (4) Role of educator in play-based pedagogy. From the four categories, eight themes were identified which can be represented as a summary of thematic findings in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Summary of thematic analysis for Research Question 1 (Kindergarten teachers)

Res Ques 1. How do Kindergarten teachers view play-based pedagogy and how do they describe their role in play-based pedagogy?
<p>Play as active exploration [category]</p> <p>[themes]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-discovery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - exploring for themselves - open-ended learning

- not directed
- child-directed
- space to explore
- free choice
- discovery
- not much scaffolding
- **experience based**
 - hands-on
 - active learning
 - manipulating
 - doing
 - touch and feel/tactile
 - live it
 - practice
 - experience/experience it

Play as purposeful, child-focused pedagogy [category]

[theme]

- **collaboration with peers**
 - working with each other
 - talking with peers
 - peer reinforcement
 - explaining to each other

Limited place for play [category]

[themes]

- **play as organised games/free time**
 - games used to support learning
 - free play time after finishing work
 - games for hands-on activities
 - play as free time during transition period
 - free play at end of day when tired
- **constrained play**
 - has to be structured play/too structured in school
 - educators choose activities
 - structured to learning outcomes
 - structured into rotation activities
 - used to fit into unit of work or part of a lesson
 - needs to fit into a session in the day
 - limited to certain curriculum areas
- **marginalisation of play**
 - explicit teaching required to learn, not play
 - play only valuable for short transition period at beginning of year
 - need to reach teaching targets and can't through play
 - have to align teaching practices to school targets

Roles of the educator in play-based pedagogy [category]

[themes]

- **supportive behaviours**
 - providing structure
 - supervising
 - guiding
 - facilitating
 - encouraging
 - supporting
 - observing
 - documenting
 - extending
- **mediating behaviours**
 - questioning
 - providing structure/instructions

- demonstrating
- explaining
- instructing
- co-player
- directing
- scaffolding

In order to provide a quick reference overview for the first research question, figure 4.2 presents a summary of the four identified categories together with the corresponding eight themes as a thematic map for Case study two.



Figure 4.2 Thematic map of identified categories and themes for Research Question 1 (Kindergarten teachers)

4.2 Research Question Two

What do prior-to-school educators and Kindergarten teachers believe about pedagogic continuity in the transition process?

This research question pertained to educators' constructs of pedagogic continuity. The responses to interview questions seven to ten formed the basis of collecting data associated with what they believed was important when considering continuity of learning and teaching for children entering the first year of formal schooling.

4.2.1 Case study one – prior-to-school educators

Following analysis of the prior-to-school participant responses, three categories were identified together with seven themes. The categories were as follows: (1) Differing expectations; (2) Academic push-down; and (3) Aspects of enhancing continuity. Table 4.4 below illustrates a summary of the data for the prior-to-school educators for research question two.

Table 4.4 Summary of thematic analysis for Research Question 2 (prior-to-school educators)

Res Ques 2. What do prior-to-school educators believe about pedagogic continuity in the transition process?
<p><u>Differing expectations</u> [category]</p> <p>[themes]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minimal continuity and cross over <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - school not based around play - very few schools ask for a report or information - is no continuity/minimal crossover - big difference in environments/different atmosphere - not a lot of flow between the two environments - is a totally different learning environment • the shock of formal learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - transition from play-based approach to formal learning is difficult - the children will get so shocked - a big change to very formal teaching - very different atmosphere sitting at desks - very different type of teaching/learning - pedagogic continuity needed to lessen shock of school - preparation is important to minimise shock - difference between preschool and school learning is too extreme - should prepare children for big change in learning context <p><u>Academic push-down</u> [category]</p> <p>[themes]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notions of school readiness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - incorporate some school pedagogy and practices to help children prepare for transition - basic skills preparation is important - EYLF is not enough to prepare children for school - EYLF should have an additional outcome for school transition preparation - preschool is for preparing children for school - primary pedagogy informs teaching of academic skills in preschool • the ‘schoolification’ of preschool <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - do more formal teaching experiences - do some modelling and demonstrating like in school - practice to sit down and concentrate - giving stamps as rewards for writing words - use of Jolly Phonics program - incorporate Kindergarten curriculum into preschool curriculum - pressure of formal teaching too early - have more structured, task oriented group times - use school-like rotation activities/have learning stations - more academic skills

<u>Aspects of enhancing continuity</u> [category]
[themes]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • play as a transition bridge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - play helps to ease into school and formal teaching - play would help lessen the shock - should start with a play-based approach - play keeps the flow of familiar learning - play allows children to act out their transition worries - play affords skills they can transfer to school - play develops positive learning dispositions for school - free choice in play experiences helps ease transition • collaborative exchange <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - continuity of learning should be about sharing information between the two environments - more exchanging of information/shared visits - transitions are less stressful if information is shared - should be open communication between the settings - documenting children’s learning and talking with other educators helps with transition - schools need to read EC reports to ease transition • recognition of prior learning experiences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - schools need to validate the information provided by EC educators - use EC reports and portfolios for orientation or as a starting place - school staff need to understand children’s current level of learning - EC reports would help primary teachers understand children’s current level of learning

In order to provide a quick reference overview for the second research question, Figure 4.3 presents a summary of the three identified categories together with the corresponding seven themes as a thematic map for Case study one.

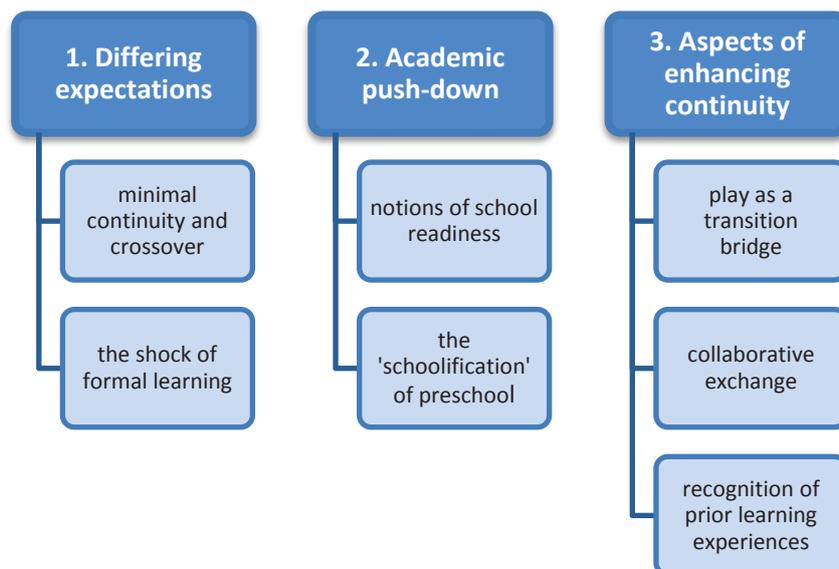


Figure 4.3 Thematic map of identified categories and themes for Research Question 2 (prior-to-school educators)

4.2.2 Case study two – Kindergarten teachers

After analysing the responses of the Kindergarten teachers, eight themes were identified within three categories. The three categories consisted of: (1) Differing expectations; (2) Academic push-down; and (3) Aspects of enhancing continuity. Table 4.5 summarises the thematic analysis for the three categories and the eight themes.

Table 4.5 Summary of thematic analysis for Research Question 2 (Kindergarten teachers)

Res Ques 2. What do Kindergarten teachers believe about pedagogic continuity in the transition process?
<p><u>Differing expectations</u> [category]</p> <p>[themes]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minimal continuity and crossover <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - little communication/continuity - our expectations are far apart - school is very different/very regimented - two different concepts and settings - no conversation between the two settings - not seamless/not a smooth transition - philosophies don't coincide • the shock of formal learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - big gap in style of learning between preschool and school - very different learning expectations - huge separation/harsh difference in learning - big step/big leap in learning between the two - huge cut-off between learning styles • the play/work divide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - school = learning, not playing - school is structured with formal learning - sit and learn, not play - play and learning doesn't work - playing is not work/is not a medium for learning - playing does not meet outcomes or learning focus <p><u>Academic push-down</u> [category]</p> <p>[themes]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notions of school readiness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Best Start assessment - focus on literacy and numeracy with links to EYLF - is the child ready for school? - academic focus is important - need a skill set - readiness to learn - school readiness is important • crowded curriculum and less play <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - intense academic program in first year of school - free play reduced and work content increased - formal learning program has no space for play - curriculum is so packed/not enough time - children need to be at a particular point/reach a particular level - crammed curriculum so less time to fit in play

- so much content to pick up
- Aspects of enhancing continuity** [category]
- [themes]
- **play as a transition bridge**
 - free play in afternoons
 - play in first few weeks of school
 - model the play in preschools in early weeks of school
 - have play experiences to continue the learning from preschool
 - **collaborative exchange**
 - more exchange of information
 - open dialogue needed
 - **recognition of prior learning experiences**
 - need to know where children are coming from/what they did at preschool
 - build on children's learning from preschool
 - find out what they bring
 - use information sheet from preschool

In order to provide a quick reference overview for the second research question, Figure 4.3 presents a summary of the three identified categories together with the corresponding eight themes as a thematic map for Case study two.

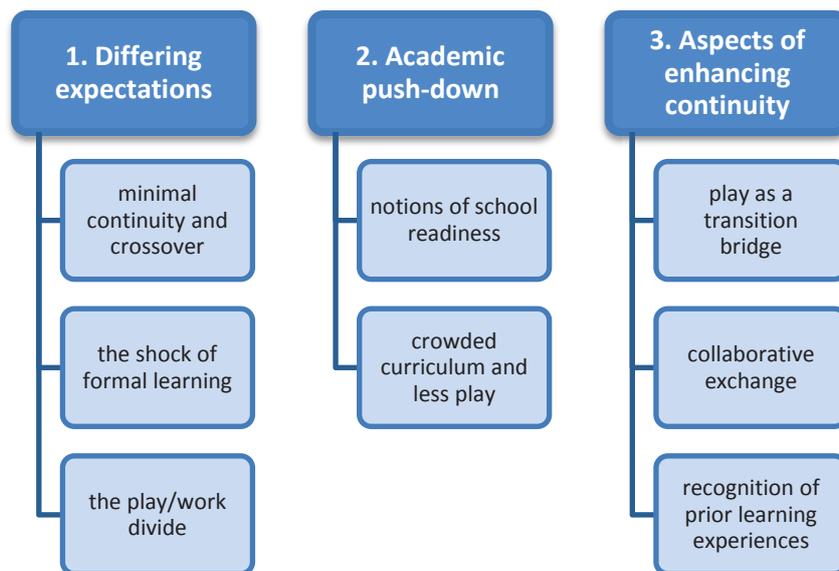


Figure 4.4 Thematic map of identified categories and themes for Research Question 2 (Kindergarten teachers)

4.3 Research Question Three

What factors influence prior-to-school educators and Kindergarten teachers' decisions related to using play-based pedagogy in the transition process?

This research question related to identified factors that influence teachers' decisions to implement play-based pedagogy across the transition process and any constraints they encountered. Interview questions eleven and twelve specifically correlated to this research question.

4.3.1 Case study one – prior-to-school educators

After analysing the responses of the prior-to-school educators, five themes were identified within the two categories. The two categories consisted of: 1) Intrinsic factors; and 2) Extrinsic factors. Table 4.6 summarises the thematic analysis for the two categories and the five themes.

Table 4.6 Summary of thematic analysis for Research Question 3 (prior-to-school educators)

Res Ques 3. What factors influence prior-to-school educators' decisions related to using play-based pedagogy in the transition process?
<p><u>Intrinsic factors</u> [category]</p> <p>[theme]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - theoretical knowledge - staff qualifications - experience - belief systems (personal) <p><u>Extrinsic factors</u> [category]</p> <p>[themes]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical aspects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - building - environment • organisational aspects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - routines - staff ratio - time - culture/philosophy - recording systems - regulations - curriculums - being part of a larger organisation • financial aspects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - equipment - available resources - SES of families - funding • attitudinal aspects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - belief systems (families) – parent expectations and perceptions - beliefs systems (community/political) – perceptions/misunderstanding

In order to provide a quick reference overview for the third research question, Figure 4.5 presents a summary of the two identified categories together with the corresponding five themes as a thematic map for Case study one.

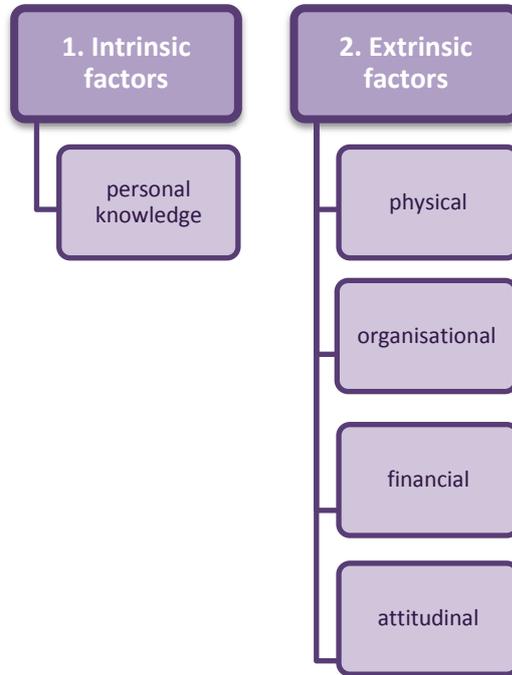


Figure 4.5 Thematic map of identified categories and themes for Research Question 3 (prior-to-school educators)

4.3.2 Case study two – Kindergarten teachers

Following the analysis of the interview responses from Kindergarten teachers, two categories together with five themes were identified. The two categories consisted of: (1) Intrinsic factors; and (2) Extrinsic factors. Table 4.7 summarises the thematic analysis for the research question three.

Table 4.7 Summary of thematic analysis for Research Question 3 (Kindergarten teachers)

Res Ques 3. What factors influence Kindergarten teachers' decisions related to using play-based pedagogy in the transition process?
<p><u>Intrinsic factors</u> [category]</p> <p>[theme]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - experience - dispositions

- belief systems (personal)
- Extrinsic factors** [category]
- [themes]
- **physical aspects**
 - classroom environment
 - **organisational/structural aspects**
 - staff ratio
 - timetabling issues
 - school system/school curriculum outcomes
 - **financial aspects**
 - SES of families
 - available resources
 - **beliefs of others**
 - belief systems (families) – parent expectations and perceptions
 - beliefs systems (others) – perceptions/misunderstanding

In order to provide a quick reference overview for the third research question, Figure 4.6 presents a summary of the two identified categories together with the corresponding five themes as a thematic map for Case study two.

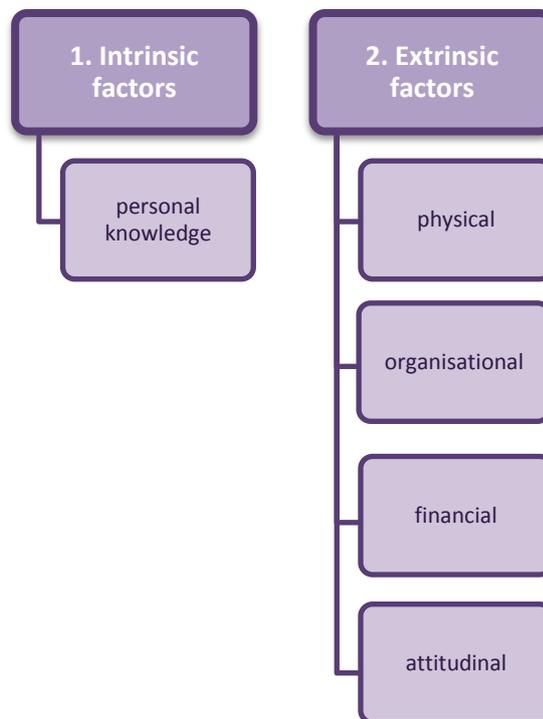


Figure 4.6 Thematic map of identified categories and themes for Research Question 3 (Kindergarten teachers)

4.4 Document and website analysis

In order to ascertain how play-based pedagogy, educator roles, pedagogic continuity and any influencing factors are constructed within key curriculum and transition documents associated with the transition process, four documents were used and these were supplemented with analysis of related websites and online publications linked to transition provided to teachers. The key documents were: the *EYLF*, the *Australian Curriculum*, the *Foundations for Learning: Relationships between the Early Years Learning Framework*, and the *NSW Transition to School Statement* plus the accompanying information sheets for early childhood educators and school teachers. They were analysed and thematically coded using the same procedure as outlined for the interviews.

Analysis of these documents was undertaken as they would potentially play a role in shaping teachers attitudes and perceptions about what transition to school encompasses and what role play for learning should hold in their pedagogy. This analysis is divided into three sections: a) as related to research question one, the analysis identified guidance these documents offered to teachers in relation to play-based pedagogy and what their role should be within this; b) as related to research question two, document analysis sought to establish how these documents might shape teacher perceptions in relation to pedagogic continuity; and c) as related to research question three, the analysis focused on what might influence teachers' decision related to using play-based pedagogy in the transition process.

4.4.1 *Play-based pedagogy and the educator's role within that as related to Research Question One*

Analysis of the documents and websites related to the topic of research question one about constructions of play-based pedagogy and the roles of the educator in play-based pedagogy. Following the analysis of the online documents three categories together with eight themes were identified. The three categories consisted of: 1) Play as active exploration; 2) Play as purposeful, child-focused pedagogy; and 3) Role of the educator in play-based pedagogy. Table 4.8

summarises the collective thematic document and website analysis in relation to research question one with key documents, publications and/or website sources identified within the labelled themes for each category.

Table 4.8 Summary of thematic analysis of document-based sources as related to Research Question 1

Res Ques 1. How is play-based pedagogy constructed within key document-based sources and how do these describe teachers' roles in play-based pedagogy?
<p><u>Play as active exploration</u> [category]</p> <p>[themes]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-discovery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - discovery [EYLF, Educators' Guide to EYLF] - improvise [EYLF, Educators' Guide to EYLF] - create [EYLF, Educators' Guide to EYLF] - learn through exploration [ECA-ACARA paper] • experience based <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - children are active participants [EYLF, ECA-ACARA paper, Transition to School position statement, Educators' Guide to EYLF] - engage actively [EYLF, Educators' Guide to EYLF] - actively construct their own learning [EYLF, Educators' Guide to EYLF] - use their senses [ECA-ACARA paper, Educators' Guide to EYLF] <p><u>Play as purposeful, child-focused pedagogy</u> [category]</p> <p>[themes]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • child-centred learning possibilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - meaning-making [EYLF] - expands children's thinking [EYLF] - test out ideas [EYLF] - enhances desire to know and learn [EYLF] - promotes positive learning dispositions [EYLF] - children can ask questions, solve problems and engage in critical thinking [EYLF] - purposeful play [ECA-ACARA paper] • responsive pedagogical interaction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - adult's active role [EYLF, ECA-ACARA paper] - involvement/highly involved adults [EYLF] - use teaching strategies [EYLF] - support inclusion [EYLF] - being responsive to children's ideas and play [EYLF] - engage children actively [EYLF] - make use of spontaneous 'teachable moments' [EYLF] - promote small group interactions [EYLF] - adults join in play [EYLF] • collaboration with peers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - learning is a social activity [EYLF] - value collaborative learning [EYLF, Educators' Guide to EYLF] - play with other children [EYLF] - power of stimulating interactions with peers [ECA-ACARA paper] - interacting with other children [KU transition publication] <p><u>Roles of educator in play-based pedagogy</u> [category]</p> <p>[themes]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supportive behaviours <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - plan, assess and monitor children's learning [EYLF, ECA-ACARA paper, Educators' Guide to EYLF]

- facilitate (design and create learning environments) [EYLF, ECA-ACARA paper, Educators' Guide to EYLF]
- modelling [EYLF, ECA-ACARA paper, Educators' Guide to EYLF]
- documenting [EYLF, ECA-ACARA paper, Educators' Guide to EYLF]
- **mediating behaviours**
 - interacting positively [EYLF, Educators' Guide to EYLF]
 - intentional teaching [EYLF, ECA-ACARA paper, Educators' Guide to EYLF]
 - scaffolding [EYLF, ECA-ACARA paper, Educators' Guide to EYLF]
 - open-ended questioning [EYLF, ECA-ACARA paper]
 - providing feedback [EYLF]
 - sustained shared conversations [EYLF]
 - co-player [Educators' Guide to EYLF]
 - co-constructing knowledge and meaning [EYLF, Educators' Guide to EYLF]
 - problem-solving [EYLF]
 - speculating [EYLF]
 - explaining [EYLF]
- **reflective behaviours**
 - reflective practice [EYLF, ECA-ACARA paper, Educators' Guide to EYLF]
 - critical reflection [EYLF]
 - professional inquiry [EYLF]
 - on-going cycle of review [EYLF, Educators' Guide to EYLF]
 - reflect on pedagogy [EYLF, ECA-ACARA paper]

In order to provide a quick reference overview of the document-based analysis as related to research question one, Figure 4.7 presents a summary of the three emergent categories together with the corresponding eight themes as a thematic map.

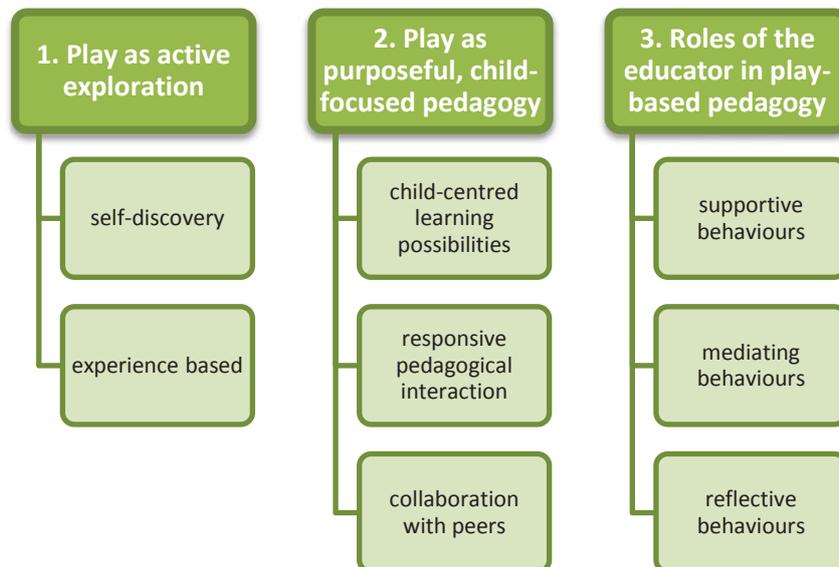


Figure 4.7 Thematic map of identified categories and themes in document-based analysis as related to Research Question 1

4.4.2 Constructs of pedagogic continuity as related to Research Question Two

Analysis of the online documents related to the topic of research question two about constructions of pedagogic continuity. Following the analysis three categories together with six themes were identified. The three categories were: 1) Differing expectations; 2) Academic push-down; and 3) Aspects of enhancing continuity. Table 4.9 summarises the thematic document analysis as related to research question two.

Table 4.9 Summary of thematic analysis of document-based sources as related to Research Question 2

Res Ques 2. How is pedagogic continuity constructed in relation to the transition process within key online document-based sources?
<p><u>Differing expectations</u> [category]</p> <p>[themes]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minimal continuity and crossover <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - starting school is a big step/big change [Raising Children Network] - schools and EC service systems currently not well integrated [Centre for Community Child Health policy brief] • the shock of formal learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a larger more structured school setting can be overwhelming [National Childcare Accreditation Council Inc] - a focus on formal educational learning experiences [National Childcare Accreditation Council Inc] - major source of discontinuity is the change in curricula and teaching strategies [Centre for Community Child Health policy brief] - abrupt change in teaching style and content [Centre for Community Child Health policy brief] <p><u>Academic push-down</u> [category]</p> <p>[themes]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notions of school readiness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - information on school readiness skills [Community Child-Care Co-operative] - focus on school readiness in all areas [Community Child-Care Co-operative] - effective school readiness experiences [Community Child-Care Co-operative] - support children's school readiness [National Childcare Accreditation Council Inc] - incorporate school based activities as part of the early childhood program [National Childcare Accreditation Council Inc] - ready to learn [NSW Transition to School statement information sheet for EC educators and school teachers] - school readiness activities [NSW Education website] - Best Start assessment [NSW Education website, BOSTES website] <p><u>Aspects of enhancing continuity</u> [category]</p> <p>[themes]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • play as a transition bridge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - enables children to make connections between prior experiences and new learning [EYLF, ECA-ACARA paper] - the way 'play' is used for learning may change as students move through the grades [ECA-ACARA paper]

- opportunities for children to use play to process and make sense of experience [ECA-ACARA paper]
- participate in play to help with school [National Childcare Accreditation Council Inc]
- learning about numbers and letters as part of play [National Childcare Accreditation Council Inc]
- introduce more play-based approaches in early stages of school [Centre for Community Child Health policy brief]
- **collaborative exchange**
 - educators from early childhood settings and schools commit to sharing information [EYLF, ECA-ACARA paper, Community Child-Care Co-operative, National Childcare Accreditation Council Inc, NSW Department of Education and Communities information sheet, Transition to School position statement, NSW Transition to School statement information sheet for EC educators and school teachers]
 - exchange information with professionals in other settings [EYLF, National Childcare Accreditation Council Inc]
 - encourage collaboration, connection and strong coordination between professionals working in different types of EC settings [ECA-ACARA paper, Transition to School position statement, BOSTES website, Educators' Guide to EYLF, NSW Transition to School statement information sheet for EC educators and school teachers]
 - establish systems for communication within and between early childhood settings [ECA-ACARA paper, Centre for Community Child Health policy brief]
 - collaboration between educators and education leaders in varied early learning environments [ECA-ACARA paper]
- **recognition of previous learning experiences**
 - provide for continuity in experiences [EYLF]
 - build on children's existing knowledge [EYLF]
 - build on children's prior and current experiences [EYLF, BOSTES website, Centre for Community Child Health policy brief, Educators' Guide to EYLF]
 - ensure that children's prior learning is valued [ECA-ACARA paper, NSW Department of Education and Communities information sheet]
 - build on what children know and can do/prior learning [ECA-ACARA paper, NSW Transition to School statement information sheet for EC educators and school teachers]
 - build on the learning children achieve under the EYLF [ECA-ACARA paper, NSW Transition to School statement information sheet for school teachers]
 - taking the child on from where they are in knowledge [ECA-ACARA paper]
 - continuity of support for children's learning across transition points [ECA-ACARA paper]
 - establish children's prior knowledge, skills, dispositions and understandings [ECA-ACARA paper]
 - value the learning that has gone on before [ECA-ACARA paper]

In order to provide a quick reference overview of the document-based analysis as related to research question two, Figure 4.8 presents a summary of the three identified categories together with the corresponding six themes as a thematic map.

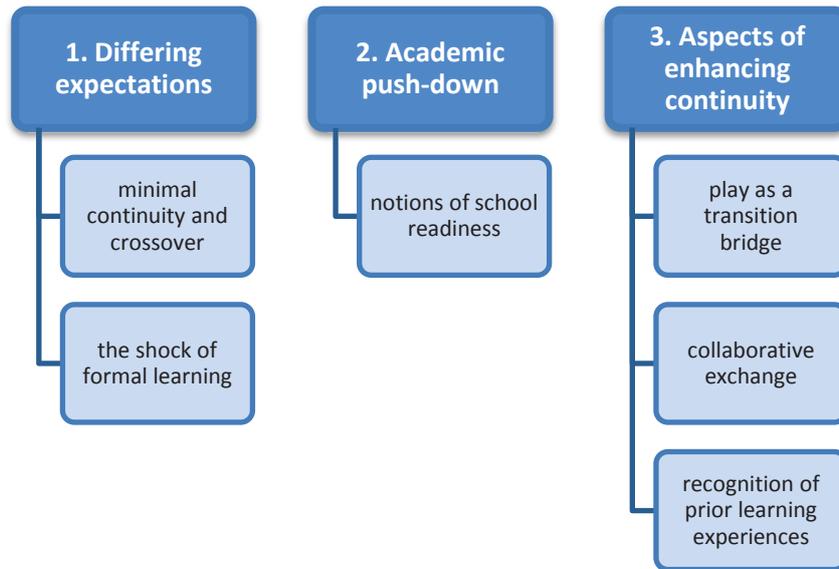


Figure 4.8 Thematic map of identified categories and themes in document-based analysis as related to Research Question 2

4.4.3 Influencing factors in teachers' decisions to use play-based pedagogy as related to Research Question Three

Analysis of the online documents related to the topic of research question three about influencing factors in educators' decisions to use play-based pedagogy. Following the analysis two categories together with five themes were identified. The categories were: 1) Intrinsic factors; and 2) Extrinsic factors. Table 4.10 summarises the thematic document analysis in relation to research question three.

Table 4.10 Summary of thematic analysis of document-based sources as related to Research Question 3

Res Ques 3. What factors portrayed in online document-based sources influence teachers' decisions related to using play-based pedagogy in the transition process?
<p><u>Intrinsic factors</u> [category]</p> <p>[theme]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - theoretical knowledge [EYLF, Educators' Guide to EYLF] - educators' professional knowledge and skills [EYLF, Educators' Guide to EYLF] - experience [EYLF] - personal styles [EYLF, Educators' Guide to EYLF] - personal beliefs and values [EYLF, Educators' Guide to EYLF]

<u>Extrinsic factors</u> [category]
[themes]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical aspects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - learning environments and play spaces (indoor and outdoor) [EYLF, Educators' Guide to EYLF] • organisational/structural aspects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - routines [EYLF, Educators' Guide to EYLF] - time [EYLF, Educators' Guide to EYLF] - recording systems/assessment [EYLF] - curriculum [EYLF, Educators' Guide to EYLF] • financial aspects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - available materials/resources [EYLF, Educators' Guide to EYLF] • beliefs of others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - belief systems (families) – expectations, practices, values and attitudes [EYLF, Educators' Guide to EYLF] - beliefs systems (others) –UN Conventions of Rights of Child – children's right to play, theorists, community [EYLF, Educators' Guide to EYLF]

In order to provide a quick reference overview of the online document-based analysis as related to research question three, Figure 4.9 presents a summary of the two emergent categories together with the corresponding five themes as a thematic map.

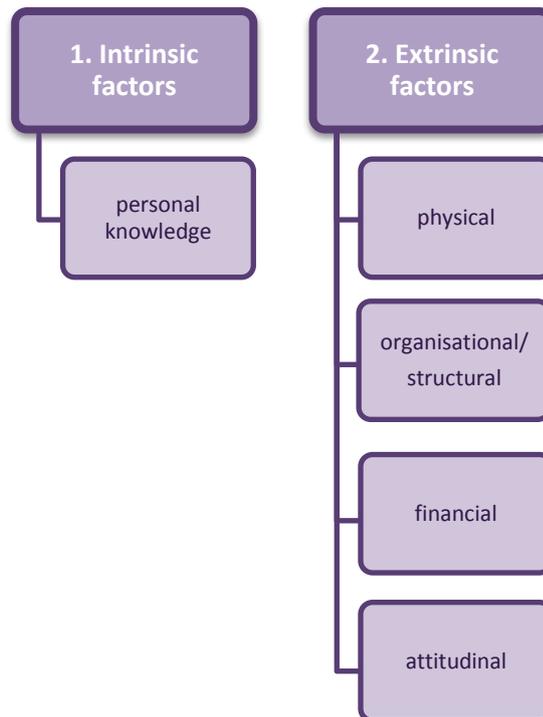


Figure 4.9 Thematic map of identified categories and themes in document-based analysis as related to Research Question 3

There is a noticeable absence of references to the Australian Curriculum within the document-based analyses as it does not focus on pedagogy or pedagogic continuity but instead centres on content and proficiency strands that need to be attained within each of the school years.

4.5 Summary

This chapter presented the findings from the analysis of the teacher interviews for each case and also the document-based analysis according to the three research questions. The resultant categories and related themes were displayed in both table format and as thematic maps. In order to provide an overview of the combined identified categories across the three research questions Figure 4.10 represents these as a thematic map.

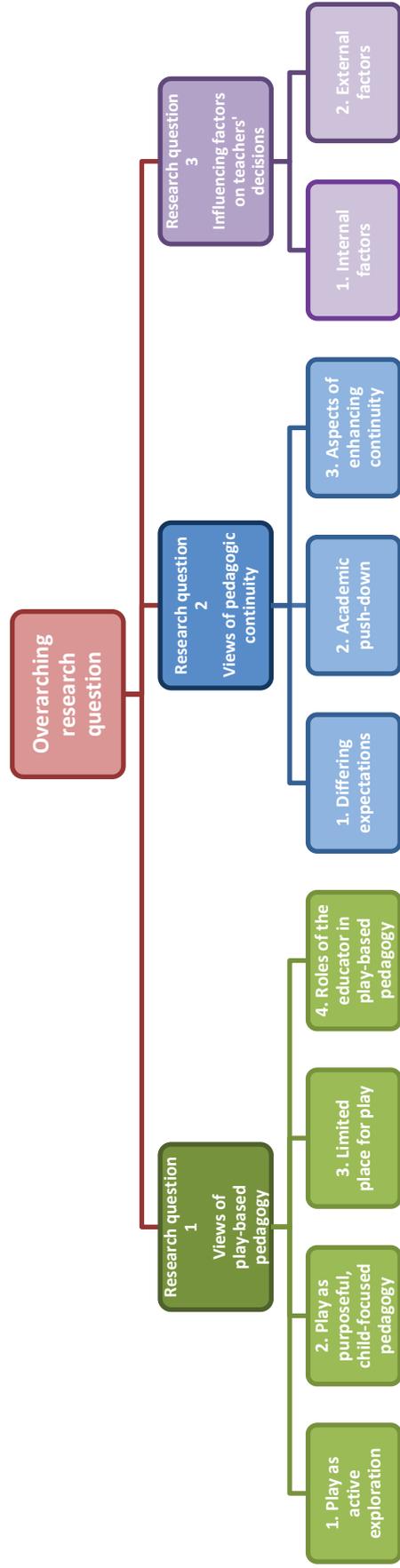


Figure 4.10 Overall thematic map of categories from interview and document-based analysis for Research Questions 1, 2 & 3