



**UNIVERSITY OF
STIRLING**

Creating Educational Experiences through the Objects Children Bring to School

A thesis submitted to the University of Stirling
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education

Muriel Logan

March 2014

ideas everywhere

Table of Contents

1	RESEARCHING CHILDREN’S BROUGHT-IN OBJECT EXPERIENCES IN A SCOTTISH EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT	5
1.1	Introducing the gaps that inspired this research	5
1.1.1	Research aim and research questions as ways to investigate further	9
1.2	The Scottish early childhood context	10
1.2.1	Scottish policies and guidance as ongoing developments	17
1.2.2	Engaging with the concept of experience	18
1.3	Brief overview of this document prior to moving on to review the literature	20
2	OBJECTS, PEDAGOGIES AND RELATIONSHIPS: PERSPECTIVES IN THE LITERATURE	22
2.1	Introducing the broader contexts of children’s object research	22
2.2	Objects in educational settings	23
2.2.1	Theorising about objects in a children’s world	23
2.2.2	Contemporary empirical work around children’s objects	34
2.2.3	Studies about objects, children and gender	36
2.2.4	Current Scottish use of object theories in educational settings	37
2.3	Pedagogical practices and theories in early childhood settings	37
2.3.1	19 th and 20 th Century pedagogical movements	39
2.3.2	21 st Century framings of pedagogy	41
2.3.3	Experiential and active pedagogies	43
2.3.4	Socio-cultural pedagogies	48
2.3.5	Postmodern and relational pedagogies	50
2.3.6	Comparisons between these pedagogical practices and theories	53
2.4	Relationships in early childhood settings	56
2.4.1	Home/School relationships	57
2.4.2	Relationships and continuity between pre-school and school	58
2.5	Reflecting on perspectives from literature prior to moving on to Dewey’s pragmatism	59

3	DEWEY'S PRAGMATISM AS A WAY OF THINKING ABOUT EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES	60
3.1	Pragmatism and reality in the making	60
3.2	Dewey's pragmatism as a philosophy based in scientific understanding	61
3.2.1	Learning as something we do as we form and transform our habits	64
3.2.2	Habits as patterned propensities to act	66
3.2.3	Objects as events with meaning or tools	67
3.2.4	Situation made up of individual and environment	67
3.2.5	Knowledge as reflective transformation in relations	68
3.2.6	Language as an interactional tool	71
3.2.7	Thinking as the ability to give mental consideration to past and future action and consequence relations	71
3.2.8	Experience as the transaction of a living organism with their environment	74
3.2.9	The point of Dewey's philosophical view	75
3.3	Dewey's view of quality and practitioners' roles in educational experiences	76
3.3.1	Continuity as essential to an experience's quality	80
3.3.2	Practitioners' roles in recognising and developing continuities of experience	83
3.3.3	Interaction as essential to an experience's quality	85
3.3.4	Practitioners' roles in developing interactions within experiences	86
3.4	How Dewey's thinking contributes to this research	88
4	METHODOLOGY AND METHODS: TRANSACTIONAL REALISM AND ITS APPLICATION TO THIS RESEARCH	91
4.1	Methodology – experimenting with transactional realism	92
4.1.1	Practitioners have agency	94
4.1.2	Practitioners' roles are evident in what is said and done	95
4.1.3	Knowing is something we do	96
4.1.4	Researching experience	97
4.1.5	Inference and engaging with the “doings” and “sayings” of others	97
4.2	Seeing situations as domains of thoughtful choices for shaping of experiences	98
4.3	Recognising experimental methods as part of Dewey's framing of how we learn	100
4.3.1	Researcher relationships as points of view in a very human interaction	100

4.3.2	Ethics as relationships of respect negotiated over time	102
4.3.3	Data collection as gathering evidence	110
4.3.4	Analysis as pattern recognition within the evidence	115
4.4	Reflecting on methodology and methods prior to moving on to describe the findings	119
5	FINDINGS AROUND CHILDREN'S BROUGHT-IN OBJECT EXPERIENCES	120
5.1	Introduction: Research questions as continuities	120
5.2	Objects children bring to nursery and school	127
5.2.1	Numbers for brought-in objects	128
5.2.2	Number of transformed objects	129
5.2.3	Brought-in objects categorised and described	131
5.2.4	Physical and social properties of brought-in objects	134
5.2.5	Summarising the brought-in object findings	172
5.3	Practitioners' pedagogical responses to objects children bring with them	173
5.3.1	Shared pedagogical practices with objects in both classrooms	179
5.3.2	Specific pedagogical practices with objects in the Nursery	200
5.3.3	Specific pedagogical practices with objects in Primary 1/2	208
5.3.4	Comparing the Nursery and Primary 1/2 patterns of practice with objects	213
5.4	Relationships illuminate similarities and differences in practice purposes	223
5.4.1	Relationships, objects and learning in Nursery and Primary 1/2	224
5.4.2	Relationships between practitioner and child	225
5.4.3	Relationships between practitioners and families	228
5.4.4	Relationships between child and learning/knowledge/curriculum	232
5.4.5	Relationships between child and peers	236
5.5	Reflecting on the three research findings prior to interpreting them	239
6	DISCUSSION: INTERPRETING THE FINDINGS THROUGH DEWEY'S THEORY	241
6.1	Relating evidence to theories: exploring the findings through a Deweyian framework	242
6.1.1	Interpretations of object roles using Dewey's framing of continuity	244
6.1.2	Interpretations of pedagogical practices using Dewey's framing of habits	254
6.1.3	Interpretations of relationships and learning through experiences	255
6.2	Interpreting the concept of experience	261

6.2.1	Learning through experience across the Early Level	262
6.2.2	There are relationships that are not yet explicit	265
6.2.3	Language of experience: tools for thinking and theorising	268
6.3	Implications of this study	271
6.3.1	Developing a language for experiences	271
6.3.2	Supporting a holistic perspective on learning and experience	276
6.3.3	Challenging our assumptions – together	280
6.3.4	Curricularising vs curriculum	282
6.3.5	“Doing” versus “thinking about doing”	285
6.3.6	Reflections on research experience	289
6.4	Final reflections prior to moving on	291
7	APPENDICES	293
7.1	Summary of the Four Capacities underpinning the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence	293
7.2	Participating Practitioner’s Details	294
7.3	Sample of handwritten page of field notes	295
7.4	Sample Classroom Observation Daily Notes	296
7.5	Sample Researcher's Notes	299
7.6	Initial Data Coding	300
7.7	Sample of data recorded for each object	306
7.8	Semi-structured Practitioner Interview Questions	307
7.9	Example of Practitioner Interview Data	308
7.10	Samples of Practitioner Interview Card Sorting Data	310
7.11	Object Brands List	314
7.12	Object Types Summary	317
7.13	Objects Received From Summary	318
7.14	Data Coding	319

List of Tables

Table 1-1: Research aim and research questions	9
Table 5-1: Summary statistics	128
Table 5-2: Number of transformed objects summary	131
Table 5-3: Extracts from various category descriptors with examples	133
Table 5-4: Object sizes	136
Table 5-5: Examples of largest objects	136
Table 5-6: Examples of smallest objects	137
Table 5-7: Examples of typically sized objects	138
Table 5-8: Object materials	140
Table 5-9: Fabric type	141
Table 5-10: Examples of a gendered length of pile on plush toys	142
Table 5-11: Object textures summary	144
Table 5-12: Object colours	145
Table 5-13: Strong colours on children's objects	146
Table 5-14: Visibly gendered objects summary	148
Table 5-15: Activities associated with girls' brought-in objects	149
Table 5-16: Activity types associated with boys' brought-in objects	151
Table 5-17: Nursery boys' branded characters: superheroes	152
Table 5-18: Range of brought-in objects example 1	156
Table 5-19: Range of brought-in objects example 2	156
Table 5-20: Range of brought-in objects example 3	157
Table 5-21: Object sources as mentioned in conversations summary	158
Table 5-22: Mention of speculative history of manufacture	161
Table 5-23: Object brands summary	166
Table 5-24: Examples of texture: natural materials	170
Table 5-25: Examples of object colour: strong colours	171
Table 5-26: Examples of object colour: objects brought by boys	171
Table 5-27: Examples of object colour: objects brought by girls	172

List of Figures

Figure 2-1: Experiential Learning Cycle Examples	45
Figure 3-1: Dewey's pragmatism diagram.....	62
Figure 3-2: Brief Summary of Dewey's View of a Good Educational Experience	79
Figure 5-1: Relationships benefitting from practitioners' practices	126
Figure 5-2: Pedagogical practice pathway.....	199
Figure 5-3: Example of Nursery Pattern 1: All children apart from older boys	201
Figure 5-4: Nursery Pattern 2a: Older boys with conflict then practitioner engagement.....	205
Figure 5-5: Nursery Pattern 2b: Older boys without visible conflict.....	207
Figure 6-1: Research inferences summary	260

List of Images

Image 5-1: A Nursery practitioner's response to a preliminary findings card sorting task	125
Image 5-2: Enid Blyton book	130
Image 5-3: Animal : 1m plush tiger (P1/2)	136
Image 5-4: Natural Materials: 60cm home-grown tomato plant (P1/2)	136
Image 5-5: Adventure Figures: Minute plastic men (P1/2)	137
Image 5-6: Natural Materials: Onyx pebbles (Nursery)	137
Image 5-7: Natural Materials: Acorn (P1/2)	137
Image 5-8: Money: Tiny golden coins (P1/2)	137
Image 5-9: Action Figures: Power Ranger (Nursery)	138
Image 5-10: Reading: 101 Dalmatians (P1/2)	138
Image 5-11: Girl's toy unicorn with long-piled plush	142
Image 5-12: Boy's more life-like plush toy	142
Image 5-13: Bright green Ben 10 playing cards	146
Image 5-14: Brightly coloured kaleidoscope	146
Image 5-15: Ben 10 rucksack "for our supplies"	152
Image 5-16: Ben 10 alien ship as both "the enemy" and "escape pod"	152
Image 5-17: Pirate "he only has one hand but this hook is COOL!"	152
Image 5-18: Power rangers – "red and yellow means danger"	152
Image 5-19: Power rangers – "pink... guys can do ANYTHING we want"	152
Image 5-20: Power ranger - "red and different"	152
Image 5-21: Toy Story Woody "has lots of friends"	152
Image 5-22: Transformer Optimus Prime - "can change so you can drive home "	152
Image 5-23: Superman "with sounds"	153
Image 5-24: Lego bionicle	153
Image 5-25: Megatron (arm only) - "we can each build our own one"	153
Image 5-26: Transformers Bumblebee - "I can give you a ride"	153
Image 5-27: Batman - "Bats are cool!"	153
Image 5-28: Transformers Bumblebee - "I like to stay in my car"	153
Image 5-29: Ben 10 Omnitrix - "We can turn into anything we want to"	153
Image 5-30: Ben 10 bouncy ball	153
Image 5-31: Ben 10 playing cards - "They're our tickets"	153
Image 5-32: Ben 10 Omnitrix - "Mine will double the strength of yours"	153
Image 5-33: Australian bush hat	156
Image 5-34: Bag of natural materials	156

Image 5-35: Adhesive plaster	157
Image 5-36: Umbro watch "with 55 on it"	160
Image 5-37: "Five little men in a flying saucer" glove	161
Image 5-38: All Blacks Scorecard	163
Image 5-39: Texture: crackling stems and pliable leaves with crisp flowers (P1/2)	170
Image 5-40: Texture: raw egg includes hard, smooth, soft and slimy (P1/2)	170
Image 5-41: Colour: Strong yellow (Nursery)	171
Image 5-42: Colour: Strong red (P1/2)	171
Image 5-43: Colour: objects brought by boys (Nursery)	171
Image 5-44: Colour: objects brought by boys (P1/2)	171
Image 5-45: Colour: objects brought by girls (Nursery)	172
Image 5-46: Colour: objects brought by girls (Nursery)	172
Image 5-47: Plush tiger	177
Image 5-48: Nursery children make their own worms and worm nest	201
Image 5-49: Sylvanian Family Rabbits	203
Image 5-50: Paula's tomato plant	210
Image 5-51: Wall-E	219
Image 5-52: Pink worms	230
Image 5-53: High School Musical magazine	234
Image 6-1: Superman	284
Image 7-1: Enid Blyton book	306

List of Vignettes

Vignette 5-1: Nancy's Emerald Ring	123
Vignette 5-2: Ms Patrick and Phoebe's Enid Blyton book	130
Vignette 5-3: Miss Potter and Preston's Bag of "Natural Materials"	135
Vignette 5-4: Ms Nesbit and Norman's Umbro watch "with 55 on it"	160
Vignette 5-5: Ms Potter and Paulo's All Blacks' Scorecard	163
Vignette 5-6: Ms Penny and Parker's Tiger's Lunch	177
Vignette 5-7: Ms Nash and Naomi's Sylvania Family rabbits	203
Vignette 5-8: Ms Patrick and Paula's tomato plant	210
Vignette 5-9: Ms Naplock and Nevin's 'Wall-E'	219
Vignette 5-10: Ms Potter and Paco's Zeebeez	221
Vignette 5-11: Ms Nesbitt and Natasha's pink worm	230
Vignette 5-12: Ms Nesbit and Nelly's High School Musical Magazine	234
Vignette 6-1: Ms Nash and Neil's "Superman with sounds"	284

Declaration

This thesis is a presentation of my original research work.

Wherever contributions of others are involved, every effort is made to indicate this clearly, with due reference to the literature, and acknowledgement of collaborative research and discussions.

The work was conducted under the guidance of Dr Christine Stephen and Professor Lydia Plowman, at the School of Education, University of Stirling.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Hogan'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M' and a long, sweeping underline.

Signature

Date **15 July 2014**

Thanks and Dedication

This project was funded by the UK's Economic and Social Research Council's (ESRC) grant/project number ES/F042612/1. It would not have been possible for me to do this research without the ESRC's funding and support and I am most grateful for their willingness to engage with trainee researchers in ways that help to turn possibilities into realities. In addition, this research would never have been completed without my husband's bearing the costs of my not earning for the years after the ESRC financial grant ended.

Huge thanks go to the local education authority, practitioners, families and children who agreed to participate in this research. They knew they were taking a step into the unknown and took it anyway. In a culture laced with multiple layers of compliance the practitioners' willingness to be open to the presence of a researcher was inspiring and showed a level of commitment to valuable experiences in children's lives which is most commendable. It also speaks to a wealth of resources present in the early childhood practitioners in Scotland and to these participating practitioner's quiet confidence and creativity as they engaged with the challenges of a new curriculum.

In addition, the Stirling School of Education provided a fertile space for ideas. Professor Gert Biesta's quest to make the opportunities which are possible through theoretical ways of thinking available to all was an essential part of this thesis too. His unerring ability to understand why I was floundering and to connect where I was to various theorists' views was inspiring even when it left me feeling like a minnow in a sea of predators. In particular, his explanations of Dewey's views about educational experiences helped me to see Dewey's ideas from my own experiences as a teacher who was trying to learn to think like a researcher. His plain English and thoughtful, open-ended responses to my never-ending questions helped me to find

ways of thinking and asking questions about what I had seen practitioners engage with in these two early childhood classrooms.

In the beginning all of the ideas were way beyond me. Over time, and with considerable effort from my supervisors, Professor Lydia Plowman and Dr Christine Stephen, I have been encouraged to try new things and improvise my way toward a way of thinking about what mattered to practitioners in two early childhood classrooms when children acted on their inclinations to bring objects from their out-of-school lives into school. The efforts my supervisors put into helping me to think in new ways and from different perspectives were both patient and persistent and I am most grateful for their kindness and faithfulness towards me through the ups and downs which were part of my experience as a trainee researcher. In all sorts of ways, I could not have done it without them.

And finally, and in every way possible, I thank my family. Both my mother and my mother-in-law shared their homes with us for two years so that we were able to continue to do what we thought important. My husband, Steve, and my children, Jen and Ali, have made my on-going battles to be an educational researcher part of their everyday lives for the last few years. It is my hope that I have not put my children off higher education and that when their future opportunities prove difficult I will be able to return the gift of optimism they have given me during this process as well as cook, clean and do their washing for them (they have it in writing now!) The family's contributions have always been practical as well as emotional: Steve and Jen have proof-read endless versions of the thesis, Ali has been perpetually kind and diffused household tensions with his calm response under pressure and more recently kept me supplied with wood for the fire, Steve has applied his technical skills to this document's final layout, converted my rough sketches into graphics, helped me understand Excel's intricacies as well as made thousands of cups of coffee, paid all the bills, picked me up every time I was ready to quit and reminded me that in this family there is always a loving, Godly way to do the things that matter.

Abstract

The Scottish *Curriculum for Excellence* is framed, without visible theory, in language embedding the value of children's experiences. In association with a policy encouraging practitioners to develop healthy home/school links, early childhood practitioners develop pedagogical practices in support of this curricular language of experience. One aspect coming into focus is children's experiences in general rather than only those which take place within institutional walls. One way children introduce their out-of-school experiences into classrooms is by voluntarily bringing treasured objects from home to early childhood setting doors.

By jointly engaging with John Dewey's view that worthwhile educational experiences are developed through interactions and continuities, the pedagogic practices of twelve early childhood practitioners and the view that each child-initiated object episode could be viewed as part of a child's experience this research aims to better understand practitioners' development of educational experiences through their responses to the objects forty children voluntarily brought to school. In support of this aim three research questions focused on 1) what objects children brought? 2) what practitioners said and did with the objects? and 3) what practice similarities and differences were visible across two consecutive age groups: 3-5 year olds in a nursery (preschool) and 5-7 year olds in a composite Primary 1/2 class (formal schooling)?

During an eight month period in 2009 data were collected by classroom observations, collection of photographic images and practitioner interviews in a government-funded, denominational, early childhood setting in a Scottish village school. Data were analysed for the physical and social properties of children's objects, practitioner's pedagogic practices when engaging with the brought-in objects and similarities and differences in object-related classroom behaviours as epitomised in the relationships in each classroom.

The findings were that practitioners made use of three main pedagogical practices when engaging with children's brought-in objects: transforming objects into educational resources, shaping in-school object experiences and building a range of relationships around these objects. While the broad patterns of practice used in both classrooms were similar the details of practice showed underlying framings of children and their futures were different in each classroom.

It is argued that what Dewey's views offer, in the context of these findings, is a theoretical framing of experience that opens new possibilities for practitioner's individual and group reflections on their current practices and collaborative practice development. His is one of the languages of experience available as practitioners and policy makers around the world grapple with educational questions.

(400 words)

1 RESEARCHING CHILDREN'S BROUGHT-IN OBJECT EXPERIENCES IN A SCOTTISH EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

1.1 Introducing the gaps that inspired this research

Experience is a key term in Scottish education. It is central in:

- both previous curricula (either explicitly or implicitly) for children between three through five (LT Scotland 1999) and five through seven (LT Scotland 2009a) years of age
- the new *Curriculum for Excellence* (with extensive use in assessment documentation such as LT Scotland 2009c; Scottish Executive 2006a; Scottish Executive 2007b)
- curricular guidance documents (Learning and Teaching Scotland 2005) which aim to clarify the role of pedagogy in active learning in the early years and beyond.

Yet, nowhere in these documents, is there any definition, explanation, or theorising of experience apart from mentioning a small number of previous Scottish and international educational luminaries, including Montessori, Piaget and Vygotsky (Learning and Teaching Scotland 2005 p15).

Four studies in particular helped to highlight a gap in the literature to which this research aims to respond. Firstly, Marsh's (2003) study of young children's literacy practices found the school influenced home practices by sending reading materials home with little reciprocal influence on school practices from home literacy practices even when children brought books from home into school. This raised the question as to what influence home objects might currently have in a school context.

Secondly, a TLRP study (Hughes 2007) used shoeboxes in a home/school exchange programme to investigate and collaborate on shared "funds of knowledge" for the benefit of children's literacy and mathematics. While the study found considerable

benefit from the home/school exchange, the particular objects exchanged were not necessarily chosen by children and so were more reflective of parent or teacher choices. This suggested there was room to investigate objects children chose to bring to school. Thirdly, Kibele's (2006 p ix) study looked at the toys children interacted with in a childcare setting and found that, for children, "(T)oy play serves as a key focus for making meaning of the world around them and their place in it" while "(T)he meaning of objects is located not in the objects themselves, but as they are activated." I interpreted Kibele's recent focus on young children, and the roles objects played for them, as opening the way for a focus on practitioners' practices in relation to children's objects - particularly those objects children chose to bring from home. And finally, Jones et al (2012) described how practitioners who work in early childhood settings make choices as to whether or not to engage with an object which a child voluntarily brings from home to an educational setting. Some children's objects were welcomed, or treated with "affection", and others were carefully filtered, or completely excluded and treated as "infection".

In summary, these four studies suggest gaps in current research of objects used for educational purposes. The gaps include:

1. Objects which go against the norm by flowing from home into school.
2. Objects agentic children choose to bring to school of their own volition.
3. Pedagogical practices in relation to these voluntarily brought-in objects.

In response to these gaps in the research this empirical study used qualitative methods to better understand two main aspects:

1. The objects which 40 Scottish children voluntarily brought to school during an eight month period during 2009.
2. The pedagogical practices of twelve early childhood practitioners as they engaged with objects children voluntarily brought from home into two Scottish classrooms.

The three research questions which shaped this investigation were:

1. What objects did children bring?
2. What pedagogical practices did practitioners use when engaging with the objects children brought?
3. What similarities and differences were there between the practices in the Nursery classroom and those in the Primary 1/2 classroom?

In the two classrooms involved in this research, practitioners routinely engaged with children's voluntarily brought-in objects to develop what they spoke of as "children's experiences". This research provides descriptions of three main pedagogical practices found by focusing on the practitioners' roles in the practitioner-child-object interactions at the classroom doors and beyond. These practices are 1) transforming children's voluntarily brought-in objects into educational resources, 2) shaping in-school object-related experiences for children and 3) building relationships. Detailed descriptions of these pedagogical practices in a Nursery¹ and a Primary 1/2² composite³ classroom illustrate how the, jointly applicable, Early Level⁴ of the Scottish *Curriculum for Excellence*⁵ (CfE) was interpreted via implicit framings of experience.

Research findings include, in the first place, details of the objects children voluntarily brought. This provides a unique view of a junction between these children's homes

¹ Nursery is the word used in this particular local education authority to mean a preschool provision situated in a school setting and applies to children between the ages of three to five years-of-age when the school year begins.

² Primary 1/2 refers to the first two years of formal schooling in Scotland and applies to children between the ages of five to seven years-of-age when the school year begins. In this research the abbreviation P1/2 is used to refer to the Primary 1/2 group.

³ Composite classes: Where children from what, in a larger school, would be two different year groups are taught in one classroom by one teacher due to limited classroom space and low numbers of pupils in each year group. This is a relatively common practice in smaller Scottish schools. In this research the composite class included children in Primary 1 (first year of formal schooling) and Primary 2 (second year of formal schooling).

⁴ Early Level is that portion of the CfE (below) which children between the ages of roughly 3-7 are likely to be engaged with during Nursery and Primary 1/2.

⁵ *Curriculum for Excellence* (CfE) refers to the new Scottish curriculum, covering children from 3-18 years-of-age. It was in the processes of being phased-in when this research was carried out.

and school education, as well as descriptions of 3-7 year old children's portable object preferences in a Scottish village in 2009 and the properties of these children's objects which were useful to practitioners in their shaping of children's educational experiences.

In the second place, descriptions of the pedagogical practices used by practitioners to shape in-school brought-in object experiences provides detailed accounts of how a similar pattern of practice can be interpreted in two different ways and raises questions about the role of implicit and explicit theories in shaping joined-up early childhood practices in collaboratively purposeful ways.

In the third place, descriptions of the kinds of relationships practitioners' interactions with children's objects developed suggest that while practitioners are skilled relationship builders with materials and people there may be possibilities to be investigated in building a more complex relationship between practitioners and educational theorising in order for them to be able to describe, frame in a broader context and then defend their practices in collaborative ways.

Some tensions between two cultures of pedagogy are evident when the similarities and differences between Nursery and P1/2 patterns of developing children's experiences are considered. A similar pattern of practice was used by all practitioners to shape children's interactions with these brought-in objects and to build a range of relationships to support children's brought-in object experiences by linking children's out-of-school experiences with in-school experiences. Yet, the tacit theories underlying Nursery and P1/2 classroom practices showed different approaches to the Early Level of the CfE.

While policy makers might like to imagine education as a plan-and-deliver process (Stephen & Brown 2004 p26) what happened with the objects which these children voluntarily brought from home is representative of the reality of early childhood education: planning is broad, practitioner's personality and ability to engage on the

day matters and much of the day is spent welcoming, then collaboratively transforming the newly experienced into the further experienced with children who respond in their own individual ways. Education in this creative sense is highly unpredictable, intensely personal and an always messy human endeavour in which children act to learn and engage collaboratively with the world in ways which build their futures. But these intensely personal educational processes, in most Western societies at least, are bounded and shaped by a mixture of public purposes (Moss & Petrie 2002) which include curricular documents, government social policy initiatives, a culture of compliance (Palaiologou 2012) in public services, workforce issues (HMIE 2007; Simpson 2010) and economic pressures. This contested context is subject to additional challenges in Scotland as the CfE reframes practitioners’ roles and opens up further possibilities for collaborative and creative practice development within schools (The Scottish Government 2010a).

1.1.1 Research aim and research questions as ways to investigate further

In summary the research aim and research questions were:

Table 1-1: Research aim and research questions

Research Aim and Research Questions	
Aim	To better understand the pedagogical practices practitioners used to create educational experiences as children voluntarily brought objects from home into an early childhood setting.
Research Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What objects did children voluntarily bring? 2. What pedagogical practices did practitioners use to engage with the objects children voluntarily brought? 3. What similarities and differences were there between the pedagogical practices used in the Nursery and Primary 1/2 classroom?

1.2 The Scottish early childhood context

Historically, a range of different types of early childhood provisions, from government funded nurseries to businesses and charities, were responsible for the care and education of children between three and five years of age in what is locally referred to as childcare, nursery or preschool depending on the type of provider. In Scotland a re-framing from childcare to education has been taking place since the late 1990's (Cohen, Moss, & Petrie 2004 p191). The introduction of a government funded pre-school voucher system, and its associated need to show good quality for its investment, led to a higher degree of interest in the quality of provision for young children (Stephen and Brown 1999). In addition, the Researching Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years (REPEY) (Siraj-Blatchford et al. 2002) study, which was an analysis of pedagogy in settings described as "providers of good practice to children and families" (p10), found that qualified practitioners engaged in more "sustained shared thinking" (p12) and that less qualified practitioners were better pedagogues when supervised by more qualified practitioners. Once children entered school in the year they turned five they were seen as part of a school provision. Increasingly since the introduction in 1999 of *A Curriculum Framework for Children 3-5* (Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum 1999) the Scottish early childhood provision has been encouraged to move from a framing as childcare to one of education. As suggested by Cohen et al (2004), in England, Scotland and Sweden "childcare can be educationalised" (p203) by what they refer to as administration, organisation and a range of conceptual questions.

Currently, Primary school education in Scotland is provided by qualified teachers registered with the General Teaching Council of Scotland. In the past, preschools attached to schools included a teacher among their practitioners while most preschools run as private businesses did not (HMIE 2007). More recently, a few Local Education Authorities have provided a teacher in a consultative role (Powell 2007) for the benefit of private businesses within their region. In response to a number of

pressures, including a new government funding arrangement with local authorities which reduced funding and removed the ring-fencing of local education budgets, a number of local education authorities are now providing a shared teacher across a group of preschools rather than employ a full-time teacher in each one (EIS 2008). This shared teacher provision has been the subject of debate within schools and local authorities and a non-supportive reception from the main Scottish teachers' union, the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS). It has gone so far as to publish and distribute to all schools a booklet emphasising parents' statutory rights to insist that their preschool children be taught by a qualified teacher (EIS 2010). However, as those practitioners who are not registered as teachers are currently paid less than those who are, it is unlikely that either preschools run as private businesses or government funded local education authorities will be in a position to fund the cost of a full-time teacher in all nurseries. More recently, the pressures on government funding mean that schools are increasingly looking to practitioners without teacher registration to manage their preschools.

Preschools not attached to a primary school have been largely staffed by adults with a wide range of qualifications. Over time these practitioners have been required to register with the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care (SCRC 2010) and to have a specified level of training in order to supervise or manage an early childhood setting. It seems possible that preschools, both those run by a local authority and those operated as businesses, will continue to recruit most of their practitioners with qualifications other than teaching.

The CfE, as the recent statutory curricular reframing process, strengthens the merger of these provisions under its Early Level⁶ of educational provision. Early childhood

⁶ Early Level is a term used in the Scottish CfE to describe the first level of the planning and assessment documentation used to frame and record a child's educational development between 3-18 years old. It is applied as developmentally appropriate for each child so some children may be working to a higher level while

provision covers children roughly aged three through six years of age (in Scotland, preschool through Primary 1) and is framed in a language of children's experiences and development. This merging of provisions, when seen in the light of Scotland's almost universal uptake of half-day government-funded preschool provision for children (The Scottish Government 2011) from their third birthday until they enter school, means that almost all Scottish children aged three or four years old plus all of the school-attending five to seven year olds are recipients of pedagogical practices (in support of this Early Level framing of education as well as more broadly applicable) which are described in curriculum guidance documents as active learning (LT Scotland 2008; Scottish Executive 2007a). In addition, further curricular guidance provides a range of descriptive statements about children's experiences and expected outcomes (for example LT Scotland 2009b lists experiences and outcomes for expressive arts). In spite of the large number of children involved, as yet, the tacit theoretical viewpoints which underpin this Early Level are largely undisclosed (Stephen 2010). In this environment of unstated theories⁷ practitioners are given responsibility for innovation at school level (The Scottish Government 2010b), so will account for their practice development at both a school level and to external overseeing authorities. Associated with policy initiatives are high degrees of regulation (Dahlberg & Moss 2005) and pressures for increased professionalism (Osgood 2006) in the workforce. In this context, there is a place for research which makes visible the complexity of the practitioners' roles in interpreting these government interventions into day-to-day pedagogical practices.

A degree of tension, centred in part in the role of play, is still present between nursery (pre-school) and school provisions. Rogers (2010) describes how child's play

others may work at the Early Level for longer. This means that age is only a very rough measure of its applicability.

⁷ The *CfE Building the curriculum 3: A framework for learning and teaching* (2010) guidance document uses a language of learning and teaching, as was the previous curriculum's framing, without any specification as to its theoretical underpinnings.

is viewed as the form of pedagogy most suitable in pre-school while in schools there is often a play of work. She suggests that by making use of relational pedagogy, such as Reggio Emilia or Taguchi, the role of play across all of the early childhood might be transformed from its current tensions towards a role “foregrounding relationships within play, thus seeing play pedagogy as emergent, co-constructed and relational... children’s play might inform classroom pedagogy rather than, as is the case in many early childhood classrooms and in some accounts of pedagogy in the literature, pedagogy informing children’s play” (p6).

The practitioners who participated in this research came from a range of different training backgrounds as is typical of most Scottish early childhood provisions. Given the diversity of qualifications, a degree of contention about early childhood staffing in Scotland (EIS 2008) and the wider UK (Nutbrown 2012), as well as a desire to move forward rather than get stuck in current staffing debates, all staff who participated in this research are referred to as practitioners: this use is intended to reflect neither qualifications nor job titles but is a single term to focus attention on their shared expertise in developing early childhood pedagogical practices. (Details of practitioner’s qualifications, job titles and years of experience are provided in Appendix 7.2 Participating Practitioner’s Details, page 294)

As part of the *Scottish Curriculum for Excellence* change process, practitioners were tasked with both increased freedom to collaboratively shape this curriculum development and increased responsibility for developing their own practices in accordance with the standards envisioned by this curriculum (Scottish Executive 2006a p1). This meant that both Nursery and P1/2 practitioners were involved in setting-based curriculum development in which they were expected to evidence both their creativity and knowledge of the local context as well as their understanding of education as defined by the outcomes- and experience-descriptive curricular guidance documents. Practitioners’ engagement in this process meant they were attuned to considering their own practice individually and in groups. For

them, the new curriculum provided opportunities to do things in different ways and to collaboratively develop and fine tune their own practices in support of the experiences and outcomes typified in these curricular documents.

Given what has been described in Scotland as an atheoretical curriculum (Priestley 2011), that relies on the word experience, it seemed potentially useful to use ideas from John Dewey's pragmatism, with its detailed understandings of experience, to frame the research and inform the findings. His views - on how experiences are developed, where quality lies in educational experiences and practitioners' roles in developing good educational experiences for children - are used to engage with the view, from analysis of classroom observations and practitioner interviews, of pupil experience as a core educational concept in the Scottish and international contexts.

This research is thus set in a context of two different traditions of practice, preschools and schools, and evidences qualities of practice from both teachers and Early Childhood Practitioners⁸ (ECPs) (which is the current title given in this particular local authority to Nursery and classroom practitioners from training pathways other than teaching). By framing all staff as pedagogical practitioners (practitioners for short) this research aims to make use of an alternative view of good educational experiences for children using Dewey's ideas around experience, including interactions and continuity.

To honour a more joined-up descriptor for early childhood staff and since pedagogy can connote both the science and art of education and is respected across a wide range of educational philosophies, the term 'practitioner' is used to refer to the classroom staff who participated in this research.

⁸⁸ Early Childhood Practitioner (ECP) is the current designation for staff in early years settings whose qualification is not a General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS) registered teaching qualification. ECP is more of a job title than evidence of a particular training pathway.

In addition to engaging with a new curriculum, schools in Scotland are required by statute to engage with parents. The *Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act* aims to modernise and strengthen a framework for supporting parental involvement in school education and, by implication, nurseries under the all-encompassing descriptor “broad principles and benefits of parental involvement in a child’s education” (Scottish Executive 2006b p1). While the act emphasises that parental involvement improves outcomes for children, much of the framing of responsibilities is in relation to schools influencing homes rather than homes influencing schools. This makes for an increased pressure for parental involvement in school programmes but has not necessarily produced a raised school interest in children’s home lives. In contrast, this research describes child-initiated influences from home to school.

The CfE requires a different kind of commitment from practitioners, namely collaborative curricular development as well as delivery. Thus the role of practitioners in Scottish schools has shifted from one of delivering a set, and largely defined, curriculum to one in which practitioners are expected to collaboratively develop and deliver an appropriate curriculum detailed in guidance documents as “experiences” to attain “outcomes” for the children in their care (For example LT Scotland 2009e is the document which describes experiences and outcomes for science).

The CfE’s framing of curriculum development as a practitioners’ role has substantially altered the early childhood context in that curriculum development practices, which have existed in preschool settings for a long time prior to the new legislation, now apply to the primary school teachers as well as preschool practitioners so are open to whole-school discussion. While preschool practitioners will have developed their own curriculum in support of the previous curricular framework (LT Scotland 1999), the framing of the current curriculum in terms of local, collaborative curriculum development has legitimised their long-standing practice of tailoring the curriculum to the children present. It has also increased the value of a range of curriculum and

pedagogical practice development skills, well-practiced for preschool practitioners, which previously may have been undervalued in primary schools.

At the same time as these practices are now more valued, there is a new sense of permission to go further, be more creative and develop innovative practices in collaborative groups. However, in conjunction with this burgeoning development is an undercurrent of concern expressed by practitioners in relation to the oversight of schools by local authorities, the education inspectorate and various bodies tasked with standards of care across public services. Within a longstanding culture of compliance (Alexander 2008b; Reeves 2008; Stephen 2010) practitioners who are developing their own practices will need to defend them across public fora. For example, as inspection reports are publicly available on the web they have influence in shaping public perceptions of individual settings. Previously, when assessment criteria were clearly defined in relation to the curricular guidelines, inspections were based on evidencing good practice in relation to these defined targets. Under the new curriculum the goals have shifted and practitioners in this research setting stated they were not sure where the goals had shifted to or even if the culture of compliance was to be replaced by a new culture.

This new curriculum aims, among other things, to provide a more seamless progression from a child's entry at three years of age through starting school at five years of age. While attendance for children aged three and four years old is not compulsory the high percentage of Scottish children who attend early childhood settings means most young children will be in educational settings for some portion of each school week from three years of age. In addition, as UK schools tend to start children in formal schooling at an earlier age than most other European countries (Eurydice at NFER 2010), the Early Level is seen as a way to make starting school more gradual and a smoother transition for children. At the same time it is seen as an opportunity for extending its active learning practices throughout the school (The Scottish Government 2010a).

At the time data were being collected, the CfE was in its third year of use in a phased roll-out process which started with Primary 1 pupils in the 2006-2007 school year and moved up with this cohort year on year. However, the documents specifically pertinent to the Early Level of the curriculum only became available in 2006 as subject guidelines (Scottish Executive 2006a). Of specific import to early childhood, in 2007, *Building the Curriculum 2 – Active learning in the early years* (Scottish Executive 2007c) became available. Thus, at the time of data collection, all early childhood practitioners were coming to terms with the new Early Level structure and expectations outlined in these documents and the associated changes in practice which were to go with it. Included, were two guidance documents focusing on pedagogy and listening (Learning and Teaching Scotland 2005; Learning and Teaching Scotland 2006 respectively). During data collection in 2008, the relatively recent publication of documents specific to the Early Level meant that practitioners were, in practice, terminology, documentation and planning making reference to the previous Curriculum Framework for 3-5, the previous 5-14 Curriculum framework and the growing collection of CfE documents.

1.2.1 Scottish policies and guidance as ongoing developments

In Scotland, preschool and school settings share a range of policy and guidance documents whose intention is to help shape day-to-day classroom pedagogical practices and support practice development. These are described in chronological order as this helps to illustrate how policy or guidance responds to current issues in the on-going CfE development.

First of these is a guidance document entitled *Let's talk about pedagogy* (Learning and Teaching Scotland 2005). Issued in 2005, just post the 2004 announcement of a new Scottish curriculum, it suggests an increased focus on pedagogy as a way forward in the on-going work of shaping the education of children by use of a common language with which to describe and develop classroom practices. In the new climate of increased practitioners' responsibility for the development of

practices in support of a new curriculum, the second publication in the same series, *Let's talk about listening to children* (Learning and Teaching Scotland 2006) emphasises the importance of engaging with where children are, in ways suggestive of more of an emergent framing of learning. This was followed in 2007 (HMIE) by a report from the Scottish Inspectorate of Education highlighting the key role of practitioners in providing quality pre-school education. CfE guidance documents combine the focus on listening to children, active learning and professional practices in *Building the curriculum 2 – active learning and professional practice* (The Scottish Government 2007) which was followed shortly by the various experiences and outcomes documents which framed children's learning as experiences. While it might have been expected that the policy guidance to follow this focus on experiences in learning would be theory to support this view, what followed was a further guidance document (The Scottish Government 2010b p2) which, while it uses some language associated with emergence (such as "interdisciplinary learning," "school as a community" and "connections") reverted to the previous curriculum's stance and framed education as "learning and teaching."

1.2.2 Engaging with the concept of experience

In this Scottish context *experience* is a concept much used in the new curricular documents⁹, associated guidance documents and by practitioners who participated in this research. A Google Advanced Search for *experience* on the website for Education Scotland (the website of the government bodies charged with disseminating educational documents, practices, standards, inspections and compliance) produced a count of 5,690 hits, as of the end of September 2011, which illustrates the use these documents make of the word experience. So did the practitioners who took part in this project. However, across the same pages of the website there were no hits for either "define experience," "experience defined" or

⁹ (For example LT Scotland 2009d which covers expectations for religious and moral education).

“experience described” which supports the view that while experience is an extensively used word there is little or no definition of the word provided. While this lack of definition allows plenty of room for innovative interpretation, it also suggests a possible lack of shared or detailed thinking about what now appears to be a central concept in the development and delivery of pedagogical practices in support of a new curriculum.

Two factors influenced the inclusion of John Dewey’s views on experience in this research:

1. Practitioners on-going references to children’s experiences suggested that experience was the concept practitioners were using to frame their practice development and delivery.
2. The CfE’s extensive use of the term experience, without a theoretical framing of the concept, suggests that practitioners may be in a difficult position as they are expected to deliver “excellent” (Scottish Executive 2006a p1) experiences but have no overall framing of either experience or of what an excellent experience might look like. The CfE describes its purposes as the four capacities: “a successful learner, a confident individual, a responsible citizen and an effective contributor¹⁰.” While these capacities describe what might be considered outcomes of educational experiences, they do not directly address the concept of experience, let alone tie the concept into relationships with other aspects of education such as interactions, continuity, learning, habit, knowledge or thinking.

By engaging with Dewey’s framing of experience, this research offers an example of one of many different current, and historical, theoretical viewpoints which offer

¹⁰ Further details regarding each of these Four Capacities are provided in Appendix 7.1 Summary of the Four Capacities underpinning the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence, page 298. It is particularly worth noting the details on the fourth capacity – effective contributor – as these highlight the intended outcomes under the CfE in relation to children’s contributions to their own education.

potentially transformative ways to think pedagogically about the concept of experience.

1.3 Brief overview of this document prior to moving on to review the literature

This chapter has introduced this research and its focus by addressing gaps in the literature and placing it in its particularly Scottish educational context. What follows is a chapter by chapter overview of the rest of this document.

Chapter 2: Objects, pedagogies and relationships: perspectives in the literature

positions this research within historical and current views of educational objects and the pedagogies and relationships associated with them. It also looks at pedagogy as a way of talking about what educational practitioners ‘do’ as well as how they, and others, reflect on what they do.

Chapter 3: Dewey’s pragmatism as a way of thinking about educational experiences provides a brief overview of the Deweyian concepts around experience. This includes explaining, very briefly, his concepts of continuity and interaction as ways of both thinking about and evaluating the quality of educational experiences.

Chapter 4: Methodology and Methods: Transactional realism and its application to this research describes the methodology, and what Dewey referred to as ‘experimental¹¹’ methods used in this project, as my interpretation of his transactional realism frames both the researcher’s stance and behaviours as well as what it is possible to know in this empirical research setting.

¹¹ Dewey’s use of ‘experimental’ is centred in his view of knowledge as what we might describe as a ‘best current approximation.’ He took the view that we continue to experiment, so as to fine tune our understandings through our thinking, ‘trial and error’ experiments and our ability to reflect and make changes to our behaviours, so that they are more appropriate to our understanding of the world and our place in it.

Chapter 5: Findings around children's brought-in object experiences describes the three main findings: out-of-school experiences are drawn in through objects, pedagogical practices shape opportunities for interactions in an educational situation and relationships offer a way to compare purposes across two practices.

Chapter 6: Discussion: Interpreting the findings through Dewey's theory interprets the research findings in light of Dewey's views, discusses some of the issues raised by the findings, and considers what this particular framing of experience might offer to Scottish early childhood education.

2 OBJECTS, PEDAGOGIES AND RELATIONSHIPS: PERSPECTIVES IN THE LITERATURE

2.1 Introducing the broader contexts of children's object research

Overall, children's objects, including those classified as toys, have been researched from numerous points of view including:

- the marketing of children's toys with a focus on increasing toy consumption or understanding techniques used to do so (Bainbridge 2010; Gunter & Furnham 1998; Hansen et al. 2002; Kline & Pentecost 1990; Lindstrom & Seybold 2004; Nadesan 2002; Seiter 1992),
- children's use of toys and technology at home with a focus on understanding the socio-cultural role children's objects play in home environments (Plowman et al. 2011b; Plowman et al. 2012; Plowman, McPake, & Stephen 2008; Plowman, McPake, & Stephen 2010; Plowman, Stephen, & McPake 2008) ,
- toy histories where the intention is to understand human relationships with toys over time (Gelman, Manczak, & Noles 2012; Gould 2011; Jackson 2010; Mammias & Spandidos 2012; Prochner 2011; Sharon 2010),
- the use of objects by disabled children with a focus on better understanding a disability or enabling therapeutic benefits (Charity & Philip ; Holmes & Procaccino 2009; Maestro & Muratori 2008; McPartland et al. 2011; Prothmann, Ettrich, & Prothmann 2009; Williams, Costall, & Reddy 1999) and
- the archaeological studies of toys to better understand the past (Barton & Somerville 2012; Ekholm 1946; Lindauer & Arizona State Univ. 1997; Okoro 2008; Smith 2010).

This project differs from all of these viewpoints in its use of children's objects as a starting point for an educational investigation.

2.2 Objects in educational settings

Objects are defined, for the purposes of this review, as made of a material or having a physical presence. While Miller (2005) referred to this simplest of definitions of materiality as “a vulgar theory of mere things as artefacts” (p3) it is just such objects which were the opening focus of this research and are reviewed from literature. Since children exist in a material world and engage with physical objects, including responsive human beings, it is important to look at pertinent literature on the topic of children’s material objects. In this research, the children’s objects that matter were brought into educational settings, so the literature reviewed is largely restricted to children’s objects within educational settings. While current early childhood education in Western cultures might be viewed as object intensive, there is less literature about objects used for, and by, children in educational contexts than one might expect to find.

In this segment on children’s educational objects, we first review theorising about children’s objects in educational settings then educationally relevant contemporary empirical work on children’s objects.

2.2.1 Theorising about objects in a children’s world

Firstly, I provide a brief note about the historical contexts in which these theorists were working and writing. Across both the United States of America (USA) and much of Europe, the late 18th and 19th Centuries were turbulent times. After the French Revolution, Europe was in considerable political and social tumult with an increased awareness of the rights of the common man. While universities continued to train the sons of the wealthy, education for others was a haphazard private provision with payment required, no shared standards or system, a largely untrained staff and was still unavailable to the poor. Gradually, education became a tool for transforming what were seen as the uneducated masses into thinking citizens (Weston 2000).

However, not until Froebel's kindergartens, was it thought useful to educate preschool children.

As part of his war effort to destabilise the Southern States during the American Civil War, Abraham Lincoln passed the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation (Foner 2011). This presidential proclamation saw the legal freeing of slaves living in what Lincoln viewed as the rebellious Confederate States. After the war ended the Northern States, to which these 'freemen' had escaped, recognised a need to educate them as well as poor children in their jurisdictions. There followed an increasing public interest in more universal education (Foner 2011). With education still largely in the domain of religious organisations and for the training of their own staff, one of the dominant pedagogies which helped enable a spread of education from these private, religious organisations to more public institutions was known as the Monitorial System (Silver & Silver 2013). With untrained staff and in mixed age and ability classrooms, it was based on more able pupils being used to help the teacher by passing on what they had learned to less able pupils, predominantly through recitation. By making free, or very low cost, use of the more able pupils it was felt possible to increase the number of pupils per teacher and offer an education to a wider group than was conceivable prior to the introduction of this pedagogy. However, following on from the 1837 Mann reforms in the American state of Massachusetts, which created a system of schools at public expense for primary and later secondary schools in addition to introducing a statewide system of trained teachers, there was a relatively rapid spread of state provisions of schools and a decline in the use of the Monitorial system in the USA. This public provision rapidly became available in towns and cities but continued to be scarce in rural areas, where most Americans lived, before the 1880's (Monroe 1911). Similarly in the United Kingdom, in spite of a long history of universities and education for the sons of the wealthy, the first national primary education act was not passed until 1846 (Silver & Silver 2013).

Kagan et al (2007) describe how, by the late 19th century, much of Western, Central and parts of Eastern Europe had begun to provide primary education in reading, writing, and arithmetic. They describe this widening of the availability of education as due, in part, to politicians thinking education would bring about more orderly political behaviours. Having made available primary education, many European nations were giving further attention to secondary education by the time of World War I.

Thus the early theorists described below, such as Froebel and Dewey, were writing at a time when education was undergoing rapid change. Whereas it had been seen as largely a domain of wealthy boys there was an increasing awareness of the need for publicly funded education to be available to everyone. While for the later theorists, such as Montessori, Piaget, Vygotsky and Winnicott, publicly funded education was the norm, it was fraught with issues of quality, staff training and questions of appropriate pedagogies, including those for the youngest children. Further, with the two World Wars, poverty and considerable social and political upheavals, particularly in Europe, were an ongoing issue. Against the background of substantial social change taking place across the last two centuries, in both the USA and Europe, a number of educational theorists put forward their views on appropriate educational pedagogies (see *Chapter 2.3 Pedagogical practices and theories in the Early Years*, page 37) and here, on the role of objects in a children's educational world.

Dewey, as part of what he described as his scientific way of viewing the world, made the following statement:

An object... is a set of qualities treated as potentialities for specified existential consequences... The greater the number of interactions, of operations, and of consequences, the more complex is the constitution of a give substantial object. ...Being a substantial object defines a specific function. (Dewey 2007 p129)

While Dewey applied the word object, or thing, to more than just physical objects, his definitions included physical objects (see *Chapter 3.2.3 Objects as events with meaning or tools*, page 67, for a more detailed discussion of his view of things or objects). What is useful in this statement is his understanding of a definitive relationship between a “substantial object” and a specific function as one of many possibilities. Also of interest is his view that the relationship grew more ‘substantial’ across more interactions with similar consequences. We might rephrase this, for the purposes of this review about children’s objects, as his being emphatic about there being a relationship between an object and a purpose. This suggests that an object becomes what it is used for: a tool for doing something particular. Dewey also emphasises that the relationship between object and purpose was one of many possible relationships: purpose was in the object’s use and a different use would mean a different purpose. It is just such object-purpose relationships which shape the structure of this section of the literature review. Literature about object-purpose relationships is discussed under headings describing theoretical thinking about object purposes: 1) objects as tools 2) objects as tools for developmental progress 3) objects as social tools which are socially mediated and 4) transitional objects as tools for change. First, objects as tools are discussed in conjunction with the literature.

Objects as tools

Theorising an object as a tool suggests that the function, or purpose, or end, or what it is able to do for us, matters. It further suggests that any adult design, or adult choice to make use of a tool, is related to a hoped-for end. While these ends, or purposes, are not guaranteed, there is at least a strongly held hope that engaging with the object itself may be a means to that particular end. The potential end, for educational objects, is framed as a particular educational purpose. There appear to be a number of different educational purposes, or desired outcomes, associated with historical theoretical thinking about educational objects as tools.

First, and possibly one of the most well-known set of objects as tools for learning a particular outcome, was Froebel's "gifts." Each set of objects, or "gift," was intended to help develop a child's understanding of certain "universal properties" (Wiggin & Smith 1895 p34) by "stimulat(ing) the recall of a concept...that was latently present in the child's mind" (Montessori & Gutek 2004 p29). For example, the first of Froebel's "gifts" was a collection of "six soft woollen balls colored (sic) in the six standard colors (sic) derived from the spectrum, namely, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and violet. The balls should be provided with strings for use in various motions" (Wiggin & Smith 1895 p6). Here the "soft woollen balls," as tools, were associated with the outcome of a child's understanding of the concepts "Unity, Activity and Color (sic)" (Wiggin & Smith 1895 p6). As a child progressed through the various sets of objects, each set was deemed to include tools for developing awareness of a particular concept. Liebschner provides further detail regarding Froebel's objects' purposes when he describes them as "educational aids", or what we might refer to as tools:

(Froebel) "...envisaged that the Gifts will teach the child to use his (or her) environment as an educational aid; secondly, that they will give the child an indication of the connection between human life and life in nature; and finally that they will create a bond between the adult and the child who play with them." (Liebschner 2002 p82)

In other words, there were "connections" or "bond(s)" to be made between: 1) child and environment, 2) child, human life and the natural world and 3) child and adult. Froebel's objects were designed, over others, as connection-making tools and as particularly suited to the principles he saw as essential in early childhood education. Blow supports connection-making as the object's intention when she says:

"The sequences which the child builds, as well as the sequence of the kindergarten gifts, point on the one hand to physical evolution, wherein each

form 'remembers the next inferior and predicts the next higher,' and on the other to the process of historic development, which magnifies the present by linking with it the past and the future." (Blow in Wiggin & Smith 1895 p2)

While there are, also, suggestions of developmental stages in this statement, these are discussed in the following section (see *Objects as tools for developmental progress*, page 30).

Further, the literature reminds us that objects as tools may have purposes which are open to disputes based on differing views of how the world works. For example, the objects designed by Froebel were largely rejected by Montessori as "symbolism based on unscientific metaphysics" (Gutek 2004 p6). Her objects were, instead, designed according to her observation that "children preferred not to pretend" (Lillard 2013 p150). In this view, objects should be "self-correcting" whereas Froebelian objects required a teacher to make sure children were using them correctly (Gutek 2004 p6). If it could be said that the objects, or tools, Froebel provided were deemed to aid symbolic leaping in a particular direction, then Montessori's tools were deemed to provide self-correction and child-centred success in particular physical and cognitive skills. Their self-correcting attribute developed a child's independence and confidence in their own abilities and reduced possible negative feedback from practitioners about using an object incorrectly (Lillard 2013 p152).

The object's material of manufacture - particularly Froebel's, but also objects from other theorists such as Montessori - are viewed by Kinchin and O'Connor (2012) as "...tools for exploring and understanding the fundamental structure and interconnectedness of the natural world and fostering the creativity and curiosity of developing young minds" (p33) by virtue of their being made of natural materials and systematically ordered. This suggests that the meaning-making which is possible around objects is a multi-layered concept with multiple connections possible.

Objects as a subset of “things,” for Dewey (1905 p393), were viewed as “events with meaning” (see *Chapter 3.2.3 Objects as events with meaning or tools*, page 67) or what we might describe as tools for carrying meanings from past experiences into present ones. Objects formed part of meaning-making interactions in which a child’s actions and the object’s responses altered a child’s propensities to act in the future and are spoken of as an experience. The object itself gained meaning from its role in said experiences, thus its being a meaning-associated tool from past experiences. Rather than associating an educational purpose or outcome with a particular object, Dewey’s view was of purpose being developed in the interactions between child, object and other people or objects. This suggests that objects develop a history with each child who engages with them, and the value of the object lies in the meanings or purposes developed within that ongoing relationship rather than in the object itself.

This means that objects can be tools for practitioners as well as tools for children. Piaget’s view was that a child’s object use was a way to better understand, or evaluate, a child’s level of cognitive developmental. As a result of his empirical psychological studies with children, he has been credited with the view that child-object relations are a largely solitary developmental process (using an interplay between assimilation and accommodation) which he described in sequential stages (Martin & Fabes 2008 p40). For both Piaget and Dewey, child and object interactions had indeterminate outcomes for both parties, were centred in actions, and were transformative. For example, Piaget describes his view of objects as part of a transformational process in which both parties become “fused” through “actions or operations”:

“...l(i)n order to know objects, the subject must act upon them, and therefore transform them: he must displace, connect, combine, take apart, and

reassemble them. ...knowledge is constantly linked with actions or operations, that is with *transformations*.¹² Hence the limit between subject and objects is in no way determined beforehand, and, what is more important, it is not stable. Indeed, in every action the subject and the objects are fused.” (Piaget 1976 p12)

While it might be possible to describe all children’s objects as tools for one purpose or another, what follows is a brief discussion of object theories in which children’s objects are viewed as particularly useful as tools for child development.

Objects as tools for developmental progress

By virtue of development being an on-going process through childhood, we might say that all children’s objects have some degree of relationship with child development. However, here we focus on those objects which were specifically designed by early theorists in order to foster particular child development goals which they saw as central in early childhood education.

Objects, for a number of early theorists, needed to be designed specifically for a child’s developmental stage and were based in sequential understandings of child development often thought of as stages of development. Many early theorists believed there needed to be a strong connection between the child’s free choice, exploration, educational objects and real life (Montessori & Gutek 2004). However, the free choice which they intended seems to be largely framed by purposes external to the child. Of particular note are Froebel’s “gifts” and Montessori’s self-correcting objects. Both were designed to be child-sized, tactile and used natural materials where possible. Yet both are associated with purposes: universal concepts in Froebel’s case and self-sufficiency as the child progressed through developmental stages for Montessori. Montessori roundly differed with Froebel regarding the

¹² See also Object transformation explained on page 130

developmental aim of a child's engagement with a carefully designed children's object, and with specific reference to Froebel's kindergarten stated that while they shared similar views regarding physical education, namely "free bodily activity," her objects

"...place(s) the emphasis on special exercises designed to give formal training in separate physical functions." (Montessori & Hunt 2005 p xxvii)

So, while both viewed child development as a largely sequential process which was supported and enhanced by the use of their objects, Montessori's described her objects as "closely adapted to the training of sensory discrimination" (Montessori & Hunt 2005 p xxvii) and so were suited to a single child's use at their particular developmental stage. In summary, objects were an essential component of both Froebel and Montessori's child development programmes. While Froebel's objects supported the development of conceptual skills for individuals or small groups of children, Montessori's objects supported cognitive and physical skills development for one child at a time.

Objects have also been theorised as tools for gaining information about a child's developmental stage. In particular, Piaget's research with children and objects might suggest one of a practitioner's roles is to observe, understand and supply suitable objects at each stage of child development in order to move the child through what have been seen as largely sequential stages of cognitive development. While the object use in Piaget's original observations was intended to describe and inform academics and educators about stages of child development, over time, Piaget's stages of development have come to be implicitly embedded into early childhood practices as described by Flear et al (2009). She found that Piaget's developmental theories were underlying early childhood practitioners' thinking about their own practice. This suggests that object use as a means of measuring, and extending, a child's developmental progress has now become a norm in early childhood practices.

Objects as social tools which are socially mediated

In this view of objects, they are both socially created and socially useful. For Vygotsky, objects were socially created in the sense that our engagements with them are socially mediated by our culture, as are their design and manufacture processes and all other aspects of object life. In a similar vein to Dewey's view of "things" being "what they are experienced as" (Dewey 1905 p393) objects, for Vygotsky, were just part of the riches of relationship we gain through social interactions (Parke & Gauvain 2008). And, for Vygotsky, relationships past and present - including those with objects - served as ways of organising thinking (Wertsch 2009 p195). With respect to Vygotsky, Holland and Lachicotte remind us of Luria's assessment that

...Vygotsky follows Marx's dictum that humans must be understood concretely, that is, as the totality of their social relationships and social histories. It is this entire person who thinks, speaks, and acts, and whose behaviour can therefore only be explained ...as a function of social history and development. (Holland & Lachicotte 2007 p110)

From this statement, we can infer that in Vygotsky's view children's objects come into being through social mechanisms and their use and meanings are developed with children through social interactions. This suggests that, in the modern world, children's objects may have local cultural interpretations as well as more global ones gained via the media. This is not to say that the object is insignificant, but rather that the child's understanding of the social relationships around the object give it its meaning and usefulness. In the context of this research this suggests that studying the object alone is not enough. Human interactions around the object are where the possible meanings, or purposes, of each object may be found.

Transitional objects

A transitional object, using Winnicott's definition (2005 pp2-3), is a carefully selected object which helps a child to maintain his view of himself as supremely loved and

cared for, in spite of anxiety at being temporarily separated from the person he most loves and derives his view of self from. The concept of a transitional object is based in Winnicott's theory that we are born without a clearly developed sense of self and have to "search" for an authentic sense of self as we grow and interact with others (Winnicott 2005 p72-73). One of many motivations for finding one's true self is that "Only the true self can be creative and only the true self can feel real" (Winnicott 1965 p140). He viewed the true self as developing as a child's caretaker, which he spoke of as "mother", responds spontaneously and genuinely to a child's attempts to interact. Out of this spontaneous, healthy mother-child (or carer-child) relationship a child should develop a sense that no bad things happen when he expresses his feelings, so feelings don't have to be overly controlled or avoided. Associated with this growth of self is a sense of being real, existing and one's own actions having shared meaning. A child's treasured object, or transitional object, was a way of retaining some of that shared sense of self in uncertain situations or times of change.

Winnicott's particular contribution to theories about children's objects is that children use objects, often the first object which they feel is really their own, to reassure themselves in times of anxiety such as a temporary loss of their mother. To the child, the object represents the presence of all that is lost. It allows the child to fantasize about the presence of what is lost in order to move forward into the unknown. Or, as Lee describes it

"Equipped with a transitional object, babies never have to face their 'separateness' from the external world alone. The transitional object is a part of the external world, so it is separate from them, but at the same time, they participate in its being and they and their carer have marked it out as belonging to them." (Lee 2005 p101)

As the name suggests, transitional objects are useful in times of change as bridges between self and the unknown. Joining an early childhood classroom each morning

may be one such change where transitional objects come into play as they signify a child's relationship with home and family and carry that togetherness into school.

2.2.2 Contemporary empirical work around children's objects

There is not a substantial body of current research around children's toys and other objects in educational settings. However, three studies which looked at particular kinds of objects used in early childhood or primary school settings are pertinent here.

Firstly, Guerra & Zuccoli's (2012) research into the use of finished and unfinished objects in primary school found that these provide different pathways for developing children's creativity. Secondly, Evangelou et al's (2010) study compared child responses to "sketch," "book," and "tangible objects" and found that the use of tangible objects elicited "longest discussions and interactions with artifacts, and was also the condition during which children were demonstrating more knowledge and ideas with regard to possible functions of the artifacts" (p1). Thirdly, Podiakov's (2011) development of, and research using, a new range of "didactic objects" found "preschoolers can combine actions and discover hidden relationships" using his particular set of newly designed didactic objects. His study is reminiscent of both Montessori and Froebel's carefully designed objects for educational purposes while all three studies suggest that object properties and interactions with them matter so may be worth recording as data.

There are also studies which consider practitioner's behaviours regarding children's objects. Jones et al (2012) looked at why practitioner's remove some objects from 3-5 year old children in early childhood settings and found "the 'arrest' of objects is as a consequence of them being understood as 'infecting' specific perceptions or constructs of young children" (p49). Using affection and infection they consider ways to think differently about engaging with children's objects. Also, Odegard's (2013) research into educational uses of junk materials found that while "children ...play and construct without the need to name, define or label the constructions," and this

“encourage(s) equality and creativity,” practitioner’s expectations “can disturb this creative and transitory process” (p387). Both of these studies illustrate that practitioner’s interpretations of their roles shape particular possibilities for children’s experiences. On the other hand, Parsons and Hower (2006) studied superhero toys and boys’ physically active and imaginative play and found that “superhero toys were associated with character/fictive and exploration/negotiation roles” with “older preschoolers ...more interested in enacting roles that are less familiar (e.g., fictional and novel occupational roles) than in the typical domestic/familial role” (p287). While Nordtomme’s (2012) study found that for 2-5 year olds in kindergarten space and materiality creates power relations and interplay with actors involved. In combination, the above studies illustrate the possibility that adults and children in early childhood settings may be acting in support of different purposes.

Recently there has been an increasing body of social constructivist research around children’s technological objects, toys and learning in the home as well as the pedagogical practices practitioners utilise as children use technological objects in pre-school settings (For example Luckin et al. 2003; McPake et al. 2004; Plowman et al. 2011a). Luckin et al (2003) considered whether digital toy technology was able to provide collaborative support to young children and found that the digital toys on offer were not impressive as collaborative learning partners and had a Help repertoire that was inadequate and even, sometimes, inappropriate. However, they suggested the technology had potential as children could master the interfaces and, in the future, these technological companions “might address both the affective and the effective dimensions of learners’ interactions” (p165). McPake et al (2004) found children using ICT at home (which included electronic books, videos, game consoles and handheld electronic games) developed three kinds of competencies: technical, cultural and learning. They also found that practitioners had limited knowledge of children’s home competencies and so were unable to make use of them in developing their pre-school or primary practice. Plowman et al (2011a), in the

context of possible increased policy interest in funding home technologies for pre-school children as part of early intervention strategies, used data from three previous studies to discuss the range of technologies children encounter at home, the different forms their learning takes and how they are supported by their families. In particular, they question what technologies would be appropriate were the government to expand support for technologies in homes to include early childhood children. They highlight that parents, policy makers, children and educators have different agendas and “would have different answers to a question such as ‘What are the desired outcomes of supporting children’s learning through technology at home?’” (p368).

Most recently, Cagiltay et al (2014) describe today’s children as the first generation to be growing up with such high degrees of interconnectivity, as is provided by smart phones and other devices, and consider the relationship between Piaget’s developmental stages and these new ways of learning and being connected and the ways technological advances change developmental behaviours and expectations.

2.2.3 Studies about objects, children and gender

There are also a number of studies which consider objects, children and gender. By looking at what young children do, Jordan (1995) found that boys’ masculinity was defined as avoiding what was done by girls while Reay’s (2001) research in primary school found that all children said it was better being a boy. Serbin et al (2001) looked at the gender stereotyping in infant’s toys while Anggard’s (2005) research in preschool found Barbie princesses’ and dinosaur dragons’ “narration as a way of doing gender” as children made and talked about their own story books. In these contexts of early gender expression Saltmarsh’s (2009) work looked at how children are economic subjects of pop culture in early childhood.

Gender has been researched across a number of contexts including Paechter (2006) finding primary school playgrounds to be sites for learning gender and Francis (2010)

looking at 3-5 year old children's toys and finding they were highly gendered. Francis found boys' toys concentrated on "technology and action and girls' toys on care and stereotypical feminine interests" (p325). Cooper looked at the consequences of earlier gendered practices around technological objects as used by adults and describes the digital divide as based on gender. She then suggests that as technologies are framed as "toys for boys" (Cooper 2006) this excludes girls from an early age.

2.2.4 Current Scottish use of object theories in educational settings

These sections on objects in educational contexts have considered a number of object theories, practitioners' roles associated with object theories, current research around children's objects as well as relevant research on gendered objects and their influence in educational settings. Although some of these theorists' ideas have been around for a considerable period of time, their ideas are not often contested in school staff rooms. As Stephen (2008) describes, there is "little obvious recourse to theory" in Scottish pre-schools, yet there are multiple "tacit understandings or implicit theories" (p227) at work including Piaget and Vygotsky's. In addition, she reminds us that government policy and guidance documents show tacit evidence of some theories, as well as popular theories from other disciplines such as psychology, but no explicit theoretical framings. She concludes that the two most dominant theories at work in pre-schools are around the value of play for young children's learning and child-centred pedagogical practice. Further, she suggests that shared practitioner articulations of theories could open pathways to seeing contradictions and developing new, more theoretically contested and consistent, pedagogical practices in early childhood contexts.

2.3 Pedagogical practices and theories in early childhood settings

In order to understand the particular framing of pedagogical practices used in this research it is useful to consider Stengel's (2001) use of the term pedagogical

response-ability which she describes as having three dimensions: practitioners being agents who respond to “other persons, external demands, and complex situations only partly of their own making,” engage in “expanded and expansive responsiveness” (p349) and take responsibility for their own actions. These highlight the intelligent and thoughtful engagement which can take place between practitioners and their pupils and which take particular pedagogical shapes as implicit or explicit theories, own life experience and day-by-day realities are imbued with the personalities of numerous different children then merged into patterns of practice or pedagogies.

Practitioners engaging with children develop and adapt their own patterns of behaviour in these engagements and these patterns of practice, or pedagogies, shape the range of possible experiences a child may have in a particular setting. Smith et al (2010) describe a number of different traditions of pedagogy including the European tradition, which Ax & Ponte (2010) state is “concerned with the moral intentions behind a person’s actions as well as the consequences of the actions in the social context” (p29). While Kemmis (2010) writes that in a profession such as education there are two purposes that guide research into praxis: guiding the development of practices and guiding the development of education itself. Both of these he sees as best suited to research by ‘insiders’ as ‘knowing doing.’

When it comes to a definition of pedagogy, Watkins and Mortimore (1999) described it as a term “seldom used in English writing about education” and more common in other European countries such as France, Germany and Russian-speaking academic communities. In reviewing a range of meanings for the term, they included “the science of teaching” but preferred “any conscious activity by one person designed to enhance learning in another” as a pedagogy that was neither science or art but had more in common with a craft and recognised “uncertainty and the limits of predictability” (pp2-3). More recent calls for pedagogy’s inclusion in English or Scottish educational thinking and debate (Alexander 2004; Stephen 2008) suggest

the term's usefulness as a way of talking about what school practitioners do, and the influences that shape why they do what they do. Both describe this use of pedagogy as potentially more beneficial to children's everyday experiences of education than policy-led discourses which tend to focus on what various bodies think practitioners should do. Dahlberg and Moss (2005) describe these pedagogic or policy conflicts of interest as cultural framings of the child and personal and public views of what a good childhood looks like. As additional implicit influences on pedagogy, these conflicts illustrate the powerful mix of influences which continue to shape differences between nursery or preschool education and formal school. In Scotland, as in the rest of the UK, where the term pedagogy has been used it has had associations with teaching and teacher-like behaviours which early childhood practitioners from other training backgrounds might find it difficult to warm to (Stephen 2010).

Since education is a purposeful endeavour, there is a relationship between a particular view of how learning works and views of the kinds of practitioners' roles which are most likely to support or further that view of learning. As Moss et al (2002) describe it, using data from a study of "children in need" in day care centres, concepts are produced from "dominant discourses about childhood, and ... in turn productive of a particular construction of the child and particular practices" (p233). There are currently a number of dominant discourses around learning, pedagogy and "good practice" at work and examples of these are reviewed below.

2.3.1 19th and 20th Century pedagogical movements

For Montessori, in the early 20th Century, the practitioner's role was in the selection and placing of an educational object within the setting and supporting the child's voluntary engagement with it so that the educational purposes associated with the object were appropriate to the individual child's development (Bebell & Stemler 2013 pg 167). While her developmental goals might be described as positivist, the individual young child's exploration through hands-on use of objects, in an order

which was most appropriate for that individual child, was central to the introduction, development and re-enforcement of skills. Pragmatically, while most other educational settings were focused on learning primarily through reading and writing, her pupils were making hands-on use of objects to develop the skills she saw as the essential starting points in a good education (Montessori & Hunt 2005). Thus, Isaacs (2010) describes the role of a Montessori teacher as “to ensure that the environment provides for the developmental needs of each individual child” (p18) with as little intervention from practitioners as possible.

On the other hand, Froebel’s gifts (developed pre-1895), required adult assistance to ensure the child used the object to bring about the accurate emergence of each concept, as well as the developing relationships between concepts (Wiggin & Smith 1895). Wiggin and Smith (1895) mention Froebel’s use of the Ratich maxim “First the thing, and then its properties” (p13) and that the recommended method or pedagogy was “not instruction, mere pouring in, but true education, drawing out, developing” (p12). Each new gift’s introduction was to be supported by a wide range of activities from songs through games, conversations and investigations.

For both Froebel (Wiggin & Smith 1895) and Montessori (Montessori & Gutek 2004), these educational objects were adult-designed and adult-introduced when considered appropriate for each child’s developmental level but it was the child’s interest and willing engagement with the objects which was key to the timing of their introduction. While Montessori’s objects aimed to teach particular manual and mental skills at developmentally appropriate times (Montessori & Gutek 2004 p58), Froebel’s aimed to teach principles of life such as unity and number (Wiggin & Smith 1895 p6) in order to draw from the child his understanding of the inter-relationships within the universe as he came to understand his place in it.

2.3.2 21st Century framings of pedagogy

More recently, an upturn in positivist uses of the term pedagogy is not without its difficulties. Alexander (2008a), in his monograph on the fraught relationships between quality and pedagogy, states that pedagogy has “been made to fit the available measures rather than the other way around” (p19). Further, and of importance when discussing the pedagogical practices in this research, Alexander reminds us that

“...although pedagogy and pedagogic quality are manifested in the decisions and interactions of teachers and learners, the very fact that others at different levels are interested in it signals that quality depends on much more than the teacher alone. If responsibility is shared, culpability should be shared too.”
(Alexander 2008a pg 17)

Among those who share responsibility, he mentions that “national considerations impact on definitions of pedagogical quality in the realm of culture and values” (p19). Of particular import at present, in Scottish education, is the CfE’s use of experience as an organising concept. However, this is not the only national consideration or cultural definition of pedagogical quality evident at present. Across the UK are nursery traditions of quality framed in language to do with play and learning and exploration and activities that can be traced back to ideas from Isaacs and Montessori (Stephen, Ellis, & Martlew 2010). As Pramling-Samuelsson and Fler (2009) describe it, this is a common thread throughout Western framings of early childhood education which tends to privilege this view even in settings where other views are possible. While Wood and Attfield (2005) state that there is no single definition of play or learning in early childhood contexts, they do describe progress toward better understandings of both in preschool settings.

Currently, additional positivist pedagogies are those under the umbrella of effectiveness. In Fielding and Moss’s (2010) view school systems are in tension with

a play and learning view since they are “dominated by markets and competition, instrumentality and standardisation, managerialism and technical practice” (p15) and “tyrannies of improvement, efficiency and standardisation” (p37). Rather than this, they call for “learning...understood as a process of co-construction” and “building meaning in relationship with others” (p4). A similar plea from a different angle is made by McNess et al (2003) as they question the drive for effectiveness in schools at the expense of affective relationships. It is within this context of considerable UK effectiveness research that experience is the unexplicated language of learning. The Scottish CfE has adopted it without theoretical perspectives on experience or tools in collaborative development of them.

An example of early UK effectiveness research (Sylva et al. 2007), the Effective Pre-School and Primary Education (EPPE 3-11 1997-2008) project is, to date, the largest study of its kind in Europe. It considered the impact of pre-school and the contribution of family background to children’s development in early childhood education. It was conducted in England, longitudinally, across a substantial cohort of “effective” schools, where effective was defined to mean that children “made more progress than expected” (p1). The study found, with regard to pedagogies, that “good early childhood staff provided direct teaching, instructive learning environments and ‘sustained shared thinking’ to extend children’s learning” (p1). They noted that the most effective pedagogy involved teaching and freely chosen “yet potentially instructive” play activities. Play activities were also found to provide best opportunities for the practitioners to extend a child’s thinking and, in effective settings, children initiated activities as often as the practitioners did while practitioners were more likely to use open-ended questions.

At the time, there was little research which could “identify the particular pedagogical strategies which are being applied to support the development of the skills, knowledge and attitudes that enable children to make a good start at school” (Siraj-Blatchford, Sylva, Muttock, Gilden, & Bell 2002 pg 16). Thus, an additional

Researching Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years (REPEY) study considered the most effective pedagogies across a range of effective early childhood care and education providers in order to identify the most effective pedagogical strategies. The 2002 report on the project (Siraj-Blatchford, Sylva, Muttock, Gilden, & Bell 2002) emphasised, among other pedagogies and across a range of different contexts and outcomes, the importance of “sustained shared thinking” (p12) between practitioners and children.

The SPEEL (Study of Pedagogical Effectiveness in Early Learning) research report (Moyle, Adams, & Musgrove 2002) is described on the government website as “one of the first attempts to isolate and record the effects of teacher and adult pedagogy on children’s learning...” which “...firmly establishes the important role that adult pedagogy has to play in EY education and the complex nature of the process” (p1). Among the multitude of findings in this study, points pertinent to this review of pedagogical practices include: ‘effectiveness’ is complex so needs to be viewed as a whole rather than in its particular aspects, a shared language needs to be developed across the sector so that pedagogical effectiveness discussions are possible, effectiveness is a continuum between ‘good’ and ‘excellent’ and there is still work to be done. In addition they noted that teaching was undertaken which was not always matched to children’s needs and interests.

2.3.3 Experiential and active pedagogies

Lipman, (1988) in considering Dewey’s pragmatism, states that in this philosophical tradition education is “...defined as the fostering of thinking rather than the transmission of knowledge” and “...student reflection is best stimulated by living experience” (p4).

In what Dewey (1990) described as a child’s uni-verse, the teacher’s role regarding objects in educational settings was “to know what powers are striving for utterance at a given period in the child’s development, and what sorts of activity will bring

these to helpful expression” (p130). This suggests that, for Dewey, the continuities that mattered were specific to each child’s uni-verse and the knowledge which underpinned these continuities was always relational. The role of the practitioners was to recognise and fuel the child’s out-of-school continuities within the school context so that what she had brought to, and extended through learning in school, was able to be immediately useful to her outside of school (Dewey 1938). Each child’s uni-verse of experience mattered and shaped their pedagogical requirements within school.

Among the various traditions in experiential education are diverse contributors including Kurt Hahn (the founder of Outward Bound) (Hahn 1936), Dewey’s view of the experiential learning cycle as a process (Biesta 2006) as well as David Kolb’s (1984) work. Roberts (2011) describes all of these as having a “belief in the educative power of experience, as direct contact” (p11). Of particular interest is Roberts’ contention that the various theoretical underpinnings of different “currents” in experiential education have “consequences...in regards to both theory and practice” (p11). This relationship between theoretical underpinning, resources and consequences resonates with the way some of the early Western educational thinkers, discussed in the previous section, saw their theories and practices as building a particular kind of freedom for the children in their care.

The following diagram (Corney 2007) is just one example of the slightly different interpretations a number of experiential learning theorists apply to what has come to be known as the Experiential Learning Cycle. It proves to be a shared, and contested, concept. As illustrated in the diagram, the term shares a common core of, firstly, a seminal relationship between experience and learning and, secondly, experiential learning being an ongoing cycle. However, the variations visible in the breakdown of the process into constituent parts, by theorist, are indicative of just some of the range of theories and interpretations currently associated with the experiential learning term.

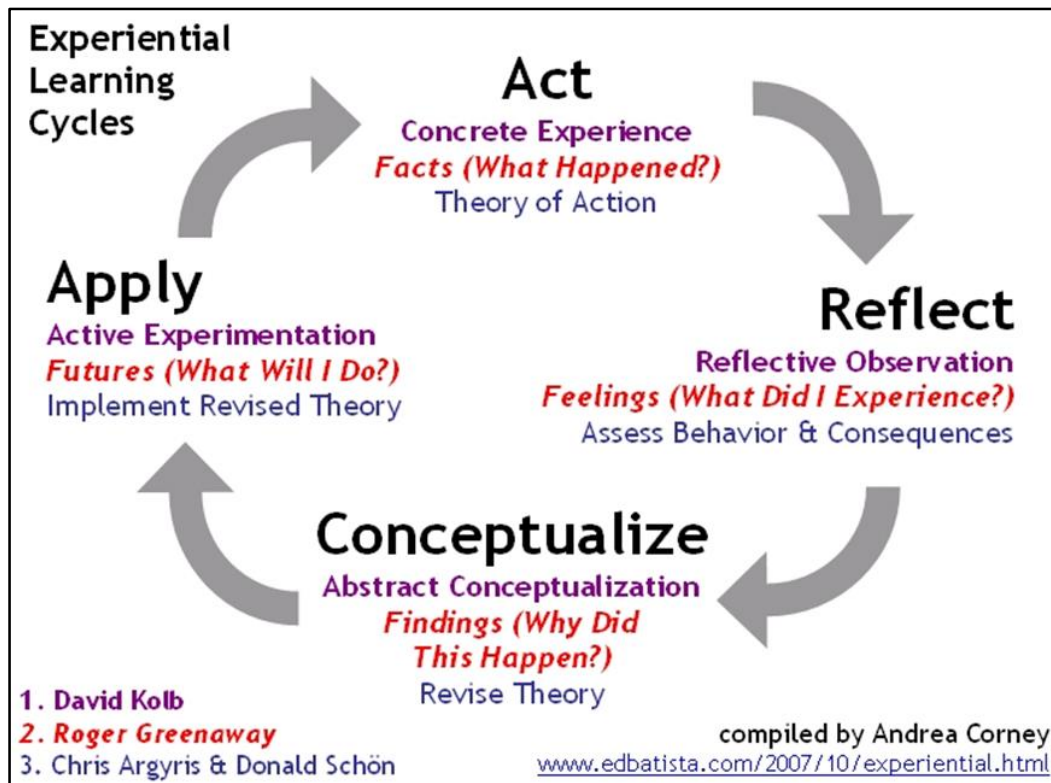


Figure 2-1: Experiential Learning Cycle Examples

Roberts (2011), using the metaphor of a river to represent experiential educational theories, describes a number of “currents” or different ways of viewing experiential education after describing the myriad of difficulties inherent in the term experiential learning. Included in these difficulties is the fact that the term experiential learning has been co-opted, as shown in the above diagram, by a wide range of different theories of learning. Further, if we bear in mind that all life is an experience, investigating such a broad view is not necessarily educationally helpful yet shorter views don’t necessarily include the consequences on which experience relies. And finally, Roberts reminds us of the necessity of not equating experiential learning with experiential education since he describes the latter as a field of thinking with “common intellectual roots, activities, and/or subject of study” and experiential learning as “learning by doing” (p7).

Active learning as a 21st Century manifestation of interest in experience and activity in learning

Simons (2013), in an OECD report across eight countries, describes active learning as, in one sense, “to mean that the learner uses opportunities to decide about aspects of the learning process” and in another sense as “mental activity” or “the extent to which the learner is challenged to use his or her mental abilities while learning. Thus active learning on the one hand has to do with decisions about learning and on the other hand making active use of thinking” (p19). Closer to home, Stephen et al (2010) describe the Scottish context for active learning as one which recognises the evidence that “formal, didactic instruction and paper-based ways of responding in school-like settings offer no advantages to four- to six-year olds” (p25). Watkins et al (2007) add that active learning is “attention towards the learner’s experience and what they do with that experience, including their own decisions about it” as well as “meaning making associated with ...activity” and suggest that it might be “better to speak of ‘action-reflection learning’” (p61).

More recently, Drew and Mackie (2011), from a lifelong learning point of view, reiterate the lack of “clarity and consensus” for the term ‘active learning’ and offer “a more robust theoretical framework” which “bridges the divide between active learning as either theory of learning or pedagogical strategy” (p451). These authors highlight the dissonance between European educational policy language permeated with references to active learning while, in their Scottish CfE example, the only reference within the policy documents is in the document specific to early childhood rather than in those for formal schooling and lifelong learning. However, even in the early childhood policy document there is no definition or discussion of the concept: only an assumption that educators understand the term and its implications. In their view this leaves the term “hazy and empty of meaning” (p455). Their suggestion is to add a fourth dimension of affect to Watkins et al’s (2007) three dimensions of behaviour, cognition and sociability. In addition they acknowledge that teachers face considerable difficulty re-constructing their role in ways that challenge existing practices and expectations.

Stephen et al (2010 pg 325), noted that teachers in observed primary one classrooms were moving away from “the dominance of pencil and paper as the response mode toward manipulating objects, physical actions and verbal responses” yet there was little evidence of “spontaneous play” or “responding to individual interests.” Rather, teachers were seen to use a child’s initial interests as a stimulus for “an aspect of learning that was part of the adult’s agenda” (p325). Overall, while children were given more opportunities to be active the activities were teacher designed, timetabled and not “children attempting to solve problems they had identified or to achieve goals negotiated with peers and adults” (p326). They conclude by emphasising that changing pedagogy requires thinking differently about learning, the learner and the teacher, and not just changing practices.

Brooker (2011) questions whether widely approved current practices, or “what works,” match up to their guiding principles: partnerships with parents, following the interests of and listening to children and working with cultural diversity. She suggests that while there is evidence that early childhood settings are embracing policies regarding diversity there is little discussion around the tensions in “values, beliefs and goals” for children who live within diverse parent and professional views. Further, she asks whether researchers are questioning social constructions of childhood or how these shape classroom practices. She also questions whether what children choosing for themselves, as espoused in active learning, would look like in practice. For her, challenges exist in engaging with taken-for-granted concepts such as listening to children. She noted that practitioners typically assume responsibility for children, so may frame children’s choices for them. Brooker (2011) describes hearing children’s views as a graduated concept ranging between practitioner’s hearing in the auditory sense and practitioner’s allowing children to influence their own provision because they are viewed as “entitled to the same respect for their views as are adults” (p4). This suggests that there are different degrees of both parent and child participation possible and framed by pedagogical practices.

2.3.4 Socio-cultural pedagogies

Vygotsky's socio-cultural view of the role of adults in a child's development was to provide support or "scaffolding" (Wood, Bruner, & Ross 1976) so that children could do, with assistance, today what they could do, without assistance, in the future. Thus, through language and behaviour, adults were agents of culture (Trevarthen 1988). Like Piaget, Vygotsky saw symbolic play as related to emerging representational skills (Elder & Pederson 1978) so children's symbolic use of objects was important in that it was indicative of growing mental skills, particularly the use of language as a primary representational skill in the collaborative construction of social products.

More recently, Wood (2009) describes the role of adults in play as ensuring that play is "not left to chance, but... sustained through complex reciprocal and responsive relationships, and ... situated in activities that are socially constructed and mediated" (p29). While Rogers (2011) highlights the difficulties in delivering a pedagogy of play in contexts where so many differing agendas are expressed in terms of play without a shared understanding around which to build a shared practice. This, she suggests, leads to a "conflict of interest" between the various parties and is manifest in two different views: "play vs work" or "play as work" (p6). Also relevant here is the literature which suggests that there are "competing pedagogies" in the first years of formal schooling, between free play and teacher-led activity (Aubrey 2004; Rogers & Evans 2008). Rogers (2011) explores the kinds of pedagogical practice which "foreground[ing] relationships within play, thus seeing play pedagogy as emergent, co-constructed and relational... children's play might inform classroom pedagogy rather than, as is the case in many early childhood classrooms... pedagogy informing children's play" (p7). At heart, the difficulty might be said to be related to who gets to choose whose interests are served and when and how. Robson (1993), by talking with children, found they associated play with activities they initiated and work with activities which were teacher directed. This suggests the possibility of children's

brought-in objects being classified, by children, as play and raises questions as to whether objects whose use is directed by practitioners, such as those brought-in objects which may be teacher integrated into activities later in the day, might then be viewed by children as work?

Of particular interest with regard to both Vygotsky and Dewey's emphasis on the role of activity in children's development is Glassman's (2001) question about the two theorists' differing views on "the relationship between process and goals in education." He describes how both theorists emphasised "the role of social history, experience/culture, and human inquiry in the educational process" (p3). While both agreed that all three of these aspects must work together for educational processes to be successful, they differed on the relationships between these three aspects. According to Glassman, for Vygotsky human inquiry was embedded within culture which was embedded within social history: what Glassman describes as the "educational process works, more or less, from the outside in." In Vygotsky's view the role of the educator is to mediate between the tools from social history and human inquiry (hopefully in the zone of proximal development). For him, practitioners use everyday culture to guide the thinking of the student. Dewey, on the other hand, makes the use of everyday culture a pre-requisite but emphasises human inquiry and its ability to create new experience/culture and social tool systems. For Dewey, Glassman suggests, "One of the major purposes of education is to instill (sic) the ability and the desire for change in experience, and possible resultant changes in social history, through individual inquiry" (p4). The practitioner's role, in Dewey's view, is to stand back more and foster students as they learn to take control and be responsible for their own enquiries in life through framing their own questions and investigating and evaluating their own solutions. Glassman and Whaley (2000) describe how important it was to Dewey that children learn to determine what goals are important and whether they have, or have not, been met and how to proceed.

2.3.5 Postmodern and relational pedagogies

Young (1995) describes postmodern pedagogies as avoiding indoctrination and being critical where “criticism always presupposes a schema, background, worldview, *vorhabe*, or tradition” (p9). Informed by major studies of early childhood pedagogical practices in England (Moyles, Adams, & Musgrove 2002; Siraj-Blatchford, Sylva, Muttock, Gilden, & Bell 2002) local and international research continues to challenge and inform pedagogical practice debates in the UK and internationally and a range of variously named pedagogies have emerged in the literature. A number of these share a focus on early childhood education as a relational space.

Intra-active pedagogy is associated with Taguchi’s (2007) Swedish research which challenges the theory/practice divide by seeing practitioners’ roles as about deconstructing, co-constructing and reconstructing, in which “recognition and affirmation of the Other is what makes us speaking and knowing, and co-operatively meaning-making human beings” (p288). This frames the role of the practitioners as fostering the de-, co-, re-constructing processes and skills while affirming children’s full participation in meaning-making.

Taguchi’s use of Deleuze’s construct of desire in her collaborative work with practitioners recognises early childhood practitioners as subject to, holders of, perpetrators of and potential challengers of theory/practice divide patterns of thinking. Taguchi (2010) and her team set out to “relativise these discourses by showing that there are alternatives and that the dominant discourses far from being self-evident are always just one of many choices facing us”(p ix). Here the traditional divide between what practitioners, government bodies, parents, education authorities and researchers *think* and what practitioners, government bodies, parents, education authorities and researchers *expect to be done* challenges both the thinking and the doing in ways centred in creative, collaborative, research-assisted theorising by the practitioners.

This alternative framing of practitioners' roles as professional educators requires of them a degree of shared- and self-determination which is highly responsible, collaborative, ever-changing and responsive. Yet, as evidenced in Taguchi's longitudinal collaboration with Swedish early childhood practitioners, it is a potentially powerful and rewarding position for practitioners and envisions practitioners in very different roles to those in which they are currently envisioned in British settings. This practitioner's role need not be a lonely one: Taguchi engaged in long term use of pedagogical documentation as a collaborative tool between mixed groups of early childhood practitioners, researchers and children. She made use of Barad's (2007) Physics concept of intra-activity as a way to shift thinking away from inter- or intra-personal toward intra-active as the relationship between all living organisms and the material environment as used in our daily practices in order to re-think pedagogy in a group of Swedish early childhood settings. From this theoretical stance material objects and humans have agency as part of "performative productions of power and change in an intertwined relationship of intra-activity with other humans" (Taguchi 2010 p xiv). Here phenomena of interest take place in-between humans and objects so Taguchi asks what might happen if "we start viewing pedagogical practices from a perspective in which learning and knowing occurs in the inter-connections that take place in-between different forms of matter making themselves intelligible to each other?" (p xv) By seeing practitioners as taking responsibility for their own understanding of this educational space or "in-between" she suggests we focus on what she refers to as "entangled becomings" (p47). In these "entangled becomings" she recognises that all parties in intra-activities have potential for change. This educational space is thus construed as potentially developmental for practitioners, children and objects. This conception of the role of practitioners is considerably more detailed and challenging than the EPPE "highly qualified staff" (Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford, & Taggart 2007 p5) in that it centres responsibility squarely on individual practitioners, recognises diverse

possibilities in on-going change and works with respect for all other parties in the intra-activity in ways which are suggestive of Stengel's (2001) interconnected aspects of response-ability.

In Olsson's (2009) research in Swedish early childhood settings, the use of Deleuze's and Guattari's concepts of systems leaking and a pedagogue's role as an on-going creator of leakages and nomadic thinking, honours a child's desire as 'unconscious processes of production of real', and envisions practitioners' roles as re-thought in terms of 'learning happening in-between' and children developing 'lines of flight'. These ways of thinking about children's experiences attempt to move beyond a subject/object divide in ways which position happenings as "in-between" and children as "competent" (Taguchi 2010 p xvi). These contemplative, responsible, collaborative practitioner roles (Olsson 2009) are centred, through a shared focus on personal and material contributions to intra-activity, in local contexts. Practitioners engage with the particular challenges made by their particular children, objects, expectations and families in their particular setting at a given point in time in association with some challenging educational questions. This is not a one-size-fits-all construction of practitioners' roles but one which involves on-going, contextual re-thinking in ways which are open rather than constraining. Included are recognitions of different constructions of childhood which are utilised to shape views of children as full of possibility.

An additional complication in relational pedagogies in early childhood settings is that of "schoolification." Van Laere et al describe schoolification as the increasing pressure for early childhood provisions to prepare children for school in spite of research and a growing consensus that

"Quality in ECEC should encompass a broad, holistic view on learning, caring, upbringing and social support for children. Quality services thus require both

‘care’ and ‘education’ as inseparable concepts...” (Van Laere, Peeters, & Vandebroek 2012 pg 527)

Among the recent applications of relational pedagogies, explored by Rogers and Evans (2008), are those espoused in the Te Whāriki curriculum in New Zealand and described by Peters (2009) as based in “responsive, reciprocal relationships” (p23). Papatheodorou (2009), also, paints a picture of relational pedagogies as about individuals participating in, appreciating and developing a shared culture which is useful locally and can contribute in a global communicative process too. Within these relationships there is “room for ‘not knowing’” (p14). Closely related is the pedagogy of relationships, a term used by Malaguzzi (Smidt 2013 pg 29) when writing about Reggio Emilia. It sees children as “actively engaged in co-constructing their own and others’ knowledge and identities” (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence 2007 p58). Dahlberg et al use Readings (1996) statement that “pedagogy is a relation, a network of obligation... (in which) the condition of pedagogical practice is an infinite attention to the other” (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence 2007 p59 from Readings 1996 p158)) as central to the pedagogue’s role in communicative relationships as human encounters. A *pedagogy of listening* is a further relational term derived from Reggio Emilia and highlights ‘listening to thought’ (Dahlberg & Moss 2005) in order to help children to negotiate their own meanings.

2.3.6 Comparisons between these pedagogical practices and theories

In this context of differing views of practitioners’ roles, each historical theorist took their own position. Yet, there are similarities across their views. One similarity was their commitment to education as purposeful. For Froebel the purpose was about a child’s coming to understand their place in the world, for Montessori it was about individual skills and child development, for Piaget purpose was about appropriate child development and for Dewey it was about engaging a child in collaborative, whole life social relationships which gave him the opportunity to develop the skills he needed to be a collaborative citizen. Something else these theorists shared was

the awareness that the hoped-for outcome for the child required a particular practitioner's role. Yet they differed about the details within these roles. For Montessori, the practitioners' role was in the adult selection and placing of adult-designed and adult-selected educational objects within the setting and supporting the child's voluntary engagement with them so that the educational purposes associated with the object were appropriate to the individual child's sensory and intellectual development. While, for Dewey (1938 p71), the practitioners' role was to see that a child was able to make use of their real out-of-school life experiences in school in ways which educated the child in making responsible choices and furthering their own learning. In addition, what was particularly unusual about Montessori's and Froebel's methods (and we might wish to include Dewey's methods here too) was that the child's exploration through hands-on use of objects was central to the introduction, development and re-enforcement of concepts while most other educational settings were focused on learning primarily through reading and writing (Montessori & Gutek 2004). For all of these historical theorists, children's objects were purposeful tools yet they took differing views as to the practitioner's and child's roles.

As we conclude, it is worth noting that most of the recent available research pertains to countries other than Scotland. However, what comes through in the international research is an interest in curriculum and both child and practitioner role debates in newer relational pedagogies which are broader than school-based. In addition, there is an increasing awareness that local educational questions may be informed by research in other countries. So, for example, Fleer (2010) offers an international review of valued curricular concepts while Collinson et al (2010) describe an international view of three trends aimed at enhancing practitioners' practices during continued professional development: glocalisation¹³, mentoring, and re-thinking

¹³ By glocalisation they mean a renewed focus on local context as part of a wide world approach.

teacher evaluation. There are other detailed examples of curriculum change in early childhood settings, such as that in Australia, where recent research has focused on the change in early childhood practice from one based in developmental theories to one based in socio-cultural theories (Edwards 2005). In addition Woodrow (2008), after reviewing the Australian early childhood practitioners' professionalism debates, suggests three possible ways forward when conceptualising practitioners' professional identity : "frameworks of caring, reconceptualised leadership and the concept of 'robust hope'" (p269).

What could be said to tie all of these newer ways of thinking together is what Osberg and Biesta (2008) describe as a need for a change of educational perspective in line with more emergent, and less transmission-based thinking and suggests we move "away from questions about presentation and representation and towards questions about engagement and response" (p215). Terms like line of flight, emergence and continuity draw our attention to each child's individual, yet socially entwined, educational experiences and raise questions about practitioners' roles in developing these pedagogies.

In conclusion, a range of discourses around pedagogies for young children have been reviewed. What emerges from these historical and current debates is a pedagogical commitment to the experience of each child being essential to education, the child and society as a whole. There is also an understanding that pedagogical purposes shape pedagogical practices. In addition, there is an understanding that children learn by doing in socially supportive spaces. What also comes through is a growing swell of emphasis on children as joint meaning-makers who are able to take responsibilities in all aspects of their education. All of these discourses merge in practitioners' roles as they take ultimate responsibility for classroom spaces. As practitioners negotiate new government initiatives, Dewey's thinking offers a joined-up way of construing what practitioners do. As detailed in *Chapter 3.2 Dewey's pragmatism as a philosophy based in scientific understanding* (page 61), his theories

honour these commitments to children in ways respectful of the rights of the child and the rights of the homes and cultures within which education takes place. Within this negotiation of educational spaces, children's objects offer visible possibilities for connections between a child's life at home and in school. In conjunction with Dewey's theories they offer a way of:

- joining up pedagogical commitments to each child's experience,
- understanding how pedagogical purposes shape practices,
- thinking about how children learn by doing in socially supportive spaces and
- viewing children as joint meaning-makers able to share responsibilities in all aspects of their education.

2.4 Relationships in early childhood settings

It would be hard to over-estimate the importance of relationships in education. As Biesta (2004) reminds us, it is important to take the interactions between teacher and learner "absolutely seriously" (p12) and to recognise that in the interactions between teacher and learner there is a necessary gap in which education takes place. A theory of education, he states, "should be a theory about the interaction between the teacher and the student. A theory of education is, in other words, a theory about the educational relationship. It is not about the "constituents" of this relationship (i.e., the teacher and the learner) but about the "relationality" of the relationship." Biesta describes three theories of communication (transmission, participation and performative communication) and the kinds of relationships they allow and argues that education exists only in the "performative nature of the process of education" (pp12-13).

Much of the literature pertinent to educational relationships in this research has already played an integral part in the two previous sections which have discussed literature regarding relationships with objects and literature regarding pedagogical practices. An important aspect of changing educational relationships, for discussion

here, is literature which investigates recognised communicative tensions which are ripe for transformation. The first of these is home/school relationships.

2.4.1 Home/School relationships

A number of empirical studies illustrate existing differences between home and school understandings of children's learning as well as home/school relationships. Two studies by Marsh (2003; 2004) looked at reading and digital literacy practices in children's homes and illustrate school's potential lack of understanding about children's lives at home as well as the way school practices may work to exclude aspects of home life from educational settings. Both these studies illustrate that children have home knowledge which may not be recognised or valued in educational settings. Hughes et al (2005) used shoe boxes which children carried between home and school to investigate ways of sharing home and school "funds of knowledge." However, the objects chosen for inclusion in the shoe boxes were largely adult choices rather than child choices.

Plowman et al's (2008) study of young children's technological literacy practices at home found that parents under-estimated their role in shaping their children's experiences with technology and rather than "just picking it up" children were in receipt of a wide range of pedagogical practices which supported their home learning. These findings are further expanded on in Grant's (2009) review of both parental and child engagements in home/school relationships. She suggests that learning in families is more complex than schools recognise and schools need to build on what is already going on at home. In particular, she mentions children's active role in shaping home learning.

Gonzalez's (2012) thesis deconstructed the way in which home/school relationships in kindergarten develop as a result of parental "crossings" between home and school. Analysing both individual parental and school factors which influenced crossings, he found that the rate at which families and communities cross differs

depending on education level, race/ethnicity and the average income of the school community. Families experience different degrees of barriers and parents with lower numbers of crossings report higher barriers to school entry while schools which offer multiple and varied opportunities for parents to cross, while supporting children academically and socially, show greater numbers of crossings. In addition, both parent crossings, at an individual level, and the average of parent crossings at a school are associated with reading achievement at the end of kindergarten although initial reading skills and whether parents have a high school diploma or not needs to be factored into the account. This thesis suggests, if we interpret “crossings” as either interactions or some degree of continuity, that more opportunities to build these connections matter.

2.4.2 Relationships and continuity between pre-school and school

In addition to literature which looks at home/school relationships there is also work which considers the relationships between preschools and schools, such as Merrell and Tymms (2007) study of what children starting school in Scotland know and can do as compared to what children across a wide range of international contexts are capable of doing. Doucet & Tudge (2007) describe the “importance of reframing current constructions of parents’ and teachers’ roles in facilitating the transition to school to account for the way in which culture informs and shapes developmental processes” (p308) particularly where home and school contexts differ. Moss (2013) describes the different cultures which exist in preschools and schools in both UK and international contexts and suggests that there may be much to learn from preschool framings of children and how they learn. Rose (2009), in his report for the government on the English curriculum states that how home/preschool and preschool/school transitions "are managed" matters and that it is important to "establish policies designed to sustain children's progress across these transition points" (p82).

2.5 Reflecting on perspectives from literature prior to moving on to Dewey's pragmatism

In this chapter, I have reviewed literature about children's objects, pedagogies and relationships. Objects viewed as tools, with a wide range of possible uses or meanings, open pathways for discussion about what the tools do, or are useful for, or signify in educational spaces. At the same time, emerging shared-meaning-making pedagogies suggest that brought-in objects might be viewed as a child's contribution to their own education and as such have potential for building or strengthening relationships within classrooms and between classrooms and homes. While there is a growing body of literature available, there is little research into objects in educational settings which go against the normally adult-initiated flow of objects: from schools to homes. The research described in this thesis does just that: it researches children's brought-in objects flowing from home into school and the pedagogies and relationships that develop around that flow.

John Dewey's views on the actions and interactions which develop a child's uni-verse seem a particularly useful way of combining ideas about objects as tools, pedagogical practices which support children's development of their uni-verse through personal experiences and the deeply relational nature of education. While all of the theorists mentioned in this literature review have contributed to one or more of the aspects in discussion, Dewey's ideas are the most consistently developed and applied across all aspects of education from a philosophical stance through educational terminology to social purposes. As such, his theories seem the most potentially useful in research circumstances which include objects, pedagogies and educational relationships.

The following chapter describes John Dewey's multi-layered theorising of the concept of experience in the context of his scientific understanding of how reality is made moment-by-moment through the actions and interactions of all of nature, including humans.

3 DEWEY'S PRAGMATISM AS A WAY OF THINKING ABOUT EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

3.1 Pragmatism and reality in the making

One of the useful things about pragmatism, in an early childhood context, is its view of reality as being in the making. Rather than school needing to be a place where children are 'taught' all the things they need to know about the world before they are qualified to participate in it, pragmatism takes the view that we are all (adults and children alike) making the world as we participate in it. This in no way suggests that there wasn't a world in existence before we arrived or that we can disregard what came before us. Rather, it honours the participatory nature of reality and qualifies all of us as learners.

Dewey's main contribution to educational research is described by Biesta and Burbules (2003 p9) as his providing "a different account of knowledge and a different understanding of the way in which human beings can acquire knowledge." For Dewey a child's freedom to initiate and contribute to shared purposes was at the centre of practitioners' resources for developing worthwhile educational experiences. His detailed account of how his various philosophical concepts worked together offers a way of engaging with what goes on every day in early childhood classrooms as well as the findings in this research by making use of one core concept: experience.

While Dewey's descriptions of a child's experience are centred within an individual child, his ideas are also highly social in that his ultimate goal for education was the development of a democratic society since this was the form of governance which he saw as fairer than any other. The interactions involved in gaining experience require other parties, so at its heart, Dewey's views on human experience and its central role in education were social.

The first part of this chapter describes this philosophical stance in a little more detail. The second part provides simple explanations of Dewey's particular framings of familiar educational terms and, finally, the roles of Dewey's views in this research are described in brief.

3.2 Dewey's pragmatism as a philosophy based in scientific understanding

Dewey's pragmatism challenges the long held Western philosophical traditions of a separation between mind and reality as well as the associated questions about how what is *out there* gets *in here*. Dewey (1938) took the view that philosophy should work *with* scientific thinking, and recognise the degree to which we make use of experimental methods of engaging with the world. Thus, his version of pragmatism is a theory centred in action and experimentation framed by his understanding of how the natural world works. His own description of his version of pragmatism was that it was "committed to ... an empirical and experimental philosophy" (p25).

The diagram on the following page, developed from Biesta and Burbules (2003 pp25-53) textual explanations of Dewey's terminology, may help to make the inter-relationships in his ideas more approachable. These brief descriptions are not in any way equal to the complexity of Dewey's thinking, but their simplicity may serve in this context.

Dewey's pragmatism: transactional realism or transactional constructionism
(Biesta and Burbules 2003 pg 10-13)

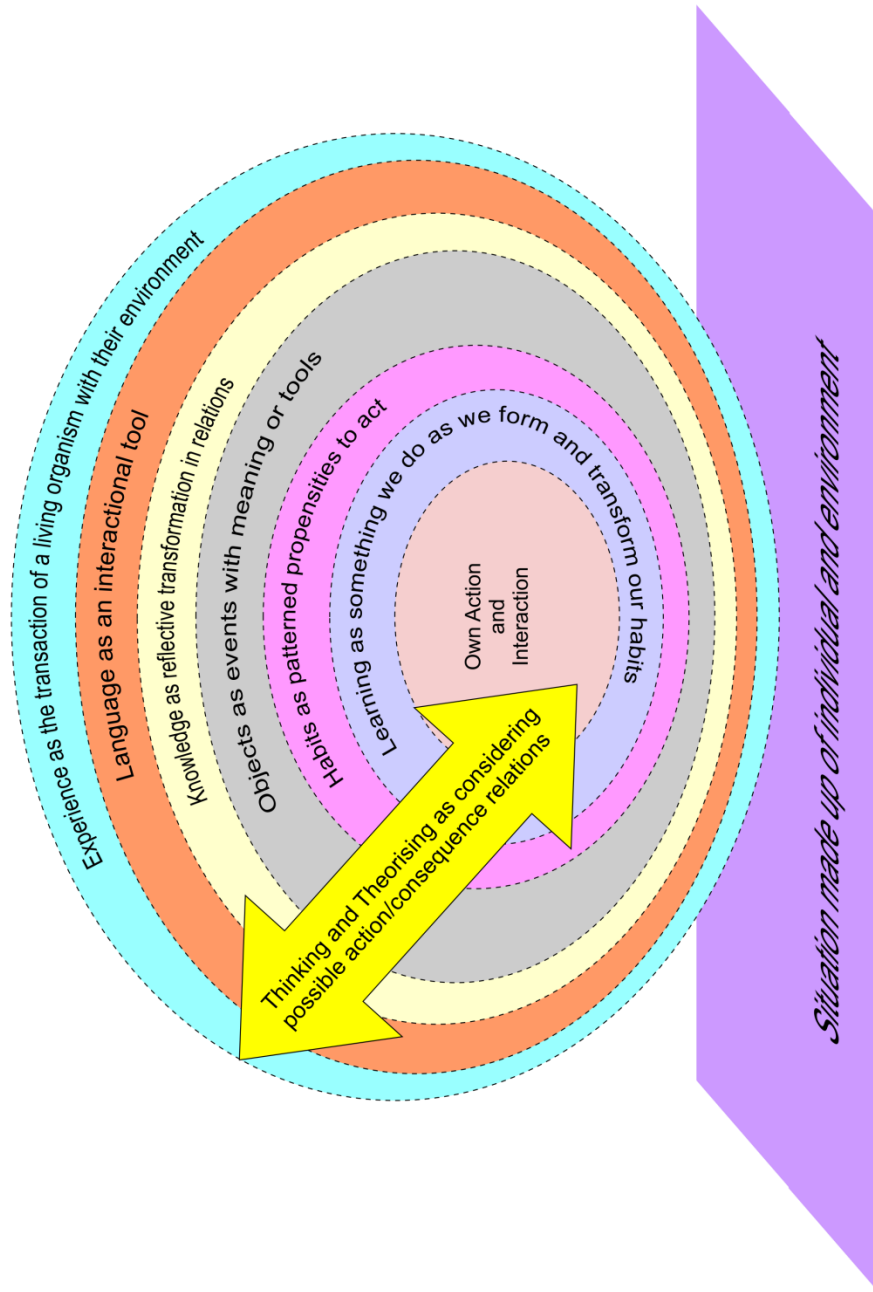


Figure 3-1: Dewey's pragmatism diagram

At the heart of Dewey's scientific engagement with the world are the behaviours of action and interaction. In his view, these underpin change processes in the natural world and, in their combination, describe where he saw *reality* as being continually made (Biesta & Burbules 2003 p90). For example, an individual¹⁴, in close proximity to another individual acts and responds to the actions of the other (even ignoring the other is a kind of action). In any on-going cycle of action and interaction each participant comes to experience the world as it impinges on her (Biesta & Burbules 2003 p37). Thus, for Dewey, the *real* world is the world as experienced, or made, within the interactions between a given person and their environment. Reality is not separate, not something *out there* to be viewed and grappled with in order to find its *real* meaning (Biesta & Burbules 2003 pp25-26). For Dewey (1922), reality is in the interactions between natural things and is thus dynamic, on-going and changeable (within limits). So reality is not something we can stand back from but something we participate in making. He wrote of our participation through our actions and responses as firstly "in the muscles" (p124) in that our physical engagement with the world precedes our ability to think about our engagement with the world. Within these engagements with the world, Dewey (1938) saw humankind as having an advantage over the rest of the natural world, whose responses he viewed as less intelligently adaptable, since humans were capable of learning from the consequences of their actions and experimenting with alternate responses in what Dewey describes as the scientific method (pp86-87). Biesta (2009c) describes Dewey's views as a "philosophy of communication in which communication is understood in terms of participation" (p72) and "... 'context' is not seen as something that is outside of and disconnected from the learner, but rather as something that is always an inherent part of an ever evolving transactional field" (Biesta 2009a p62).

¹⁴ Here 'individual' could be any form in nature, not only humans.

Biesta and Burbules refer to Dewey's pragmatism as both transactional realism and transactional constructivism in that it is centred in human engagement with the natural and social worlds. They see its contribution as a different, and more useful, way of

“...overcoming the idea that rationality only has to do with questions about the most effective means for bringing about predetermined ends. For Dewey, rationality is about intelligent human action and human cooperation... (which)...is ultimately motivated by an attempt to restore rationality, agency, and responsibility to the sphere of human action” (Biesta & Burbules 2003 p22).

Associated with Dewey's philosophical stance is a use of words we are familiar with, but which Dewey has closely defined in line with his philosophical stance. Dewey's particular definitions can be challenging in their reframing of words we take for granted in everyday use. In grappling with his terminology it is always worth bearing in mind that, at its centre, Dewey's ideas focus on individuals acting and interacting in an environment. Dewey's particular definitions of terms in common parlance in education offer opportunities to see a whole range of terminology in a new and, hopefully, more useful light. As a way into his ideas, for early childhood practitioners who are committed to pedagogies of active learning, Dewey describes learning as firstly “in the muscles” (Dewey 1922 p24).

3.2.1 Learning as something we do as we form and transform our habits

In Dewey's (1922) way of thinking, learning is a process and something we *do* (p124). What someone is able to learn is based in their own actions, interpretations of previous actions and their own experimental results within an interaction. What we *do*, and as a result *learn*, can also be a social process within social settings in which an individual's actions can be mediated by the actions or responses of others. As sentient human beings, Dewey (1938 pp67-72) saw people as having the capacity to

draw meaning from their interactions and adjust their future responses accordingly. He saw learning, which in his philosophy happens by doing, as reflected in our action/consequence relationships and verified/challenged through our experiments. In this way humans are able to shape their interactions, within limits, in ways they would wish the interactions to go or even to make their actions more reflective of a wider purpose, or end view, such as education.

For Dewey learning was not an isolated transaction but was built upon the results of previous transactions. Dewey insisted that for a child in school, transactions should not be compartmentalised into in-school transactions and out-of-school transactions. It was important to him that what a child had learned out-of-school was made use of within school transactions (Dewey 1938 pg 25) so that learning could be a continuous, joined-up process rather than two disparate strands. For practitioners in schools this means that learning should always be seen as an outcome of the transaction between what a child brings to school and what the school brings to the child (Biesta 2011). Of course this applies to much more than children bringing objects to school. It applies to everything which makes a child the way they are, which includes their ability to learn, their habits developed in other contexts, their ability to use language as a means of thinking and their own interests, prior experiences and views of the future. For Dewey (1990 p106), school needs to be one of the places where a child lives rather than a separate preparation for a life to come.

In summary, for Dewey, learning depends on the ability to act, knowledge is built through associating actions and consequences within interactions and experimenting helps one to see whether what one 'knows' through one's own experience is valid, or not. Experimenting offers opportunities to shape future actions into more purposeful responses based on what was learned through action and what one now 'knows' to be true having acted and been in receipt of a reliable

consequence. However, there are no guarantees that a particular action will produce the desired response every time. Other parties in the interaction also have their own choices to make – each of which may influence the interaction in unpredictable ways. Biesta puts Dewey’s learning in a broader context by describing how

“...we learn – that is form and transform our habits – through engagement with natural and social environments. The engagement itself is called experience....the individual-environment ‘constellation’ is called situation.”
(Biesta 2011)

The next term in Dewey’s philosophical structure is “habits.” “Situations” will be discussed in *3.2.4 Situation made up of individual and environment*.

3.2.2 Habits as patterned propensities to act

Habits, in Dewey’s way of thinking, can be described as patterns of learned action/consequence relationships which form propensities for future possible actions (Biesta & Burbules 2003 pp35-37). Habits can function as useful in reducing the complexity of new transactions in that the propensity to act in a particular way, based on prior experiences, is able to inform future action without needing to re-enact all the trial and error which went into developing the habit. In this way habits could be an advantage but they could also be a disadvantage if relied upon too heavily, particularly in changing circumstances. As a situation changed, habits, or patterns in action and response, might no longer be appropriate and might need to be adjusted for new circumstances. Of course, habits could be good or bad and could be seen in “attitudes”, “sensitivities” and “ways of meeting and responding to all the conditions which we meet in living” (Dewey 1938 p35). In a classroom setting, practitioners’ habits are seen in classroom routines, the framing of purposes, the framing of the child and other aspects described as “the hidden curriculum” (Jackson 1968; Snyder 1971a; Vallance 1973) as well as in overt behaviours such as pedagogical practices.

3.2.3 Objects as events with meaning or tools

Dewey's view of objects runs counter to the way many of us view objects as a source of knowledge. For Dewey objects (both physical and social) were the outcome of acquiring knowledge, not the starting point. Biesta and Burbules illustrate Dewey's concept with reference to a chair:

“With this transactional understanding of objects, Dewey implicitly rejected the idea that our knowledge is “of” or “about” the objects in the world. It is not that through a process of inquiry we find out what the possible meanings of a chair are. Rather, a chair specifies a particular way in which the transaction with the environment has become meaningful.” (Biesta & Burbules 2003 p49)

What this suggests for this research is that a child's brought-in object specifies a particular way in which this child's transaction with the world has become meaningful in an out-of-school environment. Within school the child and meaningful object act, and practitioners respond and participate in shaping the child/environment transactions, in ways which, hopefully, add further meaning to the child's object experience. Of course the transactions within a classroom space are more complex than one child and one object. Classrooms are social spaces with complex actions and responses through which a child and meaningful object help to shape their own experience and the experiences of others. Dewey saw practitioners as having particular roles in children's in-school experiences, as is discussed in *Chapter 3.3 Dewey's view of quality and practitioners' roles in educational experiences* (page 76). But first, Dewey's idea of what a situation was, its importance and what staff were able to do with it are described.

3.2.4 Situation made up of individual and environment

For Dewey (1938 p42) a situation was the individual and the environment in immediate combination. Situations could be indeterminate or determinate.

Indeterminate situations include conflict or problems which call out for inquiry so are useful to practitioners who want to foster learning through children's engagement with the world in experimental ways (Biesta & Burbules 2003 p63). On the other hand, traditional education's top-down model tended to prefer determinate situations under the control of the practitioners since they were headed in a fixed direction, chosen by the practitioners, and a child's action and interaction was confined within clear limits (Dewey 1938 p18). Dewey describes how practitioners in traditional schools had an easier time with determinate situations than practitioners in progressive schools had with indeterminate situations. Indeterminate situations require more practitioners' action and interaction in support of purposeful shaping and practitioners keeping the 'Where is this going?' question always in the mind (Dewey 1938 p83). Classrooms which function as determinate situations have a plan and deliver action with less diversion, more clearly defined roles for practitioners and pupils, and more clearly defined outcomes yet they fail the child by being disconnected from the child's out-of-school life experiences.

Classrooms are not the only situation in which children live: each child in a classroom comes from other situations at home, in their community and wider families. However, the individual-environment constellation or situation, which practitioners take responsibility for is the classroom situation and what takes place in it. But Dewey advocated that practitioners take a broader view and work toward developing an understanding of each child's situation outside of school as well (1938 p44). With regard to practitioners' classroom responsibilities Dewey describes the environment, or shaping the classroom situation to each child's experiences, as a practitioner's primary responsibility (Dewey 1938 pp43-46).

3.2.5 Knowledge as reflective transformation in relations

Dewey's view of knowledge is not about Truth, in the classical sense, but about "conditions and consequences" (Biesta & Burbules 2003 p45) or as Dewey put it,

searching for “those relations upon which the occurrence of real qualities and values depends” (Dewey, Boydston, & Hook 2008 p84). As Biesta and Burbules describe it, knowing

“... represents a shift from a concern with things as they are to a concern with “the history to which a given thing belongs” as well as a shift from “knowing as an aesthetic enjoyment of the properties of nature as a world of divine art, to knowing as a means of secular control – this is, a method of purposefully introducing changes which will alter the direction of the course of events.”

This shift also implies that knowledge is concerned with relations and not with reality “as such.”” (Biesta & Burbules 2003 p45)

Knowledge, in Dewey’s view, is individual and open to revision as it is the collection of what you have learned through your own interactions and experiences. As circumstances change your knowledge may need revising. For Dewey, knowledge is the result of one’s own action/consequence events or, as Biesta and Burbules (2003) describe Dewey’s view of knowledge, “about reflection and action, and about the reflective transformation of experience understood as transactional” (p42). Further, they describe what is useful about Dewey’s framing of knowledge as being that it results in “all modes of experience being equally real since they are all modes of the transaction of living organism and their environments” (pp42-43). Dewey’s (1905) expression of the breadth of this view was that “things – anything, everything, in the ordinary or non-technical use of the term “thing” – are what they are experienced as” (p393). This highlights the diversity of experience which is able to inform knowledge and also removes some of the privileges which, in other philosophical schools, can be associated with some kinds of knowledge when compared with others, such as is the case in other philosophies which privilege theory over practice. For Dewey *theory* and *practice* are two different ways of knowing; different kinds of reflection and action (Biesta & Burbules 2003 p47). Practice is the knowledge of fine

details of embodied action and response. Theory takes a view of multiple actions and responses in order to hypothesize where those actions and responses might lead and raise questions about whether that destination is of value or not. For Dewey the value of knowledge is not in its status but in its worth (which we might speak of as usefulness in taking us where we want to go). For example, pedagogical practice as a form of implicit, “in the muscles” knowledge is worthwhile in its ability to shape a practitioner’s action in the moment by providing seemingly spontaneous, yet highly detailed, responses to children’s actions.

Theory, in Dewey’s framing of it, is worthwhile in a different way: theory stands back, as it were, and by reflecting on a myriad responses develops a view of the patterns in interactions. Theory, as a provisional big picture of how things work, offers opportunities to consider and shape future pedagogical practices in ways directed by a practitioner’s understanding of what patterns of practice tend toward. In standing back, theory offers a different kind of knowledge: knowledge of patterns and directions and possible future consequences which practitioners are able to incorporate into their own practices if they find them worthwhile. Through interactions with theoretical knowledge practitioners have an opportunity to reflect on whether their practice is taking them where they intend it to go and gain insights into possible ways to transform those aspects which may not be working as they would wish. In addition, theory offers a degree of shared understanding of language. This makes communicating with other practitioners, families and society about the big picture, possible. It facilitates the processes of understanding and transforming practice as collaborative. However, theory does not offer “the solution” or a recipe in a “what works” culture. It is always speculative and experimental and works with questions such as “what would happen if...?” rather than statements of “do this, then ... happens.”

3.2.6 Language as an interactional tool

For Dewey language is an interactional tool with profound consequences. Language is developed in the same way his other concepts are developed: as learned “in the muscles” by relating action and consequence then testing validity through experimentation. Not only does it provide a less physical way of responding to another’s action (for example the ability to say “I’d like you to stop that please” rather than responding with a physical punch) but it is also essential to the human ability to think. Language’s role in thinking transforms the possibilities for human interactions by decreasing the dependence on a physical response while increasing our ability to try out action-consequence scenarios in our head. Further, it allows us a degree of engagement with other people’s learning, feelings and experiences although this is always based on inference.

3.2.7 Thinking as the ability to give mental consideration to past and future action and consequence relations

Since, for Dewey (1922), action precedes cognition, or thinking, he speaks of knowledge as first “living in the muscles, not in consciousness” (p124). However, over time and in association with the development of language as a way of experimenting with or testing action/consequence relationships in the mind prior to making use of them, thinking becomes a potentially less catastrophic way of influencing, or shaping, future transactions. Thinking offers a choice of possible action based in learning through previous experiences *as well as* the opportunity to try out various combinations and permutations of action/consequence relationships in the mind prior to acting on one of them. Not that thinking guarantees successful transactions, but it is doubtless less painful and time consuming than physically trying out each and every possibility prior to every action.

For young children this concept of thinking has particular importance. Not only is it an essential life skill but they are still developing their abilities to use language and

by implication, in Deweyian terms, to use thought as a useful precursor to action.

This suggests that early childhood practitioners may have a number of roles to play, including:

- Doing their own thinking out loud in order to associate language with actions and thereby help develop a child's own ability to use language for thought. This is not only a matter of developing a vocabulary, but also applies to modelling the processes of thinking, enquiry and experimentation through language as well as action.
- Recognising that action may still be easier for a child than the use of language for thought.
- Considering the implications for children whose first language is not English (in an English language school setting) or who have other specific difficulties with language and how this shapes what and how they think.
- Understanding that for all of us the development of language follows on from action/consequence relations so, like all of Dewey's other concepts, language and thinking begins "in the muscles."

Thinking serves a number of purposes for Dewey. As discussed above, it allows an individual to consider various courses of action in the head rather than by the more physical process of trial and error. In this way thinking can be evaluative of past experiences, as reflection, as well as predictive when planning future experiences. Not that it is always as accurate as we might like, but across a number of lived experiences in similar situations it becomes more predictive. That is until such time as the parameters of the situation change and thinking's predictive qualities are reduced or vanish and the thinking has to be done again based on new action and response information. However, thinking is a powerful tool in times of change as, at its core, it uses past and present action/consequence data to consider possibilities for the future.

Secondly, thinking in combination with language allows us to engage with the thoughts of others as additional sources of information about the world and our understanding of the way it works. Rather than having to try something out for ourselves we are able to include information gleaned from the experiences of others in the thoughtful planning of our own actions as responses. This relies on a degree of shared meaning in words and can be seriously challenged as word meanings change and develop. Dewey's use, and change in meaning, for terminology in common use is an example of this language difficulty in that our first response to a world like *knowledge* might be as something we *have* whereas Dewey's framing of knowledge is as something we *do*.

Thirdly, a degree of shared language and thinking allows us to participate in what Dewey described as "a genuine community of action" (Dewey, Boydston, & Hook 2008 p145) by which he meant participating in a successful cooperation. Dewey described successful cooperation as a creative process where "(S)omething is literally made in common in at least two different centers (sic) of behaviour" (Dewey, Boydston, & Hook 2008 p141) through the process of communication using symbols with meaning. For the community to act together there has to be a degree of shared meaning for which this "community of action" uses inference (Biesta & Burbules 2003 p42) to guess or imply what things mean to others in order to shape responses to their meanings or, rather, what has been inferred as the meanings. These symbols could be language or they could be other symbols such as music, objects or art. As Biesta and Burbules (2003) describe it "'things' – in the widest sense of this word – that make shared action possible, acquire significance, become things-with-meaning (that is, symbols)" (p42).

Dewey's framing of particularly practitioner-child relationships was in practitioner's roles as educators. He focused on what practitioners could contribute to in-school experiences and connections to out-of-school experiences. His primary educational

goal was the freedom of the individual, including the child, and he took the view that “the only freedom that is of enduring importance is freedom of intelligence, that is to say, freedom of observation and of judgment exercised in behalf of purposes that are intrinsically worthwhile” (Dewey 1938 p61). Thus, the practitioner’s role was to foster “freedom of intelligence” through shaping the situation within the classroom so that it encouraged focused and collaborative thinking about actions and purposes. This was the kind of thinking Dewey described as “postponement of immediate action (in order to)...effect(s) internal control of impulse through a union of observation and memory, this union being the heart of reflection” (p64).

3.2.8 Experience as the transaction of a living organism with their environment

Experience, for Dewey, is “the transactions of living organisms and their environment” or “the way in which organisms are *connected* with reality” (Biesta & Burbules 2003 p28).

Of particular interest in schools (where purposes matter) Dewey’s framing of experience has effects. Firstly, Dewey (1938 p35) writes that “every experience enacted and undergone modifies the one who acts and undergoes, while this modification affects, whether we wish it or not, the quality of subsequent experiences.” Experience, then, changes the person who has the experience and affects the quality of subsequent experiences. For practitioners, who have responsibility for educating a child, this way of describing experience may make it sound like a powerful tool for shaping children’s lives. However, Dewey had things to say about how practitioners might make use of children’s experiences as is discussed in *Chapter 3.3 Dewey’s view of quality and practitioners’ roles in educational experiences* (page 76). It is important to note that what he says suggests that practitioners are less powerful than they might wish to be: yet they are not without ways forward.

Experience is then the opportunity to learn by doing (interact) and to place that learning in relation to past and future events (continuity) in one's own life. The learning begins "in the muscles" and young children are particularly dependent on this aspect as they don't yet have full recourse to language use and the full range of other sophisticated tools. As children develop, language and other learning resources develop in multi-faceted social situations yet the muscles are still where the actions begin.

By way of an example of this phenomenon, adults who work with small children understand that modelling the physical behaviour asked of a child works more effectively than "just telling them." Not only does seeing an example of the desired behaviour help the child to process an instruction but the modelling may be enhanced by offering assistance with producing the desired muscle effect in the child. For example, "sit here beside me" followed by the lifting and placing of the child beside one on a couch is far more likely to produce the desired effect than merely instructing a child to "sit here." It is as if, in the active assistance of the adult in producing the desired physical posture in the child, the child's has observed the desired effect in the adult's modelling of it and learned the shape, by doing it, of an appropriate response through their own changes in position. Thus they are more willing and able to enact it the next time it is appropriate. Particularly as it is a pleasant pathway they have travelled before. In addition, associating the physical action of sitting with the verbal request to "sit here by me" helps the language used to have meaning and be of potential use to the child on future occasions.

3.2.9 The point of Dewey's philosophical view

In addition to Dewey's philosophical understanding of how the world works, he took a very particular stance on the process of education: "(t)here is an intimate and necessary relation between the processes of actual experience and education" (Dewey 1938 p20). He described these "processes of actual experience" and how

education worked “of, by and for” (p29) experience: education *of* experience being its shaping, education *by* experience being its learning, and education *for* experience being what practitioners needed in order to help develop in a child the freedom to experience. For Dewey, the purpose of education was to develop in children “(t)he only freedom that is of enduring importance...freedom of intelligence... freedom of observation and of judgment exercised in behalf of purposes that are intrinsically worth (sic) while” (Dewey 1938 p61). The way in which he saw freedom as a democratic principle expressed was through thinking as a community in order to develop “a genuine community of action” (Dewey, Boydston, & Hook 2008 p145). For him, school was one of the ways to learn how to develop “freedom of intelligence” in order to be part of communities of thinking and action, but practitioners’ roles were crucial.

3.3 Dewey’s view of quality and practitioners’ roles in educational experiences

While practitioners’ roles were crucial, Dewey did not see them as “the starting point” in educating through experience.

“When education is based in theory and practice upon experience, it goes without saying that the organized subject-matter of the adult and the specialist cannot provide the starting point. Nevertheless, it represents the goal toward which education should continuously move.” (Dewey 1938 p83)

It is important to state that for Dewey experience was not equal to education, or as he puts it

“The belief that all genuine education comes about through experience does not mean that all experiences are genuinely or equally educative. Experience and education cannot be directly equated with each other. For some experiences are mis-educative.

Any experience is mis-educative that has the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience.” (Dewey 1938 p25)

This suggests that, for Dewey, having just any experience was not sufficient in an educational setting. Rather, he describes quality in experience as two-fold:

- 1) His immediate gauge of quality had to do with whether the experience was agreeable or not to the child and could, to some degree, be determined by the child’s response. The kind of experience he suggests is one which “while they do not repel the student, but rather engage his activities are, nevertheless, more than immediately enjoyable” (Dewey 1938 p27).
- 2) His longer term gauge of quality had to do with its influence on later experiences which, sadly from the educator’s point of view, was not “obvious or easy to judge” (Dewey 1938 p27) but should be related to worthwhile educational purposes.

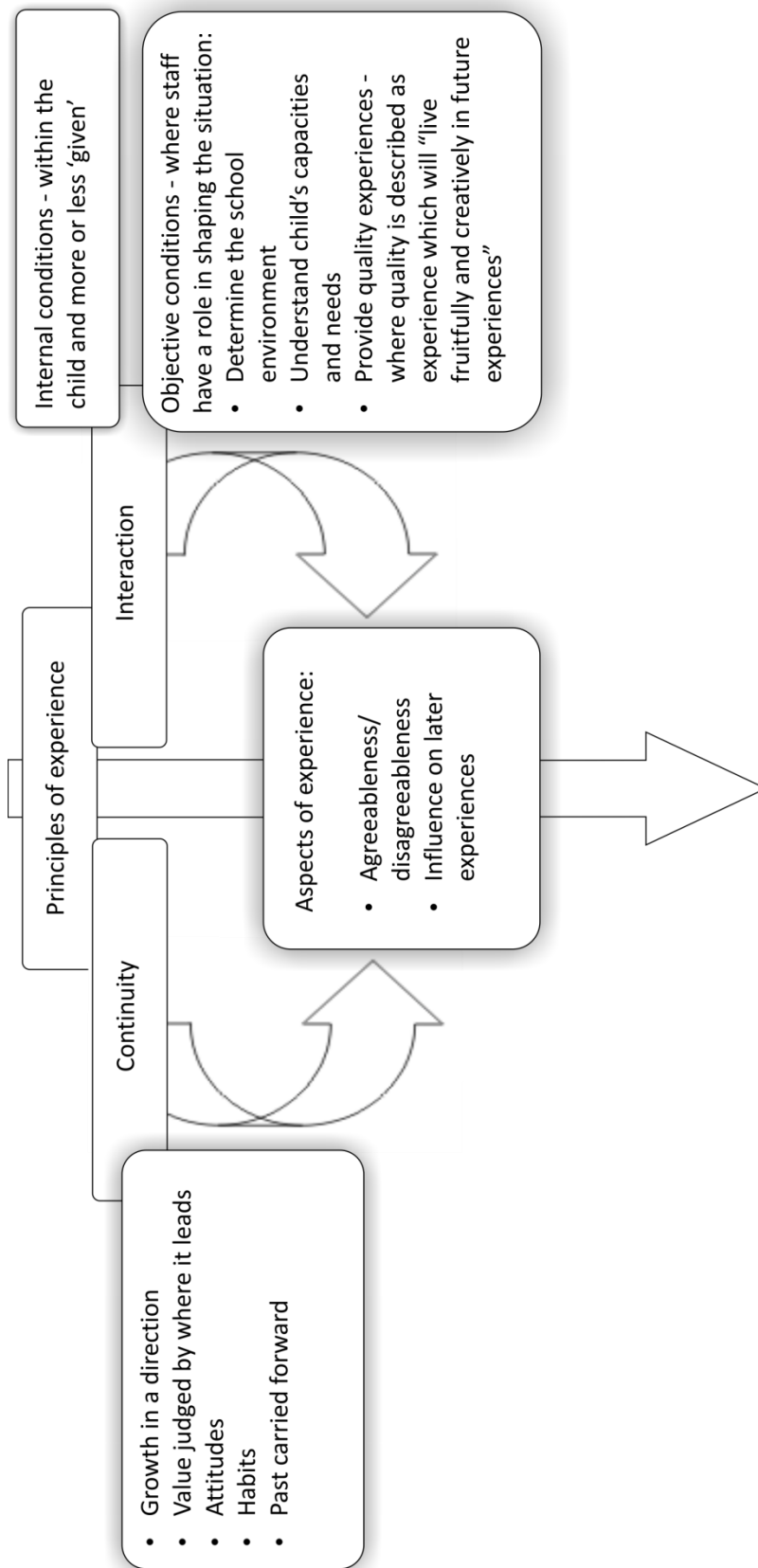
However, the fact that it was not easy to judge did not mean he would let practitioners out of the responsibility associated with a school culture of learning through experience. While he recognised that choosing quality experiences was difficult he nevertheless stated that “the central problem of an education based upon experience is to select the kind of present experiences that live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences” (Dewey 1938 pp27-28). For early childhood practitioners to make these decisions about which experiences are more, or less, appropriate they have to take a view on where an experience is taking a child, or what a child’s future experiences might be, in order to shape children’s current experiences in ways which form habits that are worthwhile in those futures.

To help practitioners in this process Dewey returns to a biological interpretation of habit in which

“(T)he basic characteristic of habit is that every experience enacted and undergone modifies the one who acts and undergoes, while this modification affects, whether we wish it or not, the quality of subsequent experiences. For it is a somewhat different person who enters into them...the principle of continuity of experience means that every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after.” (Dewey 1938 p35)

In the development of good, worthwhile, or quality experiences the two principles Dewey (1938) applied were continuity (pp33-36) and interaction (p42). A diagram may help to introduce his thinking as it illustrates how both aspects needed to work together for there to be quality of experience.

Figure 3-2: Brief Summary of Dewey's View of a Good Educational Experience



The various details within this diagram are defined and discussed in the following sections on continuity and interaction. Dewey's views on these two aspects are described separately so as not to confuse. However, it is worth remembering that he saw these two facets as integral parts of an experience and it is in their inter-relationship that their full effectiveness lies.

3.3.1 Continuity as essential to an experience's quality

Dewey (1938) defined continuity as "the experiential continuum" and declared it "involved in ... every attempt to discriminate between experiences that are worthwhile educationally and those that are not" (p33).

Core to Dewey's (1938) view of a worthwhile experiential continuum were the principles of democracy. This commitment to democracy resulted from his rather practical "belief that democratic social arrangements promote a better quality of human experience, one which is more widely accessible and enjoyed, than do non-democratic and anti-democratic forms of social life" (p34). He recommended the principles of democracy to help discriminate between valuable, or good, educational experiences and those which were not, since a good experience was one which tended toward a good goal and a bad experience was one which tended toward a bad goal or blocked the possibilities for future good experiences.

Central to Dewey's (1938) concept of continuity of experience were habits since "the basic characteristic of habit is that every experience enacted and undergone modifies the one who acts and undergoes, while this modification affects, whether we wish it or not, the quality of subsequent experiences. For it is a somewhat different person who enters into them" (p35). By habit he meant

"basic sensitivities and ways of meeting and responding to the conditions which we meet in living." Therefore, the "principle of continuity of experience means that every experience both takes up

something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after” (p35).

Dewey (1938) saw growth or growing as one example of the principle of continuity but growth itself was not enough since growth could be toward a good or a bad end. Thus “the direction in which growth takes place, the end towards which it tends” (p36) matters. In fact he added a further criterion of growth, which was that it should open further possibilities for educational growth rather than closing them down (pp25-26). So educational growing experiences were, for Dewey, about a shared democratic space in which the direction of growth was toward a shared positive future and the particular experience opened rather than closed further democratic opportunities.

The principle of continuity was not all about the future since, for Dewey (1938), the “quality of the present experience influences the way in which the principle applies” (p37). He described the quality of a present experience as able to spoil a child if it set up possibilities for bad habits or attitudes. He judged the value of an individual experience by thinking of the experience as a “moving force” whose “value can be judged only on the ground of what it moves toward and into” (p38) and stated that it was the “business of the educator” to see the direction in which the experience was going. He took this point so seriously that he states (p38) that a “(F)ailure to take the moving force of an experience into account so as to judge and direct it on the ground of what it is moving into means disloyalty to the principle of experience itself.” He describes two prongs to this disloyalty: (1) it goes against what the educator should have learned from his own past experiences and (2) it is “unfaithful to the fact that all human experience is ultimately social... it involves contact and communication” (p38).

This suggests that part of an educator’s responsibility is to consider, and make use of, the continuities of their own experience while making judgements about the value of

children's current experiences. We might describe it as the wisdom of an educator's awareness of their own continuities of experience being available to help children as they develop their own continuities and learn the skills of evaluating the direction in which an experience is taking them. This "contact and communication" which a mature person is able to bring to educational experiences is likely to be a carefully balanced skill as Dewey (1938) warns against its "imposing a merely external control" (p38). The words Dewey uses to describe the practitioners' roles are "be on the alert to see what attitudes and habitual tendencies are being created" and "be able to judge what attitudes are actually conducive to continued growth and what are detrimental" (p39). In addition, educators must have "that sympathetic understanding of individuals as individuals" (p39). Dewey acknowledges that this is not an easy role for practitioners and, in particular, is much more difficult to deliver than were the patterns of traditional education.

Continuity of experience is also seen in what Dewey wrote of as an experience's "active" (p39) side. By active he meant those aspects of an experience which "changed the objective conditions under which experiences are had" (p39). For him, experiences have the capacity to change the world in small or larger ways, as he saw evidenced in the civilization we live in. Dewey described civilization as built on the experiences of people who lived before us and was aware of how we benefit (or not) from the ways in which their experiences made the world a different place. Thus there are continuities of experience that go beyond an individual's experience in time and place.

Finally, Dewey (1938) writes of the practitioner's role in "shaping of actual experience by environing conditions" by "recogniz(ing) in the concrete what surroundings are conducive to having experiences that lead to growth" (p40). His use of "surroundings" included both the physical and the social and he made an impassioned plea for practitioners to know their local communities in order to

recognise the useful continuities between them and children in school. Again, this was an aspect which he felt traditional education ignored. And again, this makes education based on experience more difficult to facilitate as it requires a degree of embeddedness in community and environment as well as an attention to individual relationships with children which traditional schools did not feel called to acknowledge or deliver.

Dewey's (1938) principle of continuity of experience also came with a caution. While the educational experience of the child was all important this was to be viewed in a social context in which democracy and shared living were the goals. Thus, a child's experience was to be valued by the degree to which it was socially useful and continuous with the experiences of others in the child's life (p41). Children were not to be solitary divas but contributors to the greater good of society through their shared growth experiences. Thus, interaction was Dewey's second principle for experience.

3.3.2 Practitioners' roles in recognising and developing continuities of experience

This "principle of continuity of experience" allows Dewey to state that "(e)very experience is as a moving force. Its value can be judged only on the ground of what it moves toward and into" so "the business of the educator is to see in what direction an experience is heading" (Dewey 1938 p38). And this is where Dewey's view of theory as a way of seeing the bigger picture comes into play. A theoretical engagement with classroom practices around children's experiences offers a possible, and always contestable, view of where particular practices might be headed.

Applying this principle of continuity to the experiences of children with their brought-in objects suggests (modifying a Biesta quote listed in its original form in footnote¹⁵) that even when two children bring identical objects to the same classroom on the same day they will learn (or take) different things from the experience of voluntarily bringing an object from home into school because they each come to this classroom with a different 'history', that is with different habits.

Practitioners' practices, which Dewey described as supportive of continuity of experience, included:

- Taking the future into account "at every stage of the educational process" (Dewey 1938 p47)
- Linking subject matter to children's lives so that it was not "in a water-tight compartment" (Dewey 1938 p48)
- Take account of "collateral learning" as the "formation of enduring attitudes...likes and dislikes" since these attitudes "count in the future" (Dewey 1938 p48).

For Dewey continuity did not end in its temporal or directional qualities. Continuity also had effects on the world, or what Dewey referred to as "objective conditions". For him "Every genuine experience has an active side which changes in some degree the objective conditions under which experiences are had" (Dewey 1938 p39). What this suggests is that experiences, including those of small children, have a creative quality about them. The experience in some way makes the world different so that the next time a similar experience happens to that child it begins from a different starting point as far as that child is concerned. His second principle for experiences,

¹⁵ "Even when you put two students in an identical situation they will learn (or take) different things from it because they come to this with a different 'history', that is with different habits" (Biesta 2011).

namely interaction, formed part of how these “objective conditions,” over which practitioners have some influence, were changed.

3.3.3 Interaction as essential to an experience’s quality

By interaction Dewey (1938) meant the assignment of “equal rights to both factors in experience – objective and internal conditions” (p42). As illustrated in *Figure 3-2: Brief Summary of Dewey's View of a Good Educational Experience* (page 79) these *internal* and *objective* conditions formed the interplay within an experience and together form what he referred to as a *situation*.

Internal conditions he takes to be individual and not particularly subject to an educator’s influence since “an individual....is what he is at a given time” (Dewey 1938 p45). However, the *objective conditions* he sees as “to some extent within the possibility of regulation by the educator” (p45). He speaks of these objective conditions covering a wide range and including: “the way in which it is done”, “words spoken”, “tone of voice”, “equipment, books apparatus, toys, games played”, “materials with which an individual interacts” and “most important of all, the total *social* set-up of the situations in which a person is engaged” (p45).

These educator-crafted interactions are thus highly personal and in-the-moment. What worked last year, or last week, or with a different child, or even with the same child yesterday will not necessarily be fitting in the development of a “worth-while experience” in this particular moment. Here, Dewey highlights the importance of a practitioner’s interpersonal relationship skills. Not only does a practitioner need to recognise and engage with the “internal conditions” of the child at this point in time (while recognising these to be more or less given), but they also need to then shape the “objective conditions” (which might include continuities with past experiences) into a *situation* in which the child is in receipt of a “worth-while experience” (Dewey 1938 p45). There is no room here for a teaching recipe, or a pre-packaged solution or an example of best practice ready to be repeated at the teacher’s choice of time

and place. Here worth-while experiences are collaborative, “made in common” (Dewey, Boydston, & Hook 2008 p141), develop through a “community of action” (p145) in the moment, using resources the practitioner deems appropriate to honour both the continuity and interaction Dewey saw as essential in educational experiences.

3.3.4 Practitioners’ roles in developing interactions within experiences

Dewey’s described his “second chief principle for interpreting an experience in its educational function and force” as “interaction” which “assigns equal rights to both factors in experience – objective and internal conditions”. He saw “any normal experience” as an “interplay of these two sets of conditions” which “taken together, or in their interaction... form what we call a situation” (Dewey 1938 p42). Dewey’s issue with traditional education was not that it paid attention to the external conditions (such as, for example, discipline) in a situation but that it paid too little attention to the internal conditions (such as, for example, a child’s previous experiences, attitudes, mood or personal circumstances). As he put it, traditional education “violated the principle of interaction from one side” (Dewey 1938 p42).

Here Biesta (2011), with reference to what a child can take from an experience suggests that “...the process of taking is always a process of the interaction of individual and environment (that’s the principle of interaction) so that learning always should be understood as the outcome of what the child brings to the situation and what the situation brings to the child.” While Dewey saw practitioners having little influence on what the child brought to the situation (apart from engaging with the information if it became available) he took a different view on what practitioners were able to do with what educational situations brought to the child. Here practitioners had influence which he described as including:

- “Determining that environment which will interact with the existing capacities and needs of those taught to create a worth-while experience” (Dewey 1938 p46).
- Noticing the reason why something will work for a particular child at a particular time (Dewey 1938 p46).
- Adapting to the needs and capacities of individual children (Dewey 1938 p 46).
- Encouraging a child’s participation (Dewey 1938 p53).
- Ensuring rules provide structure and safety for the whole group (Dewey 1938 p54).
- Planning (Dewey 1938 p57).
- Encouraging appropriate social groups (Dewey 1938 p58).
- Being a leader who takes responsibility (Dewey 1938 p59).
- Ensuring that a child’s impulse is delayed long enough to collaboratively form a worthwhile purpose on which to act since “A genuine purpose always starts with an impulse. Obstruction of the immediate execution of the impulse converts it into a desire. Nevertheless neither impulse nor desire is itself a purpose. A purpose is an end-view. That is, it involves foresight of the consequences which will result from acting upon impulse...The crucial educational problem is that of procuring the postponement of immediate action upon desire until observation and judgment have intervened.” (Dewey 1938 pp68-69)

However, he frames all of this within the context of children’s freedom and the practitioner’s necessity to develop children’s capacity for freedom (Dewey 1938 p61) where freedom is framed as the power and capacity to frame and execute a worthwhile purpose (Dewey 1938 p67).

In this study what the children bringing objects into school were telling practitioners about a previous experience gave practitioners vital information about potential

continuities and useful in-school experiences. However, for Dewey the practitioner's responsibility does not end with engaging with the historical aspects of continuity. In his view practitioners also have an educational responsibility to ensure that a child's current classroom experience is such that it does not "arrest(ing) or distort(ing) the growth of future experiences" (Dewey 1938 p25). Here planning, tracking of children's progress and other in-school mechanisms for documenting a child's progress may become important tools.

3.4 How Dewey's thinking contributes to this research

The contributions made by Dewey's pragmatism to this research are multiple.

1. Dewey's explicit engagement with the concept of experience in an educational context has offered a way to relate to what practitioners described as "building children's experiences" by:
 - a. Using Dewey's carefully thought-out, holistic view of educational concepts ranging from actions through to practitioners' roles as a way of describing and thinking about the educational experiences practitioners built in these two classrooms.
 - b. Using Dewey's view that educational language/terminology are all centred in the core concept of an individual's action and interaction with the world as a way to talk about a number of current issues in Scottish early childhood contexts including practitioners' roles and active learning.
2. Since Dewey's view is centred in own actions and experiences what is primarily described in this thesis is my own experience as an observer and interviewer in two early childhood settings. However, the focus of the observing and interviewing was the practitioners' roles in developing children's educational experiences.

3. My understanding, as a researcher of other people's experiences, is always based in inference which is shaped by my own experiences.
4. Dewey's views offer a potentially useful way of viewing experience which provides additional texture to the current tacit or atheoretical use of experience in the Scottish curricular context. In seeing the value in an experience as lying in its continuities and interactions he offers a way for school practitioners to engage creatively, on a number of different levels: children's own actions as their initiating their learning, habits, thinking, knowledge as a reflective transformation in relations, tools use as well as the interactions and continuities within the word *experience*.

As highlighted in the review of literature, Dewey's is not the only theoretical viewpoint which adds texture, detail and possibilities to the concept of experience but it offers a place to start in developing a shared language as an essential tool for a "community of action's" (Dewey 1998 pp296-297) collaborative use.

In summary, Dewey's pragmatism offers educators a number of entry points into his way of thinking about children's experiences:

- Experience as a web of significance (sign-making) developing in a particular direction through action and interaction with the world around us, with continuity being the web's connections (or what we retain from previous experiences as habits or propensities to act) and interaction being our forays into the here-and-now from which we build further continuities of experience
- Learning as centred in own action
- Knowledge as discovered and fine-tuned through a growing understanding of action/consequence relations
- Thinking as an opportunity to avoid the mishaps of perpetual physical trial and error, experiment with new connections, access experiences in the past and future

- Habits as propensities to act, or tuned responses, based in experience and open to change through thought and action and experimentation
- Situation as where the individual's experience meets the here-and-now in a potentially creative space
- Community-of-thinking as a social space in which shared thinking, based in differences of experiences, is able to develop into a shared plan for a community-of-action.

In Dewey's view, the goal of education by experience was to nurture in children the ability to thoughtfully participate in the freedoms-of-choice, communities-of-thinking and communities-of-action in one's society. What Dewey's ideas offer practitioners, as well as researchers, is a way to think about their professional role as a person with responsibility for pedagogical practice. Philosophically, rather than engaging with what is *out there* and how it gets *in here* Dewey takes the view that we are all co-creators of reality through our actions. By thinking about the continuities and interactions within human experience and how these work in a shared space, Dewey offers a tantalising view of collaborative democratic spaces in which shared meanings and purposes are able to be negotiated. This chapter has provided an introduction to Dewey's specific use of particular educational terminology associated with his view of the importance of experience in education. The next chapter describes the influences Dewey's ideas had in shaping this research's particular methodology and methods.

4 METHODOLOGY AND METHODS: TRANSACTIONAL REALISM AND ITS APPLICATION TO THIS RESEARCH

My continuity of experience with a Mr Dewey began in my early adulthood in Zimbabwe as I experimented with the detailed system for cataloguing library books. From that experience, I developed a deep respect for Dewey's highly organised mind and ability to apply it to a technical problem. Over the intervening years, between my first and most recent interactions with Mr Dewey, I have kept him in high regard due to my previous experience having been a positive one. Only recently did I discover that the Dewey Decimal originator (now known to me as Mr Melvil Dewey) is not the same individual as the educational and political theorist, Mr John Dewey, to whom I was formally introduced by a colleague, Professor Gert Biesta. However, in John Dewey's framing of experience and how knowledge works as a refining process, my having confused two gentlemen as one brought me to John Dewey's ideas with a degree of respect, albeit misplaced. Dewey might have smiled at this story, since he took the view that knowledge was always open to further clarification and what mattered for good experiences was that they were open to further experiences, which mine were in spite of inaccurate information .

Since then my relationship with John Dewey's ideas has been both fraught and useful. Its usefulness has been for thinking about what mattered as I observed in two early childhood classrooms as Dewey's transactional realism (Biesta 2009a) meant considering the implications of his way of viewing reality as in-the-making and developed through own actions and interactions in ways that make a social whole. In this chapter I describe my applying of John Dewey's ideas to this research project. Over time, this meant that my initial impulse to better understand practitioners' use of children's brought-in objects developed, through collaboration with colleagues and my supervisors and Dewey's writings, into cycles of thinking-followed-by-writing as word

and idea experiments in sense-making. In practice, this means that in Dewey's terms my initial impulse has had opportunity to experiment its way into a new reality for me: this document in association with a deeper understanding of the relationship between the early childhood practices, children's brought-in objects and Dewey's ideas about educating through experiences. Both this document and my developing understanding are a part of that experimentally creative process, or experience as Dewey referred to it, which will develop further as I continue to experiment through future actions and, potentially less catastrophic, thinking about experience as a way to frame what happens in early childhood classrooms.

4.1 Methodology – experimenting with transactional realism

The methodology associated with this project is based in the desire "to reveal the multiple truths apparent in other's lives" (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw 1995 p3) where the others in this particular instance are early childhood practitioners engaging with children's brought-in objects. This distilled to a respectful focusing on three-way interactions between practitioners, child and each child's brought-in object against the complex background of early childhood education in a Scottish context where a change in curriculum is bringing about changes in pedagogical practices.

Dewey's transactional realism seems to offer a useful match between this methodological viewpoint and the practitioner-object-child interactions in that his centring of reality within transactions or interactions focuses attention on the dynamic possibilities initiated by practitioners' behaviours or actions while also holding in tension the necessity for children to be able to act and interact in experimental ways themselves: since the possibilities that really matter in educational settings are the children's. So while the data collection's focus was on what practitioners did or said, the findings are centred in the patterns of possibilities which these practitioners' practices created for children in these settings. Dewey's theoretical framework recognises that the possibilities within a classroom are shaped by the practitioners'

responses to children and the degree of continuity, with the past and future experiences of each child, available in these practitioner-child interactions. Active and interactive, agentic, children bring their out-of-school lives with them to school and seek ways to join up their school life with their out-of-school life as a continuous experience. Dewey suggests that practitioners' roles in building this continuity between home and school life are centred in developing active, participatory experiences for children in school based in what each child brings to these interactions and what practitioners can contribute through their focused experimental efforts. What it is possible for practitioners to experiment with are the tools of their own life experiences.

Geertz (1973) expresses the view that educational research needs an interpretive view of culture as "webs of significance" rather than older constructions of culture which were centred in "patterns of behaviours, or coherent "way-of-life"" (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw 1995 p2) views. In this research, what practitioners did around children's brought-in objects is viewed as a web of significance in which practitioners improvise to join up competing significances. These competing significances include policies, time management, a new curriculum and a focus on developing children's educational experiences within the framework of their own lived experiences. In the moment that a practitioner present at the door accepts an object from home, proffered by a child (in the presence of an educational researcher), the focus of research attention is on the practitioner-child-object interaction. Patterns of practice emerge from analysis of multiple such interactions. Practitioner's own understandings of their practitioner-child-object interactions come through interviews. This document is the interweaving of these sources of data against a background of previous and current educational thinking. Thus the methodology of this project is centred in the interwoven practices of classroom life where the webs of significance focus on educating children but are rewoven in different ways each time a child presents an object or a previous experience. The practitioners' views, which this research suggests add focus to their particular webs of significance, were two-fold:

- All practitioners spoke of the importance of children's in-school experiences joining up with their out-of-school experiences which suggests that the webs of significance practitioners were continually weaving aimed to stretch beyond the classrooms.
- All practitioners also used the word experience to describe what they were trying to develop around a child's brought-in object and connected these experiences with the CfE's use of experience in ways they found difficult to explain.

From a researcher's point of view, significance underpins the inferential process on which social research relies in that it describes how one possible inference is selected from another: I make a choice based in what I think matters or is significant or offers the most likely explanation based in my own experience. Stephen and Brown (2004) describe how different these patterns of sense making are between outsiders (such as researchers, policy makers, managers and assessors) and insiders (such as practitioners and children) in preschool settings. They found that outsiders, such as I am becoming, adopt an "espoused culture" centred in "prescribed roles", curriculum and "planned outcomes" largely independent of context. Adult insiders, such as the preschool practitioners, were found to be highly context sensitive and focus on desirable activities rather than on outcomes while child insiders were focused on play, making choices according to their preferences and enjoying the company of other children. One of the advantages of Dewey's view of experience, for researchers and practitioners, is that it continually draws attention back to the child's own actions as indicative of where learning begins for that child.

4.1.1 Practitioners have agency

No matter how complicated or changing a system may be, I take the view that practitioners have potential for agency by virtue of their being adult, having previous experiences and specific training and having possibilities to think and do other to

stretch the boundaries of a system. In what may be a longstanding culture of compliance in Scottish education (Macdonald 2004) I see context as the practical bounds of agency so have provided detailed contextual descriptions in order to delimit and describe the degree of agency likely to be available to practitioners in this particular context. However, practitioners will have their own views of where the possibilities lie for their own agency which will have been gained through their own experiences.

4.1.2 Practitioners' roles are evident in what is said and done

Practice as the performance of an activity in a real situation, appears to be recognised as difficult to research because of its complexity (Hopwood 2010). For instance, Bourdieu (1995 p163) described practice as being “fuzzy” in the sense of fuzzy logic because it tends to depend on so many factors so is complicated and hard to define. Kemmis describes similar issues when he writes of the “illimitability of practice” which “makes a mockery of most ‘measures’ of practice that observe only particular behaviours or acts without attention to the wider conditions which form and inform analysis, other than (as it were) arbitrarily or perhaps pragmatically, in accordance with one’s research purpose...” (Green 2009 p44) His question regarding practice was “What does it *look* like?” (p44). This question has informed the use of vignettes as a way of making what practice looks like more evident as well as the focus on describing what practitioners said and did in order for their practice to be visible and open to interpretations other than my own.

In order to understand the particular framing of pedagogical practices used in this research it is useful to consider Stengel’s (2001 p349) use of the term *pedagogical response-ability* which she describes as having three dimensions: practitioners being agents who respond to “other persons, external demands, and complex situations only partly of their own making,” engage in “expanded and expansive responsiveness” and take responsibility for their own actions. These highlight the intelligent and thoughtful engagement which can take place between practitioners and their pupils.

These pedagogical responses are perceived by pupils and are also available to be perceived by others, such as a researcher, who may observe a pedagogical response or episode of multiple responses. In this research raw data were made up of a 173 of these practitioner-child-object episodes. For purposes of analysis, each episode was broken down into its constituent practitioner behaviours, or particular ways of responding, in order to discover the patterns of pedagogical practice which supported each particular practitioner's responses to children's brought-in objects.

Daily field notes from classroom observations are structured into a number of object-related episodes where each episode is centred on one brought-in object and in the practitioner's conversation and behaviours associated with that object on that day. These practitioner's actions and interactions are the focus of analysis and are referred to as pedagogical practices. Practitioner behaviours are assumed to be pedagogically purposeful or, in other words, intended to help children learn.

4.1.3 Knowing is something we do

Schwandt's (2005) view of practice is as having two main traditions in which the first view positions knowledge above practice (what he describes as the scientific worldview) and the second view sees practice as a form of knowledge in its own right. While Schwandt views the second as the more interesting view in that it is coming into its own against the background context of the scientific world view and offers what he views as some serious challenges to previous constructions of knowledge it is not without pitfalls. Such pitfalls, he suggests, include its being drafted by the "what works" management cultures who equate what worked in one situation with what works in all situations.

My own view is closer to Schwandt's second view of practice being a form of knowledge in its own right since I see professional practices as an activity which illustrates Dewey's view of knowing as something we do and learning as the process of coming closer to

nature through experience while knowledge is an ever-changing human construction (Edwards, Biesta, & Thorpe 2009).

4.1.4 Researching experience

There are huge difficulties in drawing boundaries, for research purposes, around an experience. The common usage of the word experience, rather than its plural form experiences, reflects the connected thread which we seem to see as one lifelong experience rather than a number of shorter self-contained experiences. Not only is experience difficult to break into temporal chunks but in Dewey's terms it is equally difficult to attribute aspects of experience to individual participants. As Dewey (2003 p8) described it experience "...recognizes in its primary integrity no division between act and material, subject and object, but contains them both in an unanalysed totality. "Thing" and "thought"...refer to products discriminated by reflection out of primary experience" (p8). This research could be said to work with what Dewey described as "products discriminated by reflection" in that it considers children's brought-in objects as separate to a practitioner's actions in spite of both child, practitioner and my own experience being lived in what Dewey referred to as an "unanalyzed (sic) totality." However, the process of analysing involves categorising as a way of focusing on one part of an interaction at a time, rather than believing the participants in these interactions are separate. Nevertheless, while individual parts all act and interact in playing a part in the experience, it is the experience as a whole which holds the power of multiple as-yet-unknown potentials for a child and from which she is making something new.

4.1.5 Inference and engaging with the "doings" and "sayings" of others

From a pragmatic point of view our own experience as an observer of events is all we really have unless we are able to discuss the experience with others who were present and gain their view of their experience. Inference is a core process in my engaging with the experiences of others and any inferential process is not *clean* in the sense of being a

copy of what took place. In this research the process of inference evidences itself in a number of ways including:

- My use of selection when deciding what to record as field notes illustrates that I inferred “what mattered” (and wrote it down) and what “mattered less” (and did not write it down). However, when writing-up field notes much of what mattered less got drawn in to make sense of what seemed to matter more.
- My use of tidied up vocabulary illustrates that what we hear has more to do with what we understand than what is actually spoken
- My choice to use a sentence structure which conveys fuller meaning rather than the exact, less tidy speech of 3-7 year old children illustrates that we continually interpret meaning in ways that are useful to ourselves. This is the process of inference at work to make meaning.

Much of this decision making on my part was centred in what was humanly possible in highly complex, ever changing social interactions which were not always in full sight or clearly audible and often contained elements which suggested there was a history behind the conversation which I was not party to. An aid to my inferences was my knowledge of the curricular documents from previous experience as a teacher in early childhood settings. This was useful since a practitioner’s references to curricular aspects are seldom stated as such: practitioners integrated their knowledge of curricular goals into the conversation and resources available in a particular practice. Coding practitioners’ curricular references required a detailed knowledge of both the past and new curricular documents as well as interpretations.

4.2 Seeing situations as domains of thoughtful choices for shaping of experiences

Situation is described by Dewey as relationships between an individual and their environment. Doing research has put me, as the researcher, in a new situation in which

I have acted and interacted in order to try to make a way for myself within this new environment. This has been a supported experimental process informed by the experiences of others who participated with me and for me. But the purpose of training researchers is to develop both collaborative and independent skills in ways that are ultimately potentially useful to society, and in my specific case to the education of small children, and the production of this thesis is part of that purposeful process.

As a “thing” in Dewey’s terms, this thesis becomes what it is experienced as by those who act and interact with it. As someone with responsibility for it’s shaping at this stage of its existence my intention has been to make it as easy as possible for others to engage with within the confines of PhD production parameters. While theoretical thinking requires new language, or reframing of current language, it is important that the new language does not exclude participants as can often be the consequence of jargon or technical language. This desire to be inclusive and foster collaboration has informed the use of largely plain English explanations of terms and concepts, the inclusion of object images as another type of language, the use of diagrams and tables as yet another form of language, the open and uncluttered layout of the document and the extensive references to other people’s ideas and ways of thinking.

However, there are ethical issues bound up with inclusive practices which have an impact on research methods and the framing of this document and are included in the methodological discussion because they illustrate the intricate methodological balancing which goes on when aspects of methodology conflict: here between a simple document layout which fosters participation and copyright regulations and my desire to give credit where credit is due. For the research use of other people’s ideas there is a standard referencing technique and for objects, or designs, or images which are socially and legally framed as owned by individuals or corporations there are processes of consent, the use of copyright symbols as signs of ownership and complex legal issues often centred in who is entitled to benefits or gains if there are any to be had. In this

research the desire to shape participation with this document in ways that make it easy to engage with conflicts with copyright acknowledgement practices particularly when it comes to the accepted use of © after every brand name's mention. Particularly in the data chapter, where brands are a feature laced through children's brought-in objects, the use of © for every brand mention results in a text that resembles a dose of the chicken-pox. A compromise which I hope resolves this conflict is to acknowledge here that all mentions of brands carry with them an assumed copyright and that the lack of individual © symbols is for ease of use and not to discount rightful ownership of a brand. In addition, as any gain associated with this document is not financial and no harm is intended to any of the brands mentioned, I make use of brand names and images which I do not personally own under the *Fair Dealing for Research and Private Study* concept in the *UK Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, Section 29* (UK Legislation 1988).

4.3 Recognising experimental methods as part of Dewey's framing of how we learn

Here the intention was to experiment, in Dewey's sense of the word. This means recognising that I would have to take planned action to learn, in ways that were ethical and potentially useful to others. My supervisors, who have no doubt seen others like me before, insisted that I keep my methods/experimental processes as simple as possible as they knew the degree of complexity I would encounter in the interactions and the theories associated with them. It seemed important to consider my own position in the research since I was changing role from teacher to trainee researcher.

4.3.1 Researcher relationships as points of view in a very human interaction

My own position straddles the insider/outsider roles in that my previous employment as a teacher in early childhood settings means I have experience as an insider whilst this research required developing new skills as an outsider. In order to develop into a new role as a researcher it seemed important to do research in a way which was as different

as possible to my previous experience as a classroom teacher - to force me to engage with the classroom space and people in new ways. To this end it seemed useful to take on a researcher's role in which sitting still, being quiet, watching and listening were the modes of behaviour rather than participating through the well-oiled activities of my previous behaviours as a teacher. In the beginning the role of quiet observer was unsettlingly difficult. I found my whole body was tuned to a wide range of signals that seemed to call to me for a practitioner's action. So sitting still took repeated acts of the will. It was only through the doing of something else (starting with concentrating on writing field notes) that I was able to interrupt the overwhelming inclination to do what I was used to doing in a classroom space.

Another methodological consideration which influenced my adopting a silent observer role was my desire to respect the purposefulness of the experiences of the research participants. By this I mean that in researching a social setting with a distinct purpose it seemed important that my research purposes did not interfere with the already existing educational purposes at work in the classrooms. I took the view that practitioners and children were at work in this setting and I did not want to disturb or interfere with that work in any avoidable way. In practice I tried to evidence this respect by my being as unobtrusive as possible within the classroom space, not taking photographs of children's objects unless they were unlikely to be available elsewhere, asking for consent from adult participants and working with a more active, on-going assent (ESRC 2011) for all children by paying particular attention to their body language and interpreting any signs of reluctance on their part as an immediate withdrawal of their consent and cessation of data capture. I also encouraged practitioners' access to the field notes and welcomed their comments as a way of engaging with the brought-in object events from their experience of them.

The particular research questions were framed in light of Kemmis's view (Green 2009 pp25-32) that any practice is best researched by paying attention to "sayings", "doings"

and “relating.” By acknowledging practitioners’ speech, actions and relationships within classroom practice as indicators of their intentions or purpose my role as researcher was clarified: describe what I saw in each classroom in as much detail as possible then challenge and develop my understand of the findings by interviewing the practitioners.

4.3.2 Ethics as relationships of respect negotiated over time

This human-to-human methodological stance was carried through into matters of ethics, consents, assent and permissions.

Reflexivity as an ethical responsibility to question

Given this research is empirical it is doubly important to reflect on what Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009 pp8-9) refer to as “the complex relationship between processes of knowledge production and the various contexts of such processes, as well as the involvement of the knowledge producer... paying much attention to how one thinks about thinking.”

These authors refer to two levels which are associated firstly with the kinds of knowledge available through empirical research and secondly with the ways knowledge is produced during qualitative research. At the first level the kind of knowledge, or data, available through empirical research is all constructed through interpretation (Alvesson & Skoldberg 2009) since it depends on our individual ability to engage with the world around us, our use of language, our individual patterns of perception as well as the unique ways we bundle our experiences into patterns or categories when required to simplify highly complex experiences into objects of study or conversation. Even in collaborative research where a construction can be discussed and contested, the knowledge available is still a construction, albeit a collaborative one.

When challenged it is often possible to identify some of the influences hidden beneath my inferences, but it would be dishonest to think they were all available to scrutiny. My inferential processes have been kept open and participatory through willingness to

challenge my own assumptions, engagement with others about theirs and reflecting on my experiences as a researcher. Changing my mind and looking afresh from another perspective have become part of my being a researcher. But there is always room for more of the above. As someone who has lived in various places around the world I am practiced at trying to see things as others see them as well as being aware that I have my own views. I am also able to bring to this particular empirical research relatively recent personal experience in the Scottish early childhood system, as well as less recent experience of other education systems which worked with very different priorities and practices. All of which means I'm aware there is a wide world of possibility.

Ethical review processes

Prior to approaching Head Teachers for research permission I participated in one ethical review process and consulted a range of applicable Codes of Ethical Practice. These included:

- Being subject to the on-going scrutiny of the Stirling School of Education's ethical review process. This used an initial submission and consent procedure as well as an on-going availability to discuss ethical issues which came to the fore during the research.
- Applying for Enhanced Disclosure Scotland clearance which is a statutory process of certifying that I have no criminal convictions which might impinge on the safety of my work with children.
- Applying to the local education authority for permission to do research in local schools.
- Reading and ensuring compliance with a number of different research guidelines including:
 - The British Educational Research Association (BERA) *Ethical Research in Education Guidelines*

- The Scottish Educational Research Association (SERA) Ethical Guidelines (SERA 2005)
- The British Psychological Society Code of Ethics (Ethics Committee of BPS 2009).

Emergent ethical issues

Farrell (2005) describes how building trust is essential to ethical research and “requires ongoing planning, reflection and negotiation” (p143) and allowing time to build rapport and for reflective negotiations.

Having taken the view that I was in this school on trust, I took the associated view that it was essential that my behaviour and intentions were as open as possible with practitioners in the limited time available. To facilitate this openness, I arrived ten minutes early each day to afford time for practitioners to raise any concerns. Within the first few sessions of observation, issues of anonymity were raised by one of the practitioners. They expressed a concern that my photographing a child’s brought-in drawing was in breach of the child’s confidentiality. At first I assumed their concern was centred on the child’s name being visible on the drawing, so I offered to blur all names if the photograph was used. However, the concern was deeper than that. A practitioner was aware that particular children’s drawings were identifiable by family members and peers and saw anonymity applying both within and outside of the school. I agreed not to photograph children’s drawings and altered my understanding of anonymity: I made it far more personal rather than process based. It was important that I protect each individual child and member, not just the name of the school, or the research process as a whole.

I made my observational notes available for practitioners, on request, and told practitioners when I removed an incident from the data, as was the case when children stated they wanted to share a brought-in object with a practitioner only. I acted on

practitioner's concerns about the potential loss of anonymity in my photographing children's drawings, paintings and brought-in photographs so no photographs were taken of these objects. Instead, I relied on my written description of the drawing, painting or photograph and aimed to remove any identifying details from my descriptions.

Confidentiality, or how one respects the participants' rights to a degree of privacy when researching what are normally protected but possibly contested spaces, conversations or locations, is highlighted in the National Research Council's (National Research Council 2007) work on linked social-spatial data. Throughout their discussion of the complexities involved in maintaining confidentiality when using this new form of data collection, known as is social-spatial data, a very strong thread of torn loyalties is visible. In particular, research funding bodies usually have a strong interest in openness and full benefit for their investment. However, in spaces that are not normally open to the scrutiny of all, it is particularly important to negotiate the degree of confidentiality carefully in order to balance the rights of the individual and those of the higher authorities. In this particular instance, I initially assumed benign higher authorities. However, over time, there were a number of instances when practitioners expressed a view similar to "I hope you don't print that. It might get me in trouble?" Based on my previous initial undervaluing of a practitioner's concern about photographing drawings, I decided to proceed with extreme caution and exclude any practitioner comments associated with a similar remark rather than assume they were joking and risk a breach in confidentiality. Under ideal circumstances, with time available, I would have liked to discuss each comment in further detail to gain a better understanding of practitioners' reluctance, but I was always aware of the pressure of their limited time and the danger of changing the topic in mid-flow of what was a practitioner's explanation of something to do with children's objects in an educational setting – the primary focus of this research. Recognising that what I assume may be potentially able to do damage to research participants seemed more important than full disclosure for the benefit of

higher authorities: so I erred on the side of caution and have not reported on any “I hope you don’t print that.”

This experience suggested two things to me. Firstly, while practitioners are willing to share their practices with a researcher, and see classroom observations, interviews and other research practices as part of the consequences of that willingness, they are considerably less willing to feel exposed to additional consequences from things the researcher reveals to the public. Secondly, in spaces which are multiply viewed (and often contested), practitioners are aware of a degree of risk to their employment in making what they do, and think, public. As a researcher, feeling assured that I have honoured my part of the agreement is difficult. In a highly connected world, there are webs of information that I am not able to control.

Another ethical aspect which I encountered was that of anonymity for the practitioners who participated. The difficulty here was related to the small number of practitioners involved in the research (Curtis, Murphy, & Shields 2013). With small numbers of participants even anonymised names may not be sufficient to provide anonymity in a context which is as interconnected and well informed as is the educational practitioners’ community in rural central Scotland. Based on what I viewed as the high quality of practitioner-child interactions, I made a different call to the more protective one described above. Using The National Council’s (National Research Council 2007) guidance again, I considered the potential risk-benefit to practitioners if the degree of anonymity I provide is not sufficient to obscure their identities everywhere they may go. I decided, given the quality of their practice, that the risks to them were low should people recognise them. In fact, within this particular setting, it is likely that someone reading this document might recognise at least some of the practitioners involved since their personalities shine through in their practice and altering practice records to protect them would have been a step too far for me. In the end, ethical choices are muddy choices with no perfect solutions. I can only hope that my choices prove helpful

rather than damaging. But what this highlights is that anonymity, as in the removal/change of participants' names, is not necessarily sufficient to protect participants' from any/all identification or consequences for having taken part.

This showed up again in the anonymity of individual children within the classroom groups. In both classrooms, children were in each other's company for up to two years so know each other well. There is no doubt that they would recognise themselves, and their peers, in this data. As I cannot control who they choose to share their experiences with, or the fact that they have already participated together in many of these incidents, I am obliged to recognise that anonymity is a potentially leaky vessel for which I have high degrees of responsibility but less than perfect control.

Public access to findings

Data were collected in different ways at different stages of the research process:

- During data collection the field notes were available to any participating practitioners who wished to read them. One practitioner read my notes of a conversation with her but this was largely at my suggestion as I wanted to be sure I had understood what she was saying to me.
- At various stages of the data analysis process I have spoken with one or more of the practitioners involved in the project to check points of detail and talk through processes.
- Once the PhD is submitted I will offer to present data and findings to practitioners and/or school families with a particular focus for the children who participated.

The University of Stirling makes its research available to the public via their STORRE online facility and the Local Education Authority which granted permission for my access to schools will also hold a printed and digital copy.

The data and preliminary findings have been presented at a number of conferences and I will continue to engage with educational communities through conference presentations and journal articles centred in this research.

Photographic images from publicly available sources

Since photographic images of most of the objects children brought to school are available on the internet it seemed unnecessary to take photographs of them within the school setting for a number of reasons which included inadvertently infringing school rules or social norms regarding photographing other people's children and possibly skewing the data by generating an unnatural flood of "Please take a picture of my" from the children. In addition, taking photographs in a classroom did not seem to me to be unobtrusive and remaining unobtrusive mattered because I did not want to alter normal classroom activities any more than was necessary.

What I did not understand when I started this process of making use of publicly available images is the legal complexity of consents required to make use of images for any purpose other than that originally intended by the manufacturer: maximising their sales. I found children's toy manufacturers to be particularly jealous of their images and obtaining consent to use their photographic images in conference presentations, this thesis and possible future publications in scholarly journals has not been easy and has often proved impossible. However, as I am very aware that I did not take the photograph and thus the image is not mine to use without consent, I have tried to obtain consent for each and every image. Further I have taken the view that a thesis is not a public use of these images for any purpose which might decrease sales.

The process of obtaining an image of brought-in objects included

- Making an quick assessment during observations as to whether an image of the object was likely to be available online or not

- If it was not likely to be available online I photographed the object out of sight of the child, with no visible identifiers of either the child or the school.

While this did not rest easily within my ethical boundaries I developed a practice which asked the child's permission if I needed to take the photograph while they were present and did not ask their permission if I was able to take the photograph while they were out of the classroom. This relied on an over-arching interpretation of school and parental consent as being sufficient to cover the child's consent, avoided interfering with classroom practices and respected the school's consent policy. However, it was balanced in favour of the child as described below.

Consent and on-going assent

Moment-by-moment assent for children

Consent is a potentially difficult concept when working with children so I chose to use a more active and on-going assent which Christensen and Prout refer to as "ethical symmetry" (2002 p477). By using a child's body language and speech as moment-by-moment indications of their wish to continue, or not, assent can be incident specific, is centred in each child's detailed responses and respects a child's right to withdraw at any point. Unlike adult consent, which requires an understanding of the concept of consent, assent bypasses this need for the research participant to understand the concept and respects the child's embodied behaviours as evidence of their wishes. Working on this basis meant I stopped recording data for any child who suggested via body language or verbal signal that they were uncomfortable being observed. A child's assent was not the only criteria, as parents, practitioners, the Head Teacher and the local education authority had all granted consent but in practice it was the most sensitive of all the consent filters. There are three incidents in my data records where I stopped observing and writing field notes because I was aware of a child's discomfort: two where a child stated they wanted to show an object only to the teacher and a third where a child appeared uncomfortable with my observing. These three records come

to an abrupt halt and have a line drawn through them in the field notes which means they don't appear in the typed-up observation records.

Consent for adults

Based on a research summary and my having already received overall consent from the local education authority, the Head Teacher requested that she be responsible for the consent process within the school. While I had some misgivings about this, as I felt slightly uncomfortable researching under what I saw as an inherited consent, her view was that the school's consent discussions had been had over a long period of time and she was confident that the standard procedure was most appropriate. I went with her view, as she was responsible for all the ongoing consent conversations between school and parents and practitioners.

4.3.3 Data collection as gathering evidence

Data were collected using three methods:

1. Classroom observations
2. Collection of taxonomic information about each brought-in object including an online image
3. Semi-structured practitioner's interviews

Classroom observations

Two phases of classroom observation took place. Phase 1 was exploratory, took place between Easter and the end of the school year, and is described below.

In order to observe both the arrival of the objects at the classroom door and any resulting practitioner's activity, observations for data collection purposes started 10 minutes before the start of the morning session and continued until interactions with the brought-in object appeared to be at an end. On most occasions this extended no later than 10:30 a.m. which was Break Time in this particular school. Practitioner's conversations suggested they occasionally engaged with children's objects at other

times of the day so these episodes were investigated in conversation with the practitioner and by occasional half-day observations which confirmed that practitioner engagement with children's brought-in objects was, in the main, part of the arrival routine and once the day had moved past Break Time the objects were usually at rest until either small group planning meetings in the Nursery, the allotted subject time in P1/2 or children took them home at the end of the day.

Classroom observations were recorded initially as field notes (see *Appendix 7.3 Sample of handwritten page of field notes*, page 295). Later in the same day these were computerised as word processed documents and relational database files with an attached photographic image of the brought-in object. *Appendices 7.4* (page 296) to *7.7* (page 306) show a range of sample data files in all stages from field note through to coded document.

Since the focus was on practitioners' pedagogical practices, what children said and did was recorded as supporting data in order that each practitioner's data made sense. The data were collected by episode, where an episode was defined as the observed interactions between the practitioners, child and a particular brought-in object. This meant that each episode related to a particular object or group of objects brought in at the same time by a single child. Some episodes were brief in that practitioners were not seen to engage with an object while others were extensive and included multiple interactions such as those which took place at the classroom door, continued in a group, developed into an object related activity, then went to small group planning sessions before leaving the classroom.

Phase 1 of classroom observations:

Observations were carried out in a Nursery classroom and in a composite P1/2 classroom in the last term of the 2008-2009 school year and first term of the following 2009-2010 school year.¹⁶ Data collection involved observing the pedagogical practices of a total of seven Nursery practitioners and five P1/2 practitioners on roughly alternate days which were adjusted frequently so as to suggest random visits. The intention was to reduce practitioners' (and children's) planning for a researcher's presence. Over the two different periods of observational data collection a total of 173 records of practitioner-child-object episodes were collected. This was made up of twenty days of observation in each classroom producing a total of forty days of classroom observation in all.

Due to limits on space and staffing in smaller Scottish primary schools multiple year groups are often taught together in the same classroom space, as was the case in this P1/2 classroom. This complicates the data sample in this research in that the Early Level of the CfE is often thought of as covering the two years of preschool and the first year of primary school even though the guidance documents describe the Early Level as being flexible depending on each child's circumstances. All brought-in object events for children present in the P1/2 classroom were included for a number of reasons:

- The P1/2 observed practices included the whole class group so all children present were recipients of similar pedagogical practices with respect to brought-in objects.
- The focus of the research was on what practitioners said and did rather than on the children's framings.

¹⁶ Scottish schools follow a similar school calendar to other UK countries. The school year starts in August or September and runs through to the end of June or the middle of July in the following year. There is a long summer holiday between school years and a short break at Christmas and Easter.

- The Early Level is open to flexible interpretation based in children's circumstances.
- Assessment of individual children's Early Level achievements is a complicated and additional inferential process which was judged as unlikely to make significant differences to the findings in this research.

Thus all P1/2 children with brought-in objects were included in the data collection and analysis irrespective of where their birth date or developmental level might have positioned them.

Phase 2 of classroom observations:

This phase took place after the start of a new school year. The modified focus of this second, more corroborative data collection phase was to challenge as well as clarify potential findings from the first set of observations and to increase the number of practitioners participating. During Phase 2 of the classroom observation data collection more attention was paid to the patterns associated with the three themes emerging from the first set of classroom observation data: transforming objects, shaping interactions and building relationships.

Brought-in object data

During both phases of classroom observations the objects which children brought were used as data sources. Physical and social properties of each brought-in object were recorded in the observational field notes unless a child's assent was deemed withheld. In addition, as a memory aid, an online image search was conducted later in the same day to obtain an image of the observed object without using a camera in the classrooms.

For roughly 85% of the brought-in objects online images were available. One difficulty between the brought-in objects and online images was the occasional absence of an image in the exact colour for some items of personal adornment such as bracelets or

necklaces. Where this was the case the field notes included mention of the actual colour of the brought-in object and this was the data which was analysed rather than the colour used in the online image.

In roughly 5% of the brought-in object episodes it seemed unlikely that an online image would be available so a digital photograph of the brought-in object was taken within the classroom but out of sight of the children. In approximately 10% of object events no photograph was taken as the object was the child's own work and thus potentially identifiable.

Semi-structured practitioner's interviews

In order to gain more evidence of practitioner's own understanding of their practices and triangulate the classroom observation findings semi-structured interviews (see *Appendix 7.9 Example of Practitioner Interview Data*, page 308) were conducted with the five practitioners available just prior to Christmas 2009. As is typical of early childhood practitioners in Scotland, where currently only 3% are male (Hamill 2010), the interviewed practitioners were all female. Both experienced and newly trained practitioners were represented in the interviewed group and those practitioners who had engaged most with children's objects during classroom observations were all interviewed. Each interview was digitally recorded then the audio file was transcribed into text in a relational database (NVIVO) then checked and double checked against the audio recording in preparation for data coding. Each interview lasted for 30-40 minutes and included specific questions, with scope to roam, on the following themes (see *Appendix 7.8 Semi-structured Practitioner Interview Questions*, page 307).

Practitioner's views on curriculum - curriculum

Practitioner's views on objects children bring - objects

Practitioner's views on their relating to these objects - decisions

4.3.4 Analysis as pattern recognition within the evidence

Practitioner participants were offered and chose anonymity so were each given a pseudonym beginning with N for Nursery and P for P1/2. The same convention was used for the children's names.

During both data collection and analysis of the practitioner's interviews, it became apparent that two factors needed to influence the data analysis methods:

1. The practitioners consistently framed their engagements with children's objects as "creating" or "building children's experiences" which suggested that the concept of experience was important to them in their brought-in object-related practices.
2. Practitioners described their "creating children's experiences" as largely intuitive. For example, when asked how they decided what their response to a child's object would be, all practitioners used phrases similar to "I just know" or "I get a gut feeling."

As practitioners were engaging with a new curriculum which makes extensive use of the word experience with little or no policy guidance as to its meaning or constituent parts (in other words an implicit rather than an explicit use of the word experience in policy) and practitioners' practices around objects were intuitive it seemed potentially useful to consider the findings in light of Dewey's descriptions of good educational experiences: continuities and interactions. Viewing relationships as vehicles for experiential continuity, five patterns in relationships were identified from clustering of the coded data. This process is illustrated in *Appendix 7.6 Initial Data Coding*, page 300.

Developing these five relational groupings was inferential work on my part and is based jointly on what I observed in these two classrooms and is no doubt influenced by my own experience as a teacher. I was not aware of the five categories as I was observing although I was aware that relationships seemed to matter. This was suggested by practitioners' comments to children in which practitioners valued a relationship. For

instance, practitioners commented “tell your mum” or tell “Uncle Bill” or “you’re a good writer” and “let’s wait for your friend.” These comments, and many others, suggested there were patterns in the practitioners’ relationship building. The patterns are described as five kinds of relationships.

Categorising the physical and social properties of the brought-in objects

Each object children brought was classified according to a range of object property categories generated by following taxonomic principles as described by Hague (1999). An example of a brought-in object record can be viewed as *Appendix 7.7 Sample of data recorded for each object*, page 306.

Object property categories were developed by reviewing a range of sources: literature regarding children’s objects (Goldstein, Buckingham, & Brougere 2004; Kibele 2006; Ray 2011), toy catalogues and toy retailer’s websites. Obtaining an image of most objects helped with object categorisation as images served as aides-memoire during the initial categorisation process as well as at later dates when additional categories either emerged from the data or were suggested by further reading.

Category groups were formed in order to simplify the large number of possibly useful categories. Objects were included in more than one category since category groups covered a wide range of object characteristics from the physical descriptors (size, texture, colour, weight, etc) to its material of manufacture (wood, fabric, plastic, metal, food, natural material, etc) and its brand as well as the type of activity suggested for it and the gender of the child who brought it in. Additional object-associated categories developed through analysis of practitioners’ practices, such as the presence or absence of further conversation or the initiation, or not, of a curricular link or the development of classroom activities were included as pedagogical practices associated with these children’s objects.

Table 5-3 illustrates some of the categories used and how a particular object would be included in a number of categories (for example My Little Pony).

Analysis of classroom observation data

Initial readings of the classroom observation data suggested that there were patterns in each classroom's object-related practices. The initial method of analysing these patterns was to add the pathway traversed by each object to a very rough classroom map. What this method of analysis rapidly showed was that patterns of practice within each classroom were largely consistent and mapping was not a particularly helpful way of analysing the object's passage through the classroom because each map looked too similar to its predecessor. What was gained from this initial mapping foray was a rough guide to a typical descriptive pattern for a brought-in object's passage through each classroom. Codes were developed from a textual description of each leg of an object's journey on the map. For example, the first possible code for an object's journey in the Nursery was "Object proffered to practitioner at door." These patterns of practice are discussed further in *Chapter 5.3 Practitioners' pedagogical responses to objects children bring with them* (page 173) and illustrated by a Nursery example in *Figure 5-2: Pedagogical practice pathway* (page 199).

Typed-up field notes for each brought-in object episode were coded in a relational database (NVIVO). Daily field notes from classroom observations were structured into a number of object-related episodes where each episode was centred on one brought-in object and the practitioner and peer conversations and behaviours associated with that object on that day. These practitioner actions and interactions are the focus of analysis and are referred to as pedagogical practices. Practitioner behaviours are assumed to be pedagogically purposeful or, in other words, intended to help children learn.

The development of codes for pedagogical practices was in iterative process based on inferring pedagogical practices from what practitioners said or did in each object episode. Developing the list of codes for data analysis was an iterative process centred

in inferring one or more purposes for each practitioner's action, where actions were defined in the broadest sense as what practitioner's said or did as well as what they didn't say or didn't do if these inactions seemed intentional. Additional codes were added as necessary and duplicates, alternative names for codes and empty codes were removed over time. Codes with a small number of entries were not removed until the final stage of organising the codes as there was the possibility that entries in sparsely populated codes reflected the exceptions and so might be of further interest. *Appendix 7.14 Data Coding* (page 319) illustrates the way pedagogical practice codes (first column) were clustered into groups (second column) and the final code groupings (column three).

Analysis of semi-structured practitioner interviews

Pedagogical practice codes, as developed to analyse classroom observation data, were applied to practitioners' interview data. Further coding categories were added as necessary with each new addition incurring a re-coding of the classroom observation data to ensure all evidence against that particular code was captured across all data types. By far the most frequently used new code was the one added to capture practitioners' references to experience. Practitioners consistently spoke of their engagements with brought-in objects as "creating" or "building on children's experiences" so *creating children's experiences* was added to the list of pedagogical practice codes and the classroom observation data were re-coded for uses of this term or similar. The final codes as used across all data types are listed in the third column of *Appendix 7.14 Data Coding* (page 319).

Review of relevant policy documents referring to experience

As all practitioners framed their engagement with children's objects as "creating" or "building children's experiences" Google's Advanced Search was run on "experience" for each of the following websites:

- LTScotland.org.uk – the website for a government funded body charged with supporting Scottish schools (a body now known as Education Scotland and found at EducationScotland.gov.uk)
- Scotland.gov.uk – the Scottish Executive’s website
- HMIE.gov.uk – Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education (for Scotland)
- CareCommission.com – the Care Commission had a supervisory role in all child and adult care settings, including nurseries. As of April 2011 it is known as the Care Inspectorate and is found at www.careinspectorate.com.

This produced a list of education policy documents which included references to experience in an educational context. Following pertinent links produced a short list of documents which were reviewed briefly to develop a view on the use of experience in educational policy documents. What was of particular note during this process was the lack of any definition of the word *experience* or theorising around the nature of children’s experience.

4.4 Reflecting on methodology and methods prior to moving on to describe the findings

This chapter has described the methodology and methods used to gather and analyse data in order to develop a more detailed understanding of the objects children voluntarily brought into two early childhood classrooms, pedagogies around the objects and similarities and differences between the object-related practices in two early childhood classrooms. The focus of classroom observations was on the practitioner-child-object interactions. Data collected were analysed to reveal patterns in the practitioner-child-object interactions and each practitioner’s own understandings of their practitioner-child-object interactions was gathered through interview. The next chapter describes the research findings as the interweaving of these sources of data against a background of previous and current educational thinking.

5 FINDINGS AROUND CHILDREN’S BROUGHT-IN OBJECT EXPERIENCES

5.1 Introduction: Research questions as continuities

To summarise the research so far, data collection was carried out with the research aim of developing an understanding of the way practitioners interacted with children and their voluntarily brought-in objects¹⁷ in two early childhood settings within one school. The following research questions supported the research aim.

Research Aim and Research Questions	
Aim	To better understand the pedagogical practices practitioners used to create educational experiences as children voluntarily brought objects from home into an early childhood setting.
Research Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What objects did children voluntarily bring? 2. What pedagogical practices did practitioners use to engage with the objects children voluntarily brought? 3. What similarities and differences were there between the pedagogical practices used in the Nursery and Primary 1/2 classroom?

¹⁷ *Children’s voluntarily brought-in objects:*

While children arrive at classroom doors with many things, most are required by routine school activities: Physical Education clothing, lunch boxes and homework. The working definition, for this research, of a child’s voluntarily brought-in object had three main characteristics:

1. The object could be separated from the child: Thus a new haircut or a visit to the dentist would not have been recorded as object data. However, a pair of reading glasses, a wig or a toothbrush would have qualified had a child presented them at the door. Thus, an adhesive plaster qualified as a child’s brought-in object. This is an arbitrary distinction for the purpose of putting a boundary on data collection.
2. The bringing of the object was initiated by the child: There was no evidence of a parental instruction or request by the staff.
3. The object was brought into the classroom: This *excluded* objects which remained in the children’s rucksacks or hung on pegs outside the room but *included* objects which children brought in but were hidden from, or unnoticed by, staff.

On eleven occasions, or in approximately 6% of object episodes, parents were heard to express a view such as “I have no idea why they brought this in, but they did!” which was interpreted as a strong indication that the object was brought by the child’s choice.

Dewey's view that knowledge is "a reflective transformation within relationships" (Biesta & Burbules 2003 p42) and learning is something we do in our muscles, suggested there may be merit in looking at what practitioners "do" to develop active and ongoing classroom relationships as spaces for "reflective transformation" or knowledge building for active children and adults alike. Dewey's careful thinking about two things in particular made his ideas so potentially useful for this research:

1. His view that learning is embedded in own action and response, or interaction with the world, chimes with the longstanding and growing swell of educational thinking about early childhood education needing to be "active" and
2. His understanding of young children's experiences as continuity with their own "in the muscle" pasts and a pointer to their collaborative "in the muscle" futures is deeply socially embedded in interactive and relational ways.

In this chapter the findings associated with these research questions are dealt with in turn. The relationships that emerged during data analysis are here associated with the three research questions in the following ways:

1. Physical and social relationships evident around the objects themselves were grouped as responses to Research Question 1.
2. Pedagogical practices, as what practitioners say and do to shape children's in-school relationships or engagements with brought-in objects, are grouped as responses to Research Question 2.
3. The five relationships deemed to further illustrate similarities and differences in brought-in object in-school experiences form the response to Research Question 3.

This means that both the research questions and the findings, structured as they are, prove to be somewhat arbitrary divisions. The difficulty in making these arbitrary distinctions starkly illustrates the depth to which educational relationships are

thoroughly dependent on each other. Divisions into named relationships are not prescriptive but rather a way to manage the quantity of data in order to foster potentially meaningful discussions about its highly inter-related qualities.

Along with the emphasis on relationships which emerged through data analysis, the theoretical underpinning for a focus on relationships is Dewey's view that human relationships, which he termed "renewing of the social group" (Dewey 2004) provided "continuity of any experience" (p2). This use of relationships as a method of renewing a social group, or what we might think of as making other kinds of knowledge along particular pathways socially constructed, underpins my use of the patterns of relationship as giving some indication of the kinds of knowledge, goals/purposes, and interpretations associated with children's brought-in objects in each classroom. Importantly, Dewey (1938) saw the necessity for continuities to cluster around growth toward a purpose which he declared to be the child's "...freedom of intelligence... freedom of observation and of judgment exercised in behalf of purposes that are intrinsically worth (sic) while" (p61).

It seems useful to view an example of what a practitioner was seen to "do" as she collaboratively developed a range of relational qualities within which children were able to "reflectively transform" their knowledge. What follows is a copy of the very beginning of a researcher's reflective note.

Vignette 5-1: Nancy's Emerald Ring

Nancy's Emerald Ring



For example, when Nancy brings in an emerald ring Ms Nesbitt marvels at how it shines, talks of her own emerald ring at home, moves on to talk of birthstones and how she received her ring as a birthday present from someone she loves, invites some of Nancy's friends to view the ring then asks to try on Nancy's ring to see if it will fit on her own hand only to find that the only finger she has a chance of getting the ring on is her 'pinkie'. So, in the way staff see it, the emerald ring (*thing*) was only part of what Nancy brought in to the classroom today. Along with the ring Nancy brought factual information and a willingness to share. To this Ms Nesbitt added previous experiences and memories and information about birthstones and an invitation to a few of Nancy's friends and a good helping of humour in the form of unsuccessfully trying the ring on her own fingers. All of this Nancy started, participated in building and thoroughly enjoyed. (15 May 2009, Nancy, emerald ring, Ms Nesbitt)

As illustrated in the above example, the relational efforts a practitioner put into transforming a child's choice to bring an object into a classroom space suggests the high value the practitioner placed on human relationships as integral to the fulfilling of school purposes and her implicit understanding of the relational nature of the world we live in. Rather than choosing to ignore or exclude a child's previous interactions with the objects, she encouraged the collaborative development of very human, yet purposeful, relational spaces within each classroom. The educational purpose toward which practitioners work, shaped by their characters, training and resources on the day, is negotiated in a space populated by community views, policy, national and international educational conversations and, at the time of data collection for of this

research, what was a new curriculum as well as the presence of an educational researcher in training. In this complicated space practitioners were seen to make full use of what Dewey described as the human advantage in interactions (Biesta & Burbules 2003 p12): that the responses to the world's actions can be shared, through thinking and learning and knowledge, in human-to-human relationships so that the transacting is collaborative, multi-faceted, various and full of more possibilities than one person on their own could embody.

Of particular use in illustrating the relational nature of brought-in object practices is the following practitioner's response to a request, at interview, to sort, order, add to or remove a number of cards that reflected provisional themes/findings from initial data analysis.

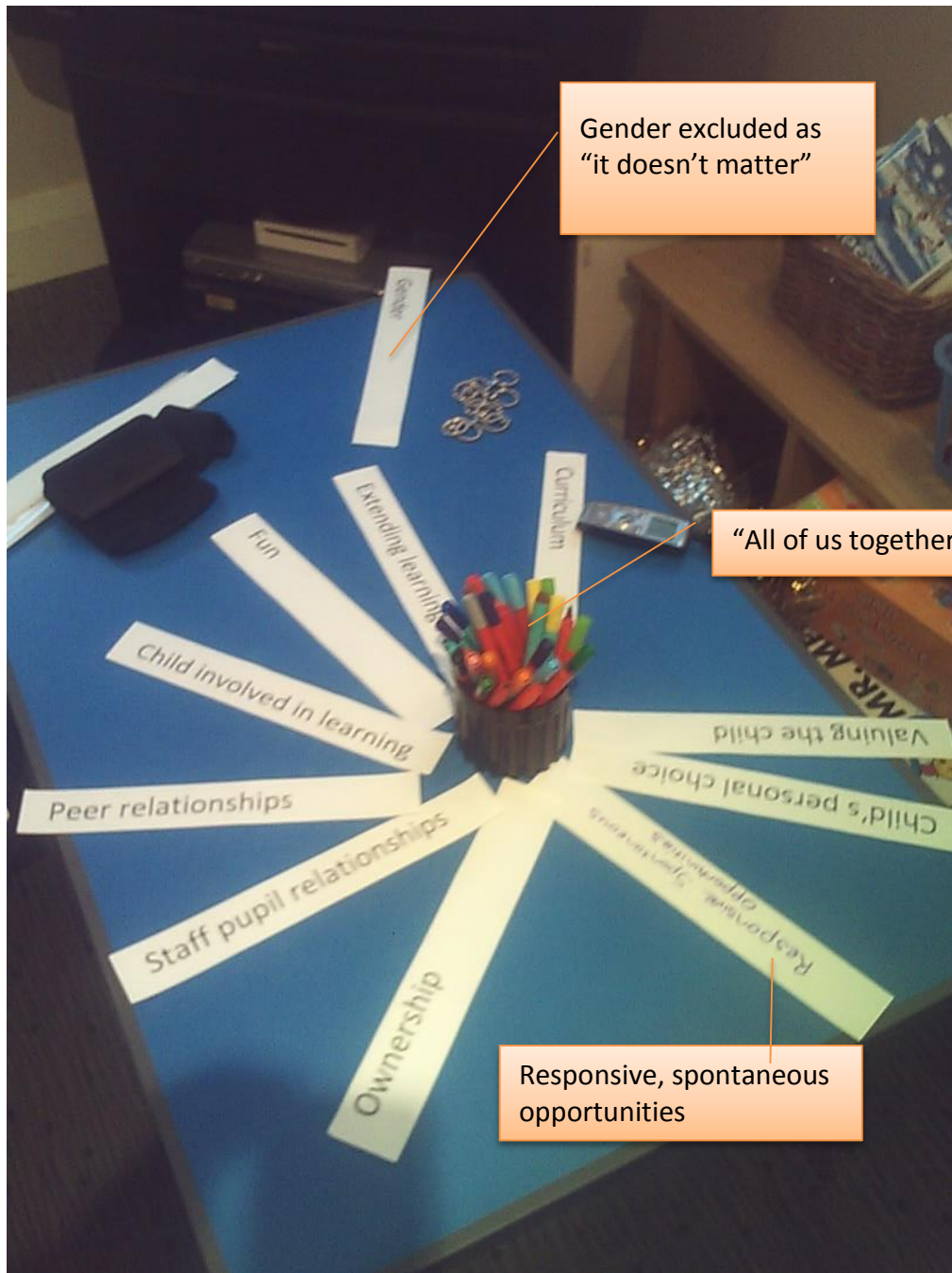


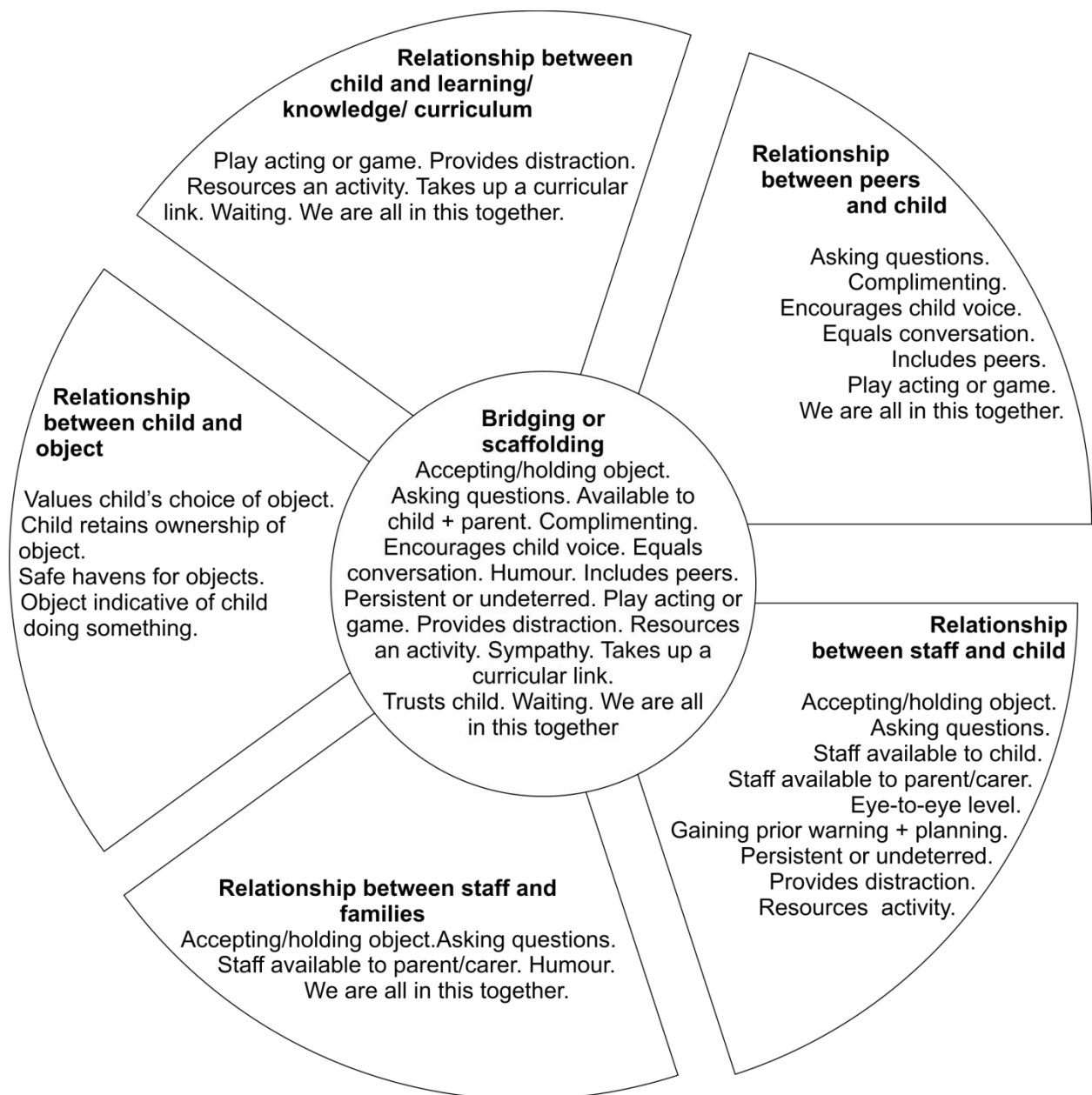
Image 5-1: A Nursery practitioner’s response to a preliminary findings card sorting task

Further examples of practitioner’s responses to this card sorting task are available in *Appendix 7.10 Samples of Practitioner Interview Card Sorting Data*, page 310. The final chunking of classroom observation, interview and card sorting data into categories (below) is displayed in a similar fashion. This was suggested by the degree of collegiality

implied by the laying out of the above cards in a circular format. (With the addition of a “responsive, spontaneous opportunities” card for what was described by the practitioner as “All of us together” (the pens pot).)

Diagrammatically the five relationships most evident in this research can be expressed as:

Figure 5-1: Relationships benefitting from practitioners’ practices



Discussion of these relationships is organised as follows:

1. Relationships between practitioners and objects are discussed in *Chapter 5.3.1 Shared pedagogical practices with objects in both classrooms* (page 179).
2. Discussion of the other five relationships help elucidate the similarities and differences in the two practices (see *Chapter 5.4 Relationships illuminate similarities and differences in practice*, page 223)
 - Relationship between child and object
 - Relationship between practitioner and children
 - Relationships between child and peers
 - Relationships between practitioner and families
 - Relationships between the child and learning/knowledge/curriculum.

First, we look at the relational qualities practitioners made use of in their interactions with brought-in objects and children as drawn from the data collected in response to Research Question 1.

5.2 Objects children bring to nursery and school

Research Question 1 explored the range of children's voluntarily brought-in objects in this particular school by analysing the relationships in both the physical and social properties of brought-in objects as indicative of a child's previous and in-school experiences with the object.

5.2.1 Numbers for brought-in objects

Summary statistics are provided to give an overview of children’s object bringing actions and practitioners’ responses.

Table 5-1: Summary statistics

	All	Nursery	P1/2
Count of children who brought objects	67	33	34
Phase1	41	21	20
Phase2	26	12	14
Count of children by gender in each class			
M	37	17	20
F	30	16	14
Count of objects brought	173	79	94
Phase1	123	53	70
Phase2	50	26	24
Count of objects transformed	141	63	78
Phase1	110	41	69
Phase2	31	22	9
Count of objects not transformed	32	16	16
Phase1	13	12	1
Phase2	19	4	15

A total of 173 objects were recorded across the two classrooms during a total of 40 classroom observation visits: 79 objects arrived during 20 visits in the Nursery and 94 objects arrived during 20 visits in P1/2.

Phase 1 of classroom observations included sixteen visits in Nursery and fifteen visits in P1/2 while Phase 2 included five visits in Nursery and six visits in P1/2 in order to balance the total numbers of visits in each classroom. The reductions in number of visits per classroom between Phase 1 and Phase 2 account for the apparent drop in recorded brought-in object events in Phase 2. Across both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of classroom observations the highest number of objects brought to one observation session was four in the Nursery and seven in P1/2. The least number of objects brought on any one day was one in the Nursery and two in P1/2. The average number of brought-in objects per day in Nursery was just under 4 and in P1/2 it was 4.7 objects per day. There were no observed days when a child did not voluntarily bring an object.

In order to form a view on whether the presence of a researcher was increasing the quantity of brought-in objects a count of objects arriving each day was monitored across the months of observation and practitioners were questioned as to whether the count was unusual. The relatively consistent number of objects arriving in addition to the practitioners' views that object numbers were normal supports the view that there was no particular researcher effect on the number of objects brought by children.

5.2.2 Number of transformed objects

Daily field notes from classroom observations were structured into a number of object-related episodes where each episode is centred on one brought-in object and in the practitioners' conversation and behaviours associated with that object on that day. These practitioners' actions and interactions were the focus of analysis and are referred to as pedagogical practices. Practitioners' behaviours are assumed to be pedagogically purposeful or, in other words, intended to help children learn. Among these purposeful practices is object transformation (explanation of this term follows on the next page).

Pedagogical responses are perceived by pupils and are also available to be perceived by others, such as a researcher, who may observe a pedagogical response or episode of multiple responses. In this research raw data were made up of a 173 of these


practitioner-child-object episodes. For purposes of analysis, each episode was coded by constituent practitioner behaviours, or particular ways of responding, in order to discover the patterns of pedagogical practice which supported these particular practitioner responses to children’s brought-in objects.

Object transformation explained

The term object transformation is used in this research to describe the process by which an object which a child has previously used for a particular purpose at home, such as play, becomes something different or performs a different function in an educational context. Objects in this research are viewed as transformed by and through the actions and interactions between practitioner, child, peers and classroom resources. By noting the conversation and actions associated with each brought-in object, it is possible to view an object’s transformation.

So, for example, when a child brought in Enid Blyton’s *Pretty Star the Pony* book the following conversation took place between practitioner and children:

Vignette 5-2: Ms Patrick and Phoebe’s Enid Blyton book

	
<p>Image 5-2: Enid Blyton book</p>	
Phoebe	I read this book to my mum last night.....
Child 2	(after some group conversation about the fun of being a reader) Can I see the book?...
Child 3	Can I borrow the book? I want to read it at home.
Phoebe	Can I read a story to my friends now?
Ms Patrick	Let’s put the book on the reading table and see if we get a chance to read it later.

As illustrated in this example, objects can be transformed through a range of social behaviours and conversation. They may also be transformed through other practices such as manufacture or recycling or imagination, as was the case when a group of boys used a piece of a Bionicle’s arm, pen, paper and their imaginations to draw plans for a Bionicle then made use of Lego bricks, wooden blocks, drinking straws and Knex to each build their own Bionicle-shaped creation and a village for their new creatures to live in.

Within this framing of object transformation there was also the possibility that a brought-in object was not engaged with in any way so was not transformed. This was the case for 32 brought-in objects.

Object transformation data

Roughly 80% of brought-in objects were transformed across both classrooms or roughly four out of every five objects was engaged with by a practitioner and/or peers while one in five objects was not transformed. No children were observed to be in any distress at their brought-in object not being transformed and four objects which were seen not to be transformed during a classroom visit were seen to be brought again during a subsequent observation day. On all four occasions they were then transformed.

Table 5-2: Number of transformed objects summary

Transformed by practitioner	All		Nursery		P1/2	
Yes	141	81.5%	63	79.7%	78	83.0%
No	32	18.5%	16	20.3%	16	17.0%
TOTAL	173		79		94	

5.2.3 Brought-in objects categorised and described

The following table illustrates some of the categories used to classify children’s brought-in objects and lists a few examples of the objects in each category. It is important to

note that in these descriptions of brought-in object data *all* brought-in objects were categorised – whether they were transformed by pedagogical practices or not. This means, in this section of the findings, descriptions apply across *all* objects that children brought unless stated otherwise. Further, there is not necessarily a one-to-one correspondence between an object and object categories: for example, a Gormiti toy is branded, a boys’ superhero figure and red (which are all one-to-one correspondences) while Woody from Toy Story is coloured both cream and brown (so shows up twice in any counts of colour) and is movie related as well as being a boys superhero (so shows up twice in activity counts: movies and boys superhero play) since both were mentioned as previous activities with Woody.

All the brought-in objects were portable by a 3-7 year old child and were classified by a wide number of categories. An example of data held for each brought-in object is available as *Appendix 7.7 Sample of data recorded for each object*, page 306.

Table 5-3: Extracts from various category descriptors with examples

Category Descriptors plus counts	Examples of objects
Colour	
Black* ¹⁸ (15)	Sparkling shoes, Lego man, Robo dog's spots, Megatron transformer
Creams/browns *(14)	Woody, wooden cat, wooden horse, plush tiger, Sid the sloth
Pinks/mauves *(24)	My little pony, magic wand, feather mask, headband, pink worm,
Yellow *(13)	Cement mixer, Bumblebee Transformer, digger, horse riding Barbie
Material	
Fabrics (plush, leather, cotton, oilskin, wool, etc) *(25)	Teddy bear clothes, Baby Annabelle clothes, knitted "5 men in a flying machine" glove
Glass (1)	Marble
Natural – All *(19)	Gems, stones, twigs, tomato plant, feathers, bleeding heart flowers
Natural - Metal (9)	Coins, jewellery, toy cars, etc
Natural - Stone (4)	Onyx pebbles, diamond ring, stones collected on a walk, blue stone ring
Natural - wood (4)	Polish wooden horse, wooden cat, twigs, branch
Plastic (71)	My Little Pony, Kinder egg toys, Bionicle, Transformers, Ben 10, etc
Paper (34)	Shoe box bed for a tiger, handmade surfboard, handwritten charity brochure, posters, etc
Object type	
Animals *(21)	Sylvanian Family characters, plush teddy bears, plush tigers, etc
Arts and crafts (9)	Homemade cardboard surfboard, posters, handwritten letters in envelopes, etc
Books (12)	Albert le Blanc, The Cat in the Hat, 101 Dalmatians, Enid

¹⁸ * refers to the fact that the number used here is a summary of various colour categories – all of which included black. In this case Black (15) is made up of Black (4) + Black and green (4) + Black and grey (3) + Black and white (3) + Black and gold (1). All colour categories and counts are available in *Table 5-12: Object colours*, page 146.

Category Descriptors plus counts	Examples of objects
	Blyton, charity leaflet, handwritten posters, etc
Construction (4)	Lego, Lego Bionicle, Transformers, toy digger, toy truck
Games (2)	Gormiti game cards, Ben 10 game cards
Music (4)	Mouth organ, ABBA CD, etc
Personal adornment (10)	Earrings, bangles, rings, necklaces, sparkling shoes, hat, hair band, etc
Technology (12)	Nintendo DS, toy camera, ABBA CD, toy mobile phone, photographs, etc
Branded characters	
Boy superheroes (19)	Ben 10, Superman, Power Rangers, Spiderman, Ninja Turtles, Transformers, Gormiti, Thunderbirds, etc
Girl superheroes (2)	Horse riding Barbie, Dora the Explorer

5.2.4 Physical and social properties of brought-in objects

All practitioners began their engagement with children's objects with a discussion of the object's physical and social aspects. These conversations were seen to include references to one or more aspects of size, object name, colour, texture, use and previous experiences a child may have had with the object.

Physical properties of objects as topics for verbal interactions and physical explorations

Physical property conversations took place for 100% of transformed objects since after each child handed their object to a practitioner detailed investigations of the object's physical properties always took place either between the child and the practitioner, as was part of the Nursery pattern, or between practitioner and the whole group, as was the P1/2 pattern.

A brief P1/2 vignette illustrates a practitioner leading children's engagements with physical properties of brought-in objects.

Vignette 5-3: Miss Potter and Preston’s Bag of “Natural Materials”



(Photo from www.blackcanoncollective.co.uk. Used with permission.)

Context

Ms Potter, P1/2 teacher, is seated on the carpet¹⁹ with the children all sitting in a large circle. She is questioning her way around the group in order to find out how each child is on this very sunny autumn day. Four children have brought objects to the classroom. On reaching Preston and his “bag of natural materials” the following takes place:

Ms Potter What have you brought?

Preston A bag of natural materials. (He is holding the top of the bag tightly shut.)

Ms Preston Tip them out so we can see? Where did you get them?

Preston In my garden. (Still holding the bag tightly shut.)

Ms Potter Could we pass them around so everyone can have a feel? (Preston passes it to his neighbour.) What words could we use to describe them? Close your eyes and feel...

Child 1 (Putting his hand into the bag) Squashy with leaves on.

Ms Potter Any more describing words? Like hard, soft, rough or smooth? (Child passes bag to next neighbour.)

Child 2 (Puts nose to bag then hand in bag.) It smells like leaves.... Smooth. (Has hand in bag for a long while. Keeps feeling different things in the bag.)

Ms Preston Yours is smooth? Does that one feel different to the first one you had?

Child 2 It has green stuff – moss.

Child 3 Green stuff! (Sounds a little disquieted by concept of “green stuff”.)

Child 1 It’s not called green stuff! It’s called moss!

Child 4 (Receives bag from Child 3.) It smells fresh!

¹⁹ Carpet time here refers to a whole-group time during which staff and students sat in a circular formation on the Primary 1/2 classroom carpet. Children arriving in the morning took their regular place on the carpet and talked with peers until the start of morning routines which included the attendance register, lunch orders, morning prayers and often physical exercises. In Primary 1/2 much of the shared engagement with children’s objects took place during carpet time. In the Nursery the carpet was one of the destinations children chose if they needed more working space than a table could provide. The Nursery did not use a shared carpet time at the beginning of each day but managed the administrative aspects of the day individually with each child as they arrived.

The choice of which aspects of an object’s physical properties formed part of each particular practitioner-child conversation was seen to be flexible.

Object Size



From the perspective of an overview more than half of the brought-in objects were estimated to be less than 15cm long on their largest dimension. In both classrooms the most common length of brought-in objects ranged between 5cm to 15 cm long.

Table 5-4: Object sizes

Object Size (cm)	All		Nursery		P1/2	
0-5	42	24.3%	18	22.8%	24	25.5%
5-15	65	37.6%	34	43.0%	31	33.0%
15-30	37	21.4%	16	20.3%	21	22.3%
30-60	20	11.6%	9	11.4%	11	11.7%
60-100	9	5.2%	2	2.5%	7	7.4%
TOTALS		173		79		94





Examples of the details of larger brought-in objects were a 1m long plush tiger and a 60cm tall home-grown tomato plant which are illustrated below.

Table 5-5: Examples of largest objects

 <p>Image 5-3: Animal : 1m plush tiger (P1/2)</p>	 <p>Image 5-4: Natural Materials: 60cm home-grown tomato plant (P1/2)</p>
---	--



Examples of brought-in objects on the small end of the size spectrum included a collection of minute model railway figures at 1cm high, and precious stones at 0.5cm across a single stone, tiny gold coins and natural materials such as an acorn.

Table 5-6: Examples of smallest objects

 <p>Image 5-5: Adventure Figures: Minute plastic men (P1/2)</p>	 <p>Image 5-6: Natural Materials: Onyx pebbles (Nursery)</p>
 <p>Image 5-7: Natural Materials: Acorn (P1/2)</p>	 <p>Image 5-8: Money: Tiny golden coins (P1/2)</p>

By far the most objects fell within the 0-15cm height/length range. Some illustrative examples are shown below:

Table 5-7: Examples of typically sized objects

 <p>Image 5-9: Action Figures: Power Ranger (Nursery)</p>	 <p>Image 5-10: Reading: 101 Dalmatians (P1/2)</p>
---	--

The Natural Materials and Animals categories showed the greatest variation in dimensions as the Natural Materials category included objects the size of pebbles and acorns through leaves, sticks, plants and a large, and heavy, carved wooden cat while the Animals category ranged from a 5cm long blue/green tortoise through to the 1m long plush tiger.

Object size was one of the most often mentioned object properties and was occasionally seen to be interpreted by children as an invitation to compare. For example, a clear glass marble was described by a practitioner as “so small it is smaller than a grape” which was followed by various children’s comments relating the comparative sizes of their marbles at home: “bigger than that one,” “about three grapes big,” “I saw one in a shop that was nearly as big as an apple,” and “it’s smaller than my eye.”

Practitioners demonstrated a considerable range of descriptive vocabulary related to object size. Some examples follow:

- 101 Dalmatians book: “That’s such a vivid red on such a skinny book!”
- All Blacks score book: “Isn’t it amazing how much information can go into such a minute book?”

- Red apple earrings: “Those must be the most delicate metal apples I’ve ever seen.”
- Baby Annabel doll: “That’s a life-like baby doll.”
- Ben 10 rucksack: “That rucksack is big enough to take camping.”
- The big pencil: “There’s enough pencil there to write a HUGE book.”
- Small yellow cement mixer: “This cement mixer would be great for an ant-sized village.”

In the Nursery, object size was not related to the object’s eventual destination. In P1/2 objects that participated in the carpet time whole-group discussion were more-often-than-not put away for the rest of the day. Those too large to fit into a child’s personal tray were displayed on the classroom windowsill or the top of the trays’ unit. Both locations afforded them continued exposure to view.

Object materials:

The table below provides a full list of the main types of materials brought-in objects were made from.

Table 5-8: Object materials

Object Materials	All		Nursery		P1/2	
Plastic	71	41.0%	40	50.6%	31	33.0%
Paper	34	19.7%	13	16.5%	21	22.3%
Fabric – plush	18	10.4%	7	8.9%	11	11.7%
Metal	9	5.2%	5	6.3%	4	4.3%
Mixed	9	5.2%	5	6.3%	4	4.3%
Natural – plant	6	3.5%	0	0.0%	6	6.4%
Natural – stone	4	2.3%	2	2.5%	2	2.1%
Natural – Wood	4	2.3%	2	2.5%	2	2.1%
Food	3	1.7%	0	0.0%	3	3.2%
Fabric – nylon	2	1.2%	2	2.5%	0	0.0%
Natural – birds	2	1.2%	1	1.3%	1	1.1%
Natural – mixed	2	1.2%	0	0.0%	2	2.1%
Craft foam	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Fabric – cotton	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Fabric – embroidery	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Fabric – Leather	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Fabric – oilskin	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Fabric – wool	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	0	0.0%
Glass	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Natural – animal	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Silver	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	0	0.0%

As can be seen in the above table, plastic was by far the most prevalent type of material used to make brought-in objects. The number of plastic brought-in objects dropped between Nursery and P1/2 while the number of paper objects increased slightly.

When the full range of fabric types are combined into one figure the top three materials are 1) plastic 2) paper and 3) fabric. Plush fabric was observed to be the most common type of fabric on brought-in objects.

Table 5-9: Fabric type

Category	All	Nursery	P1/2
Fabric – plush	18	7	11
Fabric – nylon	2	2	0
Fabric – cotton	1	0	1
Fabric – embroidery	1	0	1
Fabric – leather	1	0	1
Fabric – oilskin	1	0	1
Fabric – wool	1	1	0
TOTALS	25	10	15



Plush objects were more often brought in by a female pupil than by a male pupil. This tendency increased in P1/2 such that only one P1/2 boy brought a plush fabric object. Of the plush fabric objects roughly a third were pink or mauve in colour and the rest ranged in colours: red, brown, black, white, yellow, orange and beige or cream.

The length of the pile on plush objects brought by girls was longer than the length of the pile on the plush objects brought by boys and longer or fluffier piles regularly generated a practitioner’s comment such as “I could hold this all day it is so soft” or “I wonder if a real pony feels this soft?”

Plush objects brought by boys tended to be more realistic in colour. For example, the short pile, orange and cream fabric used for a small plush tiger’s stripes and the shades of brown used for a plush lion (illustrated below) were more authentic uses of colour than those applied to objects brought by girls. Also, plush objects brought by boys were associated with a more life-like portrayal of the animal than objects brought by girls. As illustrated in the images below, length of pile on the plush fabric was associated with the lion’s mane or a life-like feature. Practitioners’ mention of the more life-like properties included “this looks like a real lion – only smaller and less dangerous.”

On the other hand, girls’ plush toys had longer pile, used paler less-life-like colours and often a less realistic portrayal of the animal as was the case for a mauve pony/unicorn (illustrated below), a violet rabbit and a sparkling white fluffy bear which was not polar bear shaped.

Table 5-10: Examples of a gendered length of pile on plush toys

 <p>Image 5-11: Girl's toy unicorn with long-piled plush</p>	 <p>Image 5-12: Boy's more life-like plush toy</p>
--	---

Object textures

The table below includes the range of object textures associated with the brought-in objects. Texture was one of the physical properties of objects which practitioners regularly made use of, particularly in Nursery where practitioners again showed a considerable list of descriptors associated with qualities of texture. A few examples are provided:

- Toy car: “How come this car is so silky smooth? My car doesn’t feel like this when I wash it!”
- Wall-E’s caterpillar tracks: “These traction ridges would chew up the dirt track to my house. I’d have to leave this parked on the main road if it was my car.”
- Plastic lizard: “I think a real lizard would be more wet and slippery than this one is. He’s almost sticky, isn’t he? Do you like how he feels?”
- Rough bark: “I just love the way bark makes roughness! It’s so higgledy-piggledy”

Brought-in objects ranged in texture from delicate tissue paper through solid moulded plastics designed to withstand almost anything young children can do with them as was the case for Transformer models and Lego Bionicles. An object’s texture was one of the physical properties that was regularly discussed in the explorative investigations between child and practitioner or child, practitioner and child’s peers in the Nursery and as a whole class group in P1/2.

Table 5-11: Object textures summary

Object Textures	All		Nursery		P1/2	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Smooth	90	52.0%	36	45.6%	54	57.4%
Mixed	46	26.6%	23	29.1%	23	24.5%
Fluffy	9	5.2%	3	3.8%	6	6.4%
Hard	8	4.6%	8	10.1%	0	0.0%
Velvet-like	8	4.6%	5	6.3%	3	3.2%
Soft	5	2.9%	1	1.3%	4	4.3%
Rough	2	1.2%	0	0.0%	2	2.1%
Rubbery	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	0	0.0%
Soft spikes	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	0	0.0%
Sticky	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Unknown	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Various	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	0	0.0%

Object colour

Most objects included more than one colour and those for which there was no predominant colour or colours were categorised as mixed. After mixed colours the most common designation was pink with a roughly equivalent amount of pink objects arriving in each classroom. When all of the noted combinations of black are added together objects with a high proportion of black (17) take third place behind the pinks.

Table 5-12: Object colours

Object colours	All		Nursery		P1/2	
Mixed	48	27.7%	19	24.1%	29	30.9%
Pink	21	12.1%	10	12.7%	11	11.7%
Green	14	8.1%	7	8.9%	7	7.4%
Blue	13	7.5%	5	6.3%	8	8.5%
Yellow	11	6.4%	5	6.3%	6	6.4%
Brown	9	5.2%	5	6.3%	4	4.3%
Silver	7	4.0%	2	2.5%	5	5.3%
White	6	3.5%	1	1.3%	5	5.3%
Beige	5	2.9%	2	2.5%	3	3.2%
Grey	5	2.9%	5	6.3%	0	0.0%
Black	4	2.3%	1	1.3%	3	3.2%
Black + green	4	2.3%	4	5.1%	0	0.0%
Red	4	2.3%	1	1.3%	3	3.2%
Black + grey	3	1.7%	2	2.5%	1	1.1%
Black + white	3	1.7%	0	0.0%	3	3.2%
Orange	3	1.7%	2	2.5%	1	1.1%
Purple	3	1.7%	2	2.5%	1	1.1%
Mauve	2	1.2%	1	1.3%	1	1.1%
Red + Yellow	2	1.2%	2	2.5%	0	0.0%
Black + blue	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	0	0.0%
Black + gold	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	0	0.0%
Brown + blue	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	0	0.0%
Gold	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Green + pink	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Unknown	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%

Another feature of colour used in these brought-in objects was the strength of colour seen in many of the manufactured objects such as plastic superhero figures or Lego people or bricks. While there were a number of white objects (plush toys) the only other colour which could be described as pale was mauve as illustrated by the mauve plush unicorn (see *Image 5-11: Girl's toy unicorn with long-piled plush*, page 142). All other manufactured colours associated with children's objects were strong colours as is illustrated below.

Table 5-13: Strong colours on children's objects

 <p>Image 5-13: Bright green Ben 10 playing cards</p>	 <p>Image 5-14: Brightly coloured kaleidoscope</p>
--	--

It was noted that pink was consistently brought by girls and blacks and greys tended to be brought by boys. This relationship between colour and gender is described further, below, as one of the social constructions of objects which was evident in the brought-in objects.

Social properties of brought-in objects as indicative of out-of-school experiences

Continuities in brought-in object experiences

During the classroom observations most brought-in objects were seen to have out-of-school experiences associated with them (see *Appendix 7.13 Objects Received From Summary*, page 318). These experiences were mentioned in conversation and, in Nursery, often developed into in-school conversations or further experiences.

In categorising the data, objects were classified by an activity observed to be associated with the object by the child or the practitioner, which was deemed by the researcher to be the activity of choice. The activities were so diverse that no simple categorization was possible apart from noting that 84% of all object-related events involved some kind of conversation.

In the P1/2 room, activities were often discussed during carpet time as possibilities for after-school or weekend activities rather than as activities with potential for immediate effect.

Particularly in the P1/2 whole group setting, where children were more used to addressing the whole group and so projected their voices, the suggested activities were largely child suggested rather than practitioner suggested. Practitioners in P1/2 showed a more curricular view of object activities than children did and this is discussed further in *Chapter 5.4.4 Relationships between child and learning/knowledge/curriculum* (page 232).

Visibly gendered objects

The interpretation of a visibly gendered object was based on the presence of one or more of these features:

- Predominant use of a gendered colour such as is Barbie pink: Pantone 219C (Young 2003).
- Predominantly, or exclusively, seen in association with a child of a particular gender.
- Spoken of by a child as belonging to them.
- Spoken of by a parent as belonging to a particular child.

Where a Yes or No could not be inferred the option Unknown was used when the object could not be clearly seen so it was not possible to determine whether it was gendered or not and Depends was used for Ickle Pickle (pale blue) from In the Night Garden as

this particular one was a purse but this was only discovered in class. Up until the discovery that it was a purse boys were engaging with it as well as girls. After the purse discovery the boys were not seen to touch it again.

Table 5-14: Visibly gendered objects summary

Visibly Gendered Object?	All		Nursery		P1/2	
	Yes	86	49.7%	49	62.0%	37
No	84	48.6%	28	35.4%	56	59.6%
Unknown	2	1.2%	1	1.3%	1	1.1%
Depends	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	0	0.0%

While it is recognised that designating a child’s brought-in object as gendered or not is a highly interpretive process the figures in the above table suggest that gendering of children’s toys is a common feature and one which might make some families more comfortable than others. Even given a wide margin of error in the process of interpreting, these figures suggest that the objects young children brought in are socially constructed in gendered ways. What follows are more detailed examples of gendered objects which were part of the brought-in objects data.

Girls’ object associated activity continuities

In the table below the activities associated with girls’ objects are grouped by the frequency of a type activity’s mention.

Table 5-15: Activities associated with girls’ brought-in objects

Activity types associated with girls’ brought-in objects		
Frequency of mention	Nursery	P1/2
Most frequently mentioned	Personal adornment, Caring	Learning literacies
Often mentioned	Arts and crafts	Arts and crafts, Learning about materials, Caring
Occasionally mentioned	Listening to music, Investigating nature, Learning literacies, Going to movies, Technology play	Growing things, Technology play, Listening to and playing music

The above table illustrates that in the Nursery classroom personal adornment was seen to be important for girls, as was caring, arts and crafts, literacies, music and understanding nature. The objects which were classified as personal adornment in Nursery included a pink box-purse with a Polly Pocket inside it, a mauve hair clip, a necklace made from pastel coloured stones, a pink tulle headband, red apple ear rings, a silver bangle and a purple bangle.

The object which generated a single technology entry for girls in Nursery was a pair of pink binoculars which were initially used to view the birds outside the classroom but later moved on to a small group discussion about “ways of seeing far away” which included mention of telescopes, planets and stars, a space craft going to Mars and taking pictures as it travelled. There was also interest in Google Earth images and what the local village looked like from above. In P1/2 the girls’ technology entries included a pink toy camera which was passed around the group at Carpet Time then became part

of the Toy Shop stock for a few days. Here it received a hand-written 79p price tag and was seen to be associated with giving of change.

While girls in P1/2 brought three objects to do with personal adornment they showed more interest than did their Nursery peers in literacies: books were mentioned more often in conversations by P1/2 girls and writing saw more activity mention by girls than it did in the Nursery, particularly if the posters allocated to arts and crafts are included as parts of an interest in literacies.

Personal adornment and caring for animals, as mentioned above, are two activities that illustrate how object types (see *Appendix 7.12 Object Types Summary*, page 317) were seen to have different trajectories over time. While personal adornment was a popular activity for Nursery girls its mention fell from 8 in Nursery to 2 in P1/2. This suggests that while personal adornment mattered to the Nursery girls it featured less with the P1/2 girls so could be described as having a potentially falling trajectory for girls over the four years they spent in Nursery and P1/2. By way of contrast, caring (particularly for animals) appears to be an activity whose frequency is consistent across both classrooms so could be described as having a steady trajectory for girls across these two classrooms.

Boys' object associated activity continuities

The following table lists activities mentioned in association with the objects brought by boys and shows a different pattern.

Table 5-16: Activity types associated with boys’ brought-in objects


Activity types associated with boys’ brought-in objects		
Frequency of mentions	Nursery	P1/2
Most frequently mentioned	Superheroes play	Investigating nature
Often mentioned	Caring for animals, Transport play, Investigating nature, Timekeeping	Learning literacies, Healthy living, Caring
Occasionally mentioned	Constructing, Playing music, Playing games, Technology play, Learning literacies	Constructing, Learning about materials, Technology play, Superheroes play





Superhero play was the activity most often associated with boys’ brought-in objects in Nursery and involved nearly three times as many objects as did caring. Through superhero play the Nursery boys adopted scenarios typical of a range of branded characters and extended the play in ways collaboratively developed either among their peers or with practitioners when they intervened to help children settle disputes. While boys made use of branded character names they were also seen to get pleasure from developing their own character-like names. The most often brought superhero brand for Nursery boys was Ben 10, followed by Transformers then Power Rangers.

In P1/2 the bringing-in of branded characters, again largely superheroes for boys, was on a par with construction and foodstuff. P1/2 boys brought in objects associated with nature: plants, stones, a diamond ring (and talked about the diamond rather than the ring), a cupcake (talk was about the ingredients and where they grew, how they were milled, etc) and leaves and twigs.

By associating the most often mentioned activity, superheroes, with the particular brought-in object images it is possible to build up a visual illustration of children’s engagement with a particular theme over time. This is illustrated in the following table.

Table 5-17: Nursery boys' branded characters: superheroes

Nursery Boys' Branded Characters: Superheroes			
 <p>Image 5-15: Ben 10 rucksack "for our supplies"</p>	 <p>Image 5-16: Ben 10 alien ship as both "the enemy" and "escape pod"</p>	 <p>Image 5-17: Pirate "he only has one hand but this hook is COOL!"</p>	 <p>Image 5-18: Power rangers – "red and yellow means danger"</p>
 <p>Image 5-19: Power rangers – "pink... guys can do ANYTHING we want"</p>	 <p>Image 5-20: Power ranger - "red and different"</p>	 <p>Image 5-21: Toy Story Woody "has lots of friends"</p>	 <p>Image 5-22: Transformer Optimus Prime - "can change so you can drive home"</p>

 <p>Image 5-23: Superman "with sounds"</p>	 <p>Image 5-24: Lego bionicle</p>	 <p>Image 5-25: Megatron (arm only) - "we can each build our own one"</p>	 <p>Image 5-26: Transformers Bumblebee - "I can give you a ride"</p>
 <p>Image 5-27: Batman - "Bats are cool!"</p>	 <p>Image 5-28: Transformers Bumblebee - "I like to stay in my car"</p>	 <p>Image 5-29: Ben 10 Omnitrix - "We can turn into anything we want to"</p>	 <p>Image 5-30: Ben 10 bouncy ball</p>
 <p>Image 5-31: Ben 10 playing cards - "They're our tickets"</p>	 <p>Image 5-32: Ben 10 Omnitrix - "Mine will double the strength of yours"</p>		

Viewing these Nursery object images together with object-related snippets of conversation from the children helps to describe their on-going engagement with superheroes over time. Boys thought about “their supplies”, “the enemy” and methods of “escape,” recognised disability as “he only has one hand” but admired the prosthetic technology since “this hook is COOL!” From Power Rangers boys developed a traffic light system for recognising danger: “red and yellow means danger.” While other

Power Ranger colours were associated with almost limitless powers: “pink, white and blue guys can do ANYTHING we want.” The superhero Woody, from Toy Story movies, was associated with having lots of friends, while the Transformer Optimus Prime was both flexible and useful since you could “change him so you can drive home.” Superman with noises provided a sound track for the boys’ adventures and Megatron was associated with drawing scaled plans for the whole superhero based on the arm which was brought-in. In addition, once the plans were drawn up the boys went on to “each build our own” Megatron from construction materials available in the Nursery. With transport being a theme often associated with superheroes one boy reminded his peers that “I like to stay in my car” which was a Transformer Bumblebee in its car form. Ben 10 was the most often brought-in brand with the Omnitrix being the only repeatedly brought-in object in the Nursery. Led by the older boys in the Nursery, the superhero theme ran through the Nursery activities as a strong thread in which boys engaged in fantasy play and were creative of game plans and new characters. While the brand appeared to regularly contribute a setting and some named characters the boys constructed their own narratives around these branded contributions and extended them as the play progressed.

In P1/2 the activities most frequently associated with boys’ brought-in objects were to do with nature then literacies, healthy living and caring (largely for animals). These activities might be viewed as traditional in that nature and healthy living have possible associations with the outdoors while construction, materials, technology and superheroes were mentioned on fewer occasions.

What was notable was the difference in the number of superheroes brought to Nursery and P1/2. In Nursery superhero objects were common and were seen to be the boys’ preferred method of playful engagement with the world whereas in P1/2 only four superhero objects arrived.

Object conversations illustrated brought-in object's continuity through previous experiences

The range of objects children brought was interesting in its diversity, as is illustrated by the three examples below. From an adult researcher's point of view the brought-in objects appeared, at first sight, random or disconnected. However, once the child and practitioners engaged in conversation about the object the child's context and relationship with the object became visible and available for practitioners to extend. An object characteristic which these examples illustrate is that, in a child's experience, obtaining an object is always mediated by another person: parent, family or friends. No child arrived with an object described as "I bought this." For these particular children all brought-in objects were described as obtained within a meaningful personal relationship. Yet these children showed agency in these early childhood classrooms: they chose to bring each object, they engaged in conversation with practitioners and peers about their object and in some circumstances they helped to develop then engaged in an activity instigated by their bringing of the object. Some also went on to help plan ways to take their object-initiated experiences forward. This act of bringing an object served to connect their out-of-school life with their in-school life and these continuities of experience were initiated by the children and supported and developed by the practitioners and children's peers.

Table 5-18: Range of brought-in objects example 1


 <p>Image 5-33: Australian bush hat</p>	<p><i>Pauline’s bush hat: What children know about the world and how.</i></p> <p>This bush hat was given to Pauline as a gift by her father on his return from Australia. It was made of a waterproofed canvas fabric and was sized to fit a child. A discussion about hat-making materials started as some children thought it was made of leather and others of fabric “like my Auntie’s bush coat”. Further talk developed a plan for identifying the material: “If you can see threads it isn’t leather.” A number of children recognised it as “Australian.” There followed a discussion about how it was so recognisable. The conversation included mention of a movie (Crocodile Dundee) and advertising for an Australian beer. One of the boys felt this hat was not quite Australian enough because it did not have bottle corks hanging from its rim. Discussion about whether “real Australians” would wear bottle corks on their hats, and how we might know if they did, followed. The hat was on display in the classroom window for the day.</p>
---	--

Table 5-19: Range of brought-in objects example 2



 <p>Image 5-34: Bag of natural materials</p>	<p><i>Learning in relationship with his mother and nature.</i></p> <p>Perry brought in a shopping bag he described as full of “natural materials”. He had collected the contents “on a walk with my mum”. The bag contained numerous stones, twigs, leaves, garden flowers, acorns and a chestnut pod. He knew the names of the trees associated with each leaf and that the leaves would fall off the trees later in the year “when it’s Autumn”. Later, the leaves were passed around the circle during conversation about veins and colours in leaves, variety of pod shapes and bark colours. He lined up all the objects on the windowsill for the day.</p>
--	--

Table 5-20: Range of brought-in objects example 3

 <p>Image 5-35: Adhesive plaster</p>	<p><i>Niamh's plaster: experiences are for sharing.</i></p> <p>Niamh arrived with an adhesive plaster on her forearm. Once Niamh had shown it to Miss Nash she peeled it off to show her the bruise it covered. They talked about the accident that made the bruise then Niamh pressed the plaster back onto her arm where it stayed for the rest of the observation period. Miss Nash suggested Niamh talk to one of the other girls about her injuries as the other girl had a bruise with no plaster on it.</p>
--	--

These three examples also illustrate how children's out-of-school experiences with brought-in objects were intertwined with people. Every brought-in object engaged with by practitioners revealed aspects of a child's out-of-school relationships with parents, family and friends as well as their understandings of the world around them as is illustrated in the following table.

Table 5-21: Object sources as mentioned in conversations summary

Object sources	All		Nursery		P1/2	
Unknown	103	59.5%	67	84.8%	36	38.3%
Gift	21	12.1%	3	3.8%	18	19.1%
Gift from Family – Mother	14	8.1%	3	3.8%	11	11.7%
Handmade by child	9	5.2%	2	2.5%	7	7.4%
Borrowed from mother	5	2.9%	0	0.0%	5	5.3%
Borrowed from father	3	1.7%	0	0.0%	3	3.2%
Nature	3	1.7%	0	0.0%	3	3.2%
Borrowed from sibling	2	1.2%	1	1.3%	1	1.1%
Gift from Family - Friend	2	1.2%	1	1.3%	1	1.1%
Gift from Family – Grandparents	2	1.2%	1	1.3%	1	1.1%
Borrowed	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Borrowed from home	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Gift from Family - Cousin	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Gift from Family - Father	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Gift from Family - Sister	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Made with Wraparound carer	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Swimming coach	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Tesco	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Visiting speaker	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	0	0.0%

Adult and child conversations around the brought-in objects almost always illustrated that objects have histories, be they human or non-human histories. Examples of object pasts included mentions of:

- Place, or time, of purchase such as “Mum bought it for me in Tesco last night.”
- Mention of its previous owner such as “It was my grandma’s ring.”
- Mention of family trips such as was the case with the bush hat which “my father brought it from Australia for me.”
- Mention of a previous out-of-school activity such as was the case for a hand-written charity brochure which a child had made about which she said “I help collect money for children in places like Africa.”

When an object’s history was mentioned this often involved mention of its purchase, usually spoken of as “bought it from,” or mention of its being a gift, usually spoken of as “..... gave it to me”. Finding out about the previous owner of the object formed a very typical part of roughly 40% of the object conversations. A wide range of previous owners were recorded: grandparents, parents, siblings, the natural world, other extended family members as well as various shops were described although the only shop actually named was Tesco. All practitioners were noted to make regular use of the question “Where did you get it from?” which is interesting in that while adults are able to procure objects for themselves practitioners showed an implicit understanding that children’s objects are most likely to be other-person-related. Practitioners behaved as if they were aware of this fact and used the brought-in objects to engage the children in conversation about their valued out-of-school relationships. So, for example:

Vignette 5-4: Ms Nesbit and Norman’s Umbro watch “with 55 on it”



Image 5-36: Umbro watch "with 55 on it"

Ms Nesbit What is this? (As she takes object in her hands and turns it every way to look at it.)
 Norman It’s my Umbro watch with 55 on it!
 Ms Nesbit It’s amazing! Where did you get it from?
 Norman My Uncle Billy gave it to me....

Later practitioner notices child looking carefully at the numbers in the watch’s digital display

Ms Nesbit A watch that says 55 then 52! That’s amazing. I think your Uncle Billy would like that!
 Norman Can I draw a watch?... I don’t know how.
 Friend I know how to draw a watch. I’ll help.
 Ms Nesbit (Takes classroom clock off the wall) What shape shall we start with?
 Norman (Draws a circle)
 Ms Nesbit Wonderful! Now you put the numbers on.
 Norman (Writes emergent numbers)
 Friend Those aren’t numbers!
 Ms Nesbit He’s learning how to do his numbers... (Gets out wooden numbers for child to copy)

Later after talk of watches, clocks, a pendulum and how it moves and that the cuckoo clock on the wall is from Switzerland...

Ms Nesbit Those are super numbers! Your Uncle Billy will be proud of your numbers!

Parents and children often spoke about the more recent history of a manufactured object. This is not surprising since that is likely to be the part of the object’s history they participated in. Only one person spoke about a manufactured object’s earliest history

when a child brought an intricately decorated single glove, illustrated below, for use as a prompt for the “Five little men in a flying saucer” song. In the “Where did you get that from?” conversation the parent commented that “I bought it in a toy shop in London but I imagine it started life in China.” There were also conversations about object manufacturing processes, often prompted by a practitioner asking “I wonder how they make this?” these conversations were occasionally seen to include talk of a country of manufacture.

Table 5-22: Mention of speculative history of manufacture



Image 5-37: "Five little men in a flying saucer" glove

The brought-in objects about which participants showed the most historical awareness were those in the Natural Objects category. Within this object category onyx pebbles were spoken of by a parent as “I think they’re mined in South America or somewhere” and for grandma’s diamond ring the parent commented “I wonder where it was from? Maybe South Africa?” Children who brought in twigs, leaves and seeds from trees often spoke of the source of the objects in ways which suggested they were aware of big trees

being old. This included “I got them under the big old trees by the river” and “It was a *really* big tree!” as if its size gave it seniority or indicated longevity.

On the other end of the object age spectrum a child’s description of her tomato plant included that “I planted it from a seed in a packet” and “My mom helped me... in the Spring.” The child was also able to describe in detail the process of “plant(ing) the seed in the soil”, the placing of the pot “in the window for the sun”, the regular “watering” and how they had “carried it carefully” to the classroom. Objects from Nature seemed to be somehow more inclusive in their histories as natural objects are aspects of the physical world with which village families possibly have more of an historical understanding.

Practitioners often picked up on references to an object’s history and conversation about different times and places would follow. An example follows:

Vignette 5-5: Ms Potter and Paulo's All Blacks' Scorecard



Image 5-38: All Blacks Scorecard

Context

Whole-group conversation about an All Black's Scorecard.

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| Child | It belonged to my Uncle in Australia. |
| Other child | How did you get it? |
| Child | He gave it to me when we were on holiday. |
| Practitioner | Where did you go on holiday? Australia or New Zealand? |
| Child | Both, but I liked New Zealand more 'cause I played on the beach with my cousins. |
| Another child | Did your uncle go to the game? |
| Child | I don't know. I think it's an old card from a long time ago. Maybe from when he was little? |
| Another child | How old is he now? |
| Child | I don't know. He's older than my dad so he's quite old. |
| Another child | Did they have rugby that long ago? |
| Child | That would be funny if they did! |
| Practitioner | Why? |
| Child | They wore funny clothes in the olden days. |
| Practitioner | What kind of clothes?..... |

What followed

Conversation about sports clothing during different time periods.

Not all object histories pointed primarily to times past. When a child brought in a scan of her, as yet unborn, sibling it sparked a conversation about what it would be like to have a new baby in the house with a number of other children commenting from their own experiences of a new sibling in the family. When the same child, a number of

months later, brought in a very small nappy to show the class her peer understood “that’s for the baby you showed us a picture of before.” The objects the child associated with the new baby had changed, but the central experience of engaging with a new sibling was seen to be on-going.

Practitioners responded to all brought-in objects they saw

The 141 brought-in objects noticed by practitioners led to at least a practitioner-child conversation: in total 32 objects were not noticed by practitioners for reasons which included a child’s secreting the object, supply practitioners being present or lack of time.

The verbal aspects of an object-related conversation were typically started by a practitioner after a child proffered the object to the adult at the door²⁰. This proffering took the form of a child standing in a conversational position in front of a practitioner, then holding up a brought-in object and waiting for a practitioner’s response such as “What’s this?” Often practitioners would offer a compliment based in a characteristic of the object such as “That’s very colourful!” or “That’s the same shape as one I have at home”.

In Dewey’s action/interaction concepts the action appears to be the child’s bringing an object to the classroom door. However, the degree of confidence that children showed in their bringing of objects suggests that there is a continuity of relationship with practitioners which children are making use of for their brought-in objects since they showed no reluctance about whether the object would be welcomed or not. That objects would be welcomed by practitioners appeared to be a given which children acted upon when they wanted to.

²⁰ In the Nursery and Primary 1/2 classroom a staff member was available at the door at all transition times: start and end of session, going to/from gymnasium or music room or school assembly or fire alarm practice. This served a number of purposes: regularly being available to parents/carers and children, having concurrent sight of inside and outside of the classroom, and ensuring that staff knew where children were at all times.

Branded objects

Object brands (see *Appendix 7.11 Object Brands List*, page 314) were only recorded if either the child or an adult mentioned the brand name: thus object brand was categorised as a social property. Across all the data most of the mentions of brand name were by a child rather than by an adult. There were three instances where adults mentioned that they did not know the brand name but a child was able to supply the brand: Nintendo, Gormiti and Umbro. As can be seen from the table below, brand seemed to be one of the features of an object which children were happy to speak about and brand was often included in any initial adult-child conversation about the object's properties. Children spoke of a brand as a distinguishing feature to a similar extent as colour or object use. A child's mention of a brand name often followed the pattern:

It is a (BRAND) (Item) (type of object).

So, for example, in relation to Image 5-32 above, the child's statement in response to a question as to what the object was took the form:

It's a Ben 10 Omnitrix watch.

While the brand name and the item name are both accurate and illustrate a depth of understanding about the Ben 10 range of children's objects it is interesting to note that the designation of the object type as watch does not conform to the Ben 10 marketing which describes the object as an "Illuminator". This illustrates that while a child participated in behaviours associated with branding they also had their own constructions of the objects.

The following table illustrates the frequency of object brand mentions in each setting. These mentions are based on conversations including a brand name.

Table 5-23: Object brands summary

Object brands	All		Nursery		P1/2	
Unknown	71	41.0%	37	46.8%	34	36.2%
None	31	17.9%	7	8.9%	24	25.5%
Ben 10	8	4.6%	7	8.9%	1	1.1%
Lego	7	4.0%	2	2.5%	5	5.3%
Power Rangers	4	2.3%	3	3.8%	1	1.1%
Transformers	4	2.3%	4	5.1%	0	0.0%
Enid Blyton	3	1.7%	0	0.0%	3	3.2%
Wall-E	3	1.7%	1	1.3%	2	2.1%
Gormiti	2	1.2%	1	1.3%	1	1.1%
Great Britain	2	1.2%	0	0.0%	2	2.1%
Kinder	2	1.2%	0	0.0%	2	2.1%
Ninja Turtles	2	1.2%	0	0.0%	2	2.1%
Shaun the Sheep	2	1.2%	0	0.0%	2	2.1%
Tesco	2	1.2%	0	0.0%	2	2.1%
Thunderbirds	2	1.2%	1	1.3%	1	1.1%
Umbro	2	1.2%	2	2.5%	0	0.0%
101 Dalmatians	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
ABBA	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	0	0.0%
All Blacks	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Baby Annabel	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Barbie	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	0	0.0%
Dora the Explorer	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	0	0.0%

Object brands	All		Nursery		P1/2	
Dr Seuss	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Duplo	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	0	0.0%
High School Musical	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	0	0.0%
Hornby	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Ice Age	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	0	0.0%
In the Night Garden	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	0	0.0%
Indiana Jones	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
My Little Pony	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Nick Butterworth	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Nintendo	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	0	0.0%
Over the Hedge	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Peter Pan	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	0	0.0%
Polly Pocket	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	0	0.0%
Spiderman	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	0	0.0%
Superman	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	0	0.0%
Sylvanian Families	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	0	0.0%
The Little Mermaid	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Toy Story	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	0	0.0%
Winnie the Pooh	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Zeebeez	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%

41 different brands were mentioned during observations in this early childhood setting. A brand was mentioned more often by a Nursery child than a P1/2 child and by a boy than a girl. The most often mentioned brand was Ben 10 by Nursery boys.

The three brands most mentioned in the Nursery – Ben 10, Transformers, Power Rangers – were all associated with objects brought by boys and marketed as action heroes for adventure play. These particular brands were much less visible in the P1/2 object bringing practices. For instance, in the P1/2 room the most mentioned branded objects were Lego, Enid Blyton, Kinder, Ninja Turtles, Shaun the Sheep and Tesco. However, none of these objects received more than 5 mentions which illustrates the limited mentions of brands in P1/2.

When brand mentions are compared to the number of brought-in objects per classroom, the Nursery children brought in fewer objects but mentioned more brands. The P1/2 children brought in more objects than Nursery children did and were less likely to mention a brand.

Gender as an example of the mingling of physical and social object properties

Gendered social interactions

Gender was seen to play a nuanced role in the patterns associated with brought-in objects. As seen in the following discussion about various physical properties of the brought-in objects particular colours appeared to differ by gender: pink and mauve were only seen to be associated with girls' objects and blacks and browns were more often associated with boys' objects. Further, the activities associated with objects through in-classroom conversations also appeared to be gendered: superheroes being an activity mentioned in conversation which was almost entirely associated with boys' objects and personal adornment being a topic entirely associated with girl's objects.

Research suggests that the gender of the child influences the child's choosing of objects. This suggestion was demonstrated for children as young as two years of age in Campbell et al's (2000) preferential looking study. And again later, Lloyd and Smith's (2011) research into toy selection and play found that a child who was part of a mixed gender pair was more likely to make an opposite gender toy selection than a child who was part

of a same gender pair which suggests that gender influences object choice in different ways depending on the gender of the playmate. That children chose their objects at home may mean that their object choices were less influenced by peer gender as their peers were not present and speaks to the complexity of gender influences in children's object choices. An example of just how complex these toy choice processes are can be found in Cherney & Dempsey's (2010) study using objects of ambiguous gender and children aged three to five years old being asked to choose an object to play with. While boys tended to state that the gender of any ambiguous object they chose was male, it was not just the choosing process which differed between boys and girls: how children interacted with the objects also differed by gender.

Among the object-associated experiences which appeared to be least influenced by gender were caring for animals and doing things with the family. In object events in which caring was mentioned similar numbers of girls and boys brought a range of animal objects including cuddly toys and plastic model animals. These were plush fabric toys as well as hard plastic animals such as a lizard, turtle and sheep. When talking about doing things with the family boys and girls brought objects such as photographs, a nappy, a party plan catalogue and a mother's childhood teddy bear. Across both themes there appeared to be an element of care, for either family or animals. Recurring aspects of care such as understanding differences, individual needs, nurturing and generating another's happiness were noted in the conversations associated with these themes and these aspects of care appeared to be genderless.

Material, texture and gender

By far the most common material was plastic, followed by paper and plush fabrics. Texture was related to the material of manufacture in that cloth fabrics were more likely to be soft and even fluffy while moulded plastics tended toward the hard and smooth. Natural materials seemed to bridge these distinctions, as illustrated below, in that they were the most likely to be multi-textural. So, for example, the fresh chicken's

eggs brought in by a boy in P1/2 was hard and smooth on the outside in contrast to the soft and slimy texture on the inside. Plant materials also often included a range of textures as was the case with the bleeding heart branch and flowers brought to P1/2: the flowers were delicate, the branch crackled when bent and the leaves were pliable.

Table 5-24: Examples of texture: natural materials



 <p>Image 5-39: Texture: crackling stems and pliable leaves with crisp flowers (P1/2)</p>	 <p>Image 5-40: Texture: raw egg includes hard, smooth, soft and slimy (P1/2)</p>
---	---

Gender also appeared to be associated with texture as objects boys brought in were more likely to be toughened and have smooth or hard surfaces such as was seen in toy cars, construction materials and action hero figures. On the other hand, objects which girls brought in were often softer and potentially less resilient such as was the gauze fabric used on a mauve mask or the fraying ribbon around a white teddy bear’s neck.

Colour and gender

Bright or strong colours were reliably associated with objects brought by boys, such as Power Rangers, as well as objects marketed as unisex including Lego or story books. Black and brown were also more often seen on objects brought by boys such as Transformers and Ben 10. An example of the use of black as a colour for boys was the Indiana Jones dress-up doll brought in by a boy in P1/2. It included clothes which could be removed and was coloured in shades of black and grey throughout.

Table 5-25: Examples of object colour: strong colours

 <p>Image 5-41: Colour: Strong yellow (Nursery)</p>	 <p>Image 5-42: Colour: Strong red (P1/2)</p>
---	---

As illustrated in the above images, objects which are marketed for children of either gender (for example Lego) were seen to have intense and often multiple uses of colour.


No boy brought in an object coloured pink or mauve while some girls brought in objects using colours black, grey or brown. As found by Bussey & Bandura (1992) gender boundaries appear to be applied by boys to a greater extent than by girls.

Table 5-26: Examples of object colour: objects brought by boys

 <p>Image 5-43: Colour: objects brought by boys (Nursery)</p>	 <p>Image 5-44: Colour: objects brought by boys (P1/2)</p>
---	--

However, if the brought-in objects are sorted by the gender of the child, by far the most popular colours associated with girl's brought-in objects are pink and mauve. While some objects brought by girls used creams, beige or white these were in the minority. The preponderance of pink and mauve in objects girls brought in meant that there was more variety in the base colour of boys' objects than those brought by girls.

Table 5-27: Examples of object colour: objects brought by girls

 <p>Image 5-45: Colour: objects brought by girls (Nursery)</p>	 <p>Image 5-46: Colour: objects brought by girls (Nursery)</p>
--	---

As both of the above examples illustrate, the pink associated with girls’ brought-in objects was of a particular shade and intensity. None of this colour was seen on any non-gendered²¹ or boys’ objects: this particular pink, in this context at least, was associated with girls. So strong was the gendered association with pinks-through-mauve’s that no boy brought-in an object which was entirely pink in colour although one Nursery boy brought-in a Power Ranger, as part of a group of different coloured Power Rangers, which had some reddish pink on it. He described it as “pink” and, when challenged by a peer with “that’s a girl’s Power Ranger” responded by commenting that this Power Ranger was able to “do anything we want”.

5.2.5 Summarising the brought-in object findings

The detailed response to Research Question 1: What objects did children bring? is that they brought a wide range of portable, often gendered, objects which had been part of their previous out-of-school experiences. The objects brought to the Nursery included an extensive collection of boys’ superhero objects and many items of personal adornment for girls. The objects brought to P1/2 showed a dramatic drop in both boys’ superhero characters and girls’ adornment and an increase in objects associated with nature and literacies. Gendered objects illustrate the interrelationship between the

²¹ Another somewhat arbitrary distinction here as gendered or non-gendered is a matter of interpretation. Here these statements are made from my own interpretations based in my own experiences.

physical and social characteristics of children's objects and how these influence the interactions around them. Across both classrooms practitioners consistently engaged with a high proportion of brought-in objects.

Practitioners transformed children's brought-in objects into education resources by engaging in some or all of the pedagogical practices described in the next section.

These practices always began with practitioner-child conversations about the physical and social characteristics of objects. In Nursery these conversations developed into an in-school experience with the object. In P1/2 those objects whose physical or social properties showed strong links to literacies during the initial whole-group conversation at carpet time were likely to become resources in curricular activities at the allotted time slot for that subject. We begin our next section with a brief introduction then move on to descriptions of the patterns in practitioners' pedagogical practices associated with brought-in objects.

5.3 Practitioners' pedagogical responses to objects children bring with them

This section is in response to Research Question 2 which asked what pedagogical practices early childhood practitioners used when interacting with children and the objects they voluntarily brought from home?

Pedagogical responses are perceived by pupils and are also available to be perceived by others, such as a researcher, who may observe a pedagogical response or episode of multiple responses. In this research raw data were made up of a 173 of these practitioner-child-object episodes. For purposes of analysis, each of the 173 practitioner-child-object episodes was broken down into its constituent practitioner's behaviours, or particular ways of responding, in order to discover the patterns of pedagogical practice which supported these particular practitioner's responses to children's brought-in objects.

When practitioners engage with children's brought-in objects, object transformation is defined as changes in use of an object. So, for instance, a child's play object or toy arrives at the classroom door and becomes a conversational object. If the object of conversation is used to cement a social group then it has been transformed again. Should the object go on to be central to an activity in which children engage with number concepts, develop further vocabulary and increase their manual dexterity it has been transformed into a multi-faceted educational resource useful in engaging children in concept development and understanding. Object transformation is thus closely linked to meaning-making since at each stage of the object transformation process its meaning has shifted or been added to or modified in some way by the adult or children shaping the process of engagement with it.

As described in the research methods, an untransformed object is defined as one which was brought-in but not engaged with by practitioners or children. Of the 173 brought-in objects in this research a total of 32 were deemed untransformed: 16 in Nursery and 16 in P1/2. In other words, these objects were not seen to make any difference to the child's interactions with their peers or practitioner's plans for the day.

Across the two rooms the following practices were associated with untransformed objects:

- supply practitioners were in the room
- practitioners were busy with others or momentarily away from the door/carpet time
- welcoming time ran out (particularly so in P1/2)
- the child obscured the object as they passed through the doorway (pockets, sleeves and behind the back were the most common sites observed for obscured objects)
- the child asked a practitioner to keep an object private (particular to P1/2 practices).

In these two classrooms practitioners' pedagogical practices shaped the ways children engaged with brought-in objects such that the in-school patterns of engagement could be described as educational: a child's brought-in object was transformed into an educational resource by practitioners making use of subtle, flexible, yet similar patterns of pedagogical engagement with each child and the object they brought. By educational I here mean that the objects took on purposes to do with knowledge creation, the children's personal advancement in relation to the curriculum and strengthening of their skills in engaging with the world and other people. Of the 173 brought-in objects 141 (or 81.5%) were transformed.

To say that practitioners transformed the objects may be overstating their role in the sense that what became of the objects was most certainly a collaborative matter between not only a particular practitioner and the particular child and their object but also other practitioners and children who may have been drawn into the collaborative event. Yet, what became clear over time was that there were patterns to a practitioner's behaviours which, although collaborative, were most certainly shaped by what the first practitioner a child approached said and did in relation to the object a child brought. Other practitioners often took their lead from the first practitioner's response and followed it through with contributions of their own.

It is in this sense of practitioners making use of pedagogical practices to shape an event because of their greater knowledge of the purposes of an educational setting that I speak of practitioners transforming the objects into educational resources. Yet it is important to emphasise that while practitioners led or guided the process their consistent intention was observed to be to engage others throughout. It is also important to state that a practitioner's taking a leading role was, in most cases, not a commanding or highly directive stance on their part. Rather, it appeared to be a quiet, often gentle, almost subtle role which provided multiple and varied spaces for children to participate to whatever degree they saw fit.

On occasion these object-based events had elements of dramatic theatre about them, such as was evident when Parker brought his 1m long plush tiger to P1/2. However, this vignette provides one example of the variety of practitioners' use of the patterns of pedagogical practice which are described and discussed after it.

What is typical in this vignette is a practitioner's willingness to engage with children's experiences. What is less typical is the degree of theatre with which it begins.

Vignette 5-6: Ms Penny and Parker's Tiger's Lunch**Image 5-47: Plush tiger****Preamble**

The P1/2 children are all sitting on the floor on a large circular carpet with the letters of the alphabet woven into its perimeter. Most of the children have already been on the carpet for a few minutes and practitioner has already welcomed a number of objects from home one of which is a freshly laid chicken's egg. The classroom door swings open and Ms Penny stands in the doorway obstructing the entry for child Parker and his metre long plush toy tiger. All eyes are on Ms Penny, Parker and tiger.

Snippets of conversations from field notes:

Ms Penny: Don't worry class, I'll protect you! I won't let him in!

Child: He's alright Miss! He's only a toy!

(Ms Penny looks relieved and all enter and join the circle of children on the carpet. Parker has the tiger sitting over his lap as well as over the children's laps on either side of him. Tiger is larger than Parker and is obstructing his view of the rest of the group. The morning routine starts with prayers²².)

Ms Penny: Parker, please make sure he (pointing at tiger) joins his paws. Are his eyes shut?

Parker: He can't.

²² As this was a denominational school the start of day's routine in Primary 1/2 included a morning prayer, repeated together as part of the regular carpet time routine.

Ms Penny: OK. We'll let him off then....
 (Morning routine moves on to organising school dinners....)
 Ms Penny: Parker, what are you having for your lunch today?
 Parker: (States his lunch preference.)
 Ms Penny: What would the tiger like today?
 Parker: He would like some meat.
 Ms Penny: (*Looks at lunch menu.*) I only have chicken or ham.
 Parker: He likes *real* meat.
 Ms Penny: I'll have to talk to Ms Peacock then – see what she can do.
 (She continues around the circle asking children their preference for lunch then leaves to deliver lunch list to the kitchen as normal. Later Ms Peacock (the dinner lady) arrives at the door.)

Ms Peacock: Who is this? (*Looking at the tiger.*)
 Parker: My tiger. He needs meat for his dinner.
 Ms Peacock: You know I have a tiger nearly twice as big as this one at home. He gets hungry too! I'll see what I can do for his dinner. (*Mrs F leaves.*)

What followed

On the day: further discussion between students with and without practitioner about who eats what in the animal world. Talk between children about what 'healthy' eating means.

Next day at lunch orders: 'What you like' versus 'what's good for you'. "If tigers ate What would happen to them?" and "Why?" Different kinds of stomachs for different kinds of digestion and cows have lots of stomachs, 5 a day, growing things you like in your own garden, eating food fresh "like tigers eat fresh meat."

What started²³ outside the classroom door as a practitioner-child-object interaction was shaped by practitioner's use of six pedagogical practices which will be illustrated and discussed in turn:

²³ Bearing in mind that in Dewey's framing good experiences have continuity so while this portion of this child's experience is said to *start* at the classroom door, what has actually started at the door was my observation of a small snippet of the child's on-going experience with their object which here takes on the designation *brought-in object* for research purposes. Similar caveats apply to all research extractions (or choices to focus on particular aspects) from what is an on-going conglomerate of experience for all parties.

1. Welcoming the object and experience
2. Scaffolding experimental thinking and behaviours
3. Supporting collaborative learning by negotiating or directing experiences
4. Enabling experience as doing or experience as thinking about doing
5. Responsive planning
6. Recording memories

5.3.1 Shared pedagogical practices with objects in both classrooms

Across both classrooms, practitioners made use of similar practices. These are named and described below. However, the detailed implementation of each of the particular practices differed in each classroom. Under each individual practice heading, the different implementations are described first for the Nursery and then for the P1/2 classroom.

However, in both classrooms the practitioners' use of language as a tool for responsive practice was mentioned during interviews. When asked to describe a previous incident in which a child's bringing of an object did not go well all experienced practitioners responded with a statement similar to "I won't let it go badly because I change as I go along. I make it work for the child." This suggests that practitioners are using their understanding of a child's language to aid their interpretation of a child's actions and responses as well as using their own language to shape the practitioner-child-object interaction in ways which go well for each child. Through both verbal and body language, practitioners shaped children's experiences using the following six practices.

Welcoming the object and child's experience

First contact between practitioner and child with brought-in object

In the Nursery the classroom doorway was conveniently positioned such that the practitioner standing in the doorway had full view of the main entrance into the Nursery complex and the children's coat hooks with personal storage bays as well as the Nursery

classroom. This Nursery classroom doorway provided an overall view of the whole interior setting and functioned as the final gateway into the classroom area. In the Nursery the first easily visible or audible contact with a child's brought-in object was made at this doorway although practitioners spoke of how it helped them in their interaction with the child if they had caught a glimpse of the object as it came through previous doorways with the child. However, given how crowded the hats and coats and boots area was at transition times it is likely that it was often only a glimpse which the practitioners were able to gain prior to speaking with the child and their responsible adult as they entered the final Nursery doorway.

In the P1/2 setting there were two different physical layouts during the data collection period. Between the first and second data collection periods an additional classroom was built into what had been an open interior space just outside of the P1/2 classroom door. So, in the initial data collection period the first contact between a practitioner and a child's brought-in object was usually somewhere within this open space. A practitioner tended to be present in this space in order to welcome the children and give parents an opportunity to make contact if so desired. This was a highly social space full of children busy hanging up their coats and parents and practitioners mingling together. However, in similar fashion to the Nursery entrance space, this space was often so busy that any advantage which the practitioner might gain from early sight of the object was often minimal. However, what this space provided was an opportunity for a child to initiate a public/private conversation with a practitioner if they so chose. Objects which were deemed to be private would go into a child's tray for safe keeping beyond this space. Objects that were deemed to be public would move into the classroom with the child and be held on the child's lap while they sat on the carpet waiting for the start of the school day.

During the Summer school holidays an additional classroom was built into this previously open space. This meant that during the second period of data collection the

pattern of engagement between practitioner, children and parents was different in that the physical space had been much reduced and most parents no longer entered the building with their children unless they particularly wanted to speak with a practitioner. The hats and coats and boots space was now in a corridor which led to the P1/2 classroom door. This reduction in physical space and the new patterns of movement associated with it appeared to shift the first engagement with the objects as well as any public/private conversations to the P1/2 classroom door.

Practitioners accept, hold, investigate then pass around the object

Children proffered their objects to the practitioner. The Encarta online dictionary defines proffering as “to hold something out to somebody so that he or she can take or grasp it” and “to offer something for consideration to somebody.” In these classroom contexts it also included a degree of tentativeness or risk taking on the part of the child in association with trusting child-practitioner relationships. The child’s object was valuable to them and they were risking their valuing of it in a different context. Had children assumed the object had a right to be in the classroom they would have taken it into the classroom without engagement with the practitioner (as was suggested by the pattern for older boys in the Nursery and for children in P1/2 if there were no practitioner at the door).

Particularly for the younger children, this proffering of the object was often their opening gambit in the conversation. It required little or no speech on their part, seemed to gain the attention of the practitioner and other adults without seriously interrupting adult conversations and ensured a practitioner’s response. The object was always held as high as the child could comfortably hold it such that it was often in line with the child’s own head rather than in line with their waist. This suggested that there was a growing understanding of an adult’s line-of-sight and the need to position their object within it.

In the P1/2 setting proffering of each object could take place more than once. If a practitioner was at the doorway the child proffered their object and the practitioner engaged in a discussion about the object and whether the child wanted to share it with the class. Practitioners spoke of this as “checking whether the child wants to share it or not.” Objects to be shared were proffered again at carpet time. A practitioner’s accepting, holding and dextrously investigating aspects of the object triggered the detailed verbal questioning of the object’s name, origins and possible meanings within the group.

A practitioner’s decision to pass around an object was supported by asking the object’s owner for an opinion if the object appeared delicate in any way. So, when Paula brought a Bleeding Heart flower, Paula and Ms Patrick decided together not to pass it around for fear of it being damaged since it was “so delicate.”

Available to child

Here we are not referring to available in the sense of merely being present and taking a level of responsibility for health and safety and the child’s general well-being. This availability is about a meeting of minds. Here the child can ask almost anything, say almost anything, connect seemingly random aspects into an imaginary whole and the practitioner is with the child in attention, responsive speech, eye contact, sense of humour and enthusiasm throughout the conversation. In this kind of availability children can be children without any fear of censure for being silly. This is an availability to engage in a creative space in which teachers can be transformed into dogs and frogs or small parts of a toy transformed into a drawing and measuring experience where each child measures then compares the lengths of their drawing’s arm, their own arm and their teacher’s arm first with the pencils they used for drawing (until they realised that they each had different lengths of pencil) and then with a tape measure even though they were “not sure what the number says” on the tape. This practitioner’s availability to a child is about providing a safe and accepting space in which meanings

can be made together. In this form of practitioner availability not knowing something was a challenge for children to find something out rather than associated with a sense of failure.

Available to parent/carer

Again this is an availability which goes further than a presence at the door at times of transition. This availability is about respecting a parent as a child's primary adult. One practitioner spoke of parents as the "child's primary educator" and emphasised the need for practitioners to respect the parent's choice of objects for their children and engage with them. One practitioner saw parental gifts to the children as instances of parents "buying what they know the child will enjoy." Another viewed children's objects as valuable information from "parents who know them best" as to what the child engaged in outside of school hours and, as such, viewed objects as both a resource for further in-classroom engagements and a rich source of information to add to a their understanding of a particular child.

This was not just one-way traffic in which objects and their information travelled from home to school. Practitioners made a point of having digital cameras available for children's use in the classrooms so that children could record the events in their day and share them with parents/carers at the end of the session. Where possible, practitioners also made a point of sharing with parents the highlights of a child's object's journey through the classroom. These were often highly entertaining renditions of the day's happenings so it was not unusual for a brought-in object to be the topic of discussion as parent and child left the building.

Complimenting

Practitioners used compliments to increase a child's confidence in their choices, their ideas or their suggestions for activities. Whether it was a result of the largely female early childhood staff, or whether this was merely a coincidence it is hard to say, but most of the compliments associated with the object itself were of the form "Isn't

beautiful / colourful / sparkling / delicate.” Not once did I hear an object complimented for being strong, or grey, or manly. Practitioners seemed to be in a difficult position in that their compliments regarding objects appeared to be very heartfelt and an honest portrayal of their own response to the object. Somehow they did not seem able to bring themselves to engage in complimenting in a more male manner those objects which did not appeal to their own personal taste. Instead, they tended to compliment girls’ objects and say something akin to “I can see you really enjoy this!” about boys’ objects.

The same quandary did not seem to apply to ideas or suggestions for activities. Practitioners were quick to say “Great idea!” or “That sounds like fun!” irrespective of the gender of the child and this complimenting often energised a child’s making of a curricular link and the collaborative development of an associated activity.

Encourages child voice

Hearing a child’s voice in an early childhood setting is often not about practitioner’s listening with their ears. Rather it is about a kind of listening which involves all the senses and includes a considerable skill in reading body language. Against this background practitioners could be seen to be encouraging child voice when associating a quiet child with a more vocal peer who was sympathetic to the quiet child’s needs, asking a child to take their object to small group planning meetings and valuing a child’s drawing and suggesting that others might like to draw too. Particularly in the Nursery, child voice is viewed as any kind of suggestion from the child which might help to shape future events and practitioners were seen to take great care in turning non-verbal child voice into a verbal form in order to avoid embarrassing or misrepresenting a child’s view. This respect for child voice seemed to be linked to practitioner’s use of waiting as a pedagogical behaviour since when in doubt the practitioner was seen to wait until evidence of the child’s view was more explicit.

Waiting

Waiting long enough for a child to be able to respond was a pedagogical practice most often associated with the Nursery or an experienced member of staff. Waiting was spoken of by the practitioner less experienced at an Early Level as a quality they admired, tried to make use of but felt would take more practice. One less experienced practitioner member said “I can hear myself talking and just wish I could be quiet!” This suggests that silence, as is often the case when practitioners wait for a child to respond, can be rather uncomfortable and practitioners fall into the trap of filling the silence with speech rather than allowing the young child time to process and respond in their own way. For one less experienced practitioner, waiting was spoken of as risky in that “they (meaning the child) might just walk away” since social signals of attention, or its end, are at play and both practitioner and child can be unsure how best to proceed.

Experienced practitioners seemed to be able to wait longer before speaking, behaved as if they had more time by speaking slowly, took time to get down to a child’s level or even sit on the floor with them and took longer talking about the object they were holding. It was not uncommon to see an object pass backward and forward a number of times between an experienced practitioner and a child as particular features of the object were commented on and considered in turn. This slowing down of the conversation in conjunction with the passing back and forth of the object seemed to be one of the ways more experienced practitioners managed to make waiting easier. Thus it was not so much a silent waiting, although that happened sometimes too, but a slowing of the pace which constituted waiting for the child to respond.

A second aspect of waiting, hinted at above, was that experienced practitioners spoke with confidence of what one referred to as the children’s ability to “get there by themselves.” These practitioners had built up a high degree of experienced confidence that the child’s contribution would be valuable and was worth waiting for and saw their task in the initial object-related conversation as to wait, to acknowledge and to possibly assist with resources when a child’s interest led to a curricular link. The Nursery

practitioners were adamant that a three year old children could “grow the magic bean into Jack’s beanstalk” if supported.

Across the data practitioner’s waiting occurred most often in the Nursery. A number of factors appeared to work together with waiting: available time, group sizes, presence of parent/carer and inclusion of the child’s peers. By available time I mean that the Nursery timetable was less subject-based with more fluid transitions wherever possible. This meant that there was seldom a whole class instruction to do X or Y. Rather, children were aware of the timetable and tended to gravitate toward the next activity as and when they had completed their previous activity. Exceptions to this were the Art and Music teachers but as a rule there was less whole group management or change which allowed flexible management of time. Also, the relationship between a particular practitioner and their small group meant that children tended to receive instruction from their own group practitioner rather than as a whole Nursery group together. The practitioner was thus able to adjust the transition to a next activity to when it seemed appropriate.

There were also occasions when Nursery practitioners seemed to wait for the appropriate moment to invite a child’s peer into the group. On one occasion a peer was changing shoes in the hallway and the practitioner was heard to say “Why don’t we wait for Naomi to get ready? I know she will want to see your purple bracelet.” Once Naomi had joined the group a plan to make further bracelets from craft straws of varying lengths was developed with peers.

So, in summary, ability to wait was a pedagogical practice associated most with the Nursery practitioners and with experienced early childhood practitioners in either setting. It was mentioned by less experienced practitioners as being a practice they aspired to but found difficult to deliver.

Conversations between equals at eye-to-eye level

Experienced practitioners always stooped or got down on the floor so as to be eye-to-eye with children bringing objects to school. Less experienced practitioners were seen to be more nervous about what might happen and often stayed standing while making eye contact with the child in brief spurts rather than for extended periods of time. It was as if they were not sure what other responsibilities might make a call on their attention at any moment.

As well as taking measures to make their heights more equal practitioners also took every opportunity to reveal their ignorance regarding an object that was not familiar to them. So, for instance, Ms Patrick took extensive instructions from Paco regarding the ZeeBeez he brought to school. Ms Nesbit took a lesson from Neil on how to use the “Ben 10 watch” which turned out to be a compass-like device for tracking Ben 10 themed aliens. This allowed other children to voice their ignorance too as was the case just before Christmas when Ms Nesbit engaged in a conversation with Neil’s parent about a Nintendo DS and admitted that she had never played on one so could not offer a view. Neil suggested that he bring his DS in so Ms Nesbit could “learn how to do it”. The DS arrived on the following day and Ms Parker and a number of pupils all had a chance to “have a go”. One of the children found it to be less fun than he had anticipated and was heard to tell his parent, as he left the Nursery, “I don’t want one anymore. It’s still too hard for me.”

Use of humour

Practitioners made very careful use of humour in that it was always at their own rather than anyone else’s expense. A common theme in the use of humour was a practitioner trying on objects of adornment which children brought to school. Mr Newman got all the girls giggling when he tried on Neena’s pink tulle headband although none of the boys thought him funny. Ms Nesbit routinely tried on every piece of personal adornment which arrived while she was at the classroom door and it was a source of

much entertainment to both children and parents. Practitioners also made use of play acting such as that performed by Ms Penny regarding Parker's Tiger's Lunch or Ms Patrick and Pippa's peacock feather, which Ms Patrick pretended to tickle herself with, each time a child mentioned the word feather. Humour was repeatedly used to play with the boundaries of vocabulary and behaviour. Boundaries which were seen to be played with were real/fiction, manners/no manners, fitting/not fitting, visible/invisible, weak/powerful and useless/useful. Practitioners seemed intent on using humour to widen children's assumptions about what was or was not possible.

Scaffolding experimental behaviours and thinking

Practitioners hold proffered object

Across both Nursery and P1/2 classrooms children appeared to open the conversation with the practitioner about their objects by holding up the object for the practitioner to take it and have a detailed look at it. This proffering of the object was consistent irrespective of practitioner, child or classroom apart from those times when a relatively unknown supply practitioner was at the classroom door. This suggests that children required a certain degree of familiarity with the adult before they were willing to engage in a conversation regarding their brought-in object. The object was always proffered for supply practitioners who were very familiar to the children. The practitioner having taken hold of the object seemed to open up the possibilities or launch the conversation.

The underlying premise for engagement with the objects was different in each classroom. In the Nursery the underlying premise was stated by both Ms Nesbitt and Ms Nash to be "sharing". This meant that practitioners acted from the assumption that the child brought the object to share it with staff and other children. This premise of sharing was visible at various stages of the object transformation process: this interaction with the practitioner being the first. Within this practitioner-child interaction there was considerable possible reward for the child's having shared the

object: personal and specifically object related attention from the practitioner, the practitioner's drawing in of peers into the conversation, the possibility of an interesting (or even fun) activity and the security of something to do immediately on arrival to state only a few of the possible explanations which practitioners mentioned as possible motivations for a child's bringing of an object.

The underlying premise for engagement with the objects in P1/2 was stated by Ms Patrick to be private vs public. Here the child had the opportunity to make a choice regarding who they intended to share the object with and as part of this process P1/2 practitioners were always offered the object to hold. This practitioner's holding of the object was a consistent pattern between child and practitioner during the carpet time interactions as well as being part of the public/private conversation when that took place either in the open space outside of the classroom or in the classroom doorway. On the carpet objects which children had opted to classify as public were proffered to the practitioner irrespective of whether they had done so previously or not.

In summary, practitioners were usually offered the object to hold. In Nursery that most commonly took place at the doorway under the assumption that all objects brought were for sharing. In P1/2 the underlying assumption was that the child could choose between a public or private conversation regarding the object. In both instances the practitioners would take the proffered object even if they had previously done so as part of a public/private conversation which had opted to be public and so was now going public during carpet time. This accepting of a proffered object appeared to be an opening part of the object transformation process.

Practitioner asking questions

Practitioners made use of questions to engage the child in object related talk. These questions often followed a pattern. The most common first question was "What is it?" This usually elicited a name for the object or started a discussion about the object's name, its properties or its material.

The second question often related to who or where the object had come from. The most typical response to this question drew family members or friends into the conversation. Father had brought an Australian bush hat back from his recent visit in the “outback”. Perry brought in a MO (from the movie Wall-E) and mentioned Tesco’s having lots – “even one for you.” By far the most common response to questions regarding an object’s origin was that it was from home and had been a gift either from a parent or a family member or belonged to an older sibling who had allowed the child to bring it in. Associated with the discussion about the object’s origin was often considerable detail about a child’s family relationships. What did seem to be a very common practice was that family members who travelled either on holiday or as part of their employment seemed to bring back mementoes for children. Often the object would have particular significance to the child as in the case of Paulo’s All Blacks commemorative booklet. Paulo spent his weekends playing rugby and this small booklet seemed to be particularly valuable to him.

The question most often associated with the imminent emergence of an object-related activity was the “What does it do?” Discussion regarding the uses of the object often generated a curricular link and an ensuing activity. So, for example, when a practitioner asked Pamela what her pink feathered magic wand did the discussion rapidly moved into various object transformations including the possibility, or not, of Ms Patrick being transformed into a dog, Ms Potter into a frog and a discussion about the reality or fiction of story or movie object transformations in general. Ms Patrick asks what “real” transformation the wand could assist with and was told that “it will help us all write magic stories this morning.”

Asking questions often engaged a full use of the child’s and adult’s senses in investigating the physical properties of an object. It provided opportunities for children to use or discover new vocabulary and to talk about object related processes such as

the changing of the colours in autumn leaves the making of moulded plastic toys and the origins of leather for bush hats.

Persistent or undeterred

Particularly in the Nursery experienced practitioners did not give up if the conversation was slow to develop. They persisted and worked their way through a wide range of conversational starters in order to draw a child in to a conversation about a brought-in object.

In the main, children in P1/2 seemed less reluctant to engage in conversations regarding their brought-in objects. However, there were a few children who for various reasons (including having English as a second language, having a stammer, or being very shy) were less likely to take part in object related conversations. Practitioners were seen engaging with these children on a one-to-one basis after the carpet time discussion to ensure that they had an opportunity to participate further away from the limelight since, as one practitioner member said, “saying it is harder for them.”

Play acting or game

Here Ms Penny and Parker’s Tiger’s Lunch (see *Vignette 5-6: Ms Penny and Parker’s Tiger’s Lunch*, page 177) is probably the most useful example. However, practitioners seemed to take every opportunity on offer to play so would routinely take a turn when a new toy that was unfamiliar to them, or any member of the group, arrived. This playing was not only of the play acting type but often looked like the practitioner was having a good time trying out a new object or toy. By being playful practitioners seemed to keep boundaries open to the possibility of change, modification or discussion.

Discussion of physical and social properties

After accepting the proffered object from the child the practitioner typically started engaging in a conversation based firstly on a series of questions. “What is this?” or a

variant of it such as “What have you brought us?” was the most common opening question. This started a naming and classification process that, if sufficient time was available, could go on for a couple of minutes. It would work through a whole range of further questions all aimed at developing a history and understanding of the particular object; who, what, where, when, why and how were all put to good use to detail the physical characteristics of the object as well as its recent social history. Throughout this questioning process practitioners made liberal use of opportunities to compare the child’s object to their own personal experiences. “I had a hat like that once” and “That’s the same colour as my scarf” or “I loved Kinder Surprises when I was little too” were just a few of the wide range of personal comments which were included in the discussion of the physical and social properties of the objects.

Practitioners also made much use of humour and implied or overt compliments, usually at their own expense, in these discussions. They would offer to try something on (see *Vignette 5-1: Nancy’s Emerald Ring*, page 123), question what would happen if they wore clothing similar to one of the toy figures to the next important staff meeting (see *Vignette 6-1: Ms Nash and Neil’s “Superman with sounds”*, page 284), suggest a swap of his eye glasses in exchange for a pink tulle hair band brought in from a wedding (see *Image 5-46: Colour: objects brought by girls (Nursery)*, page 172), as well as offer unequivocal compliments regarding a child’s taste. The particular physical aspects which were discussed included size, shapes, smell, numbers, colours, textures, materials and uses. The social aspects included a wide range of family and other relationships present in the stories of where or who the objects had come from. Included in the social relationships mentioned were grandparents, mothers, fathers, uncles and aunts, friends of the family, relatives living overseas, specifically named shops, a child’s birthday party and often older siblings who appeared willing to lend a younger sibling a personal object for the day so they could show it to their teacher. Throughout this discussion practitioners used their understanding of the various children’s interests to draw like-minded peers into the object discussion.

Supporting collaborative learning by negotiating or directing experiences*All peers included or practitioners drawing in a few peers*

In both classrooms peers were very much a part of the process of engaging with children's objects. In the Nursery peers were drawn in to make up small, like-minded groups for object associated activities. In P1/2 the assumption was that objects which passed the public/private test at the doorway were to be shared with the whole class group. Thus, in P1/2 all peers were included while in Nursery like-minded peers were invited. Peers seemed to help to scaffold the object engagement process, offer ideas regarding activities, increase a child's enjoyment of an activity and strengthen a child's sense of belonging within the group. Often peers would be drawn in to talking about an object because they had similar objects at home or had seen similar elsewhere.

This practitioners' behaviour of drawing into the discussion like-minded peers was most easily visible in the Nursery where practitioners almost invariably called another child over to the group, or shepherded a child passing through the door into the object small group discussion. The arrival of the new child in the group was accompanied by a practitioner's mention of the children's shared interest and typically heralded a change from physical and social properties talk toward talk of an activity related to the object.

A similar process was visible in P1/2 public object discussions when, occasionally, the normal practice of working the way around the circle would be interrupted by a practitioner in order to draw a particular child with similar interest into the conversation sooner rather than later. However, in P1/2 the peer group was most typically the whole class group rather than any extraction from the whole class. Here the social network seemed to be deemed by practitioners to be the whole group and here activities as a result of a brought-in object were developed if someone mentioned a curricular link between an object and predominantly reading, writing and arithmetic.

Child mention of curricular link leads to educational activity

Practitioners in both classrooms seemed tuned to a child's mention of aspects of the objects which might serve as a curricular link. In Nursery these links were broader in the sense that almost any object seemed to be able to serve a curricular purpose. Again in Nursery these purposes were most commonly suggested by something one of the children in the small object discussion group would say. Occasionally, when a curricular link was not obvious, practitioners would either suggest an activity relating the brought-in object to the curriculum based on their knowledge of the children's interests or would wait, while the children moved off to play, until a curricular link became obvious through their play.

In P1/2 curricular links were largely related to reading, writing, arithmetic and understanding the natural world (science). Objects that did not link to these topics were discussed for their physical and social aspects after which the practitioner would ask children to put the object "In your tray please". Objects which evidenced a curricular link would be added to the activities for the day if appropriate or fed into future planning if that was deemed more appropriate by practitioners.

Enabling experience as doing or experiences as thinking about doing*Timing of object-related experiences*

In Nursery physically active aspects of object-related experiences (such as building, drawing, sculpting, dressing, wearing, writing, caring, photographing, telling) occurred as part of a seamless process which started with the object's arrival at the door and the practitioner's engagement with it. Children did not need to wait for an object-related activity to begin. Children found any suggested resources they chose to use and got to work immediately. This happened consistently, apart from on those occasions when the visiting PE, Art or Drama teacher was timetabled to work in the Nursery. In Nursery time was largely flexible and available for children's use.

In P1/2 there was a timetable for each day and brought-in object experiences which went on for longer than the whole-group discussion at the start of the day fitted into the allotted subject slots. Thus books were placed on the reading stand and referred to at the allotted time for reading and plants, stones, twigs and flowers were placed in the windowsill and included in the science and nature portion of a day. The organisation imposed by the timetable was also seen in the physical arrangement of the classroom in that there were focal points, which contained topic-specific resources, for reading, writing, number work. In P1/2 time and knowledge were organised.

Trusts child

The kind of trust that showed up most often across the data was practitioner's trusting that a child could make decisions, participate and proceed with minimum support. Trust appeared to be founded on the practitioner's view of each child as capable. This was expressed at interview as "they are far more capable than I first think so I'm trying to do less so they can do more." So, in the Nursery, children brought their objects to small group planning meetings and spoke for themselves regarding their interests. Practitioners also spoke of trusting the relationship between children and the curriculum so tried to wait for a child's interest to make the link rather than imposing their own link.

In P1/2 practitioners trusted the children to be able to distinguish between matters which were private between a practitioner and child and matters which were "for all of us." Practitioners' trust was also demonstrated in the low-key way in which the bringing of objects from home was managed. There was no particular system, such as is often the case with Show and Tell programmes. Children were trusted to bring objects as and when they felt the need to do so rather than "If it is Monday it must be my turn to bring something".

Responsive planning

While planning when and how to deliver the curriculum practitioners in both classrooms took account of what children brought in. In P1/2 practitioners planned together and made decisions based on the individual progress of each child against the background of learning milestones which practitioners drew from the curricular documents (past and new) and their own previous experience of children's progress in early childhood classrooms. Both the ECP and the teacher marked the children's work, heard their reading and could speak in detail of each child's progress. Taught aspects of the curriculum were regularly supported by four or five different small group activities in support of the new knowledge or skills. Each child would move through all or most of these small group activities depending on their level of understanding or need for challenge. However, given the overriding expectation that a child in Primary 1 should learn to read and write and count meant these aspects of the curriculum were most visible.

There were a number of occasions when I heard practitioners talk about bringing forward the date for introducing a particular topic because of the conversation generated by an object brought by a child. In P1/2 this was particularly visible after Ms Penny and Parker's Tiger's Lunch when the healthy eating topic was brought forward because the conversations around the tiger's lunch had made such a natural, child initiated introduction to a topic for which a number of practitioners were already on board and interested to see it go further.

The relationship between objects children brought and forward planning was different in the Nursery. Here practitioners encouraged children to bring their objects, the products of their object centred small group activity with peers and or any photograph they might have taken to the small group planning meeting which met last thing in each Nursery session. Here children could talk about what they had learned, where their interests were leading them and plans could be made to further the topic in future

sessions. This gave children a very direct voice into the planning process. However, while in Nursery practitioners supported children who were interested in reading, writing and arithmetic the practitioners took a rather holistic view of the Nursery / Early Level curriculum which was supported, in practice, by very thorough individual child progress record keeping by practitioners. "As long as they learn these things (referring to particular aspects of the curriculum) sometime over the next two years, I see it as useful to follow their interests rather than mine." So, in the Nursery the children bringing their objects, the objects evidencing the child's interests and the object informing planning was part of a practitioner's plan to encourage children to be "successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors" (a reference to the four stated purposes of the new Scottish Curriculum for Excellence).

Recording memories

In-school memories

Both classrooms had systems for recording memories. In Nursery both practitioners and children used the digital cameras to make photographic records of children's objects and products of in-school object experiences. These photographs were available for children to put into their memory books or to be taken home as additional continuity between the school and home experience. While practitioners had input into these memory books by way of recording children's experiences and outcomes the high proportion of children's art and design work meant the books were child-friendly and children were seen to enjoy looking through them and talking about them with their peers.

In P1/2, as the products of experiences were often oral (reading) or textual (writing) there were fewer photographs and more written work in memory folders. Also, practitioners systematic recording of outcomes related to experiences meant the

folders were shaped by practitioners' criteria for evidencing these experiences and outcomes.

Conversations with family

The typical Nursery practice of an adult-to-adult handover of children aged 3-5 years old meant that at least one member of staff in the Nursery saw a child's responsible adult at the beginning and end of each session. This did not necessitate a conversation at every handover but it meant that if there was something to talk about there was a regular opportunity. The healthy relationships associated with this regular contact meant the child's brought-in object was often talked about by practitioner, child and parents/carer on the way in of a morning and again on the way out at the end of the session or day. The conversations as the child brought the object in were often slightly apologetic on the part of the parent/carer. They expressed how uncertain they were as to whether the object would be appropriate or not, but the conversations after the session/day were often rich, full of humour and set up on-going conversations between child and their parent/carer as they left the building.

Data analysis suggested that this process of practitioners engaging with the objects children brought was not without risk or benefit to all parties concerned – as was evidenced by the parents occasionally expressing uncertainty regarding the appropriateness or not of the objects. Practitioners also mentioned their own awareness of risks. Further, there were differences in the detailed use of these patterns in Nursery and P1/2 as described below.

The following diagram illustrates the above practitioners' practices in relation to a child's on-going experiences. This diagram is particularly descriptive of the Nursery practices.

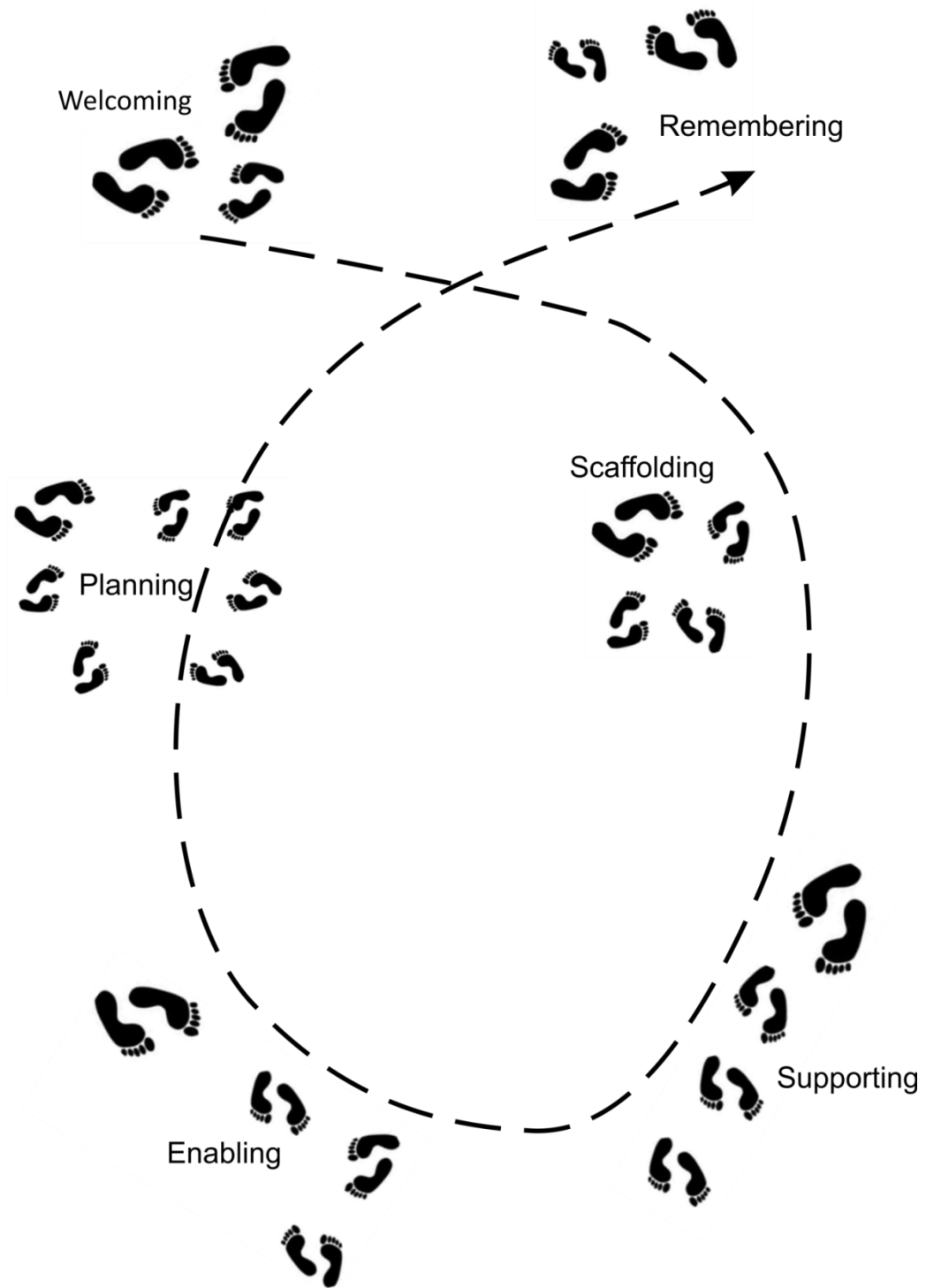


Figure 5-2: Pedagogical practice pathway

5.3.2 Specific pedagogical practices with objects in the Nursery

In the Nursery three variations on the shared pattern of pedagogical practices emerged. The first pattern, and by far the most frequent, saw object events begin with the adult at the door welcoming a child proffering an object, followed by practitioner's engaging in a collaborative conversation with the child while drawing in the child's peers. Within this small group an in-classroom activity was usually developed around the brought-in object. The second pattern, applicable to the older boys, took two different forms based in these boys' own practice of not engaging with the practitioner at the classroom door. Instead they developed their own experience with one or more peers inside the classroom. These older boy experiences were seen to go one of two ways: if there was visible or audible conflict practitioners intervened or if there was no conflict the boys would continue their own experience for as long as possible. In object incidents in which conflict was seen or heard a practitioner applied the pedagogical practices usually visible at the classroom door in order to re-negotiate the object-based activity in new ways.

These Nursery pedagogical practices are best illustrated by way of examples. What follows is the first, and predominant, variation on the shared patterns of practice. This variation was consistently associated with all of the younger children and the older girls. This pedagogical pattern took place at the classroom door (often in full view of parents and children in the entryway) between a practitioner and a child, usually with their parents or a carer present, and the brought-in object. In this variation children consistently proffered the object to the practitioner. The practitioner then took the object in their hands, gave it an inquisitive inspection then began to ask the child questions about the object. For experienced practitioners these questions always started a conversation with the child. An example follows:

Nursery Pattern 1: All children apart from older boys

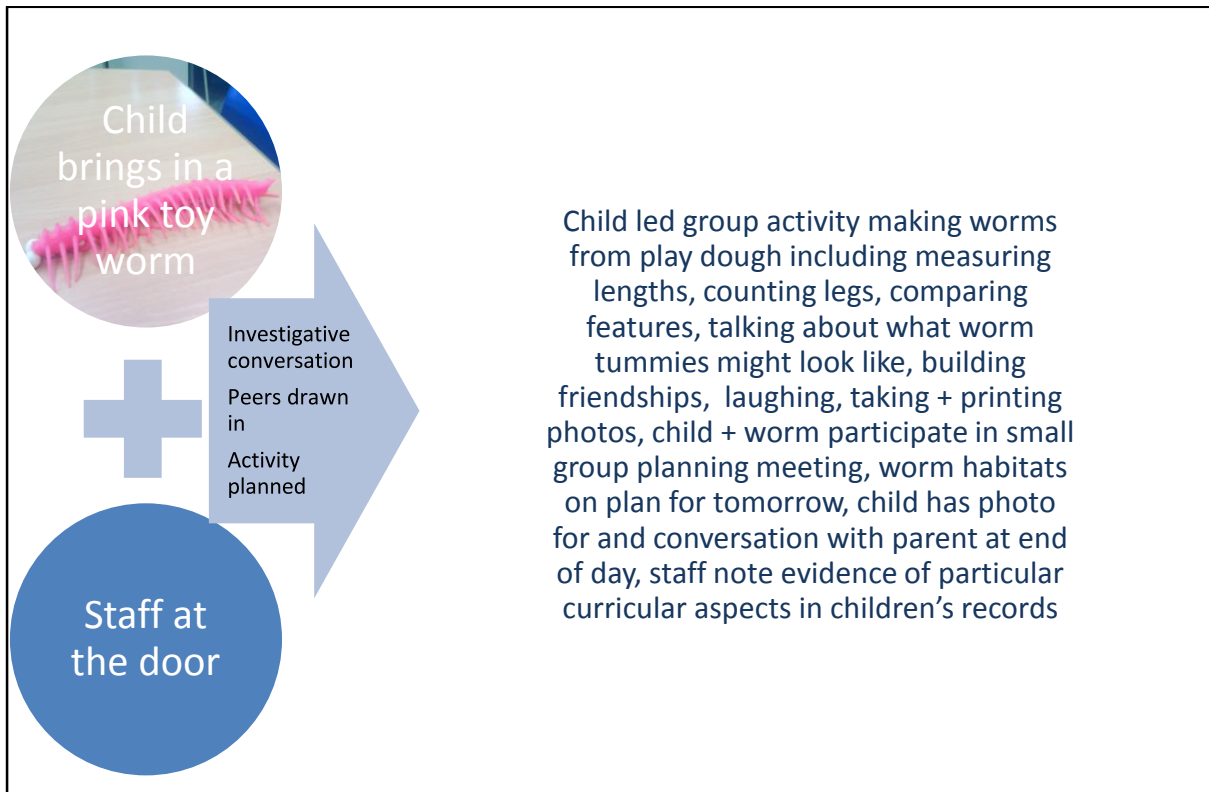


Figure 5-3: Example of Nursery Pattern 1: All children apart from older boys



Image 5-48: Nursery children make their own worms and worm nest

This most prevalent pattern usually included many of the following:

- welcoming the object and experience
 - child proffering the object to the practitioner

- practitioner accepting an object proffered by a child
- scaffolding experimental thinking and behaviours
 - practitioner looking at it carefully then asking a question about it
 - investigative conversation ensues
- supporting collaborative learning by negotiating or directing experiences
 - practitioner draws in other children
- enables experience as doing or experience as thinking about doing
 - activity emerges through collaborative conversation
 - practitioner ensure resources are available for activity
 - children proceed with activity in which brought-in object is transformed into an educational resource
 - practitioner participate as/when appropriate
 - photograph taken or other activity suggesting ownership such as writing own name on it
- responsive planning
 - practitioner encourages child to take brought-in object and/or product of the activity to small group planning meeting so object-related topics are included in planning
- recording memories
 - practitioner talk with child and other practitioners about the day's events and record curricular aspects associated with brought-in object in children's records
 - as child leaves Nursery child and/or practitioner talk to parent/carer about object-related experiences.

The emergence of this pattern of pedagogical practices in the data does not mean it was slavishly adhered to. Practitioners played with these practices and adapted them to suit the particular circumstances. So, for instance, practitioners would mention that they had drawn particular children into the group because they knew they had a shared

interest as was the case when two girls and an adult were comparing purple bangles. When useful, extensive time could be given to an investigative conversation and less time to activity planning such as was the case when a child brought in her Sylvania Family of rabbits.

Vignette 5-7: Ms Nash and Naomi’s Sylvania Family rabbits



Image 5-49: Sylvania Family Rabbits

Child	(Silently proffers objects to practitioner)
Ms Nash	<i>(Takes objects)</i> What are these?
Child	Rabbits.
Ms Nash	Do they have names?
Child	(No response)
Ms Nash	Do you have any clothes this colour? (Points to yellow flowers on baby rabbit’s dress)
Child	Yes. My yellow dress... I like that colour and that colour <i>(points to red on child rabbit’s dungarees)</i>
Ms Nash	What about this lace? Do you have anything with lace on it?
Child	There’s some on my sun hat....

What followed

Long comparative conversation about multiple aspects of rabbit family’s clothing fabrics, plush fabric and potential rabbit names while practitioner draws in child’s peers.

The practitioner later mentioned that this child found separation from her family particularly difficult so it was important to draw her into conversation and gather her peers to ease the transition into the Nursery space.

Nursery Pattern 2: Older boys with signs of conflict followed by practitioner engagement

Visible conflict was seen to draw a response from both supply and regular practitioners and when practitioners intervened the boy's brought-in object was consistently negotiated onto the agenda for the day in a similar way to Nursery Pattern 1. An example follows:

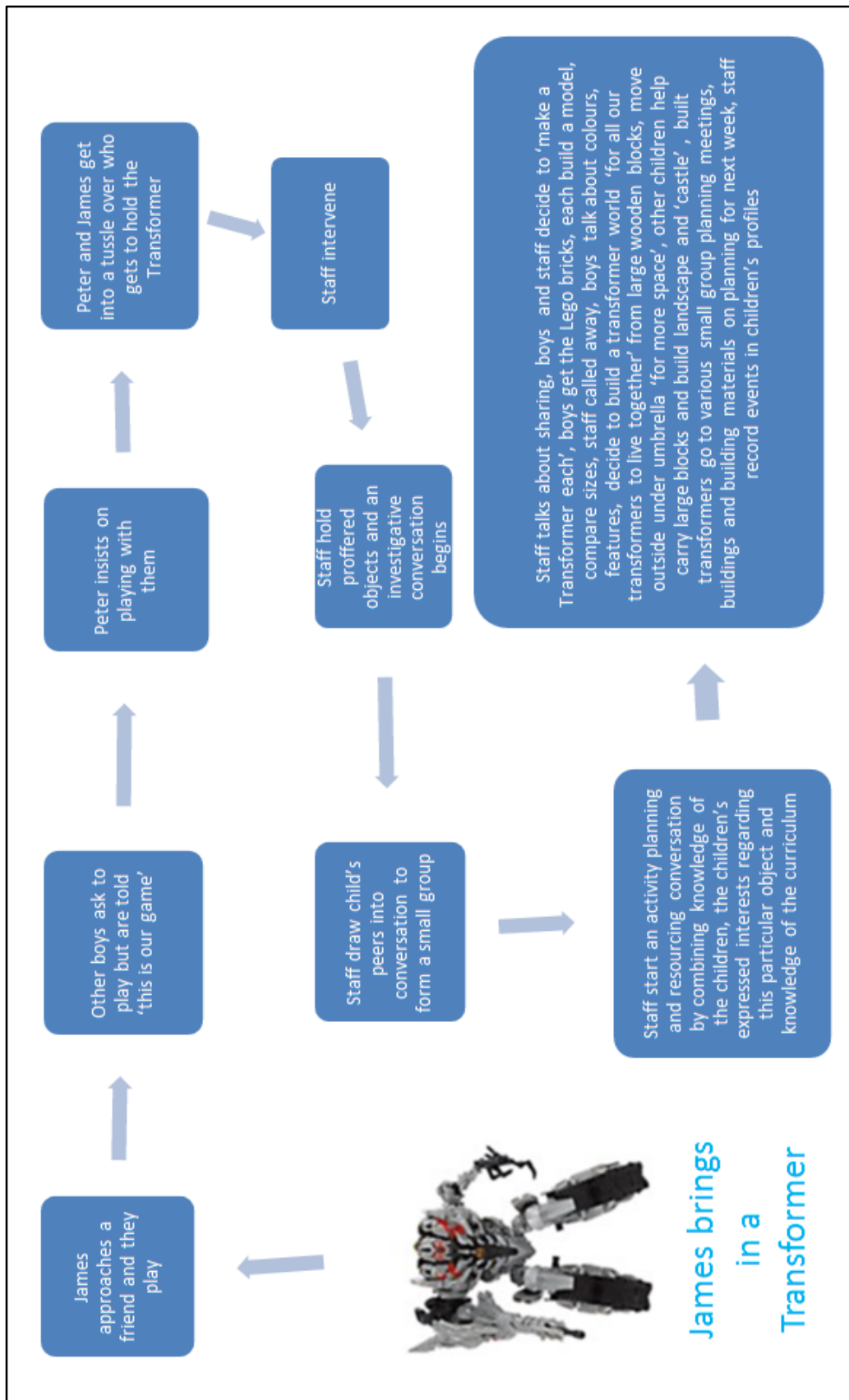


Figure 5-4: Nursery Pattern 2a: Older boys with conflict then practitioner engagement

Difficulties negotiating who could, and could not, join in the activity led to practitioner intervention and a re-negotiation of the activity in ways which afforded all those who wanted to participate an opportunity to do so and led to a highly collaborative extended planning, development and play session both indoors and out. After which the boys brought photos of their objects to small group planning to talk about habitats for Transformers.

Nursery Pattern 3: Older boys without visible conflict

Here older boys entering the classroom without engaging with the practitioner at the door develop their own activity around their brought-in object. Typically this activity involved at least one other male peer and took the form of reconstructions of activities they had seen at home on TV or as a movie or video. In this pattern of practice the boys were often seen to exclude other children from joining in the activity but this exclusion did not result in a flare-up and the activity continued. This object-related incident is typical of nursery incidents in which the older boys by-passed the practitioner at the door and set up their own object-related activity.

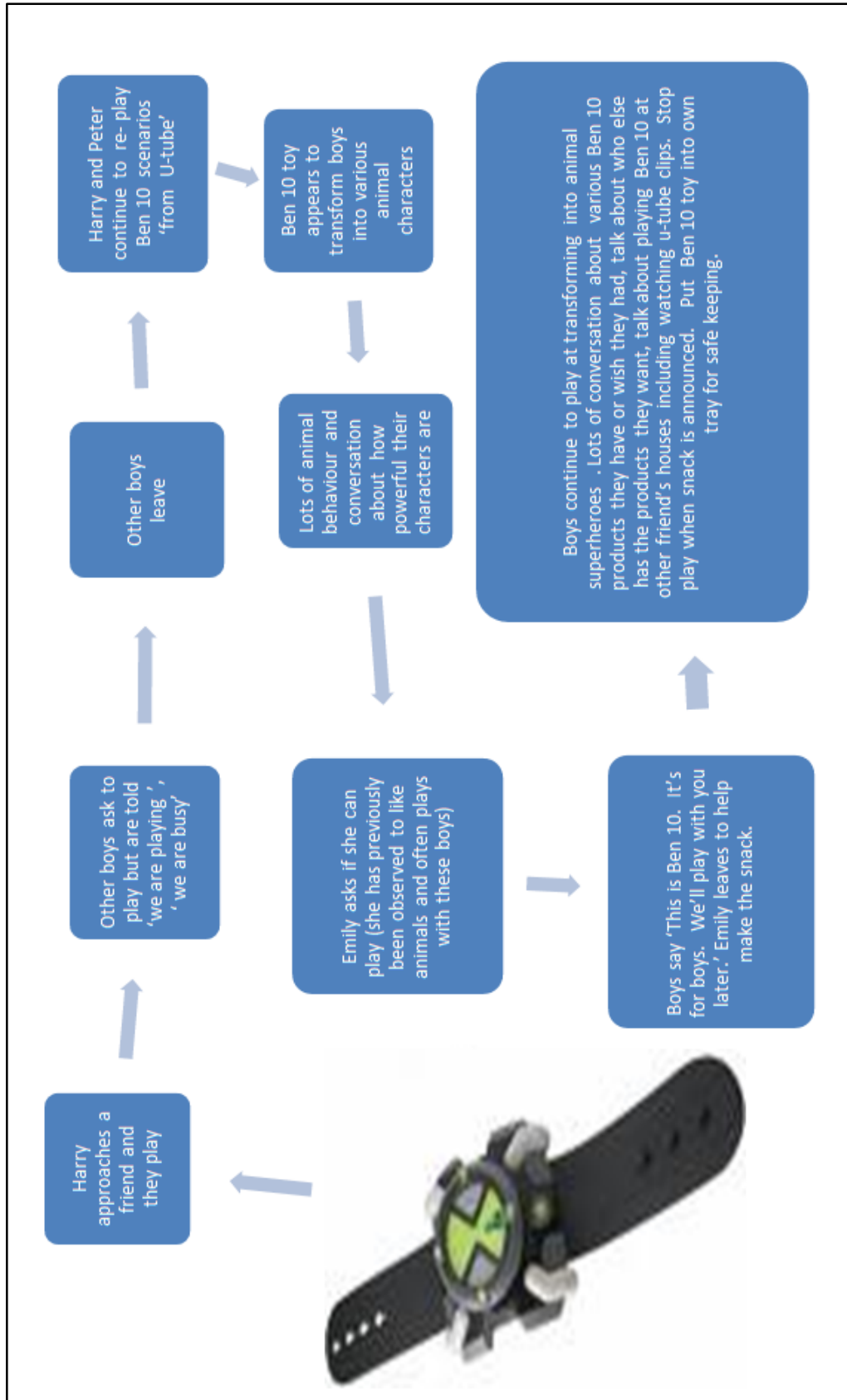


Figure 5-5: Nursery Pattern 2b: Older boys without visible conflict

In cases where no visible conflict ensued it was possible for boys to maintain their own activity in a way which girls did not. This often continued until there was a whole class activity such as Snack Time or it was time to leave the classroom for Physical Education or Music. Approximately one third of the recorded incidents of older boy's brought-in objects followed this pattern and almost all of the incidents took place on days when supply practitioner was present. This illustrates that a change in staffing makes a substantial difference to the patterns of pedagogical practice which is not surprising given the relational nature of pedagogic practices: different practitioner means different pedagogical practices. In this setting this was particularly true for the older boys. It may also be that since older boys did not engage with regular practitioners at the door, with whom they had a good relationship it was even less likely that they would engage with supply practitioner. Another possibility is that their propensity to 'do their own thing' was stronger than for the girls and younger boys and the presence of a supply practitioner afforded an opportunity for them to do so.

5.3.3 Specific pedagogical practices with objects in Primary 1/2

Practitioners in the P1/2 classroom had their own variations on the pattern of engagement with children's objects based on their first principle that a child bringing an object might intend to share it with the practitioner only or with everyone. So in P1/2 it was not unusual to hear, at the engagement with a practitioner at or near the classroom door, a question as to whether the object brought was intended by the child as "private for me and you?" or "for all of us on the carpet?" Practitioners described using these questions if there was any doubt whatsoever as to the child's intention regarding the object. This added a new dimension of possible control to the child. They were able to specify that the object was "private, between you and me" in which case it was enjoyed and discussed between child and practitioner but not offered for discussion to the whole class group in conversation on the carpet. Alternatively, if they chose to share it with their peers it progressed with the child to the carpet for a whole class group discussion. Thus, in this P1/2 classroom, children's brought objects could be

either private or public. Any discussion regarding the object either could be between the child and a practitioner or as a whole group made up of children and practitioners together. Rather than the small group settings that Nursery practitioners made use of, here the child's choice was between individual and private or whole group and public.

Across the period of classroom observation, only two objects were deemed by two different pupils to be private. When I noticed that a child had requested a private discussion regarding a brought-in object, I did not record that discussion as I felt my recording of it would be an ethical breach of the terms of the agreement between practitioner and child. In both cases I observed that the brought-in object was a photograph which, after a discussion with the practitioner, was returned to the child's tray which was used by each child as their personal safe storage until it was time to go home. Neither the child nor the practitioner said anything further about it. Private meant private.

In the main, children brought objects intending to share them and discuss them with the whole class group. These carpet time object-based events always started with the child first proffering the object to the practitioner who was leading the carpet time discussions even though this proffering had possibly already occurred once before at a public/private conversation on the way into the classroom. After the practitioner had held and commented on the object most would be passed around the group for everyone to have a look, ask questions, offer comments and contribute to a general discussion about the object. On very rare occasions when an object was considered fragile it would not be passed around the group. Instead, children who wanted to have a closer look would get up and come over to the practitioner to see the object at close quarters or the practitioner would walk the object around the circle of children so each child could view it without any risk to the object.

Here, in the P1/2 classroom, Paula's tomato plant is considered fragile.

Vignette 5-8: Ms Patrick and Paula’s tomato plant



Image 5-50: Paula’s tomato plant

Preamble

Paula enters the classroom carrying a 40cm high tomato plant in a small black, square plastic pot filled with earth and a few pebbles on the top. After Paula greets Ms Patrick a conversation begins:

- Ms Patrick What is that you are carrying? (Paula is having a difficult time balancing the plant then hands it to Ms Patrick.)
- Paula It’s my plant. It’s my tomato plant. It’s growing.
- Ms Patrick Where did you get it from?
- Paula I grew it myself. I put a seed in the ground and gave it water. It’s for the window. (There is already a collection of growing plants on the sunny windowsill.)
- Ms Patrick How did you know how to grow it? (Puts plant on windowsill after showing it around the circle of children.)
- Paula My mom grows things. She helped me. I did it last year too.
- Ms Patrick Who will look after the plant if it lives in the window?
- Paula You can water it when you water yours. (Ms Patrick pretends to be shocked.) Or I could water them for you? Maybe we could make a list?
- Ms Patrick A list of people to do the watering? That’s a good idea. Who would like to help do that? (Lots of hands go up.) We’ll do that at writing time this morning.

What followed

Five children worked together in a small group to design and make a days-of-the-week list for watering the plants in the window. They walked it around the class for children to put their names on. Most children wrote their name on the list. List was taped to the windowsill and the first name on the list (Paula) watered the plants. Water went everywhere....lots of mopping up with paper towels. Comment from Ms Patrick was “Thank you for watering the plants Paula.”

This particular episode is typical of the data collected in P1/2 for its taking place on the carpet with the whole class group participating. Its translation of the object into a curriculum related exercise (in this case writing and plant growth) starts in the conversation between the practitioner and the child or children, moves through various social and physical characteristics of the object then develops into a small group and eventually large group participatory activity. What is not typical in this vignette is that there did not appear to be any public or private conversation regarding this object prior to its arrival in the whole class group. The arrival of the object at a most public time such as is early morning carpet time seemed to propel it into the public arena without any possibility for a prior discussion. However, given the size of the tomato plant, its stated intention of being for display on the windowsill and the degree of comfort that Paula showed in talking about it with the whole class group this appears to have been the choice she intended. What is also typical about this vignette is its curricular link to the 3R's inserted it into the plans for the day. Further, it was not uncommon for children to bring what might be termed natural objects such as flowers, leaves, plants, an egg, stones, sticks or gems.

This example illustrates a more extensive P1/2 interaction with a child's brought-in object in that the object interaction extends beyond a whole-group conversation into a further within-class activity in which a list is written as part of organising watering the new plant and its associates on the classroom windowsill each day.

However, the most prevalent variation on a pattern of practice for developing brought-in object experiences in P1/2 involved the whole class group and took place at the beginning of each day during what was known as Carpet Time. The pattern of practice can be summarised as:

- Welcoming the object and experience
 - Child arrives with an object – sometimes engages briefly with practitioner at the door and sometimes goes straight to the carpet to sit down and talk with peers
- Scaffolding experimental thinking and behaviours
 - After routine school dinner orders and morning prayers practitioner asks a particular child what they have brought-in today.
 - Child gives object to practitioner who looks at it then begins asking questions about it. Questions often start with “What is it?” then move through “What’s it made of?” and “What do you do with it?” or “Where did you get it?”
 - Children raise a hand if they have a question/answer/comment and these are all heard and shape the on-going discussion.
- Supporting collaborative learning by negotiating or directing experiences
 - While conversation is on-going the object is passed around the group unless it is “too delicate” in which case the adult walks it around the circle of children so they can each see it while she holds it.
- Enabling experience as doing or experience as thinking about doing
 - Group conversation about the object continues
 - Until *either* no more questions are forthcoming *or* practitioner suggests a site for object to go for safe keeping typically with a variation on “when we’re done you could put that in your own tray to keep it safe”. For instance, Gormiti figure and minute railway people went into the children’s personal trays. Objects too large for a tray would be put on the windowsill or the practitioners’ desk.
 - *or* someone (sometimes practitioner, sometimes child) has made a link between the object and a current curricular focus, then

- the object is placed with similar curricular objects until regular time for that subject to be engaged with. For instance, a tomato plant and a bag of stones were put with other plants and natural materials on the windowsill “for this afternoon’s lesson” and an Enid Blyton storybook was placed on the sill of the language board “so we can read it together later.”
 - When all brought-in objects have been discussed children put the objects away and the first lesson of the day begins.
- Responsive planning
 - Practitioner talks about how objects might fit into planning
- Recording memories
 - Practitioner takes photos for record keeping to which they add comments/text

5.3.4 Comparing the Nursery and Primary 1/2 patterns of practice with objects

As seen in the different patterns of practice in each classroom the possible experiences developed around children’s brought-in objects differed in each classroom. In each classroom practitioners’ particular selection and grouping of pedagogical practices can be seen to frame different kinds of experiences and different roles for participants in these experiences. Here the pedagogical practices of choosing the most effective group size, deciding on the role a practitioner should play, framing the role of the object-bringing child, peers and brought-in objects are all discussed in their similarities and differences. Lastly, framing all of these pedagogical practices seemed to be a particular kind of relationship between practitioner, child, object and curriculum.

Group size

In the P1/2 classroom the experiences developed around brought-in objects were whole group experiences. All children had visual access and similar opportunity to

engage in a wide range of questions and comments per object. This large group interaction could be interpreted as practitioners valuing equality of experience for all children or might suggest a more school-like pattern of interaction in which the adult is in control was selected for this pedagogical practice. There were opportunities for a child to engage with practitioners in a less public and more personal way at the classroom door but only three children chose this route. This suggests that children either valued the wider audience or thought a wider audience was expected of them. What the group size does say is that the pedagogic construction of a P1/2 child includes their being able to learn effectively in a large group.

In Nursery a typical group size was between two and four children. An adult was present and instrumental during the collaborative development phase and then dipped in and out as necessary while the activity progressed. This suggests that practitioners saw this as the most effective group size for these children since the group size was most often determined by the number of peers the practitioner drew into the object discussion. Practitioners spoke of their development of these groups being based on “similar interests” or “shared experiences” and “being friends.” At the small group planning meetings at the end of each session the group size would be around seven children with one adult. These planning groups were made up of the same children and adult throughout the year and these groups did not necessarily coincide with the interest or friendship groupings the practitioner had developed earlier around the brought-in object. What practitioners were seen to do was build the group size from an initial one-to-one at the door into a small group activity and then into a larger group planning session. The care and attention practitioners put into object-related groupings suggests that they saw shared interest and friendships as important parts of children’s learning and that the pedagogic construction of a nursery child is that they learn effectively in a range of smaller groups.

Practitioner as active mediator or child-led facilitator

In P1/2 practitioners led the brought-in object engagement by always being present, managing the conversational turn-taking required in a large group and choosing whose brought-in object would be viewed and discussed next. Practitioners were also seen to inject considerable humour into Carpet Time activities like recording attendance and organising lunches. This humour regularly spilled over into the engagements with brought-in objects such that object related experiences were playful and questioning of numerous social boundaries. Practitioners regularly took a turn at playing with brought-in objects, related humorous object-related episodes from their own childhoods and fostered a climate in which novel uses for objects was always possible and using the imagination was part of the experience. For instance, the arrival of a randomly bleating Shaun the Sheep whose bleats kept interrupting the normal routines, led one practitioner to parody the classroom behavioural expectations “for everyone including sheep” much to the delight of the children. Practitioners also saw themselves as the protectors of delicate objects and adjudicated, usually after taking advice from the child who brought the object in, whether the object could be passed around the group or not. Practitioners also managed the time given to engaging with brought-in objects so on a morning when there were five brought-in objects said “we have lots of things to talk about today so we’ll have to keep moving.” A further practitioners’ role in P1/2 was to honour a curricular link made between a brought-in object and a current curricular topic by asking the child to position the object in a specific curricular area of the classroom. Science and nature objects lived in the windowsill, reading and writing objects rested on the language board and mathematics related objects went to the shop area of the classroom. Practitioners also had the role of remembering to include the brought-in object in a particular lesson later in the day. An additional object related role for P1/2 practitioners was planning. Practitioners paid particular interest to the group conversations around brought-in objects and used interests expressed by the children as input into their planning. For instance, a plush tiger’s lunch experience

triggered much conversation about “who eats what?” and “what would happen if a tiger ate junk food?” which a practitioner interpreted as “this is a good time to talk about healthy eating” so modified their upcoming plans. The large group brought-in object experiences in P1/2 depended on practitioners’ leadership and children’s playful participation for their success.

In Nursery the role of the practitioner was to be present and participate “at times of transition”. Practitioners were seen to regularly engage with a child and their object at the door, draw in peers, make suggestions for object related activities if none was forthcoming from the small group of children, point children in the direction of a range of resources, drop in on the activity when it seemed useful, ask provoking questions, document the activity if the children had not already done so, welcome the brought-in object or products of an object-related activity to the small group planning session and include further agreed activities in the planning. So in Nursery practitioners spoke of their role as “to facilitate the children’s object-related activity” and to “document the parts of the curriculum that the child’s activity evidences.” Practitioners expected the children to lead whenever possible, saw planning as collaboration between a child’s interests, a child-by-child curricular record and practitioner interjected possibilities to ensure a breadth of experiences over the two years. In Nursery a practitioner spoke of her role as to “take responsibility for developing the full range of the curriculum over the two years a child is with us” by “responding to children’s choices in ways that extend their own experiences.” In “extend(ing) their own experiences” she aimed to “ensure the experience is socially good,” “has a breadth of resources,” “is taken further if they want to” and “joins up with their parent/carer at the end of the session.” In the same way that the practitioner engagement with the brought-in object was visible to parents and children in the entrance hall on the way into Nursery, practitioners aimed to continue the engagement in the hallway on the way out of Nursery. Brought-in objects in the Nursery were thus heard to be dug into social activities before they

arrived and seen to be so on arrival, during the activity, during planning and again as they exited the Nursery.

Practitioners' practices shape the role of the object-bringing child

In Nursery the object-bringing child was described as “capable,” “social and hungry to learn” and “interested in joining up home and Nursery” experiences. Pedagogical practices were developed based on these premises as both foundations and outcomes in the sense that one practitioner spoke of as “they are always interested and want to do more”. Practitioners positioning themselves as “more.... a guide than as a leader, because the experience that matters is the child’s” which meant a child was able to shape the role they desired and could negotiate with their peer group, Nursery resources and practitioner’s support. A number of practitioners expressed the view that “they (the children) brought it for a reason” and it was important to try to understand their reason and develop it further within the Nursery. The only condition which a practitioner mentioned in association with brought-in objects was that the “child should be ready to share” by which she meant “talk about it, let others have a look at it and work together in an activity.”

In P1/2 the object-bringing child’s first role was to decide whether the object was to be part of a public or private pedagogic practice. If they chose the public practice they were expected to take the object to the carpet, wait their turn to talk about their object, engage in conversation when it was their turn, pass the object around the circle then put the object away as negotiated with the practitioner. They were also expected to participate in the discussions and sharing of other children’s brought-in objects. So sharing was again a norm. However, here there was no guarantee that the object would be made use of beyond the Carpet Time engagement. So part of the child’s role was to accept the role the object was assigned by the group: if a curricular link had been made the object would live on during the day, if not the object would rest in the child’s tray or another designated place or could occasionally be seen on a child’s desk as a

companion for the day. The role of the object-bringing child was thus very much one of participating student, part of a larger group and focused on curricular activities as designed by practitioners who listened very carefully to the ebb and flow of the children's interests as expressed during brought-in object Carpet Time experiences.

Practitioners' framing of the role of peers

In both classrooms peers took on the role of co-collaborators. Practitioners encouraged peers to express their views, ideas and questions. Where further object-related activities were developed peers were almost always involved. Peer's views were to be taken seriously even when humour was in the air. In the Nursery peers were carefully drawn in by a practitioner in order to make up a group with a shared interest. In P1/2 when peers were required for an activity roughly half of the time practitioners asked the child who had brought in the object to choose the peers they would like to work with while the other half of the time the practitioner chose the peers who would participate in the brought-in object activity.

Role of the brought-in object

In Nursery the brought-in object was seen as "seed" for the development of child-led small group activities. The child's proffering the object to the practitioner at the door initiated a conversation which often started by agreeing a name for the object. As illustrated in the example below, this agreement was sometimes contested by peers and required further research before a name could finally be agreed. Nursery practitioners were consistently reluctant to provide information they thought a child could find for themselves, as illustrated below.

Vignette 5-9: Ms Naplock and Nevin’s ‘Wall-E’



Image 5-51: Wall-E

Nevin (Proffers object to practitioner at the door)
 Ms Naplock What’s this beautiful thing? And it moves!
 Nevin It’s Wall-E and...
 Peer No it’s not! That’s MO! I’ve seen the movie....
 Nevin I’ve also seen the movie. Its Wall-E.
 Ms Naplock How could we find out what his name is?
 Peer Ask Nathan ‘cause he’s seen the movie too...
 Nathan (Nathan is called over and asked to name the object) It’s MO.
 Nevin I don’t believe you.
 Ms Naplock Who do you think gave him his name?
 Nevin The people who made the movie.
 Peer We could look on the internet...
 Nathan I know how to do that... (They are all off to the whiteboard to load Google. Ms Naplock helps to key in search term “Wall-E”)

As illustrated in this extract the object in Nursery was expected to speak for itself, as it were, in that practitioners were supportive of the investigative process but did not readily supply an answer to questions. The object’s role was to be questioned, touched, moved, passed around, imagined, discussed and investigated by the children in the small group. Practitioners supported the process of investigation but did as little as possible so as to honour the children’s processes of investigation. As discussed in *Chapter 5.4.4 Relationships between child and learning/knowledge/curriculum* (page 232), this honouring of the children’s processes often called for the pedagogical

practices of silence and waiting as well as open questioning and prospecting. Similar practices are referred to by Reggio Emilia practitioners as “provocations” (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman 1998 pg 302) in that they are designed to encourage the child to go further and think differently because the answer is not obvious.

As “seed” in Nursery, the object was expected to begin the process of developing a collaborative children’s activity in which speaking and listening were required. Mark - making skills or camera skills were natural extensions of children’s object related activities when documenting their activity. In small group planning meetings the object and associated developments were used as a type of child, or small group, voice. Further conversation flowed naturally from and child and sometimes practitioners at the end of the session when parents/carers collected the child. So, for example, a pink plastic worm led to the making of similar pink play dough worms which were then used as measures of comparative length and for counting numbers of legs. Children photographed the worms, took them to the small group planning session as a way of putting worm habitats onto the plan for the next day’s activities and showed the photograph to their parents/carers on their way out of the building.

In P1/2 the role of the object was to spark whole group conversation, imagination and where a curricular link was apparent, an object-associated activity during the subject allotted time slot later in the day. So, for instance,

Another role of the object in P1/2 was to help inform practitioners of children’s interests and out-of-school experiences so that planning was more responsive to children’s interests. So, for instance, when Parker’s Tiger (see *Vignette 5-6: Ms Penny and Parker's Tiger's Lunch*) set off considerable interest in healthy eating practitioners brought forward their plans for a unit of study related to healthy eating so as to take advantage of the heightened interest in “who eats what” and “why”.

Lastly, the objects in P1/2 served to strengthen social bonds between children and practitioners in that the object often developed into a humorous shared experience on the carpet. So, for instance, when a Zeebeez arrived, the following happened:

Vignette 5-10: Ms Potter and Paco’s Zeebeez



Practitioner	What have you brought today
Child	I'll show you (child puts object on floor in front of adult and walks away. Whole group waits.....and waits in silence while watching the object do nothing...until the Zeebeez suddenly jumps up. Squeals of delight from the practitioners and children.)
Practitioner	You terrified me! (much laughing)
Child	Shall I do it again Miss? Or would you like to have a go?
Practitioner	Show me what to do.... (Child shows adult how to position Zeebeez in the middle of the circle of children....who wait for ages and start saying it's broken before it finally goes off.)
Other child	How does it work?....
Another child	That took longer than the time before!...
Other children	(Lots of ideas followed, then watches and stopwatch to try and time the interval before it jumps.)
In the end	(Timing the interval 'till jump confirms that it jumps in an irregular pattern and careful watching by a group lying near the Zeebee confirms that it starts to move before it jumps.)
Watching child	Something makes it move!
Another child	No it doesn't! It just moves by itself!
Practitioner	This afternoon we'll have to see if we can find out what's happening to it.

Role of the curriculum

In the Nursery, practitioners stated that they aimed to transform each object brought by a child because they saw the brought-in objects as “a child’s contribution to curriculum making.” When the conversations which consistently took place around brought-in objects are recognised for their integral role as part of the curriculum each brought-in object was transformed into child and adult conversation and fulfilled curricular aspirations for children’s experiencing a range of conversational experiences. These included being able to “communicate, collaborate and build relationships,” “explore the richness and diversity of language, how it can affect me, and the wide range of ways in which I and others can be creative” and “extend and enrich my vocabulary through listening, talking, watching and reading” (Education Scotland 2009 pg 24) as well as being able to formulate a plan and act on it, even if the plan was to *not* engage in developing a brought-in object activity. By recognising a child’s talking, listening and expressing their views as aspects of the curriculum all brought-in objects engaged with the curriculum in Nursery and more than half of them went on to be part of activities which drew in numbers, vocabulary, social skills, manual dexterity, mark making and other aspects of the curriculum.

The light-touch, or undifferentiated, presence of the curriculum in Nursery allowed children’s brought-in objects to take the path collaborative development of an activity produced. While there was some visible timetabling, practitioners showed leeway and usually followed children’s interests in-the-moment rather than delaying an interest until a subject slot in the timetable. Taking the view that “covering the curriculum is my job over two years” suggested that practitioners took on a child-by-child responsibility for knowing current lines-of-flight and, over the two year period, ensuring that these many and varied lines-of-flight covered, and even went beyond, the curriculum’s expectations.

Similarly in P1/2 almost all brought-in objects were subjects of a large group conversation. As illustrated in the Zeebeez vignette, P1/2 practitioners took up opportunities to link a brought-in object to aspects of the curriculum which included language skills as well as others. In this incident the subtleties of the Zeebeez bounce, and the forces at play, were to be discussed during an afternoon science lesson rather than in-the-moment. Practitioners explained that the intricacies of the primary school timetabling did not afford an opportunity for the P1/2 practitioners to take the Zeebeez questions further in-the-moment. This relationship between an aspect of the curriculum, framed as subject specific, and timetabling is typical of school structures. As the timetable was shared across a number of classrooms practitioners felt it necessary to “stick to the programme” as one practitioner member put it. It also illustrates the subject classification of topics and how the sorting of knowledge into subject time slots is typical of primary school classrooms.

5.4 Relationships illuminate similarities and differences in practice purposes

This section is in response to Research Question 3 which asked what similarities and differences were present between the two classrooms. Using Dewey’s “substantial object” idea (see *Chapter 2.2.1 Theorising about objects in a children’s world*, page 23) as a way of thinking about how greater numbers of interactions and consequences constitute “substantial objects” suggests that what we might like to call ‘substantial relationships’ are constituted in a similar fashion: by a greater number of interactions and consequences. This idea was behind the analysis of classroom relationships and results in these five relationships showing evidence of being ‘substantial’ due to the frequency of their mention in the coded the data. First, the qualities of the five main relationships are described for each classroom then the similarities in practices are summarised followed by the differences’ in practices summary.

In describing the qualities of these relationships, the hope is that their purposes, or the freedoms being developed, might come into a degree of focus. In a practical sense, we might describe the relationships around brought-in objects in each classroom as providing freedom for a child to do X, or freedom for children to be Y. Here, focusing on descriptions of the relational practices as a way of highlighting their similarities and differences helps us to understand more about what these developed freedoms share and where they might diverge. To this end, Research Question 3 uses similarities and differences in classroom relationships as a way of comparing the data from two pedagogical interpretations of the same policies and curriculum.

5.4.1 Relationships, objects and learning in Nursery and Primary 1/2

In both classrooms practitioners valued and developed collaborative investigations of children's prior relationships with their brought-in objects. There was no hint that any object was not acceptable. In addition, objects were treated as what Dewey (2008) as "events with meaning" (p403) and children were welcome to state as much or as little as they wanted to about previous object events and their meanings to each child. As was described in detail in *Chapter 5.2 Objects children bring to nursery and school* (page 127), brought-in objects drew certain aspects of out-of-school relationships in with them. These aspects included findings about the physical and social properties of brought-in objects that were always treated as matters for investigation, experiment and input into improvisations in the development of further object related practices. Objects were always framed by practitioners as interesting and topics for conversations: in Nursery that interest could be followed up immediately by collaborative activity development and physically active, small group behaviours while in P1/2 it could be immediately enjoyed by the whole class group and included again later if it supported the planned topics and agenda for the day.

In the Nursery a child's object had participatory power to shape the child's day, in ways that interested the particular children involved. The relationship between the child and

the object was of sufficient importance to practitioners in Nursery that they used it to shape the child's day.

In P1/2 all objects were welcomed as topics for a shared conversation and those objects which had particular relevance to the planned proceedings for the day lived on in the allotted subject time slots. This meant that the relationship between the child and their object was different in P1/2 to what it had been if they attended this Nursery. Rather than the child's interest in an object shaping the day, it was shaped by practitioners' understanding of the range of skills and information which is expected of children in their first year or two of primary school and only those objects which supported or extended this framing of the purpose of school was made use of throughout the day. There were a number of notable exceptions to this policy which all involved a child retaining their object as a "desk pal" during the day. Practitioners were accepting of the fact that a child might like to keep the object about them for company, as was the case with a number of plush toys, a Gormiti and a large pencil.

All practitioners made use of a child's private drawer or cupboard space as somewhere a child could put their object when they no longer wanted to engage with it, or when sharing it became too difficult. Children were seen as the owners of the object and had ultimate responsibility for its care and keeping.

5.4.2 Relationships between practitioner and child

There were similarities in the relationships between practitioner and child across both classrooms. So, for instance, during classroom observations it was noted that the relationships between practitioners and children appeared comfortable such that children willingly engaged in conversations regarding their objects. The presence of a practitioner at the door each morning seemed to make both children and their families aware that practitioners were available and willing to engage. In most of the Nursery interactions regarding children's objects parents/carers were also present yet no child was seen to ask their responsible adult to offer the object to the practitioner at the door

rather than doing the offering of the object themselves. Rather, in almost every instance (apart from the older boys in Nursery) children took up a position directly in front of the practitioner, held up their object for the practitioner's notice and kept it held up while waiting for the practitioner to take the object into their own hands. Embedded within this very physical positioning and waiting was an implicit trust that the practitioner would respond in a positive manner. This ritual proffering of the object seemed to herald the child's willingness to play with their object in ways that included the practitioners, peers and other aspects of schooling such as settings, resources, norms, goals and behaviours. What set this mode of play apart from non-school play between child peers was the practitioners' pattern of directing the conversation, behaviours and its associated relationship toward activities perceived as learning in relation to both the old and new curriculum and supporting this engagement by the use of a range of social relational skills such as giving compliments, providing ample opportunity for children to voice their views, positioning themselves so as to indicate to all that these object-based interactions were on an equal footing as symbolised by eye-to-eye viewing of the object. Other interactive behaviours which appeared to make children comfortable in their communications with practitioners were practitioner humour, persistence and being undeterred when things did not go as expected, use of sympathy or distraction when children were distressed, an abiding trust in each child's abilities and a willingness to wait for the child's contribution which made visible the practitioner's view that "we are all learners together" (Ms Nesbit, 10.12.2009). These object-related incidents were a particular type of play with an educational purpose framed by a relationship with practitioners which supported, or scaffolded, that educational purpose.

One of the difficulties which less experienced practitioners encountered in these opening gambits was that if the child did not take up the practitioner's first line of conversation or interaction practitioners were seen to be unsure how to proceed further. In other words, it was almost as if less experienced practitioners went into

these conversations about the objects with an opening line tailored to this particular object. When that one tailored line did not facilitate a response from the child the practitioner appeared unsure where to go next and it was not unusual for the conversation to falter and occasionally fail. In contrast, one of the skills which the more experienced practitioners appeared to have developed was the ability to make numerous changes of direction during the opening moments of these practitioner/child conversations such that sooner or later they would arrive at a topic of mutual enjoyment which would engage the child and open a conversational space for further discussion.

While the older boys in the Nursery did not engage in this ritual proffering/acceptance at the classroom door when practitioners intervened in the boys' play to calm a conflict whoever was holding the object at the time would proffer it to the practitioner. From this point on the interaction appeared to work in a very similar manner to that which was so typical of the other children at the doorway and from then on the interactions between practitioner and children was very much on track as an educational encounter.

On being proffered an object regular practitioners typically either leaned over to be at eye level with the child or even knelt on the ground so as to be on a level with the child. This physical balancing of the practitioner's height with the child's height seemed to be associated with object episodes which were productive for both the child and the practitioner. It was almost as if the practitioner's willingness to reduce their height so as to be on a level with the child was indicative of a good pre-existing relationship between the practitioner and the child.

Supply²⁴ practitioners who were unfamiliar with the children were not seen to engage with the children in this particular way. Where children chose to proffer an object to supply practitioners it was always accepted but no levelling of height manoeuvre took

²⁴ 'Supply' is a term used in Scotland to refer to temporary staff who are covering a staff absence.

place on the practitioner's part. Of course there is the possibility that supply practitioners were not confident enough in their new post to be willing to lose their full height and supervisory gaze position, even for a brief moment, but whatever their reason supply practitioners were not seen to engage with the child and object on the child's level. Another point at which supply practitioners were seen to be working with limited options was the sanctioning and resourcing of any object related activity suggested by the children. Here a supply practitioner's lack of personal experience within this particular physical and social and educational space seemed to lead them to behave more cautiously than more experienced practitioners. As the resourcing part of the conversation was dependant on a full knowledge of the resources available within this particular classroom on this particular day it was not surprising that these practitioners tended toward the safer resources which might be assumed to be available in all classrooms – such as paper, pens and pencils and building materials. In contrast, practitioners with extensive experience of these particular children within this particular context appeared to make use of these established relationships in complex and creative ways which even included drawing in of non-classroom practitioners or whole school resources, on occasion, such as was the case in Ms Penny and Parker's Tiger's Lunch (see *Vignette 5-6*, page 177).

5.4.3 Relationships between practitioners and families

Local village families vote with their feet regarding this particular school and it is not unusual for the new school year's enrolment to go to a ballot which is the preferred method of settling oversubscription in this particular education authority. While the school's being held in high regard may not necessarily apply to each and every school family on each and every day it does suggest the possibility that the school is making some effort to maintain positive relationships with families. It appeared to be an everyday practice for at least one practitioner to be available to parents/carers at the door of either the actual classroom (in the case of Nursery) or the door to the school or the classroom (in the case of P1/2). Because parents/carers were often present when a

child proffered an object to a practitioner parents were aware of staff responses to both the objects and the children. In fact it was not unusual for parents to take part in these object-related conversations on occasion. However, in the following extract from Natasha's pink worm data grandparents were not present but were mentioned as the source of the new object.

Vignette 5-11: Ms Nesbitt and Natasha’s pink worm



Image 5-52: Pink worms

Natasha My grandad gave him to me.
 Ms Nesbit Is he visiting you again?
 Natasha And granny.
 Ms Nesbit Did grandad make him? (gently pulls a stringy bit)
 Natasha I don’t think so. But I could make one.
 Ms Nesbit Could you make one like this with Bethany? We made pink play dough yesterday. Do you remember where we put it?

What followed

- 3-5 children making pink worms together
- Children comparing lengths of worms – lots of math vocabulary
- Talking about worms and legs – and trying to count them – decided there were too many to count
- Counting how many eyes each worm had then how many they all had together (including the girls’ eyes – boys ran off at this stage – did not want their eyes counted)
- Measuring Ms Nesbit’s arm in worm lengths – “Your arm is 2 and a little more worms long Ms Nesbitt” when she came to see how they were doing
- Pink worm included in small group planning – discussion about whether worms had legs or not continued and “finding out about who has legs and who doesn’t” went on the plan for the next day
- “I might be able to do soft/loud counting in two’s with them.” (Ms Nesbit)
- “I’ll put the photo evidence in their folders.” (Ms Nesbit)
- “I have no idea what worm homes look like! We’ll find out next week.” (Ms Nesbit)

The practitioner’s asking of questions about the physical and social aspects of the objects children brought often elicited information about children’s families and relationships at home. Aunts and Uncles, Grandparents and family friends and neighbours were often known to the practitioner and children were happy, where

appropriate, to convey greetings to these absent participants in the conversation. Practitioners spoke with warm regard of older siblings who had been in their care in previous years and were interested to hear news of their successes. This vast network of friendships and acquaintances benefited the sense of community and the school's role as part of a network in which all were in it together. During the time I was observing family members went on numerous holidays, babies were born, an arm was broken, an older sibling went up to High School, a mother spent some time caring for an elderly relative and we learned about parental places of employment from children's perspectives.

In the Nursery the physical arrangement of spaces, corridors and doors in relation to the classroom entrance meant that parents/carers and the children they were delivering or collecting were often all squashed up together in a small hallway which also acted as the coat/hat/boots storage area. This close proximity made a necessity of sharing of experiences and conversations between parents and children and practitioners. There was little space for privacy so communal sharing was the norm.

The P1/2 classroom entrance arrangements were changed during the school holidays between the two periods of time I observed in the classroom. During the initial period of observations parents/carers often came into the hat/coat/boots area and engaged in conversation with practitioner and child regarding objects children brought, among other things. However, after the holidays and the modifications to the hat/coat/boots area far fewer parents came into the building with their child as there was less physical space available. This reduced the number of object-based interactions which included the parents/carers.

I observed that in both classrooms the child's responsible adult seemed to get as much pleasure from these encounters, often with photographic evidence as well as child crafted product provided, as did the practitioner and child. Yet these encounters were still low key and fitted into the other encounters at the classroom door as is evidenced

by the lack of escalation in object bringing during the 5 months of classroom observations. These practitioner-child-object-family encounters were not dramatic episodes but were part of the normal day-to-day relationships within these two classrooms. Rather than being an add-on activity or special project the welcoming of children's brought-in objects was part of what seemed to be wide ranging and highly responsive relationships between practitioners and children and the children's homes. This did not mean that there was never any sign of tension or conflict at the doorway but that it appeared sorted out because of the breadth of relationship between practitioners, children and families and the practitioner's employment of humour at their own expense if necessary. These conversations around children's objects seemed to me to contribute to the strength of these adult-to-adult relationships possibly because parents/carers saw for themselves that practitioners were interested in their child's life outside of school.

5.4.4 Relationships between child and learning/knowledge/curriculum

The practitioner's accepting/holding of the children's brought-in object seemed to indicate the levelling of the knowledge and learning arena. In this encounter there was no guarantee who would be the expert and who a novice learner. As well as finding out about the object itself practitioners and pupils learned about each other and in the free flowing parts of conversations almost anything might come up. This freedom of topic was balanced by the practice of detailed questioning. Here children were seen to focus on minute details of the object such as when the pressed plastic toy making process came up in conversation after a child noticed a thin wing-like extrusion of plastic at a join in a moulded toy. Practitioners provided a safe space in which a child could ask or suggest almost any topic that might then be investigated, discussed, drawn, modelled, baked, painted, built or investigated on the (firewalled) internet. Practitioners would make the learning more varied and verbal by drawing in peers, using humour and play acting or games to play with the topic on offer in such a way as to investigate the boundaries of the topic and use the child's interests to motivate further engagement

with the topic. Knowledge and learning were packaged as fun and extended through relationships. If a practitioner did not know something she would ask and children who would share their experience (as was the case with the Nintendo DS). If a child wanted to know something she would ask and together further information would be found as happened when there was a disagreement about what Australian bush hats were made from. However, there were notable differences in the relationship between knowledge and learning and the child across the two classrooms.

What follows is a Nursery example of a practitioner following through on a child's suggestions for a curricular activity.

Vignette 5-12: Ms Nesbit and Nelly’s High School Musical Magazine



Image 5-53: High School Musical magazine

Context

Ms Nesbit is not manning the door this morning but the practitioner who is has gone into the main school to attend to something for a parent so Nelly comes into the classroom to find Ms Nesbit.

- Nelly (holding magazine up to Ms Nesbit)
- Ms Nesbit High School Musical magazine! What’s in here? Who’s that?
- Nelly (Conversation with lots of changes in speaker but most of it is too soft for me to hear however Nelly looks pleased.)
- Ms Nesbit Here’s a list of all the lovely things going to be on.
- Nelly They are going to sing.
- Ms Nesbit They’re doing the Chitty Chitty Bang Bang song! Remember that? (sings it)
- Nelly (Joins in the singing)
- Ms Nesbit (Invites Nelly’s friends to join in the song. They all seem to know it and sing it and where they don’t know the words they talk about “words that would fit” then use their own words in the song. They move on to other songs when Chitty Chitty Bang Bang is finished.)
- Nelly (After 10-15 minutes of singing Nelly says to Ms Nesbit) We did good singing. Can we sing more tomorrow?
- Ms Nesbit Can you remember to talk about that at your planning meeting?

What followed

Talked about chances to sing at planning meeting. Decide to bring in their favourite CD’s to sing along to “so we can learn each other’s songs”. (I hear them singing along to ABBA a few days later....brought in by Nina)

In the Nursery the children were between 3 and 5 years old. All the children had some level of speech although some children were much less verbal than others.

Practitioners in the Nursery made considerably more use of scaffolding techniques in order to facilitate these young children's connections with each other and with the topics raised by the brought-in objects. Here practitioners behaved in ways that made their supportive presence known to the child, such as complimenting, encouraging child voice, using humour, including peers, being persistent/undeterred, play acting, providing distraction or sympathy, verbalising trust in the child's abilities and waiting for the child to respond in their own time and way.

In P1/2 classroom children were between 5-7 years of age and there was less visible scaffolding and more reliance on the child's own capacity to see a task through, express their view and plan and deliver with or without peers. Here too the curricular links were much tighter in the sense that the link would likely be visible to the child as well as to the practitioners. Here the curriculum as learning to read, write and do maths and science was much more visible to the children in both what was spoken and what was done and illustrated around the walls of the classroom. This is not to suggest that there was no scaffolding, because there was. What was different was the general level of social scaffolding since children evidenced greater self-reliance and more proficient personal social skills. A similar vein of "we are all in this together" was evident in activities such as the morning carpet time but there was more visible practitioner direction of learning content associated with brought-in objects and greater differentiation regarding appropriate activities. Here practitioners maintained a higher degree of focus on what might be termed core skills: reading, writing and maths. Links with these themes were seen to direct a brought-in object to the sunny windowsill where the plants grew, to the reading and writing display for inclusion in later reading and writing exercises and to the shop where numbers were in common usage. Objects which did not make a link with one of these curricular areas were engaged with on the carpet but were likely destined for "in your tray please" at the end of carpet time. In

P1/2 children engaging with reading, writing and arithmetic was a prime focus and objects which were linked to these curricular themes were visibly present in the classroom for longer than objects which were not.

5.4.5 Relationships between child and peers

The practitioner behaviours which appeared to be associated with the relationships between an object-bringing child and his/her peers were slightly different in Nursery to those in the P1/2 classroom. In both classrooms peer relationships were important and practitioners made an effort to ensure that children had friends they could rely on in class by grouping children with similar interests together and assigning privileged chores or classroom tasks to pairs of children as a norm rather than to individual children. So, for instance, if there was a note which needed to be taken to another classroom the practitioner in both the Nursery and P1/2 would ask a particular child and their friend to take the note rather than asking a child to go on their own. This was demonstrated to apply to sharing of brought-in objects as well when Ms Patrick asked Pauline to take her handmade “Hungry Caterpillar” and show it to the Nursery practitioner. Ms Patrick asked Pauline who she would like to go with her and Pauline chose a peer who sat next to her at their table.

In similar vein to that which applied to the other three relationships described previously, P1/2 practitioners were seen to engage in less scaffolding in association with children who brought in objects. However, what was apparent was that this was a decision made on a child-by-child basis so again practitioners were very knowledgeable about each child’s abilities and when support might be appropriate or not. In the P1/2 classroom I frequently heard practitioners ask children if they would like assistance or not but this question tended to be a general “Would you like help?” rather than a more specific “Would you like help with X?” Practitioners appeared to assume that P1/2 children were more able to assess their own requirements for assistance.

In the Nursery the peer matching and peer support processes associated with brought-in objects was much more specific in both content and the naming of peers. Whereas in P1/2 the question regarding peer support would be asked, here practitioners assumed that peer support would be beneficial and made a point of mixing and matching the children with peers they were good friends with as well as those who they did not know so well. Part of the aim of welcoming objects from home seemed to be to build many and varied peer relationships. Sometimes the peer matching was done on the basis of shared interests, such as was the case when Ms Nesbit asked Nina to show Natalie the purple bangles she had brought in. Ms Nesbit told me later that she remembered Natalie had brought bangles a couple of days before. Other times the peer matching was done on basis of shared needs, as was the case with Ms Nesbit and Natasha's Pink Worm. In this instance Ms Nesbit had noted that an English 2nd language speaker was on her own, so drew her into the group then associated Natasha's friend Nareen with the pink play dough so that she too would be included in the worm making activity.

In the Nursery most of the girls appeared to be more amenable to this peer mixing and matching for brought-in object related activities than the older boys were. While the younger boys were happy to be peer-matched with children of either sex as long as the object related activity was to their liking the older boys were much more inclined to do their own peer matching which almost inevitably led to some degree of conflict since their own peer-matching tended to be more exclusive. It was noted that practitioners, having intervened in an older boys' conflict, would always draw a range of boys into the group as if to dilute the exclusive peer bonds that had contributed to the conflict by excluding a peer from the activity.

Nursery practitioners also made considerably more use of play acting and games – particularly word games – to support children in talking about the objects they had brought. Where a child's vocabulary was in short supply practitioners would suggest a number of rhyming words as options so that a child could choose the one they thought

most appropriate. So, again in association with Natasha's pink worm, when Natasha did not respond when asked what the worm did Ms Nesbit offered a range of rhyming words (with associated actions) which included "Slither? Dither? Jiggle? Wiggle?" Natasha ignored all the suggestions and opted for "Bounce!" instead. So, while Ms Nesbit's show of potential worm movements had entertained a small group of children it seemed it had also given Natasha the opportunity to contribute her own word.

All five of these relationships, described in detail above, by virtue of their being ongoing and interrelated, provided continuities of potential use in the development of child-centred experiences. Of particular note in the Nursery was the degree of child agency the practitioners enabled in their acceptance of the children's objects as indicative of the child's agenda for the day. Nursery children had high degrees of input and control over three out of five of these ongoing relationships, or continuities, and were able to participate in collaborative shaping of their own experiences. In the Nursery context the relationship between the child and the object, relationships between practitioner and child, relationships between child and learning/knowledge/curriculum as well as the relationships between child and peers were wide open to child shaping and input as children followed their own experiential pathways.

In the P1/2 classroom practitioners had a more directive role in the shaping of children's in-school experiences. Brought-in objects were all welcomed and high proportions of them were engaged with by both students and practitioners. However, practitioners' planning, classroom routines, time management, staffing levels and the linear processes of learning to read, write and do arithmetic differentiate between those brought-in objects which continued to be part of a child's in-school experience throughout the day and those which rested in children's trays until it was time to go home. While the experiential pathways children were able to follow in P1/2 were differentiated according to children's abilities, interests and peers the next step in the experiential

journey was shaped by what has elsewhere been described as *schoolification* (Van Laere, Peeters, & Vandenbroeck 2012 p527).

5.5 Reflecting on the three research findings prior to interpreting them

This chapter has described the findings to Research Questions 1-3 as three main pedagogical practices which practitioners used in conjunction with objects children brought to school. In a short form, these can be summarised as practitioners used transforming objects, pedagogical practices which shaped classroom interactions and building relationships to tailor the practices to their own classroom purposes.

- Transforming objects: Practitioner-child-object relationships were shaped by the practitioner's engaging with children in experimenting with the physical and social properties of brought-in objects in order to transform them from a previous role in an out-of-school experience into an educational tool useful in in-school experiences and available for further out-of-school conversations after school as well.
- Shaping interactions through pedagogical practices: Object transformation took place within practitioner-child-object interactions that were shaped by six main pedagogical practices (Welcoming the object and experience, scaffolding experimental thinking and behaviours, supporting collaborative learning by negotiating or directing experiences, enabling experience as doing or experience as thinking about doing, responsive planning and recording memories).
- Building relationships: The interactions within brought-in object situations were seen to build five different kinds of relationships: Relationships around objects, practitioner/child, practitioner/families, child/learning/knowledge/curriculum and child/peers. These relationships, working together with practitioners' pedagogical practices, determined the parameters for what was, or was not, possible with regard to children's brought-in objects within each classroom.

In the next chapter these three findings will be interpreted with particular reference to Dewey's views on good educational experiences.

6 DISCUSSION: INTERPRETING THE FINDINGS THROUGH DEWEY'S THEORY

This research contributes to the debate about the nature and educational potential of experience in four ways. The set of three findings contributes the following: (1) that practitioners transformed children's voluntarily brought-in objects into educational tools and (2) they shaped children's classroom interactions using pedagogies that fostered continuities and interactions through (3) a web of collaboratively developed relationships. The fourth contribution is the application of Dewey's detailed thinking about the nature of experiences to these findings and the discussion around them. The use of Dewey's thinking about educational experiences offers one, of many, languages of experience with which to think about, and envision, the making something in-between which is so core in relational pedagogies.

Experienced practitioners have a range of learned responses available to them. Yet, past experience is not necessarily enough in new circumstances. There is a real possibility that in a new situation, such as the implementing of a new curriculum, previous experience does not offer "first in the muscles" answers to all the new questions. In addition, new challenges may need new language with which to think about them as appears to be the case with the CfE's use of the word 'experience'. We may assume we understand its many meanings since it is a word we use often. However, in a new educational context which uses 'experiences' to assess both children's learning and the quality of practitioner and school pedagogies, assuming a shared understanding across parties with very different agendas may have risks. Thus, the social development of shared language is one of Dewey's solutions. It offers possibilities for expressing both the new challenges and new socially developed solutions. Thinking, as a less painful way of carrying out "What if?" experiments, is another of Dewey's contributions to just such a difficulty. And a third contribution is what he referred to as a "community of action"

in which “Something is literally made in common in at least two different centers (sic) of behaviour” (Dewey, Boydston, & Hook 2008 p141). By this he meant collaboration, since it makes available other people’s thinking and experience, as contributions to new solutions to new questions in uncharted times.

Using Dewey’s understanding of experience, we might say that a practitioner’s pre-existing patterns as habits, or propensities to act, offer a learned shape to their response. Beginning with this learned response, and informed by new information gained within the immediate child-with-brought-in-object interaction, practitioners create a situation in which children are able to participate by responding, in ways shaped by their own experiences but also informed by their learning what is deemed appropriate in each classroom. These are highly social interactions in which practitioners, in Dewey’s terms, are making use of their own continuities of experience, exhibited as behavioural habits or pedagogical practices, to influence children’s abilities to interact with the world. Over time, and through multiple interactions and reflections on those interactions and the experiences they contribute to, practitioners make and re-make the patterns of possibilities for children’s learning in their classroom.

In order to consider the implications of the findings from this research in an early childhood educational context, this chapter does three main things: 1) relates the three research findings, as evidence, to Dewey’s theories in the main 2) interprets the concept of experience in light of Dewey’s views and 3) considers some of the implications of this study.

6.1 Relating evidence to theories: exploring the findings through a Deweyian framework

Firstly, a brief reminder of the three findings, as evidence, plus interpretation in slightly more Deweyian terms:

- Finding 1: Out-of-school experiences were drawn into classrooms through children's brought-in objects. In Dewey's terms this translates into continuities were made possible between out-of-school and in-school experiences through practitioner's responses to a child's action to bring an object from home into school. Through social interactions around the brought-in objects, they became tools, or "events with meanings", for exploring past continuities of experience and developing different kinds of future continuities of experience.
- Finding 2: Pedagogical practices shape possibilities for interactions in an educational situation. In Dewey's terms this translates into the view that differences in pedagogical practices shape in-school experiences as different possibilities. Or, practitioners' patterns of pedagogical practice, as habits developed through their own previous experiences, shape the kinds of experiences made possible for children in each classroom.
- Finding 3: Relationships shape learning through experience. In Dewey's terms this translates into an understanding that in any interaction the presence of at least two parties is implied. With relationship defined as patterns in behaviour within interactions, relationships are at the very heart of how we live in the world.

The mutual sharing of previous experiences around seemingly random (from an outsider's point of view) objects illustrates the experimental nature of learning, since neither party knows which way the sharing of experiential stories will go or where the boundaries for in-school conversations lie. Nevertheless, risking misunderstanding, practitioners make use of and reflect on their own experiences in order to open potential meanings and connections between different participant experiences. This behaviour is reminiscent of collaborative quilting bees where group participation in a new quilt produces something unique, potentially beautiful and useful from retained or recycled pieces of previous creations. This practitioners' risk-taking in

action/consequence experiments, or classroom interactions, opens opportunities for communications around coordinated actions so that “something is literally made in common in at least two different centers (sic) of behaviour” (Dewey 2003 p141).

Below, the three findings are interpreted using Dewey’s framing of experience as continuities and interactions developed through experimental action/interaction within relationships which, in a classroom, are shaped by a practitioner’s learned pedagogical habits/practices. Other theorists’ views or research findings are included in the discussion where useful.

6.1.1 Interpretations of object roles using Dewey’s framing of continuity

In this research, practitioners made use of what Biesta and Burbules (2003 p42) describe as “shared action” by which we mean, in this discussion, shared pedagogical action. This is illustrated in the largely shared patterns of pedagogical practice which shaped all the practitioners’ engagements with children’s brought-in objects.

Appropriating a Biesta and Burbules turn of phrase, we might describe the brought-in children’s objects as things that make shared action possible, acquire significance, become things-with-shared-meaning (that is, symbols) as a result of the social interactions around them. Which raises the question as to what the objects as things-with-shared-meaning became symbols of?

Each practitioner’s implicit recognition of the objects children voluntarily brought into the classrooms as “events with meanings” useful in educational settings opened possibilities for actions/interactions that transformed an event with meanings made elsewhere into in-school events with meanings, or tools, useful in in-school activities and beyond. There are many ways to interpret objects in this research, depending on which of Dewey’s concepts you use as an interpretive filter. This section uses continuity as one of the key concepts in Dewey’s theory to consider brought-in object roles in developing continuities of experience for children and practitioners within broader educational and cultural contexts. Since Dewey’s concept of continuity is in relation to

his other concepts, a number of these other concepts are also drawn into this discussion.

I begin by looking at the role of objects in a child's continuity of experience in and out of school. The child's continuities mattered to Dewey because he took the view that school was one of many places where a child lived. Rather than a preparation for some future life, school was to be as natural a part of a child's learning to engage meaningfully with the world as was her life at home or in other settings. For a child to develop joined-up patterns of engagement with the world (continuities of experience), she needed to be able to learn (action an impulse) in order to gain knowledge (develop action/consequence relationships through experimentation) of how the world worked so as to understand possible worthwhile purposes ("making something together"). It was this skill in selecting worthwhile purposes, and having the freedom to choose to dedicate her energies to them, which was at the heart of Dewey's view of freedom of intelligence.

Dewey's view that knowledge is "first in the muscles" (Dewey 1922 p12) suggests that in its initial action learning may be, but is not necessarily, an unconscious activity. Or, it may be a natural physical response following on from what Taguchi (2010 p ix) describes as a child's desire or interest experienced in previous activities. As such, a child's bringing in of an object may be viewed as a step into the unknown, a risk, or an experiment initiated by an impulse. Whether it is an unconscious impulse, or conscious choice to follow a desire, a child's ability to action their own impulse matters. In arriving at the classroom door with a voluntarily brought-in object, the child's action to bring the object implies an invitation for others' responses as the child participates as a contributor to, and developer of, his own continuities within a space of shared continuities such as is a classroom.

The kinds of experiences that many early educational object theorists such as Froebel, Montessori and Piaget saw as useful for children's educational experiences were adult

chosen and designed. They were based in adult desires for children's learning, and often specific to adult understandings of particular developmental levels (see *Chapter 2.2.1 Theorising about objects in a children's world*, page 23). With their distinct views about what children should learn, these theorists' objects could be said to be integral to their own views of child development and what was deemed, by adults, to be appropriate at any given point in time. The objects which the children in this research voluntarily brought to classrooms were, in Dewey's terms, part of the child's continuity so were present by a child's impulse and own action to learn and continue a previous experience through bringing the object into a classroom setting. Rather than selecting particular objects as educational tools for particular purposes, as was the adult thinking behind Froebel and Montessori's educational objects, Dewey took the view that since objects were "events with meanings" they were potentially useful based in their meaning to the child rather than in their particular physical characteristics. In this sense, the objects that children brought to these two classrooms could be seen as symbols of previous events and meanings children wanted to now engage with in school. In Dewey's terms they were developing their own continuities between their home and school experiences. What these continuities were, for each child, is not possible to know. However, observations suggest that for children who were in the early years of mastering language, bringing an object might be viewed as an unspoken sign of their intent to converse and be social. For children with a greater command of language the brought-in object opened a whole world of possible conversations and social negotiations. What was particularly interesting about the object-centred interactions between child, parent/carers and practitioner at the door was how natural, or "first in the muscles," both the proffering of the object by the child and the accepting of it by the practitioners were in opening mutual conversation around the object. Practitioners understood the spoken and body languages in which child + object = conversation as children made their own use of impulse + action = interaction.

With reference to Dewey's view of experience as part continuity, part interaction, brought-in objects could be described as tools for practitioner's interactive access to one or more previous interactions in a child's continuities. Practitioners gained access to some of a child's continuities, as useful in building a shared cultural context within each classroom, by allowing a space for an in-school brought-in object interaction to happen and develop its links with previous out-of-school object interactions. Through these practitioner/child/object interactions practitioners gained knowledge about what mattered to the object-bringing child as well as to their peers. Brought-in objects also offered practitioners opportunities to interact with a child about bodies of knowledge which they had built up outside of school experiences and bodies of knowledge deemed important in in-school experiences, such as sharing and literacies. On occasion the body of knowledge which the child had developed was more extensive and thorough than the practitioner's knowledge of the object. When, for example in the pre-Christmas talk about presents children hoped to receive, a young boy mentioned that he would like a Nintendo DS but had never played with one before, a peer offered to bring one in. A Nursery practitioner mentioned she had never played on one either, so both the child and practitioner received instruction from the experienced DS player: based on this experience, the child who had wished for one changed his mind. He decided it was "too hard" and he would rather "wait 'till next year." This, and similar interactions around brought-in objects, framed practitioners and children as learning together and the objects as tools for learning through a child's interests and in support of shared continuities, or what we might describe as cultural continuities.

In Winnicott's sense, it might be possible to interpret the brought-in objects as tools for transitioning identities between out-of-school and in-school as part of what Dewey referred to as continuity of experience. Particularly if we make use of Winnicott's claim that

“The place where cultural experience is located is in the *potential space* between the individual and the environment (originally the object). The same can be said of playing. Cultural experience begins with creative living first manifested in play.” (Winnicott 2005 p135)

In this sense, this Nursery in particular, might be described as a place of cultural experience where children and their brought-in objects lived creatively in the potential space between themselves and their classroom environment as a cultural experience within which they could play. Whereas in P1/2 we might describe children’s cultural experience as focused on gaining the tools for cultural participation: literacies. In both classrooms those objects which supported each classroom’s purpose lived on in the classroom space. These ideas are reflective of the theories described in *Chapter 2.2.1 Theorising about objects in a children’s world*, Subsection *Objects as tools for developmental progress*, (page 30), and illustrate the ongoing tension in early childhood educational thinking around children’s play and objects as one of many cultural tools for experimentation, creativity and collaborative social development of new purposes (eg Nursery) or tools for a particular purpose (eg literacies in P1/2). While both are reflections of cultural expectations for children’s development, it is possible that conversations focused in the timing and pedagogical practices in support of a gradual transition between these different expectations might be a topic for further practitioners’ collaborative development.

Children’s own continuities, or those encapsulated in social expectations, were not the only continuities that mattered in Dewey’s views. His ideas frame practitioners as responsible for a child’s education through continuities of experience – their own as well as the children’s - yet possibly little to go on regarding what a child’s out-of-school experiences actually are. He describes a practitioner’s influence, in this context of working with high degrees of unknown about children’s out-of-school lives, as being in shaping the classroom environment and interactions in ways which make it possible, or

even likely, for a child's previous experiences to come to the fore. Once a child's out-of-school experience is brought to the fore, the in-school continuities of experience made possible by pedagogical practices around the object can be said to speak to the overall purposes within each classroom. We might describe this process, in Dewey's terms, as practitioners making tools out of the brought-in objects where the type of tools made in each classroom reflects classroom practitioners' overall purposes in classroom interactions as continuities of their own experiences within wider educational and social contexts. Thus, practitioners' purposes are mediated by cultural and social purposes.

Particularly in Nursery, there was evidence of Vygotsky's views of objects as socially mediated tools with dependence on language as one of the most powerful of social tools. Here brought-in objects were tools for sharing with small groups of peers and adults and within this sharing were possibilities for developing relational continuities, continuities of interests, and children's roles in continuities of curricularising Sellers (2013). A primary medium for this social sharing was the further development of language use as children shared their object properties and previous experience with practitioner and peers, negotiated a space in object activities for their own views and fulfilment of their own desires, brought their ideas for future activities to small group planning sessions and discussed their in-school object experience with parents/carers as they left the setting.

The continuities that that were seen to matter most, to practitioners, in this Nursery were child-centred, collaboratively developed and immediately actioned learning experiences. These were supported by pedagogical practices which made spaces for each child's own engagement with particular aspects of the curriculum as and when their interest took them there. Practitioners further encouraged joined-up home and school experiences via the pedagogical practices of small group planning and making memories which were immediately available for a child to take out the door and share with their carers on the same day: thus making what arrived from home, was

transformed in school, available to return home in its transformed state at the end of each session. We might summarise this as these Nursery practitioners chose practices which fostered children learning to learn collaboratively about shared matters of interest. Children curricularising their own learning could be described as one of this classroom's cultural continuities.

Other cultural continuities were illustrated, in Nursery, where brought-in objects were seen to be tools for exhibiting gender on the part of children and practitioners. The gendered patterns in interactions around brought-in objects were most evident in the children's practices through older boys' bringing of superhero figures and the gendered use of colours (particularly pink for girls). Additionally, the gendered patterns in pedagogical practices were evident in the variety of practitioners' language used around girls' brought-in objects as well as patterns of practice which facilitated space for older boys to independently develop their own activities and social group. While the gendered use of the colour pink continued in some of the objects brought by girls in P1/2, there was, overall, less evidence of relationships between objects and gender in this classroom. It might be worth considering whether, in general, being construed as a scholar is less culturally gendered than being construed as playing? And whether the more gendered/less gendered transition between Nursery and P1/2 may prove to have elements of discontinuity for some children? Or, if we choose to frame children's objects as illustrations of adult constructions of childhood, whether highly gendered children's objects are a way of seeing adult social continuities at work in children's lives? Which raises further issues around what is expressed by Rasmussen (2006) as the difficulties for those children deemed to have an 'unrepresentable' face because their gender does not find a home in current gendered practices.

The continuities that mattered most in P1/2 were those associated with literacies. This meant that suitability for literacy learning became a criterion for sorting possible in-school and out-of-school object experiences. Here too collaboration around brought-in

objects mattered, yet practitioners' focus on literacies made their own choices more visible in the brought-in object collaborations. We might summarise this as these P1/2 practitioners chose practices which fostered children learning literacies in adult-directed activities as continuities, where possible, of children's brought-in object experiences. And again, as in the role of gender in children's objects, these continuities have associations with adult social continuities being at work in children's lives.

Additionally, in P1/2 brought-in objects were used as tools for developing public/private distinctions in relationships. This, again, may be a societal continuity. Offering a child the option to designate their brought-in object as private between themselves and a practitioner highlighted the possibility that some objects were more private than others and opened the way for conversations with practitioners which were apart from the whole group setting. In contrast to the Nursery practitioners' view that "objects are for sharing," objects in P1/2 took on the possibility of being tools for more separate lives in which some continuities of experience were deemed "private." Again, cultural views of child development come into play as the older children are deemed to be entitled to their own secrets.

Having discussed, above, brought-in objects' roles in developing both children's and broader societal continuities, I now turn to looking at the role of these objects in practitioner's continuities. Since objects were shared between children and practitioners they also became part of a practitioner's continuities. While some of the brought-in objects may have challenged practitioners' views of what was appropriate in their classroom, these object interactions also illustrate practitioner's potentially experimental behaviours and imply their engaging in their own learning at the same time as they focus on what children in their care are learning. Practitioners used brought-in objects as tools for experimental practices. They relied on a range of learned practices (see *Chapter 5.3.1 Shared pedagogical practices with objects in both classrooms*, page 179) but personalised these with a variety of experimental behaviours

if their first attempt to engage a child did not elicit a response. So, when a young girl in Nursery was slow in forming a response to “What can your beautiful snake do?” the practitioner slithered up and down the doorpost as scaffolding for a possible response. While this creative response to a child’s need for scaffolding may come from what a practitioner has already learned, there is also the possibility that she is trialling experimental actions and theories to modify her own continuities of experience as she develops more effective ways of engaging children in in-school experiences, as continuous with their out-of-school experiences, in relation to a new curriculum. That this trialling of creative responses is visibly physical is both appropriate in an early childhood context and chimes with Dewey’s view of learning being “first in the muscles” (Dewey 1922 p124). It also illustrates how possible theories (or ideas/plans practitioners might be experimenting with) are only theories until they are turned into an interactive behavioural response capable of making a difference to children’s experiences such that in-school experiences are capable of “taking up something from those (experiences) which have gone before and modif(ing) in some way the quality of those which come after” (Dewey 1938 p35).

A further practitioner continuity, across both classrooms, was their use of brought-in objects as tools for judging compliance with the curriculum over time. They all used the conversations and activities which developed around brought-in objects as one of the ways they judged both their own and their pupils’ progress in relation to the curriculum even though they took very different stances to the curriculum itself.

In similar vein, practitioner’s actions or responses (although they have had considerably more time to develop into patterned responses shaped by learning through previous experiences, training, policy and other influences) may also be viewed as experimental in pursuit of their own desires for children’s, and their own, experiences. And it is in this sense that the different patterns of practice in each classroom may be said to illustrate different practitioner’s desires for children’s learning. Modern practitioners

act on their own “lines of flight,” within the complexities of a multiply viewed, and contested shared space, by making use of the gaps they see available for possible new pathways of thinking and behaviour. They too have hopes for future continuities of experience as they seek to make their own and their pupil’s lives full of meaning and shared purpose.

Given Dewey’s focus on the importance of continuities in experience it is not surprising that he went so far as to describe discontinuities of experience as “disorderly” or “split” or stated that they “do not hang together” (Dewey 1938 p44). He took continuities so seriously that he viewed discontinuities as potential sources of poor mental health (p44) since he saw them creating an understanding of the world that was disjointed and views of one’s own roles which might fracture across different settings. Vygotsky expressed a similar need for continuity when he stated that “humans must be understood concretely, that is, as the totality of their social relationships and social histories. It is this entire person who thinks, speaks, and acts...” (Holland & Lachicotte 2007 p110). The joined-up-ness, which both Dewey and Vygotsky describe, is often applied to pupils’ lives, but there may also be a need to recognise that discontinuities of experience have potential risks to adult practitioners’ lives as well.

The uses of brought-in objects as tools for developing continuities for children and practitioners, as well as revisiting cultural expectations, created two different classroom spaces in which children could further their brought-in object experiences in school. The pedagogical practices which shaped these two learning spaces are discussed in the next section in light of Dewey’s view that practitioners have responsibility for shaping classroom situations by selecting “the kind of present experiences that live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences” (Dewey 1938 p28). As illustrated in the above section, these experiences are part of multiple continuities, and include tensions between continuities, as practitioners shape their particular classroom situations within

larger situations, or contexts, of school, family and societal hopes and expectations for young children.

6.1.2 Interpretations of pedagogical practices using Dewey's framing of habits

As described in further detail below, slight differences in pedagogical practices effected the different symbolic meanings in each classroom such that in Nursery we might say objects were symbols of children's curricularising while in P1/2 they might be described as symbols of children as young literacies' scholars.

In Nursery the nuances in pedagogical practices fostered what Sellers (2013) describes as children curricularising. This seemed to be related, in ways which were not explored, to the practitioners' view of the curriculum as able to flow naturally, and largely unbidden, from children's engagements with the world during the two year period they spent in this classroom. So here the pedagogical practices shaped in-school learning as about small groups with a dedicated practitioner as a more experienced collaborator, child-initiated activities, peers' collaboration and following of children's interests rather than the following of a particular developmental pathway pre-determined by practitioners. Including all children in planning meetings and practitioners' willingness to collaborate rather than control, as it were, brought children's ideas and interests to the fore and put them in shared control, as full participants in the learning which took place in the classroom.

In P1/2 there was also considerable collaboration, particularly in the whole group setting which took place first thing every morning. Here too, practitioners were listening to children's views. Here too, children were active participants in the day's activities. But here, under what appeared to be pressure to develop a high standard of literacy skills, as well as school patterns of behaviour which include timetables and separate subject areas, children were, in large, participating in a wide range of adult planned activities. Thus, brought-in objects which contributed to pre-planned activities lived on past the social carpet time encounter while less literacy-useful objects did not.

Further, there is the possibility that children who understood the ‘hidden curriculum’ (Snyder 1971b) were able to participate more fully while children who did not may have found their participation less socially useful to the group. It must also be said that practitioners went to enormous efforts to make use of children’s contributions through strategic placing of the object in full view, references to it during the day and including it in future planning. However, sorting of in- and out-of-school appropriate activities was part of the collaborative engagement with objects each morning. This suggests that there is a tendency, even in children this young, to be accepting of a separation between school and the rest of their lives. Whether this is a useful separation or not is a topic for further collaborative discussion.

Practitioners honoured the children’s desire to continue their out-of-school experience in the classroom by making use of six specific pedagogical patterns of practice (or habits, in Dewey’s terms). Across these pedagogical practices practitioners used a range of ideas which showed some similarities with those described in *Chapter 2.3.5 Postmodern and relational pedagogies* (page 50) as emerging pedagogical practices in Scandinavia such as Taguchi’s “happenings in-between” and Olsson’s (2009a) “lines of flight” as well as the EPPE study’s “sustained shared thinking” and Sellers “children performing curriculum complexly.”

In the following section consideration is given to how classroom relationships give shape to both practitioners and children’s roles based in the relational nature of action and interaction.

6.1.3 Interpretations of relationships and learning through experiences

Dewey is one of many educational theorists who saw education as relational and expected practitioner-child relationships to be useful to the child as well as to society. For example, Piaget saw relationships as a way of introducing dissonance and thus the processes of accommodation and assimilation (Seel 2011 p588) on which he saw knowledge growing. In a similar, though not equivalent, way Dewey saw learning as the

on-going refinement of understanding developed through previous actions and interactions such that an increasingly more fine-grained understanding of the world became available to the child in order for the child to be able to find an increasing number of places in which they might participate and contribute. For Vygotsky not only were relationships the centre and support for a child's learning but also "social relations, real relations between people, underlie all higher functions" (Holland & Lachicotte 2007 p110).

At the centre of Dewey's philosophy was "the organic connection between education and personal experience" (Dewey, Boydston, & Hook 2008 p25) and this 'organic connection' included relationships with other people as well as other objects. He recognised that

"...basing education upon personal experience may mean more multiplied and more intimate contacts between the mature and the immature than ever existed in the tradition school, and consequently more, rather than less, guidance by others. The problem, then, is: how these contacts can be established without violating the principle of learning through personal experience. The solution of this problem requires a well thought-out philosophy of the social factors that operate in the constitution of individual experiences." (Dewey, Boydston, & Hook 2008 p21)

Within the data, a number of relationships were shaped by the choice of pedagogical practices in each classroom. This concurs with Dewey's above statement that the balance between individual experiences and social influences needs to be "a well thought-out philosophy of the social factors."

In the Nursery a number of these "social factors" or particular kinds of relationships contributed to their view of a balance between the individual and the social. Firstly, the

relationship to brought-in objects was based in a broad acceptance of whatever a child brought with them. This view might prove more difficult to attain in other settings, but the principle of working with what a child is working with is worth considering as it places the child's own experience in the centre of the classroom practices. Secondly, the relationship between a Nursery practitioner and her small group of children was one of joint collaboration in which the practitioner functioned as a 'respected and more experienced person' rather than as the person in obvious control. There were no doubt occasions when practitioners were in control, but the general tone of the settings was more collaborative than controlling which meant that children were able to follow their own experiential pathways to a greater extent than in a less collaborative space. In addition, the relationship between a practitioner and a child's family was refreshed on an almost daily basis which gave opportunity for a child's 'responsible adults' to coordinate their activities on behalf of the child. Practitioners being in regular receipt of additional information about children's lives outside of school opened possibilities for their wider understanding of a child to be useful in their collaborative efforts. And finally, by taking the view that children were curricularising all the time, practitioners were confident that their adopting a collaborator's role was sufficient to facilitate children taking an active role in planning their learning while covering the curriculum.

In P1/2 "social factors" or particular kinds of relationships also contributed to their view of a balance between the individual and the social. In the first instance, the relationship between the practitioner and the child was what might typically be described as teacher/pupil as evidenced by the different roles expected and acted on. These adult roles included being in charge of the order activities happened in, the nature of the activities and who went where and when while pupil roles included showing intent in mastering the tasks put before them. Secondly, when compared with this Nursery there was less opportunity for practitioners and families to meet and brought-in object associated activities were often spoken of a "something you could do at home" or "something you could do on the weekend with your family" which illustrated a degree

of sorting of activities into being either school or home appropriate. Thirdly, adults adopting a more controlling role may suggest that the tasks deemed essential in this stage of the children's development are understood as too complex, or possibly too unknown, for children to master through more pupil collaborative means?

Also in P1/2 there was less immediacy in integrating the literacies-useful objects into in-school activities. Here school ordering of knowledge creation took precedence over continuities of experience. Whether it is possible to frame these school-like practices as what Dewey referred to as "postponement of immediate action" (Dewey, Boydston, & Hook 2008 p64) is not known. At this point it is unclear as to whether the different practices in the P1/2 classroom are related to practitioners' own experiences or whether they are a conscious choice to postpone immediate action in order for thinking to take place. Dewey describes as a natural part of children's learning the need to begin to prioritise and focus their energies on the most useful tasks. This could prove a useful topic for future research endeavours. It may also be a useful topic of conversation for practitioners who have detailed understandings of their own circumstances and are willing to challenge what they do in order to better understand it and foster their own "freedom of intelligence" as part of collaborative practice development groups. Practitioners, it might be suggested, might need to become specialists in observing action/consequence relationships as the basis of knowledge creation so as to support a child's developing freedom of intelligence through thoughtful interruption, collaborative thinking about doing, doing and then reflecting together on whether the action/consequence relationships were useful or not.

To conclude, this section has related evidence to particularly Dewey's theories but also others as appropriate. For him education was a relational science which took place within the natural world which included objects and people. Learning was a constellation of understanding about the world and how it worked as well as our place in it. He took the view that knowledge is developed through own experience, and is

useful based in its degree of predictive quality which is honed into patterns in previous actions and responses. Over time, these action/response patterns develop into habits of relationship, habits of learning, habits of interacting with the world and social habits in relating to and with people as well as attitudes, interests and expertise.

The following diagram briefly describes the two different interpretations of “learning through experience” that were visible in this study.

Creating Educational Experiences through the Objects Children Bring to School

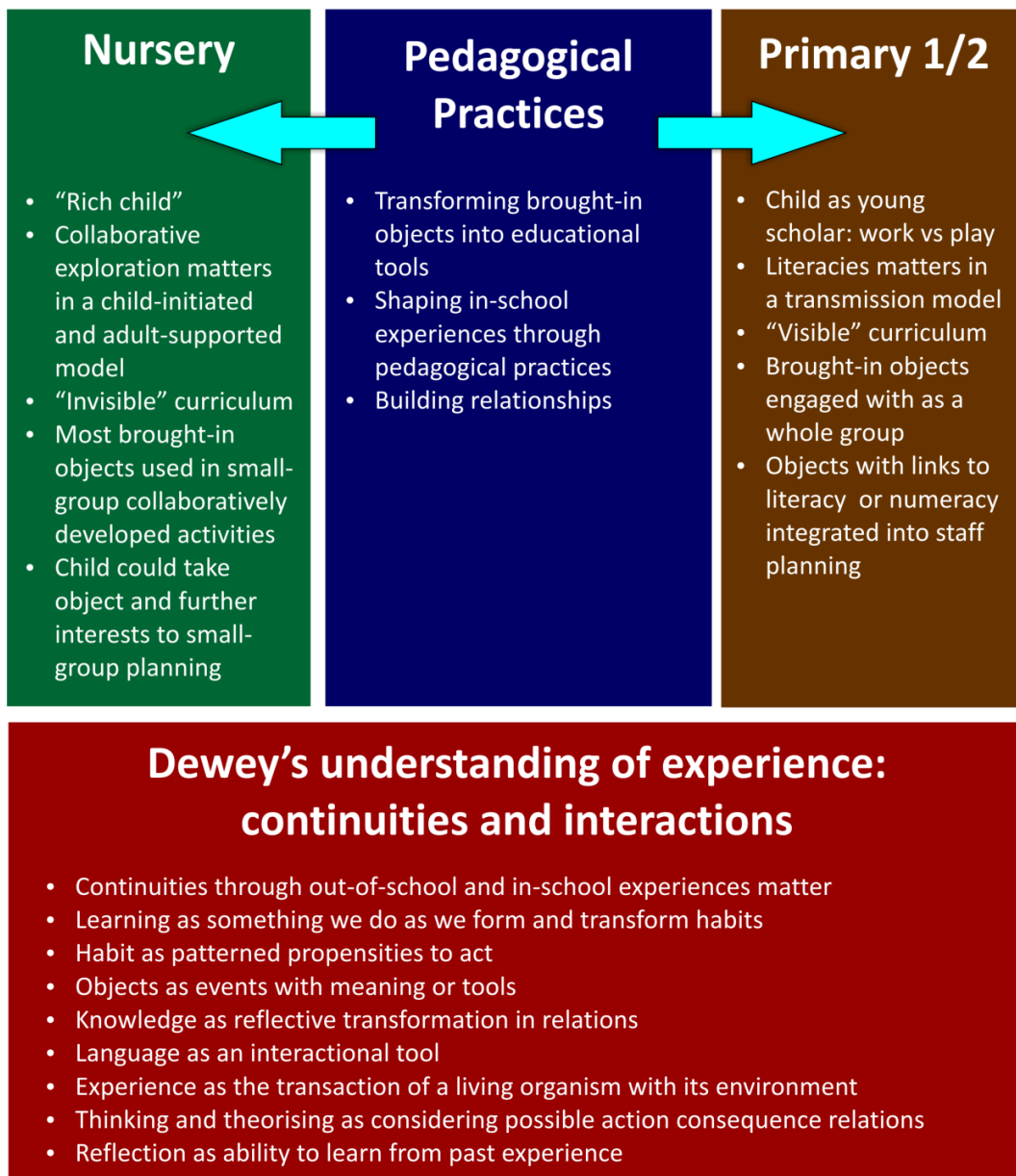


Figure 6-1: Research inferences summary

In summary, this diagram illustrates the three main findings under the heading in the central box, *Pedagogical Practices*. These findings were 1) that staff transformed objects into educational tools and 2) shaped in-school experiences through a range of pedagogical practices and 3) built a range of relationships. On either side of this list of

findings are brief descriptions of the two ways these shared practices were seen to be interpreted in a Nursery and a P1/2 classroom. Underpinning this comparative row of the diagram are some of the main ideas which, together, illustrate Dewey's view of experience. These building blocks of Dewey's ideas about experience could be useful to practitioners as they use "collaborative planning" (The Scottish Government 2006) to develop practices described more recently as "partnership working" (The Scottish Government 2009). In the next section, some of the possibly useful goods in Dewey's theory of experience are considered in an early childhood context. Also considered is what Dewey's ideas might offer to the pedagogical creation of educational experiences, as the CfE terms them, as responses to children's actions.

6.2 Interpreting the concept of experience

At interview the practitioners described their focus regarding children's objects as "building children's experiences" yet at the same time as they were also developing their own experiences as practitioners in an educational setting. Dewey's description of experience as central to learning applies to all living things, not just children in educational settings. This implies that while practitioners are engaging in developing children's in-school experiences they are also developing their own experiences and habits of pedagogical practice which also shape their own possibilities and constraints for action and interaction with children and the world of school. Like children's in-school experiments with their objects from home, practitioners too are experimenting with their actions, use of language, relationships with children and families, their engagements with changing policies and practices and their collaborative development of new ideas and practices. From these experiments they are able to draw new knowledge and insights and ways of improving the experiences of young children in their early childhood setting as shown in the complexity and diversity of their practice in relation to children's brought-in objects. However, similar to Dewey's view that children need language as a way to manipulate possible interactions without the never-ending physical effort of trial and error, practitioners too need opportunities to act and

interact with languages of educational theory. Theoretical language offers possibilities for new ways of thinking, facilitates collaborate practice development and by making what is currently implicit more explicit offers practitioners' tools for defending their choice of practice. As Priestley (2011) indicates, part of what is lost when theory is not able to be explicit are the potential gains associated with different theories and these gains include new possibilities, insights and ways of improving practice through thinking as well as acting.

6.2.1 Learning through experience across the Early Level

Of particular relevance in early childhood contexts full of the exuberant physicality of childhood, is Dewey's view that own action is at the root of own learning. His suggestion that knowledge is "first in the muscles" (Dewey 1922 p124) emphasises how personal, natural, inbuilt and physically dependent learning and knowledge is. What, in particular, a child learns by acting to bring an object from home into school is, in Dewey's view, down to the child's "first in the muscles" impulse in a context of developing understandings, or knowledge, of the relationships between his actions and other's responses. This translates, in this research, into an understanding that a child who acts to arrive at a classroom door with a brought-in object in hand has already initiated their own experiment in learning through experience.

However, experience, while a highly social and interconnected concept, is in reality largely hidden from view apart from its usefulness in shaping a current action into a successful interaction. Dewey's view of experience was that it was, to a large degree, an inevitable result of being a human being and that what mattered about experience was not the having of it (as that was an inevitable consequence of being alive) but its quality, or the direction in which it was headed. So, as the interconnected habits, or propensities to act in a particular way, conglomerated from our previous actions/interactions, Dewey's understanding of experience has much to do with where we have come from and our understanding of the world and our place in it. As

continuities in habits it also points toward future interests and directions for further actions. Yet, in spite of its current currency as a valuable educational term, it is largely invisible to practitioners in its past and future continuities apart from what is observable in a child's immediate actions and interactions within school and what child or parents/carers say. As practitioners build a relationship with each child, they become (like parents and other significant adults in a child's life) repositories of knowledge about the child and in particular about the directions a particular child's experience tends to lead him. We might say that practitioners develop their own experience of where the child's experience tends to take them. But it is important to recognise that this is only ever a partial understanding of a child, as it is most commonly within a single setting which is the school.

In practice, early childhood settings might be said to pay more attention to the rest of a child's life than the rest of school does. Welcoming parents/carers at classroom doors each day, making use of staff ratios which allow more adult per child staff time, the use of small groups with a dedicated practitioner, and encouraging a steady flow of objects and experiences between home and school all help to strengthen practitioners' understandings of each child's interests as indications of previous experience looking to continue.

This is a use of experience which is not dissimilar to the Nursery practices observed in this study. Rather than particular behaviours, emotions or knowledge which is deemed culturally necessary being referred to as experience, this practice with small numbers of children collaborating with the same member of staff over long periods of time on projects which are important to the children is a model which is rich in the social attributes which make individual experiences useful to the group as well as the individuals. In these patterns of practice children are building their own society as they learn the skills to participate in that process as contributors, collaborators and developers.

The differences in the fine-grained pedagogies in the Nursery and in P1/2 raise a number of questions about how pedagogies position the participants. One of the important things to remember is that different pedagogies create different experiences and different experiences shape different learning, knowledge of the world, understandings of one's place in it and patterns of participation. In this Nursery learning was set in small collaborative groups, with each child having opportunity to speak and influence the shape of the object-associated activity. Here a child is framed as what Moss (2000) refers to as a "rich child" who is able to make extensive use of classroom resources, ask and find answers to their own questions, shape their future learning in ways that are physically creative, tactile and valued enough to be recorded for the memory folders and included in small-group planning such that it can be continued and further developed. In Nursery a child with a brought-in object participates with both rights and responsibilities and is able to use their choices around their brought-in objects to further develop their out-of-school experience with the object within the school setting. In addition, the child's involvement in processes of planning and recording of memories involves the child in moving their experience forward and sets up out-of-school continuities for the child.

And while in both classrooms learning is framed as fun, collaborative, creative (physically or verbally) and an adventurous space the adventures in the P1/2 class are those of students in a more traditional sense in which the experiences that matter are those that support the curriculum and the teacher's plans for transmitting it. Dahlberg and Moss (2005) describe how this difference in pre-school and formal school framings is evident in education systems around the world and suggest various theoretical viewpoints which might help to underpin and further develop the shared provision of practices to which the Early Level of the Scottish curriculum, and many other early childhood policy and guidance documents, aspire. Dahlberg and Moss (2005) describe this difference as between technical-rational approaches and what is variously

described as the ethics-of-listening or learning through participation models (Learning and Teaching Scotland 2006).

Dewey's commentary on two patterns of practice being framed by two different central purposes suggests that the opportunity for children to engage in quality experiences, as defined by their continuities and the qualities of their interactions, is diminished as the central purpose of the practices change. For example, Nursery's pedagogical practices, which might be described as a participatory practice, change in P1/2 to one which is more typical of formal educational framings of purpose: adult-led and adult-decided and one which largely conforms to what is described as formal schooling (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence 2007). The learning habits centred in participatory ideas, which children have developed during their time in the Nursery, could be said to 'not fit' in the formal school setting and Dewey's warning about lack of continuity was that it led to the isolation of the child as she was no longer able to use her previous experience successfully in ways that are already "in the muscles." The question is whether the purpose of early childhood education tends toward an experientially and experimentally richer and fuller life for the child or toward imposing the more structured and compartmentalised life of a school on the child (referred to in educational literature as 'schoolification' (Jensen 2011)).

6.2.2 There are relationships that are not yet explicit

As illustrated in the previous sections, practitioners used the objects for purposes which were central to the ethos in each classroom. In other words, the objects were used in each classroom as tools in support of larger classroom purposes. The purpose in the Nursery was seen to be a collaborative development of small group, play based, shared activities which, through natural processes of children engaging with their world, supported the curriculum. In P1/2, the overall purpose appeared to be centred in developing literacies in support of the curriculum. That both of these views are in support of the same Level of the curriculum raises interesting questions.

While this research illustrates the extensive and creative use practitioners made of a number of relationships, it also illustrates that there are a relationships, such as those which underpin differences in Nursery and P1/2, which are as yet implicit rather than explicit. The danger in their being implicit is that they are not available to investigation or collaborative change if deemed useful. Rather, they become 'given' and part of habitual responses rather than what Dewey described as communities of action where thinking about purpose shapes practice. Within the as-yet-implicit relationships may be practitioner's visions of children's futures, or the underlying purposes which frame the ways they engage with children and what matters in each classroom. Also included in the as-yet-implicit framings are practitioner's relationships to the concept of experience. Also unelaborated is how experience is related to other concepts which matter in early childhood education such as assessment and compliance with a statutory curriculum.

Since pedagogical practices, as evidence of continuities in a practitioner's experience, infer expectations for children's roles in action/consequence relations in each classroom it is important that the relationships which inform them are made more explicit, contestable and negotiated with the families and communities which schools serve.

Classroom relationships are not clean, one-to-one relationships in which one action leads to one consequence which then leads to one thing learned and one experience continued for one child. Rather, they are a much more multiply responsive and interconnected rhizomatically (Sellers 2013) and develop into webs-of-significance (Geertz 1973) or continuations of experience in which seemingly minor nuances in action/consequence relations conglomerate into shaped expectations or habits or knowledge. All of which is linked in different ways to an individual's previous action/consequence events and to their expectations or likelihoods in future events. Dewey refers to these burgeoning patterns of expectation, or habits, as continuities of experience. More recently, Sellers (2013) refers to particular pedagogically responsive

ways of developing children's experiences in early childhood classrooms as being "rhizome" by which she means that a child's experience is allowed to grow naturally in response to its surroundings and challenges. This "rhizome" developmental pathway follows children's desires and is self-healing through developing another pathway around obstacles. She makes use of Deleuze and Guittari's (2013 p25) concept of "lines of flight" as a way of thinking about the multiple possibilities for further action based in children's own explorations of "leaks" or pathways around obstacles. These rhizomatous continuities within a child's experience are full of possibilities for potential extension, or growth, through the child's present or future desires. A child, in taking her own action, learns how the world responds to her actions and what possibilities, or spaces for further action, these responses leave open. Dewey described these openings as the future aspects of experience. In the gaps, or leaks, or challenges to the system, are the potentials for explorative actions and the growth of further continuities of experience. So, rather than each child ploughing the same furrow as previous children, in Dewey's understanding of experience it is essential that each child is able to plough their own furrow with potentials for creative change related to the child's own unique understanding of the world and its possibilities.

As yet, the relationships between out-of-school and in-school experience and classroom, as well as whole school, assessments are not clear. While the CfE describes numerous examples of good experiences in the Experiences and Outcomes²⁵ documents, the detail of the descriptions could be said to reduce their use as measures of quality. Rather, quality was described by Dewey as in the direction an experience is headed, the openness to future good experiences which it contains and the degree to

²⁵ These are a series of documents which are largely subject based and detail examples of experiences and outcomes across the various levels of achievement for children between 3-18 years of age. An example of one of the 'e's & o's,' as they have come to be known, follows.

From the 'Enjoyment and choice' subsection of the 'Listening and talking' section of the Literacy and English experiences and outcomes document comes "I enjoy exploring and playing with the patterns and sounds of language, and can use what I learn."

which interactions within classrooms develop each child's intellectual abilities to think before doing in order to experiment wisely, work collaboratively and select purposes which were worthwhile to the group. Thus, in many ways, for Dewey the value of each child's experience was in the child's abilities to develop good purposes and commit their energies to carrying them out and then plan, together, how to make further use of the knowledge developed through collaborative activity. All of these actions on children's parts are difficult to assess on an individual level, which is the current level of reporting.

6.2.3 Language of experience: tools for thinking and theorising

Biesta and Burbules (2003 p28) remind us of Dewey's view that experience is the way an organism is connected with reality (see *Chapter 3.2.8 Experience as the transaction of a living organism with their environment*, page 74). Using this definition of experience illustrates that, in Dewey's view, each child's experience is unique and far too complex and unavailable to scrutiny to be of use as a measure in comparative assessments. Dewey's own solution (1938 p20) to this difficulty (see *Chapter 3.3 Dewey's view of quality and practitioners' roles in educational experiences*, page 76) was a focus on the "processes of actual experience" by which he meant education "of, by and for" (p29) experience. With education *of* experience "being its shaping," education *by* experience "being its learning" and education *for* experience being what practitioners needed in order to help develop in a child the freedom to experience. How these might be operationalised as better means of assessment is not immediately clear, but might be worth further investigating. However, he does make it clear that "experience and education cannot be directly equated with each other" (1938 p25).

Dewey's inter-related educational concepts go some way to breaking experience down into more manageable and visible chunks. Rather than a blanket term which covers what practitioners "do" in schools, experience becomes a thinking tool which is useful in collaborative practice development. Making use of Dewey's, and other theorists, views of experience offers practitioners a shared language of experience with which to think

collaboratively about their visions for the future and how classroom practices point, or don't point, toward that future. In a broader perspective, a national culture of engagement with Dewey's ideas could also facilitate broader discussions about education, children's experiences and possible futures in broader "communities of action" that just those within school settings.

In addition, the practitioners' welcomes for what to them were largely unknown objects (for example: Nintendo DS, Gormiti, All Blacks' Score Card) suggest they were willing to be seen to be learning from and with the children. This framed learning as a human behaviour rather than only a child's behaviour and set the stage for collaborative experimentation rather than top-down instruction. Practitioners' willingness to engage in not knowing, such as was the case when a practitioner was asked "what does a worm's house look like?" became a catalyst for children's being able to say they did not know, speculate, ask questions, experiment, be supported in their use of smartboard technology to look for worm homes in Google Images and give their opinions. In collaborative contexts, not knowing can become a collaborative adventure rather than something to be hidden. By positioning practitioners and pupils as collaborative learners practitioners were opening the way for different kinds of classroom experiences in which action and experimental interactions were visible as part of the learning process and not knowing was a challenge to find something out collaboratively.

Thinking of learning as embedded in action and interaction and knowledge as an increasingly detailed understanding of how the world works based in action/consequence recognitions offers practitioners and children shared framings for on-going learning about learning. Also on offer are practitioners' opportunities to use collaborative thinking as a way of framing and testing new practices, in potentially less consequential ways, prior to their use in the classroom. It provides a vocabulary for thinking and talking about what makes a difference in children's experiences and allows

practitioners to engage with the experience of other practitioners by using theoretical language as a tool for understanding and further thinking. Theoretical language in collaborative forums gives opportunities for collaborative shaping of children's futures, collaborative practice development, collaborative defence of practice choices and increasing practitioner's abilities to shape their practices in explicitly purposeful ways. It also offers opportunities for a shared language between those who assess pedagogical practices and those who deliver the service of education as well as possibly opening interesting conversations about what is, or is not, assessable.

By viewing pedagogical practices as habits which are open to change as situations change, practitioners are able to focus their requirements for further CPD by considering those situations in which they find themselves most challenged or most habitual.

Taking a view of a child as already acting in the world allows practitioners to think about how to purposefully interact with where a child is already active in order to honour his acting in the world in ways that shape his own future. Viewing learning as through doing – a “first in the muscles process” - shapes possibilities for learning through experimentation in thought and action while shared language provides a tool for developing these experiments through “communities of action.” By taking the view that our shaping of the world we live in is to some extent within our own actions and interactions, Dewey emphasises the responsible role we all have in making the world we live in suitable for all of us. This may suggest that learning and sharing of collaborative practices is possibly one of the places where initial practice change may have the most benefit since collaborative purposes matter to all of us because the “something” being made together is our shared future.

In communities of shared responsibility and experience, practitioners are able to be learners with more resources than just their own. Additionally, based in their own experience of how difficult it can be to change one's habit, their own learning helps to

shape their acceptance of the difficulties present in learning processes for others. In addition, for both children and practitioners, school is where a large part of their lives happen. In a sense, this is where they live together. This makes successful learning through collaborative experiences important for both practitioners and pupils alike.

6.3 Implications of this study

The evidence in this study shows that in this early childhood setting practitioners valued children's brought-in objects and used them to bring children's out-of-school experiences into children's in-school experiences and then home again. Practitioners used a number of pedagogical practices to support these spirals of experience centred in active relationship building. While some language of experience was present, and pedagogical practices supported a continuity of experiences practitioner's practice development was described, by practitioners themselves, as largely intuitive which suggests collaborative practice development lacked a shared language for discussing, further developing and defending children's experiences in an early childhood setting. While the Scottish policy and guidance documents describe the Early Level of the new curriculum as delivered through active or participatory learning the differences between the practices in these two classrooms illustrates one particular challenge: without a shared language with which to think about and build "communities of action" the Early Level's aim to collaboratively merge those practices from two different traditions which support a shared framing of the future still needs work. Not that sharing a language of learning solves the problems. What the shared language of learning through experience offers is a way to engage collaboratively in solving the problems.

6.3.1 Developing a language for experiences

Dewey's framing of learning as something we *do* helps to explain the longstanding early childhood educational imperative for active learning and the degrees of activity present in both of these early childhood classrooms. Activity matters because it is the

mechanism by which we act and interact with the world around us and thus learn to better understand our possibilities in the world. Yet the focus of this research was purposeful practitioner actions/interactions around brought-in objects. In the same way that children learn through their experiences, what practitioners had learned through their own previous experiences was visible as habits, or patterns in their propensities to act in pedagogical ways. These habits were seen to shape what was possible in each classroom: high degrees of children's collaboration and responsibility taking for their own learning in the Nursery and high degrees of practitioner and child linking of object experiences to literacies in P1/2.

Practitioners, including those who participated in this study, when questioned about their practices often responded with "I just know what to do." This suggests an implicit rather than an explicit choice, or what Dewey referred to as "habits" or "propensities to act," based in previous experiences. At the same time this understanding of practitioner's responses as largely implicit may lend weight to Dewey's statement (Dewey 1938) that "knowledge lives first in the muscles." Practitioner's descriptions of having "a gut feeling" for knowing how to respond suggests that while they have an informative physical response they may have difficulty expressing it as a practice-making process in theoretical language (Biesta & Burbules 2003 p11). In other words, practitioners may have learned a response which works for them but may not have had opportunity to learn a form of language with which to express or explain that response-forming process or the benefits of their responses to others.

For example, when asked at interview to explain why they engaged with children's brought-in objects a number of practitioners expressed views which included "What goes on at home matters" which is in keeping with Dewey's view of the importance of continuity of experience between home and school (see *Chapter 3.3.1 Continuity as essential to an experience's quality*, page 80). Or, for example, "I can see he really likes his Transformers" is suggestive of the potentials available when practitioners engage

with children's desires in ways Taguchi (2010 p xvi) calls "happenings in-between" and Olsson (2009 p68) describes as potentials for developing "lines of flight" as a deconstructed and highly creative space within a possibly ossified context. Further, Stengel's (2001 p349) view of the relational role of the practitioners as "to pay infinite attention to the Other" is visible in a comment such as "I would feel like I was doing something wrong if I didn't like what he likes."

For Dewey experience needed to be the starting point for educational thinking, not a description of an end product. He describes practitioners' needs to engage with experience as an educational concept as:

"The more definitely and sincerely it is held that education is a development within, by, and for experience, the more important it is that there shall be clear conceptions of what experience is. Unless experience is so conceived that the result is a plan for deciding upon subject-matter, upon methods of instruction and discipline, and upon material equipment and social organization of the school, it is wholly in the air. It is reduced to a form of words which may be emotionally stirring but for which any other set of words might equally well be substituted" (Dewey 1938 p28)

Practitioners showed they valued children's experiences by engaging with brought-in objects, using pedagogical practices within both classrooms to extend children's experiences, framing their practices as "creating" or "building children's experiences" and describing the new curriculum as "all about experiences." Yet, within current policy guidance there is little to no definition, theorising or clarification of the word *experience* in spite of its being so central to how practitioners framed of children's learning. As Stephen (2008 p231) describes in a Scottish pre-school context, working practices can be the result of "implicit consensus" and "tacit understandings and expectations that shape their (practitioners) actions and interactions with children" further informed by

policy guidance documents which espouse “good practice” by giving statements of expectation regarding practice with no theoretical underpinning described, mentioned or referenced. Fleer (2009), in an Australian context, notes that for many early childhood practitioners the theory they draw on when observing children relates to their training period rather than to any more recent engagement with theory while Tassoni (2008) found, in the UK context, twelve of the fifteen books recommended for preschool practitioners in training relate to psychological theories from early in the previous century. As reflected in the Literature Review (see *Chapter 2.3.5 Postmodern and relational pedagogies*, page 50) there are an increasing number of more modern theoretical engagements with learning in the early childhood but as yet they are not reflected in practitioner’s framings of their practice which suggests that there are issues around the availability of these newer ideas to early childhood practitioners at work.

When asked at interview to define or explain their understanding of experience the practitioners’ responses illustrated two things. Firstly, practitioners have an implicit understanding of experience which one spoke of as “I can’t explain it. I just know what it means.” Secondly, again from practitioner interviews, practitioner’s explanations of experience included references to “what children do,” “everything they do” and “everything that happens to them.” Present in each of these explanations is some degree of reference to experience as about “do-ing” or “happening” – both of which are words indicating actions. One practitioner, in particular, was annoyed at not being able to “find the right words” and expressed the view that “I know what to do. I just can’t think how to explain it to you.”

Also at interview practitioners explained their heightened awareness that the new curriculum was “all about experiences – children’s experiences” and “having good experiences.” When asked about the processes involved in developing these new experiences practitioners described the efforts they were using to work together on framing new patterns of practice expressed in a new language of experience while

rooted in previous educational cultures and traditions. As one practitioner expressed it, “I was trained before 5-14 (the previous Scottish curriculum) so I know how to do this.” John Dewey’s view of experience suggests that what is possible in the present is framed by what we have experienced in the past and been able to think about or theorise into possibilities for different futures. Thus, practitioners relying on their past experiences when developing new practices are part of a natural process. However, if that experience does not include a range of theoretical viewpoints from which to consider their practice their opportunities to re-think and re-structure their practice are limited to their own experiences. As discussed in *Chapter 3.2 Dewey’s pragmatism as a philosophy based in scientific understanding* (page 61), Dewey’s explicit framing of experience offer new ways of thinking about the inter-relations between action, interaction, learning, knowledge, habits, language, experience in relation to practitioner roles in educational settings. In its interrelated concepts lie multiple points of focus which practitioners can use to frame their understandings and educational interactions with children in ways which might open new possibilities.

What this research illustrates is that there are embodied understandings among practitioners that are ready for a language with which to express themselves. A language of experience offers possibilities for reflection on their own and their pupil’s experiences. By way of example, in all but one of the practitioner’s explanations of object-related instances reference was made to ‘child’ rather than ‘children’ suggesting that practitioners implicitly understood there to be an important relationship between an individual child and that child’s potential continuities with past experiences. Yet no practitioner spoke explicitly of continuity, or a similar term, as part of their understanding or theorising of children’s experiences. This suggests that while practitioners have an implicit understanding of why they choose to engage with children’s objects a lack of opportunity to develop further theoretical language around which to collaboratively discuss and challenge the concept of experience means that the

word lacks detail with which to engage in thinking about developing practice or negotiating common purposes.

6.3.2 Supporting a holistic perspective on learning and experience

For Dewey, a holistic understanding of the role of experiences in children's lives is at the heart of thinking about why, how and when to educate children. For Dewey an understanding of what experience is and how it fits together with other educational concepts is so much more than a form of language. Rather, it informs the way we understand our place and potentials within the natural world, is a way of looking at how learning happens and what it is possible for practitioners to do, or not do, within the physical and social interactions and continuities which shape our lives. From a practitioner's point of view Dewey describes this education "of, by and for" experience (Dewey 1938 p29) as much harder work than traditional education because each of the prepositions, "of, by and for," requires materials, methods and social relationships "that are appropriate" for a particular child's own continuities and interactions as experiences.

Important characteristics of Dewey's theories include the views that our own action and interaction are at the heart of all our learning to understand and be part of the world. Yet, rather than these actions and interactions being disparate, Dewey sees experience as the joined-up-ness of our actions and interactions as well as the responses we receive into a meaningful, healthy whole. While his writings tend to describe continuities of experience in almost linear terms, this may have more to do with making his explanations easy for his readers than with his understanding of experience. Other, more recent, interpretations of experience suggest that some sort of mapping of them might produce more of a rhizome (Sellers 2013) or a mind map or a line of flight through numerous possible leakages in its French sense of eluding, leaking and flowing around obstacles (Deleuze & Guattari 2013). Yet, however we envision them, there is a sense of our personal history being present, and useful in our current experience as well

as there being possible future paths made possible through the continuities and interactions that make up experience over time. As a compilation of our encounters with the world, our experience is almost like an interactional record of our learning to use everything around us as tools or symbols so that we are able to communicate with others in meaningful and social ways.

Prior to planning for topics and classroom experiences, for example, practitioners who explicitly understood the central role of each child's continuities would be likely to develop new practices. These would focus on drawing out children's previous experiences in ways which highlighted shared continuities such that these could be carried through into the learning activities in ways that continued each child's experience. This might involve contacting parents/carers, before introducing a topic, in order to offer them opportunity to contribute their views on their child's possible continuities since similarity of previous experiences may not be a realistic assumption. Where children's past experiences are dissimilar children will need practitioners who are aware of their different backgrounds and can engage all children in developing their own continuities between their varied out-of-school experiences and classroom experiences.

This practitioner understanding of continuities as personal to a child highlights the necessity of their having good one-to-one relationships with the children in their care in order that children are able to describe their home experiences to practitioners for the benefit of their in-school experiences. This was illustrated by one practitioner's ability to recall a child's previous brought-in objects as well as the more general practice of photographing and recording children's object experiences in the child's personal memory record folder. A practitioner's willingness to welcome children's objects from home is one way of their opening individual conversations with children about their out-of-school experiences in order to develop individual continuities for a child. In addition two further practices support these good one-to-one relationships: deploying

someone at the classroom door to welcome each child, their family and brought-in objects and practitioners building-in time for conversations with families at the door on entry and exit meant there were regular opportunities for practitioners to sharpen their understanding of a child's out-of-school experiences in order to benefit their in-school ones.

Part of what Dewey's view offers is a child's need and right to participate (MacNaughton 2007, Osberg et al 2008). Rather than children as needy, Dewey's framing places children on an equal footing with adults in that they learn through their own actions and interactions, are an equal part of the world we share and have rights to shape their own continuities. Not that this shaping of their own destinies is an isolated activity, because it is not. For Dewey learning, as centred in action/response, is relational. This suggests that what matters to Dewey is that, while learning from the experience of others may be of use to us, it is primarily our own experiences which are most immediately informative in building relationships between actions and consequences in order to inform our understanding of how the world works and how we can best contribute to it.

In addition, Dewey's holistic thinking offers early childhood practitioners tools for thinking about practice development and ways to make their practices more publicly understandable and accessible while defending their choices in a contested space since Dewey's view of the role of experience is not one in which he who has the most experiences wins. Rather, it is about experiences being the mechanism by which we come to be part of the world in meaningful ways. This requires that experiences make use of continuity and interaction in order to ensure that they are connected and, as it were, validated by the quality of the relationships with other people, other things and other experiences. Throughout this process of gaining worthwhile experiences Dewey's goal is defined as "freedom of intelligence" (Dewey 1938).

Of course the issue in schools is that practitioners are not necessarily free to determine their own purposes in that they may be subject to degrees of influence by various instruments of control such as society sees fit to impose at a given place and time (Biesta 2009b). In addition to this is the necessity for practitioners to balance their own freedom in light of the requirement to develop the freedom of the children in their care. This requires collaborative work which does not devolve the practitioner from responsibility. So Dewey (1938 p71) refers to the practitioner's role as making use of opportunities, awareness of the "capacities, needs and past experiences" of pupils and allowing spaces for collaborative activities and plans as well as seeing to the progressive development of children's learning into more detailed and connected understandings while still having sufficient of their own practitioner's understanding that they can look to the future and link a child's current experience to other possible future experiences.

Dewey offers a holistic theory from action through interaction and all the way through to democracy. Few other theorists are able to offer the sheer spread of engagement with education which Dewey's thinking offers and this may mean that it is one of the most suitable starting places for the development of a shared language with which to have the conversations about education which need to underpin collaborative development of educational practices. But extent of application is not the only good to be had.

Dewey contributes to a participatory society with this holistic theory of how learning works and with the possibilities for practitioners to engage in detail with their roles in building good experiences. Dewey offers practical insights into how we already deal with the unknown: we act experimentally on it, learn the limits of possible interactions by trial and error (or thinking, if we have language for it) in order to frame possible patterns of interaction which are to our mutual benefit. This process is a social, relationship-based interactional process from which we gain some understanding of

how the world works and hopefully possibilities for how to improve our interactions in ways which shape a collaborative society.

6.3.3 Challenging our assumptions – together

A child's knowledge of how the world works and his theories of ways he might be further able to participate in its working, in classrooms and in life, develop over time from the accumulation or aggregation of these action/consequence interactions into continuities of his own experience. What a child is able to learn in a particular classroom is shaped by his understanding of action/consequence relationships as he experimentally acts to further develop a continuity in his own experience. In a sense, classroom relationships are where the continuities of all the different parties in the classroom meet.

In both classrooms brought-in object related experiences were not solitary experiences. For Dewey, the development of action/consequence relationships into the conglomerate interactions and continuities, or experiences, might be described as a function of time, a child's willingness to act and opportunities for a child's actions to be in receipt of an-other's collaborative response. This is a more nuanced version of what Sylva et al (2007) described as "sustained shared thinking." As suggested by this phrase, a child's action/response should not be intermittent. In other words, children should not be static apart from occasional actions/responses. Rather, children need to live as ongoing actors/responders within collaborative relationships in order to experience what it means to be participants in a shared world: in this way they are part of the ongoing creation of the world today and able to learn the collaborative skills necessary to take care of its future.

What develops through these accumulated action/consequence experiences is an extendable web of inter-related meanings. Parts of an individual's web of significance, in Geertz's (1973 p5) terms, may be shared, or joined up with a group, as is illustrated in the practitioner's and pupil's recounting of snippets of previous experiences during the

initial engagements with brought-in objects. Also within these intersecting webs of significance are external policies and guidance, practitioner training and influences from local culture and practices (Fleer et al. 2009; Stephen 2008). In the Scottish context, this includes recent curricular change and the associated changing expectations for practitioner development of experiences in support of this curriculum. This requires practitioners to change their practices in response to a new, powerful, multiply interpreted participant in schools: the new curriculum. Practitioners may have little or no previous experience of curricular change and any experience which they do have will not necessarily be applicable to this curriculum's implementation around the concept of experience. This presents potential dis-continuities of experience for practitioners and requires of them considerable own action/consequence experiments as they modify old habits of practice and build new ones. While the new curriculum puts considerable focus on developing experiences for children, there is less policy and guidance available about changing experiences for practitioners. Practitioners are managing two sets of experiences – their own and their pupils' - and the complicated relationships between them.

Patterns of framing practice referred to in the literature as “rich child” and “transmission” models are used in early childhood literature (Moss, Dillon, & Statham 2000) and seem to be recognisable within the evidence from this study. In P1/2 there was more evidence of what might be described as a more traditional view of learning through a transmission model with literacy and numeracy as work (Munn 2010) and brought-in objects as opportunity to play for a short while unless they contributed to the pre-planned work for the day. Practitioners were heard to say “time to work now” when they wanted to draw a whole group engagement with children's objects to an end which suggests a view that the real work of the day was as planned rather than as arrived at the door on the day. In terms which Bernstein described as the visible and the invisible curriculum (Sadovnik 1995) relationships between children and a visible curriculum were much more evident in P1/2 than in Nursery due to the timetabled

structure of the day, the association between particular brought-in objects and designated slots in the timetable, the implicit positioning of the child (Moss, Dillon, & Statham 2000; Woodrow & Press 2007), the explicit distinctions between work and play (Munn 2010), and practitioner's roles in planning. While, in Nursery, practices and relationships could be deemed more reflective of a "rich child" model.

However, based in the different training practices and work experiences associated with each training pattern, and the intimate connection between own experiences and the development of classroom practices, it seems likely that truly collaborative patterns of practice across early childhood settings might only be possible, through new, combined training which focuses on developing at least one shared language of experience. In this way, discussions around practice development may become possible based in shared language with which to rethink both longstanding patterns of practice (habits) and the new situation described by the Early Level as "...positive early years experiences giv(ing) children the best start in life" (Education Scotland 2014).

6.3.4 Curricularising vs curriculum

Implicit in Dewey's framing of the importance of children's educational experiences being continuous with their out-of-school lives is a challenge to any curriculum which specifies outcomes or implies pre-determined pathways for children to follow. A curriculum which becomes, in effect, a teaching plan imposes external expectations and agendas on what Sellers (2013) describes as an educational classroom space which might be better served as a co-creative, or collaborative space in which all parties work together toward a shared future.

Dewey's description of the experimental method (Dewey 1938 pp86-87) as "action (is) directed by some leading idea" where the "ideas employed are hypotheses, not final truths" and the "ideas or hypotheses are tested by the consequences which they produce when they are acted upon" was seen to be modelled by practitioners as scaffolding for children's engagements with brought-in objects in the Nursery

classroom situation. The pedagogical practices of questioning, touching, trying out and sharing similarities and differences about a brought-in object was seen to be centred firstly in negotiating a name for the object. As illustrated in the following vignette, practitioners often talked through their actions as if they recognised the need for particular vocabulary in order to engage in further experimentation such as testing and describing an object's possible functions and extending those into a more personal experience for a child.

Vignette 6-1: Ms Nash and Neil’s “Superman with sounds”



Image 6-1: Superman

Neil	Look Miss! (Hands Superman to practitioner)
Ms Nash	Who is this? (<i>Takes figure</i>)
Neil	It’s my Superman with sounds!
Ms Nash	And what is this he’s wearing? (<i>Touches Superman’s cape</i>)
Neil	That’s his clothes...
Ms Nash	I have a cape like this one (<i>continues feeling cape</i>). And I see he has joints in his legs (<i>touches Superman’s knee and ankle</i>). Do you have joints? (<i>looks at his knee</i>) No. Mine’s not like that... but I can bend mine....
Neil	(<i>Bending Superman’s knee</i>) I don’t think so...
Ms Nash	(<i>Places Neil’s hand on his own kneecap</i>) Now bend your knee. What can you feel?
Neil	...moving things
Ms Nash	That’s your bones in your knee joint moving. Do you have any other joints?
Neil	(<i>conversation about joints continues as peers join group</i>) Look! Superman has a joint, like mine.

What followed

Conversation about joints continues between peers

Practitioner’s mentioning of possibly new vocabulary allowed conversation comparing the object to similar objects previously experienced by practitioners or which other pupils owned (in this case Neil’s own joints and eventually his peers’ joints too). This aspect of pedagogical practice seemed to be about negotiating experimental language in order to describe the object in multiple ways then moving it into a wider context of

other objects as well as object practices. In the practice of discussing an object's similarities and differences objects were able to be interacted with in different ways which often included humorous or fanciful ways, and objects were seen to be part of interactions which took place outside of school as well having further experiential possibilities within school.

Practitioners shaped this practice of welcoming the object and experience by judicious use of open questions and a willingness to watch and wait for a response to develop during the interaction rather than expecting immediate results. Dewey might describe this aspect of experimental practice as "the educator view(ing) teaching and learning as a continuous process of reconstruction of experience. This condition in turn can be satisfied only as the educator has a long look ahead and views every present experience as a moving force in influencing what future experiences will be." By using brought-in objects as tools for engaging with a child's continuities and developing further collaborative interactions practitioners are able to participate in children's own experimental interactions with objects and use language to raise questions and help develop gaps for children to explore in their own creative ways.

6.3.5 "Doing" versus "thinking about doing"

In Nursery the initial interaction between child, practitioner and child's peers provided an opportunity for children to "think about doing" prior to "doing." In P1/2 all those brought-in objects which were engaged with by the whole group were also tools for initial "thinking about doing" and some for "doing" at a later time. In contrast to a child's previous more immediate continuity of object experience in the Nursery, this separation of plan and object-related action as subject to what might be described as a "school ways of doing things" might be viewed as typical of a larger system where timetabling, adult planning and delayed gratification of interests is more the norm. Underpinning an acceptance of this being the most appropriate practice for children of this age and developmental stage may be a cultural practice, in the UK at least, of

children “going to school” from an earlier age than in some other European countries. With schoolification described by Van Laere et al (2012 pg 527) as:

“Early years policies and practices take place in an international context of ‘schoolification’ where ECEC is increasingly conceptualised as preparation for compulsory schooling and the didactics of compulsory schooling therefore tend to determine ECEC programmes.” (Van Laere, Peeters, & Vandebroek 2012 p527)

In Van Laere et al’s view, this process is re-enforced by workforce patterns based on different training backgrounds in schools and nurseries that often overlook assistants and carers, as well as a tendency to privilege a view of school as ‘education’ over nurseries as ‘care’ and differentiate practices accordingly. Recent research describes quality early childhood education and care services as requiring of both “‘care’ and ‘education’ as inseparable concepts (European Commission, 2011; Eurydice, 2009; UNESCO 2010)” (Van Laere, Peeters, & Vandebroek 2012 p527). This highlights the importance of working within the Early Level of the CfE to collaboratively develop and implement pedagogical practices that smooth the transitions between preschool and school and are appropriate to young children across this level.

This raises questions around the P1/2 practice of sorting children’s brought-in object experiences into those deemed suitable for further collaborative effort within school, and those which were deemed more suitable for out-of –school collaborations. Of particular interest here is Resnick’s (1987 pg 13) descriptions of how in-school learning differs from out-of-school learning in the valuing of individual cognition over shared cognition and mental, or “pure thought,” in school and tool use out of school. Resnick (1987 pg 13) concludes that “...implicitly then, school is an institution that values thought that proceeds independently, without aid of physical and cognitive tools. In contrast, most mental activities outside school are engaged intimately with tools, and the resultant cognitive activity is shaped by and dependent upon the kinds of tools

available.” While this P1/2 classroom was full of what could be described as educational tools, so tool use as such seems unlikely to be the motivation, preference was shown for objects framed as literacy tools.

Dewey was adamant that education was not a preparation for life: education was life itself. This could be interpreted in a number of ways. Firstly, that formal education was best viewed as a child’s job or employment and as such needed to be meaningful to the child and contribute to society as a whole. Secondly, as education was life itself it was to be an active participation in the making of one’s own life and not a sedentary preparation for some future to come. Each day in school was to be viewed as a day in a child’s life and was not to be wasted in ways that were not meaningful to each child present.

In Entwisle’s (1995 pg 133) description of the roles played by American elementary schools in sustaining the benefits of preschool programmes for young children she frames a child’s move from preschool to elementary school as a “life course transition” with next contexts, new roles, new notions of self and learning to function in institutional contexts. In particular she considers the role school experiences play in connecting with and sustaining the gains made by preschool children. In similar vein the policy guidance for the Early Level of the new Scottish curriculum encourages shared pedagogic practices across the early childhood with a focus on active learning and learning through play (The Scottish Government 2007). While there were certainly elements of these practices in P1/2 there were also complicated questions around adult societal agendas, views of the purposes of school (As described in Stephen, Ellis, & Martlew 2010 descriptions of teachers' interpretations of active learning) and the priority given to adult interpretations of them as well as questions around who gets to decide (Woodrow & Press 2007) and what kinds of experiences matter.

Dewey’s view of the relationship between language and learning opens the question as to when children might be considered able to learn by manipulating language rather

than by manipulating objects. This questions whether the differences in practice between Nursery and P1/2 are indicative of primary children's abilities to think more exclusively in language rather than through their physical actions or whether these differences are more to do with social convention and children may be left trying to catch up? Although Piaget's staged theory is now challenged, it shares with Dewey's and Vygotsky's theories an agreement that a child's development of language is a social practice mediated by others. They also share the view that language development is a necessity for experiences to have the potential to be a mental activity with greater flexibility (and possibly fewer risks) than physical experiments with actions. In more recent English research Siraj-Blatchford et al (2002) describe this process of language development as "sustained shared thinking" between a practitioner and a child while Martlew et al (2010 pg 12) describe children's experiences in primary classes with active learning pedagogies in a whole-class context and raise questions as to the effect of different staffing ratios in pre-school and primary classes. While active learning pedagogies increased child-child talk they found that children from less advantaged homes talked less than their more advantaged peers. Further, "individual children spend very little time engaged in high-quality talk with the teacher, despite the teachers spending over one-third of their time responding to children's needs and interests."

In addition to the questions around children's developing ability to rely on language use for thinking, practitioners do not select pedagogical practices in isolation and the framing of curriculum and pedagogical guidance and a consensus around expectations is culturally different for Scottish children 3-5 years of age and those 5-7 years of age. In particular, the early childhood framing of the first years of formal schooling (in Scotland) is traditionally framed as the time children need to show some mastery of reading. Thus practitioners in P1/2 are negotiating different social expectations and constraints to practitioners in Nursery settings in spite of their both using the Early Level of the CfE.

6.3.6 Reflections on research experience

This has been, for me, a “learning by doing” experience with regular chances to “think about doing” in collaboration with my supervisors and other members of the University of Stirling Education Department’s faculty and students. What has become abundantly clear, over time, is how learning to be a researcher is so similar to other experiences in its experimental nature, its slow understanding of action/consequence relationships and its social nature. Looking back, there are a number of researcher’s habits I will continue to reflect on in order to further refine them for use in future projects:

1. I would try to find a way to include children’s views. While I accept that practitioners have responsibility for shaping the classroom environment the three-way relationship (practitioner-child-object) considered in this research has largely been explored from the practitioner’s practices and responsibilities. It would be useful to consider children’s views and contributions since Dewey was convinced that experiences were different for each participant in an interaction since they had different histories and were pointed toward different futures. With both histories and futures being matters of time, children learning to make and envision their own futures using Dewey’s views on experience would make for a fascinating longitudinal study.
2. I would take my own photographic images rather than use online images. While it seems a waste of a very useful resource to not use online images which marketing departments have so thoughtfully made widely available (for their own purposes rather than mine) the time and effort required to obtain a few consents for image inclusions in presentations and this thesis was out of all proportion to the time it would have taken me to produce my own photographs of children’s brought-in objects. Until such time as there is a clear and concise researchers’ license to use online images for research purposes, which goes beyond the contestable form of words used in the UK’s Fair Use (The UK

Copyright Service 2009), I will avoid using online images in future research projects.

3. And most importantly, I would try to structure my research in such a way that I had the confidence to engage more collaboratively with the practitioners during the data collection and afterwards. It is ironic that this has been a project which, in the end, engages with Dewey's framing of experience as action and interaction yet my relationship with the practitioners in the two classrooms has, so far, been more useful to me than to them. This has been largely a consequence of my inability to manage collaboration while at the same time learning to do qualitative research. That is my loss, and I would aim to both repair it and avoid it in future.
4. And finally, I would recommend developing a number of ways to make languages of experience available to practitioners. There are a number of standard formats available, including Continued Professional Development (CPD)²⁶ or a selection of accessible literature being made available to all practitioners. However, with practitioners' time limited, even for CPD, other options such as collaborations between education departments in universities and local education authorities might be a more useful possibility. Education departments in universities maintaining contact with students once employed, might also be useful. None of them are quick or inexpensive and since Dewey's framing of experience is underpinned with his view of humans' rights to participate such processes would possible be best aimed at the community as a whole rather than only practitioners. It is interesting to note that the BBC is showing increased interest in public engagement with a range of sciences. As yet, there is little that fosters increased public engagement with educational theory although we are beginning

²⁶ UK educational staff are required to take part in ongoing Continued Professional Development (CPD) in order to maintain their licences with their various regulatory bodies. In Scotland some of the hours per year are within the control of schools and others are open to staff interests through reading, attending courses, etc.

to see reality TV style 'fly on the wall' documentaries. In future, a series of programmes which introduce educational thinking in similar ways to those currently applied to various natural science topics might be useful. Or on the other end of the spectrum, small-scale, local practitioners/researcher collaborations (as are currently in development in Scandinavian countries) might be useful in opening up new questions from the bottom up.

6.4 Final reflections prior to moving on

What happened at these two classroom doors and in the classrooms beyond was not just the relatively soft option of making time in an already busy day for children to have some level of voice regarding their lives outside of school. While child voice and information about their wider lives was spoken of as important and useful to practitioners in their decision making, what was also prominent was a transformational process which practitioners engaged in regarding the objects children brought. While this transformational object-based process potentially changed whatever object arrived at the door into an educational resource the transformation was not just of the object but also of the children's knowledge and skills as well as their relationships with the practitioners, their peers and later their families. Theoretical languages of learning offer additional ways of describing these collaborative, transformational practices as well as ways of opening up these experiential processes to wider engagement and debate while strengthening practitioners' roles in broader public forums.

Dewey's views on experience in education were only part of his wider views for society as a whole. He took the view that we are all, children and adults alike, learners all of the time and that continuing to learn is part of survival as individuals, society, the human race and the natural world. In all of these circumstances, he saw collaboration as a model holding more possibilities than learning on one's own. Learning through shared experiences was thus a life skill as well as a way of getting an education in a classroom situation. Children in school, learning through his collaborative "communities of

thinking” and “communities of action” are making the world in ways that are applicable throughout their lives, not just in classrooms. The challenge for schools is to adopt similar collaborative approaches in learning how to serve the communities they are in. And the hope, for Dewey, was that children, having learned to be part of making the world in school, will continue to do the same once they have left school and taken up roles as active citizens in society.

Dewey’s theoretical language offers practitioners an interactional tool for thinking about possible action/consequence relationships as children collaborate in developing their own in-school experiences as continuous with their out-of-school lives. Within this theoretical view of how education works, Dewey’s framings of each aspect of action and interaction, through learning, habits, objects, tools, educational situations and the development of experiences offers a way for practitioners to use language to theorise, or speculate, or envision how their educational habits or pedagogical practices might better serve their intended educational goals. While Dewey’s intended educational goal was the child’s freedom to do, think and choose for worthwhile purposes, practitioners may find it useful to think about their own framings of the intended goal of their educational practices and theorise about how their practices might better serve their motivating purposes. While policies and practice guidelines, curricular documents and Continued Professional Development activities all have their own particular framings of educational goals it is important for practitioners to be aware of their own personal views and be willing and able to defend them, challenge them and engage in on-going reflective transformation of them as times and circumstances change and old habits need transforming for new situations.

7 APPENDICES

7.1 Summary of the Four Capacities underpinning the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence

successful learners	confident individuals	responsible citizens	effective contributors
<p>attributes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> enthusiasm and motivation for learning determination to reach high standards of achievement openness to new thinking and ideas <p>capabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use literacy, communication and numeracy skills use technology for learning think creatively and independently learn independently and as part of a group make reasoned evaluations link and apply different kinds of learning in new situations. 	<p>attributes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> self-respect a sense of physical, mental and emotional well-being secure values and beliefs ambition <p>capabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> relate to others and manage themselves pursue a healthy and active lifestyle be self-aware develop and communicate their own beliefs and view of the world live as independently as they can assess risk and make informed decisions achieve success in different areas of activity. 	<p>attributes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> respect for others commitment to participate responsibly in political, economic, social and cultural life <p>capabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop knowledge and understanding of the world and Scotland's place in it understand different beliefs and cultures make informed choices and decisions evaluate environmental, scientific and technological issues develop informed, ethical views of complex issues. 	<p>attributes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an enterprising attitude resilience self-reliance <p>capabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> communicate in different ways and in different settings work in partnership and in teams take the initiative and lead apply critical thinking in new contexts create and develop solve problems

(Scottish Government 2013)

7.2 Participating Practitioner's Details

Provision	Pseudonym	Position	Yrs experience	Qualification	Gender
Nursery (7)	Ms Nesbitt*	Wraparound Care Manager	More than 20 years	PDA	Female
	Mr Newman	Part-time Nursery Teacher	Unknown	Unknown	Male
	Ms Nash*	Part-time Nursery Teacher	2 nd year	BA	Female
	Ms Newsmith	Part-time Nursery Teacher	10-15 years	BA	Female
	Ms Norton	Early Childhood Practitioner	10-15 years	Unknown	Female
	Ms Norris	Occasional supply practitioner	Unknown	ECP	Female
	Ms Naplock	Occasional supply teacher	Unknown	ECP	Female
Primary 1/2 (5)	Ms Patrick*	P 1/2 Teacher	More than 20 years	BA + Early Childhood	Female
	Ms Potter*	P 1/2 Teacher	1 st year	BA	Female
	Ms Penny*	ECP for Primary	More than 20 years	ECP	Female
	Ms Parker	Teacher in training	1 year	In Training	Female
	Ms Phillips	Supply practitioner	unknown	Unknown	Female

(* Practitioner who participated at interview)

7.3 Sample of handwritten page of field notes

• Data in spreadsheet
• Data in NVivo
• Teacher date now

PRIMARY 1
 Staff: ~~_____~~, ~~_____~~ (SUPPLY)

No comments re 'brought ins' but was smiling @ the photos. 3.06.09


WtH	OBJ	DESTIN	DESCRIPTION
_____ B	Tesco vouch.	In - but didn't hand them in - holding on to them - not noticed by staff.	
_____ P	Photos	In - given to _____	: "Oh my! lots of shopping in Tesco. That's fantastic! Thank you."
_____ B	Books	In	What have u get today? (hands it over) "Pretty Star The Pony and Blythe" Is it a good book? (nod) Lots of wee stars In bag or tray (want 2 so we can use it later. tray)
_____ T	Kalaidoscope	In	"What do u have today?" "K." What does that do? It gets bigger! I brought it in 2 show its fr _____
_____ Exclude (Mami's)	letter (cheque + lunches)	In - given to _____	What for it? Gran + Grandpa. Nd 2 be careful if it if it came all the way fr.
_____ P + B	photo + book	In	(everyone wants to look... _____ will put it away safe & let u have a look later if she wants... it is precious.
			* _____ : What have u br. today? Baby photo. Dese photo (laughing from floor @ pink dress)


7.4 Sample Classroom Observation Daily Notes

2009.05.21

Nursery Classroom Observation Notes

- Children very capable at finding resources, asking for what they want/need for resources
- Pink worm group seemed intent on measuring everything today but asked to talk about “worm houses” at small group planning.... Seem to have moved on from measuring to other things of their own accord
- Interesting that parent apologises for an object – tulle hair band – at the door... parents seem to have ideas about what is in/out in preschools?
- Seems to be plenty of time for children to get really involved in what interest them today. Snack, etc went very quietly/flexibly so didn't interrupt anyone who was busy.
- One of the girls working with the play dough didn't look too comfortable with her fingers in the mixture to begin with but seemed to be ok with it after a few minutes then actually enjoying herself later.... Wonder if it is the first time she's had a go with play dough? CAN'T ASK – this is not about the children, but about what the practitioners do! One practitioner concerned about the children's anonymity and ethical safety so I won't push the bounds on that one.
Practitioners have a right to say – this is where they work. Have already excluded objects with child's name on – drawings, etc – from photo records.

Staff	Child	Object	Destination	Observation of Practitioner	
				Stated	Enacted
Nesbit/ Norton	Natasha	Bright pink wiggly / hairy with big white ball eyes 	In – playing with pals	<p>Ms Nesbit: Look at the colour and all the legs and 2 eyes! Beautiful eyes! Norton: What is it? Ms Nesbit: Could it slither thru the letterbox? Slither up the door, thru the letterbox and onto the floor? Oh, door and floor rhyme! Natasha: It can bounce!</p> <p>Later practitioner helping children to make bright pink play dough worms while toy lies in the middle of the craft work area: “lots of legs” “do they feel the same?” “are they the same length?” “if we stretch yours they will be the same length” “yours has more legs than mine!”</p> <p>Ms Nesbit: “The worm was a link to other children. It gave me a chance to draw them in.”</p> <p>Later: worm to planning</p>	<p>Takes worm when offered. Makes it wiggle.</p> <p>(later) Bright pink play dough has been fetched from the cupboard to the craft table. 4 girls are working with 2 practitioners on making their own pink worms. Everyone working on their own worm + “worm nests.” Measuring practitioner’s arm length using their worms: “yours is 2 and a bit worms”</p>

Staff	Child	Object	Destination	Observation of Practitioner	
				Stated	Enacted
Nesbit/ Newman	Neena	Bright pink toulle, ribbon and jewelled headband (photo) 	In – showing it to pals	(Parent apologises for it at door – child away already) (later) Ms Nesbit: I thought it was a butterfly – with wings! Did you make it? Neena: Mum bought it. Ms Nesbit: What do you need to buy things? (some discussion) Neena: Oh! Money	Brings headband into conversation at craft table when child comes over to have a look at the worms her friends are making. (later) JNewman reading a story to boys in the story corner. Neena walks over and hands him the headband. He puts it on his head while he carries on reading then passes it on to the boy sitting next to him (who passes it on like a hot potato). JNewman makes no comment. Headband is passed round the group while the story continues – no boy tries it on – till it gets back to Neena. She walks off.

7.5 Sample Researcher's Notes

2009.05.13

Nursery- Researcher's Notes:

Context

- Practitioner absent
- Nesbit: "We are short staffed today."

Practitioners Present

Ms Nesbit, Ms Norris (Supply), Other (work experience)

Thoughts re what I observed

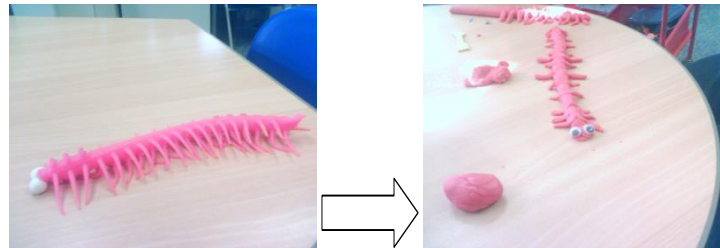
- 2 out of 3 children bringing objects - no acknowledgment of their objects today.
- Nesbit: "It's important to Naomi so it's important to me."
- Having supply practitioners seems to mess with the systems: less practitioner time @ door, fewer children are approaching practitioner with objects, supply practitioners can't seem to 'cover the back' of the practitioner who is engaged in setting up object-related activities so they keep getting interrupted. Time to go at child's pace seems to be critical issue.

Thoughts re the observation methods

- I'm finding it really hard to watch and not get involved!! I feel so guilty! – like I'm not working- ie struggling with shifting roles
- Am I counting all brought-in objects or only those that practitioners engaged with?
- I think I can get object images off the www for today's brought-in objects – check.
- Check with lead practitioner whether school has arranged consent with supply practitioners or whether I may ask each personally?

7.6 Initial Data Coding

Ms Nesbit and Natasha's Pink Worm



Data from Observations	Pedagogical Practice (by inference)	Benefitting Relationship (by inference)
<p>Contextual information: Ms Nesbit is at the door this morning. In the last 5 minutes she has had three conversations with different parents about their varying school dinner requests and payment of their Wrap Around Childcare bills including giving receipts and change, answering the telephone then recording the absence of a child due to poor health, laughing with a mom and child about the joys of shoe shopping with a wilful daughter, asking another practitioner about her particular time off work requirements and offering sympathy for another practitioner's bereavement.</p>	<p>Present at the door: Available to parent/carer</p>	<p>Practitioner/ family</p>
	<p>Sympathy (toward child and practitioner)</p>	<p>Practitioner/ family</p>
	<p>Humour (shoe shopping)</p>	<p>Practitioner/ child + Practitioner/ family</p>

<p>Natasha arrives at nursery: Natasha arrives at the Nursery door waving an approximately 35 cm long very wiggly, bright pink, soft plastic toy worm with big white eyes and lots of 2 cm long floppy tentacles (see picture above left). For the last minute or so Mrs Nesbitt has been repeatedly glancing at something in the entry way which is out of my view. Given the ease of her interaction with Natasha and her statement at interview that “I like to see what’s coming” [Ms Nesbitt, DATE]] I suspect she saw the worm arriving and may have been making a plan.</p>	<p>Prior warning</p>	<p>Practitioner/ family</p>
<p>Natasha offers the worm to Ms Nesbit: Natasha approaches Ms Nesbit and, jiggling the worm, offers her the pink plastic worm with wobbling legs. Mrs Nesbitt stoops to take a closer look and exclaims “Look at the colour of all those legs! And two eyes! And such beautiful eyes!” She bends down even further to take the worm and engages on an eye-to-eye level with Natasha.</p>	<p>Accepting/ holding object</p>	<p>Practitioner/ child</p>
	<p>Eye contact</p>	<p>Practitioner/ child</p>
	<p>Scientific investigation together</p>	<p>Child/ learning Practitioner/ child</p>
	<p><i>Complimenting</i> (implied re Natasha’s taste in worms – “such beautiful eyes”)</p>	<p>Practitioner/ child</p>
	<p>Accepting/holdi ng object</p>	<p>Practitioner/ child</p>

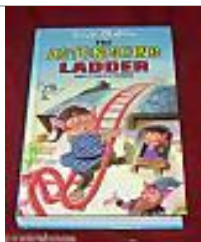
<p>Other practitioners are also waiting to engage: Ms Norton, who is working across the room at the kitchen sink with her back sideways to the Nursery door but is obviously still listening to the morning's proceedings, asks "What is it?"</p>	<p><i>Available to child</i> (shared practitioner awareness of the object welcoming event)</p>	Practitioner/ child
	<p><i>Available to child</i> (Opportunity for multiple practitioner relationships on offer)</p>	Practitioner/ child
<p>Ms Nesbit tries to engage both Natasha and Ms Norton: On receiving no verbal response from Natasha to Ms Norton's question, Ms Nesbit begins an enthusiastic game of verbal clues and guessing which starts with the question "Could it slither through the letterbox?" There is only just a trace of a smile from Natasha. Ms Nesbit continues the questioning while at the same time rising from her previous stooped position by pretending to be a snake slithering up the door post. "Slither up the door, slither through the letterbox and onto the floor? Oops! Door and floor rhyme!"</p>	<p>Play acting or game and waiting</p>	Practitioner/ child
	<p><i>Undeterred and waiting</i> (by limited sign of engagement from Natasha)</p>	Practitioner/ child
	<p><i>Play acting or game</i> (Practitioner increases actions and adds rhyming words)</p>	Practitioner/ child Child/learning
	<p><i>Humour</i> (at practitioner's own expense)</p>	Practitioner/ child

<p>Natasha responds enthusiastically: Natasha laughs and enthusiastically replies “And it can bounce!”</p>	<p><i>Takes up a curricular link</i> (Ms Nesbit abandons snake actions and rhyme in acceptance of Natasha’s suggestion of “bounce”.)</p>	<p>Practitioner/ child Child/learning</p>
<p>Ms Nesbit draws in Natasha’s peers: Nesbit calls over two of Natasha’s girlfriends to have a look, feel and hold of the pink worm. The group of girls move into the main Nursery area and continue their conversation and play around the pink worm while Ms Nesbit welcomes another child and parent at the Nursery door.</p>	<p><i>Includes peers</i> (Practitioner draws in peers to extend/resource Natasha’s “bounce” idea)</p>	<p>Child/ learning Child/peers Practitioner/ child</p>
	<p><i>Trusts child</i> (Children using senses to experience the object Ms Nesbit leaves the group to make own plan / is called by another duty.)</p>	<p>Practitioner/ child Child/ learning</p>

<p>Making personal and curricular connections: Within a minute or two Nadine, who often cries when her mom leaves the Nursery, arrives at the door. Before she has a chance to grow distressed Ms Nesbit mentions the bright pink play dough they made together the day before and taking Nadine’s hand, points across the Nursery to Natasha and friends playing together with the bright pink worm. She asks Nadine to “Please get the play dough out of the cupboard so we can all make pink worms together.” Nadine fetches the pink play dough and the girls get busy making worms at the craft table. No tears or distress.</p>	<p>Sympathy <i>Provides distraction</i> (Practitioner uses purposeful task and peer relationship based distraction to ease child’s distress.) <i>Bridging or scaffolding</i> (Eases Nadine’s passage into the group by associating her with a new resource (bright pink play dough) as well as a <i>We are all in this together</i> (social bridge in the form of her own attending of the group ‘so we can all make pink worms together’ so child’s participation made easy by practitioner input.</p>	<p>Child/peers Practitioner/child Child/learning</p>
--	--	--

<p>More drawing in of peers: Later, while working at the craft table with Natasha, Nadine and another friend Ms Nesbit notices Nadia wandering alone around the Nursery. She calls Nadia over to the table and engages her in making a play dough pink worm. There is much talk about numbers of legs, where to put the eyes and whose worm is longer or shorter or fatter or thinner (see picture above right) as well as worm tummies and worm nests. (The rounded lump of pink play dough in the picture – above right – is a child’s rendition of a worm nest.)</p>	<p><i>Includes peers and Bridging or scaffolding</i> (More facilitating of social bonds and engagement in productive talk and activity.) <i>Takes up a curricular link.</i> (Aspects of curriculum come up naturally while children engage with their creations: numbers, animal anatomy, length/width and measurement, worm internal anatomy and worm habitats in relation to eating and homes.</p>	<p>Child/ learning Child/peers Practitioner/ child</p>
<p>Enabling child voice in planning process: At the end of the morning session Natasha takes her pink worm to small-group planning meeting where learning more about worm habitats is put on the plan for the following week.</p>	<p>We are all in this together Curricular aspect (worm – and other – habitats) taken further in plans for next day.</p>	<p>Child/ learning</p>

7.7 Sample of data recorded for each object

Sample of data recorded for each object	
Categories	Data
Class	P1/2
Date	12.05.2009
Leading Practitioner	Ms Patrick
Additional Practitioner Present	Ms Penny
Context Details	At carpet time, writing display area is focus of daily reading/writing
Child Name	Pauline
Child Gender	Female
Object Transformed?	Yes
Object Image	 <p style="text-align: center;">Image 7-1: Enid Blyton book</p>
Conversation Theme @ Entry	Reading at home
Conversation Theme 2	Reading together in class
Conversation Theme 3	Making up stories together on playground
Object Type	Book
Object Characteristics	Size: A5ish Colours: Blue, red Texture: smooth Material of Manufacture: Paper Brand Mentioned: Enid Blyton Object Source: Library
First Contact	On the carpet
Practitioner response - Verbal	...Group chat about the cover and Enid Blyton Ms Patrick: "What is your favourite story?" Pauline: "the dwarf who borrowed a lot of stuff until he learned not to borrow things again".... Ms Patrick: "...put it in your tray now and maybe we can read a chapter together later".... "Put it in your tray now then have a go building stories together on the playground"....."maybe we should put it on the writing display board?" Pauline: (puts it on writing display board – there for 1 week)
Practitioner Response - Enacted	Investigated book, passed it around group for comment/viewing, displayed it prominently in association with reading/writing curricular materials. Read a story together during reading/writing slot later in week.
Object Destination/s	Writing display board

7.8 Semi-structured Practitioner Interview Questions

THEME 1: How do you understand Curriculum?

- I know this is tricky to do, but how would you describe curriculum?
- How do you transfer the abstract curriculum into concrete behaviours at the door?
- Does *Curriculum for Excellence* make any difference to things at the door?

THEME 2: What do you think about the Things that show up at the door?

- What single word would you use to describe what comes to the door?
- What do you think these things mean to the children who bring them?
- Why do you think some children do not bring things?
- Are there children who never bring things?
- Do you see patterns in what arrives at the door?
- Do you see patterns in how you greet things that arrive at the door?

THEME 3: May we talk about your Decisions about things at the door?

- Could you describe in detail the most recent 'thing at the door' incident you remember?
 - Could you talk me through your decision making about this thing arriving?
 - I have a number of cards here. Would you mind putting them in some sort of order for me? Explain the order?
- Could you describe an incident you think you would do differently next time?
 - Could you talk me through your decision making about this thing arriving?
 - I have a number of cards here. Would you mind putting them in some sort of order for me? Explain the order?

Do you think there is any value in researching a topic like this?

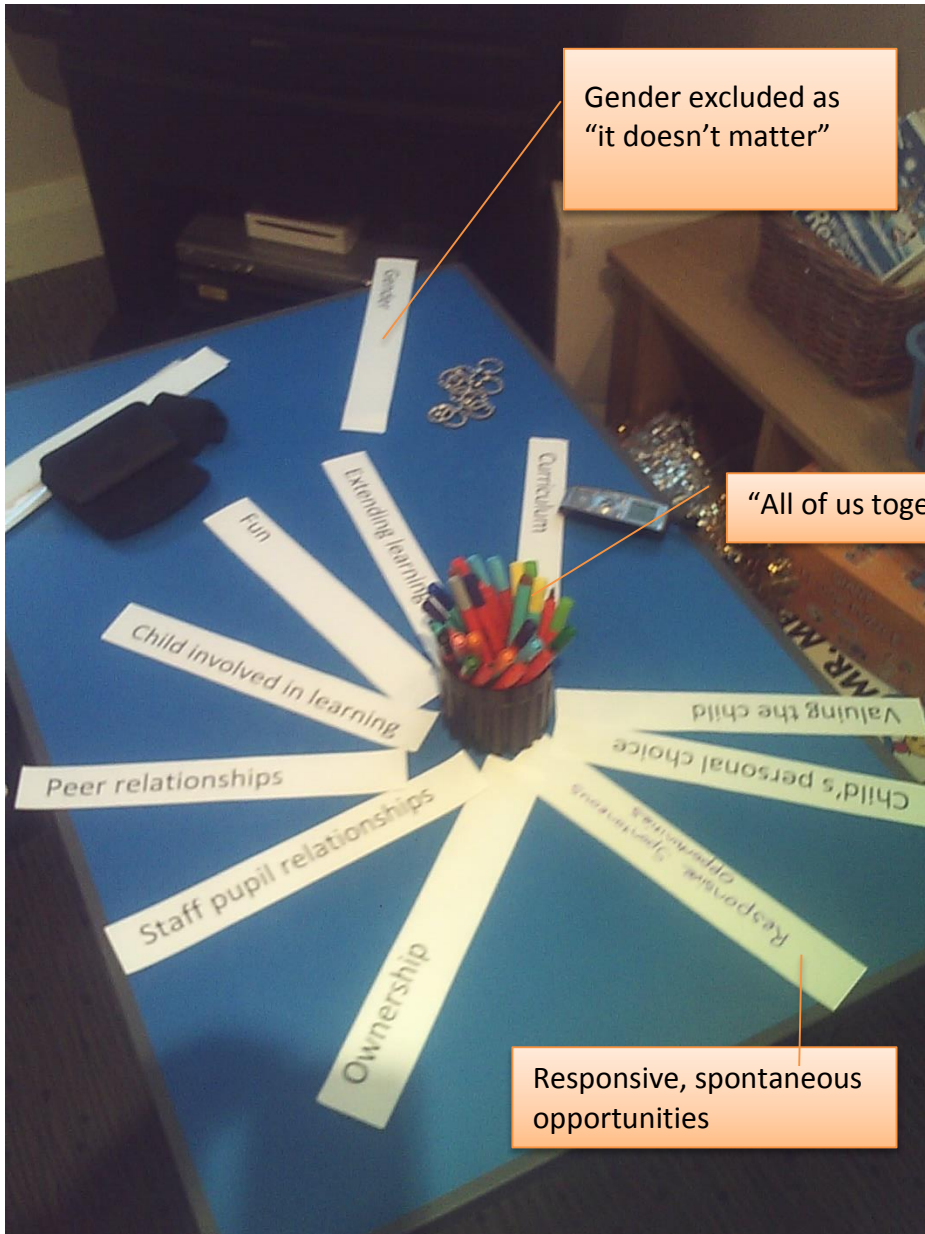
7.9 Example of Practitioner Interview Data

Example of Practitioner Interview Data		
<i>Interview question:</i> Some children don't seem to bring things. Why do you think this is?		
Practitioner Name	Class	Excerpt from practitioner responses
Nesbit	Nursery	<p>"I think, at some point, every child that walks through the door will bring something and it doesn't have to be a toy. It can be something from a key ring on the coat to the bobble that's in the hair...I think you then will pick out something that will give them that sense of belonging – like their eyes, their hair, their fingers, or something that they can do by looking at a book or... there is always something that you will be able to help them to feel that sense of belonging. But I think at every point – over the course of the year – every child will bring something. And I say, it can be their coat, it can be their wellies...It can be their personality. Everybody is bringing something and it doesn't necessarily have to be a specific toy. It can be their conversation about what they've got at home. So they can share it in that way. I think some children don't bring them because maybe they don't want to share. They maybe don't feel the need for it because they might feel that what they need to play with is in there" (referring to the Nursery classroom).</p>
Nash	Nursery	<p>"And then you've got the children who probably wouldn't want to bring anything in at all because it is theirs and they are quite - the ownership is really, really important to them and they just wouldn't want anybody else. Maybe they wouldn't mind them looking at it but certainly not touching it. So I wouldn't bring it in here if that's the case!</p> <p>Erm.. I'm just trying to think of the individuals. There are children that don't bring things. There's a few of the girls who maybe necessarily wouldn't bring anything but the likes of if they are wearing a nice bracelet or a hair bobble or things like that. There is one girl in particular, she clearly decides herself in the morning how she is going to get dressed and what she wants to wear and we do tend to talk about the things that she is wearing but I don't get the impression that she has necessarily chosen it to bring it in and talk about it. It is more the way that she dresses all the time - and it is lovely - all the accessories and things are very, very fashionable. We do talk about things like that as well. There definately are children who don't bring in things. Ones that bring in things do stick out in you mind more than the ones that don't. When I'm thinking just now there are definately some that I've never seen bring in anything."</p>

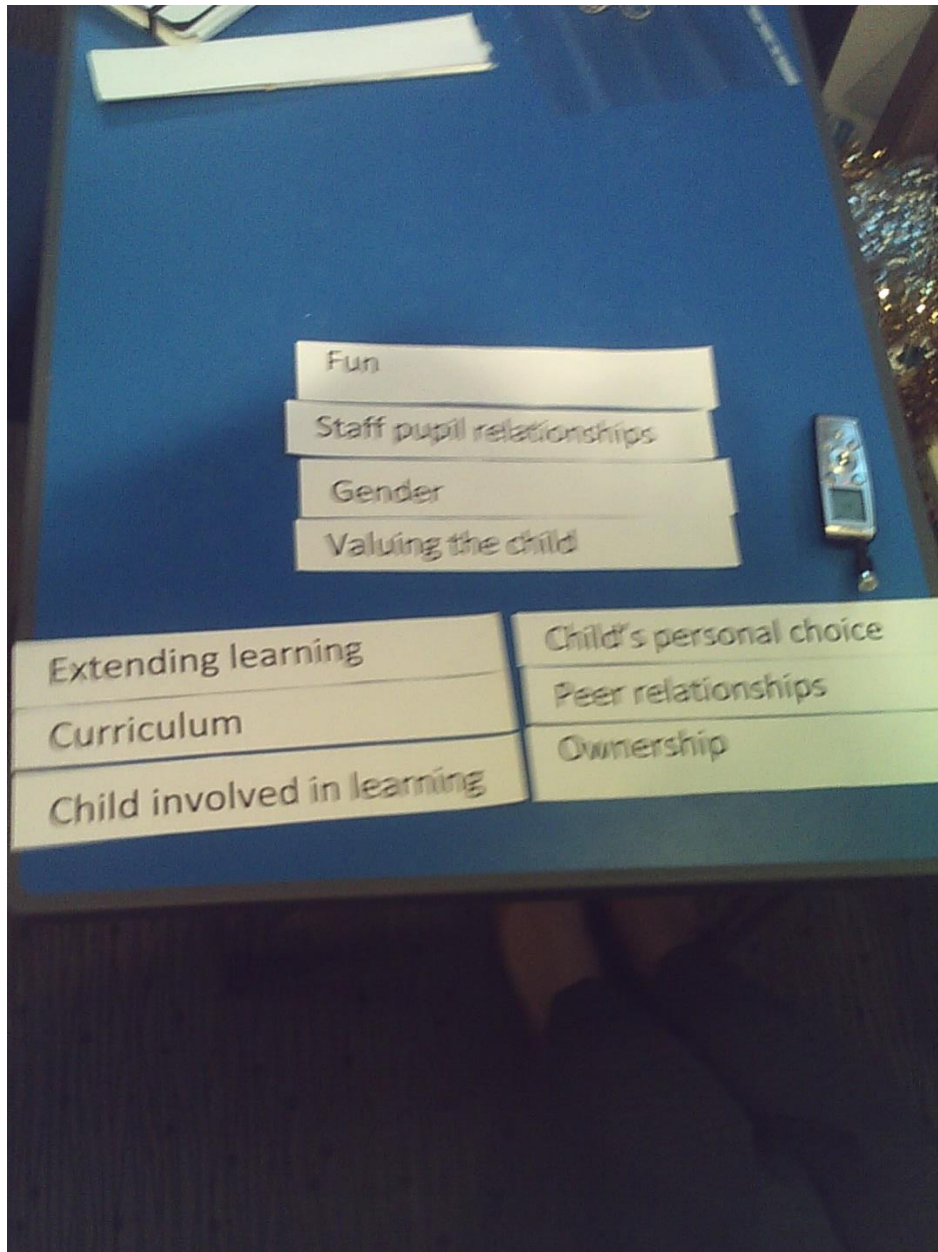
Example of Practitioner Interview Data		
<i>Interview question: Some children don't seem to bring things. Why do you think this is?</i>		
Practitioner Name	Class	Excerpt from practitioner responses
Patrick	P1/2	<p>"At some time or other they all come with something. Whether it is a card or a present or a picture or a photograph or whatever. I encourage them to bring things. I encourage them to bring their achievements. They are always bringing things. In their homework they write their wee stories and sentences and things. They are writing their wee sentences now. They are so precious to them. That's treasure because they are desperate to share that fantastic sentence they wrote last night and its a wee key into their wee world - to where they are coming from. They do all bring something at some point. It is not maybe a toy but at some point they bring something. You know wee Phillip rarely brings in things but yesterday, I think, he brought his Christmas card and was so chuffed to take his Christmas card in."</p>
Penny	P1/2	<p>"No, I wouldn't say they all bring. But why do they not bring? I don't know. They maybe just don't feel that they need to bring in and say something. I've never actually thought about it. You know what I mean? You just automatically think about the ones that bring. You haven't thought about the ones that don't bring it in. Maybe they are just happy to see what everybody else has brought. Maybe they are just happy and contented in themselves the way they are and don't need to express themselves in another way?"</p>
Potter	P1/2	<p>"Maybe children who are a bit more conscious or aware of themselves tend not to bring them in. It tends to be the more confident children, I notice, that bring them in. The children who are more eager to speak out in class and to share. So maybe the shy children are a wee bit more reserved and don't want to draw attention so they don't tend to bring toys in."</p>

7.10 Samples of Practitioner Interview Card Sorting Data

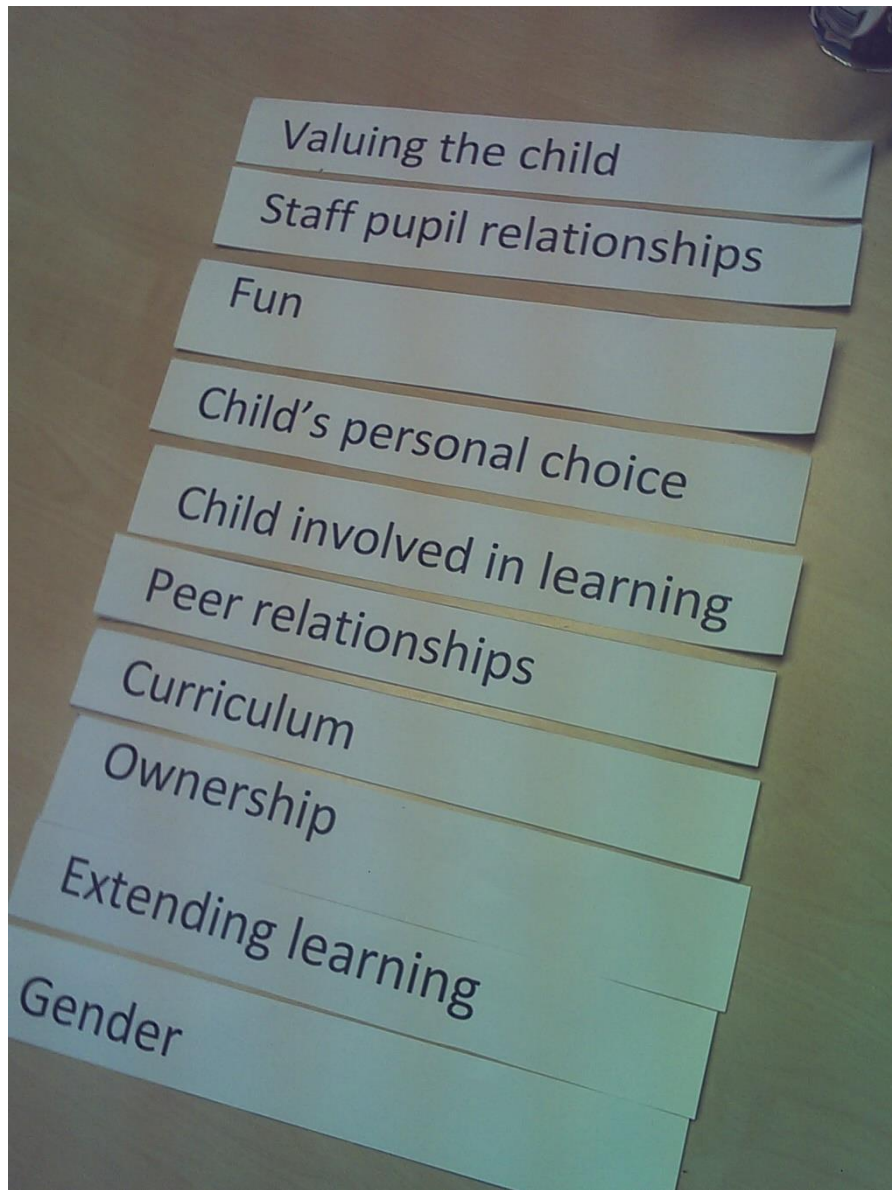
A Nursery practitioner response to a request to sort (or add/remove) cards for “a brought-in object interaction that went well since I changed it as it went along. I don’t allow them to go badly”:



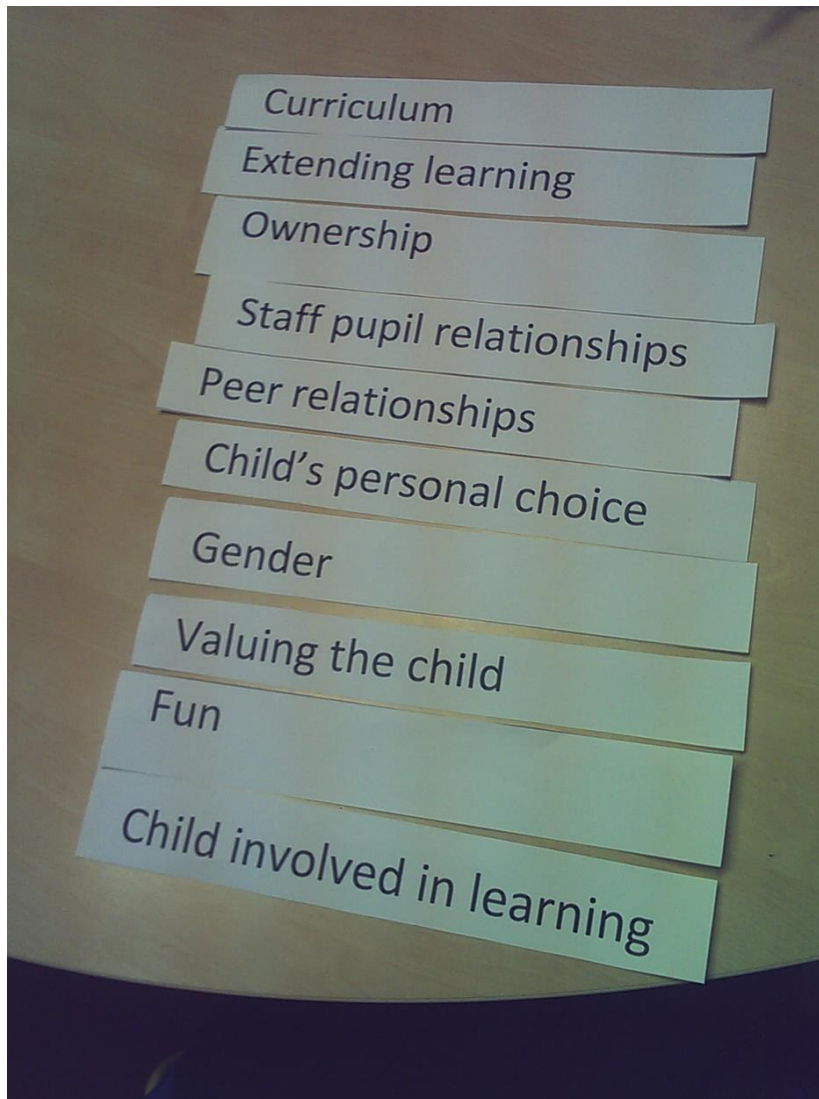
A Nursery practitioner's response to a request to sort (or add/remove) cards for "a brought-in object interaction that I wish had gone better":



A P1/2 practitioner response to a request to sort (or add/remove) cards for “a brought-in object interaction that went well”:



A P1/2 practitioner's response to a request to sort cards (or add/remove) for "a brought-in object interaction that I wish had gone better":



7.11 Object Brands List

Object brands	All		Nursery		Nursery Example	P1/2		P1/2 example
Unknown	71	41.0%	37	46.8%	Plush brown teddy bear, pink dangly hairclips, toy motorbike	34	36.2%	Pink plush teddy bear, sparkling black shoes, kaleidoscope
None	31	17.9%	7	8.9%	Grey feather, handmade surfboard, photograph	24	25.5%	Homemade cupcake, acorn, Venus fly trap plan
Ben 10	8	4.6%	7	8.9%	Ben 10 Onmitrix watch, Ben 10 t-shirt, Ben 10 playing cards	1	1.1%	Ben 10 bouncy ball
Lego	7	4.0%	2	2.5%	Bionicle action figure, Small trucks, Mauve person	5	5.3%	Big Lego box full of cars, Yellow Lego person, Blue Lego person
Power Rangers	4	2.3%	3	3.8%	Red Power Ranger, Pink and white Power Ranger, Group of multicoloured Power Rangers	1	1.1%	Blue Power Ranger
Transformers	4	2.3%	4	5.1%	Bumblebee Transformer, Megatron Transformer, Megatron's arm	0	0.0%	
Enid Blyton	3	1.7%	0	0.0%		3	3.2%	The Astonishing Ladder, Pretty Star the Pony, Enid Blyton Collection
Wall-E	3	1.7%	1	1.3%	Wall-E, MO	2	2.1%	Motorised Wall-E
Gormiti	2	1.2%	1	1.3%	Gormiti card game	1	1.1%	Gormiti - red
Great Britain	2	1.2%	0	0.0%		2	2.1%	Box of silver UK coins, 3 x gold UK coins
Kinder	2	1.2%	0	0.0%		2	2.1%	Kinder toy

Object brands	All		Nursery		Nursery Example	P1/2		P1/2 example
Ninja Turtles	2	1.2%	0	0.0%		2	2.1%	Green Ninja Turtle
Shaun the Sheep	2	1.2%	0	0.0%		2	2.1%	Shaun the Sheep plush toy with sounds
Tesco	2	1.2%	0	0.0%		2	2.1%	Vouchers for Schools
Thunderbirds	2	1.2%	1	1.3%	Thunderbird 3 rocket	1	1.1%	Thunderbird 1 rocket
Umbro	2	1.2%	2	2.5%	Umbro watch	0	0.0%	
101 Dalmatians	1	0.6%	0	0.0%		1	1.1%	101 Dalmatians book
ABBA	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	ABBA CD	0	0.0%	
All Blacks	1	0.6%	0	0.0%		1	1.1%	All Black's scorecard booklet
Baby Annabel	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	Baby Annabel doll	1	1.1%	Baby Annabel doll
Barbie	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	Barbie on horseback	0	0.0%	
Dora the Explorer	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	Dora the Explorer colouring book	0	0.0%	
Dr Seuss	1	0.6%	0	0.0%		1	1.1%	The Cat in the Hat book
Duplo	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	Duplo child	0	0.0%	
High School Musical	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	High School Musical magazine	0	0.0%	
Hornby	1	0.6%	0	0.0%		1	1.1%	Group of Hornby railway people
Ice Age	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	Sloth plush toy	0	0.0%	
In the Night Garden	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	Ickle Pickle purse	0	0.0%	

Object brands	All		Nursery		Nursery Example	P1/2		P1/2 example
Indiana Jones	1	0.6%	0	0.0%		1	1.1%	Boy's dress-up doll
My Little Pony	1	0.6%	0	0.0%		1	1.1%	Purple pony
Nick Butterworth	1	0.6%	0	0.0%		1	1.1%	Albert le Blanc book
Nintendo	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	Nintendo DS	0	0.0%	
Over the Hedge	1	0.6%	0	0.0%		1	1.1%	Over the Hedge book
Peter Pan	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	Peter Pan book	0	0.0%	
Polly Pocket	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	Polly Pocket purse and figure	0	0.0%	
Spiderman	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	Spiderman costume	0	0.0%	
Superman	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	Superman with cape	0	0.0%	
Sylvanian Families	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	Rabbit family	0	0.0%	
The Little Mermaid	1	0.6%	0	0.0%		1	1.1%	Little Mermaid doll
Toy Story	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	Woody with phrases plush toy	0	0.0%	
Winnie the Pooh	1	0.6%	0	0.0%		1	1.1%	Piglet plush toy
Zeebeez	1	0.6%	0	0.0%		1	1.1%	Zeebee jumping toy

7.12 Object Types Summary

Object types	All		Nursery		P1/2	
Plush toy	15	8.7%	5	6.3%	10	10.6%
Action figure	14	8.1%	10	12.7%	4	4.3%
Art/Craft	14	8.1%	4	5.1%	10	10.6%
Book	14	8.1%	6	7.6%	8	8.5%
Phenomenon toy	12	6.9%	4	5.1%	8	8.5%
Natural material	11	6.4%	2	2.5%	9	9.6%
Technology	10	5.8%	8	10.1%	2	2.1%
Animal figure	9	5.2%	6	7.6%	3	3.2%
Jewellery	9	5.2%	6	7.6%	3	3.2%
Adornment	8	4.6%	5	6.3%	3	3.2%
Transport	7	4.0%	5	6.3%	2	2.1%
Construction	6	3.5%	2	2.5%	4	4.3%
Clothing	5	2.9%	3	3.8%	2	2.1%
Movie toy	5	2.9%	3	3.8%	2	2.1%
TV toy	5	2.9%	3	3.8%	2	2.1%
Doll	4	2.3%	1	1.3%	3	3.2%
Foodstuff	4	2.3%	0	0.0%	4	4.3%
Music	4	2.3%	2	2.5%	2	2.1%
Photograph	4	2.3%	1	1.3%	3	3.2%
Game	3	1.7%	2	2.5%	1	1.1%
Handwritten material	3	1.7%	1	1.3%	2	2.1%
Miniature figures	2	1.2%	0	0.0%	2	2.1%
Money	2	1.2%	0	0.0%	2	2.1%
Vouchers	2	1.2%	0	0.0%	2	2.1%
Achievement	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%

7.13 Objects Received From Summary

Object Received From	All		Nursery		P1/2	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Unknown	103	59.5%	67	84.8%	36	38.3%
Gift	21	12.1%	3	3.8%	18	19.1%
Gift from Family - Mother	14	8.1%	3	3.8%	11	11.7%
Handmade by child	9	5.2%	2	2.5%	7	7.4%
Borrowed from mother	5	2.9%	0	0.0%	5	5.3%
Borrowed from father	3	1.7%	0	0.0%	3	3.2%
Nature	3	1.7%	0	0.0%	3	3.2%
Borrowed from sibling	2	1.2%	1	1.3%	1	1.1%
Gift from Family - Friend	2	1.2%	1	1.3%	1	1.1%
Gift from Family - Grandparents	2	1.2%	1	1.3%	1	1.1%
Borrowed	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Borrowed from home	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Gift from Family - Cousin	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Gift from Family - Father	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Gift from Family - Sister	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Made with Wraparound carer	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Swimming coach	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Tesco	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Visiting speaker	1	0.6%	1	1.3%	0	0.0%

7.14 Data Coding

Analysis Phase	Initial Coding Categories	Category Refining...	Final Categories
Theoretical framework	Practitioners pedagogical practices and objects from Dewey's view of experience		
Coding Decisions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Code all data from handwritten observation book and interviews. Decide what is in/out later. 2. Be cautious in the coding – assume as little as possible. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Add codes as appropriate. 2. Merge codes as appropriate. 3. Rename codes as appropriate. 4. Don't remove categories until sure data is not significant. 	<p>Write up categories which are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly populated • Exceptional
Coding Structure	<p>Pedagogical Practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available resources • Curriculum • Home school links • Making a safe space • Planning • Practitioner available • Time constraints • Complimenting • Consoling • Demonstrating • Displaying • Encouraging 	<p>Finding 1: Transforming objects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available resources • Planning • Practitioner available • Time management • Linking to curriculum <p>Finding 2: Shaping experiences using pedagogical practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcoming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practitioner available • Complimenting • Consoling 	<p>Finding 1: Transforming objects</p> <p>Finding 2: Shaping experiences using pedagogical practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcoming • Scaffolding • Supporting

Analysis Phase	Initial Coding Categories	Category Refining...	Final Categories
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoying • Exclaiming • Explaining • Intervening • Linking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To curriculum ○ To family ○ To future ○ To peers ○ To previous experience <p>Modelling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative problem solving • Comparing • Imagination • Investigating further • Observing • Playfulness and humour • Use of senses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hearing ○ Sight ○ Speech ○ Taste ○ Touch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoying • Exclaiming • Linking to previous experiences • Comparing • Playfulness and humour • Use of senses • Naming • Questioning • Valuing child contrib – holding • Valuing child contrib – body posture • Scaffolding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrating • Displaying • Explaining • Modelling collaborative problem solving • Suggesting • Valuing child contrib – calling others to enjoy • Supporting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making a safe space • Time constraints • Intervening • Valuing child contrib – altering timetable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling • Planning • Remembering

Analysis Phase	Initial Coding Categories	Category Refining...	Final Categories
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naming • Questioning • Suggesting • Supporting • Valuing child's contribution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ By altering timetable ○ By calling others to enjoy ○ By extending activity ○ By holding ○ By inclusion in planning ○ By body posture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available resources • Linking to future • Imagination • Investigating further • Valuing child contrib – extending activity • Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time constraints • Linking to curriculum • Linking to future • Investigating further • Valuing child contrib – inclusion in planning • Remembering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linking to curriculum • Linking to future <p>Finding 3: Building relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child object <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questioning • Holding • Child peers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linking to peers • Child learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playfulness and humour 	<p>Finding 3: Building relationships</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Child object 2. Child peers 3. Child learning 4. Practitioner-Child 5. Practitioner-Families

Analysis Phase	Initial Coding Categories	Category Refining...	Final Categories
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Valuing child contrib – altering timetable + calling others to enjoy• Practitioner-Child<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observing• Playfulness and humour• Practitioner-Families<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Linking to family• Home school links	

8 REFERENCES

Alexander, R. 2004, "Still no pedagogy? Principle, pragmatism and compliance in primary education", *Cambridge Journal of Education*, vol. 34, no. 1, pp. 7-32.

Alexander, R. Education for All, The Quality Imperative and the Problem of Pedagogy. Research Monograph No 20. 2008a. Institute of Education, London. CREATE PATHWAYS TO ACCESS.
Ref Type: Serial (Book, Monograph)

Alexander, R. 2008b, "Pedagogy, Curriculum and Culture," P. Murpy, K. Hall, & J. Soler, eds., Sage.

Alvesson, M. & Skoldberg, K. 2009, *Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research*, 2nd edn, SAGE Publications, London.

Anggard, E. 2005, "Barbie princesses and dinosaur dragons: narration as a way of doing gender", *Gender and Education*, vol. 17, no. 5, pp. 539-553.

Aubrey, C. 2004, "Implementing the Foundation Stage in reception classes", *British Educational Research Journal*, vol. 30, no. 5, pp. 633-653.

Ax, J. & Ponte, P. 2010, "Moral issues in educational praxis: a perspective from *pedagogiek* and *didactiek* as human sciences in continental Europe", *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 29-42.

Bainbridge, J. 2010, "Fully articulated: The rise of the action figure and the changing face of 'children's' entertainment", *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, vol. 24, no. 6, p. 829.

Barad, K. 2007, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum physics and the entanglement of matter and meaning* Duke University Press, Durham & London.

Barton, C. P. & Somerville, K. 2012, "Play Things: Children's Racialized Mechanical Banks and Toys, 1880-1930", *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* no. 1, p. 47.

Bebell, D. & Stemler, S. 2013, *The School Mission Statement: Values, Goals, and Identities in American Education* Routledge.

Biesta, G. 2006, "Context and interaction: Pragmatism's contribution to understanding learning-in-context", in *ESRC Teaching and Learning Research Programme Thematic Seminar*.

Biesta, G. 2004, ""Mind the Gap!" Communication and Educational Relation," in *No Education without Relation*, A. M. Sidorkin & C. Bingham, eds., Peter Lang, pp. 11-22.

Biesta, G. 2009a, "Context and Interaction: Pragmatism's Contribution to Understanding Learning-in-Context," in *Rethinking Contexts for Learning and Teaching: Communities, Activities and Networks*, R. Edwards, G. Biesta, & M. Thorpe, eds., Routledge, London, pp. 61-73.

Biesta, G. 2009b, "Good education in an age of measurement: on the need to reconnect with the question of purpose in education", *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability*, vol. 21, no. 1, pp. 33-46.

Biesta, G. 2009c, "Pragmatism's contribution to understanding learning-in-context," in *Rethinking Contexts for Learning and Teaching: Communities, Activities and Networks*, R. Edwards, G. Biesta, & M. Thorpe, eds., Routledge, p. 61.

Biesta, G. Email with Gert Biesta re Dewey's views on learning, education and experience. 17-10-2011.

Ref Type: Personal Communication

Biesta, G. & Burbules, N. C. 2003, *Pragmatism and Educational Research* Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, MD.

Bourdieu, P. 1995, *Outline of a theory of practice* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Brooker, L. 2011, "Taking children seriously: An alternative agenda for research?", *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 137-149.

Bussey, K. & Bandura, A. 1992, "Self-regulatory mechanisms governing gender development", *Child Development*, vol. 63, pp. 1236-1250.

Cagiltay, K., Kara, N., & Aydin, C. C. 2014, "Smart Toy Based Learning," in *Handbook of Research on Educational Communications and Technology*, 4 edn, M. J. Spector et al., eds., Springer, pp. 703-712.

Campbell, A., Shirley, L., Heywood, C., & Crook, C. 2000, "Infants' visual preference for sex-congruent babies, children, toys and activities: A longitudinal study", *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, vol. 18, pp. 479-498.

Charity, M. R. & Philip, D. S. "Object lessons: How children with autism spectrum disorders use objects to interact with the physical and social environments", *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, vol. 3, pp. 517-527.

Cherney, I. D. & Dempsey, J. 2010, "Young children's classification, stereotyping and play behaviour for gender neutral and ambiguous toys", *Educational Psychology: An International Journal of Experimental Educational Psychology*, vol. 30, no. 6, pp. 651-669.

Christensen, P. & Prout, A. 2002, "Working with Ethical Symmetry in Social Research with Children", *Childhood*, vol. 9, no. 4, pp. 477-497.

Cohen, B., Moss, P., & Petrie, P. 2004, *A New Deal for Children?: Re-forming Education and Care in England, Scotland and Sweden* Policy Press.

Collinson, V., Kozina, E., Lin, Y.-H. K., Ling, L., Matheson, I., Newcombe, L., & Zogla, I. 2010, "Professional development for teachers: a world of change", *European Journal of Teacher Education*, vol. 32, no. 1, pp. 3-19.

Cooper, J. 2006, "The digital divide: the special case of gender", *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, vol. 22, pp. 320-334.

Corney, A. *Experiential Learning Cycles*. 2007.

Ref Type: Slide

- Curtis, W., Murphy, M., & Shields, S. 2013, *Research and Education* Routledge.
- Dahlberg, G. & Moss, P. 2005, *Ethics and Politics in Early Childhood Education (Contesting Early Childhood)* Routledge.
- Dahlberg, G., Moss, P., & Pence, A. 2007, *Beyond Quality in Early Childhood Education: Languages of Evaluation*, Second Edition edn, Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, London and New York.
- Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. 2013, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* Bloomsbury.
- Dewey, J. 1905, "The postulate of immediate empiricism", *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*, vol. 2, no. 15, pp. 393-399.
- Dewey, J. 1922, "Human Nature and Conduct," in *John Dewey: The Middle Works, Vol 14*, J. A. Boydston, ed., University of Southern Illinois Press, Carbondale.
- Dewey, J. 1938, *Experience & Education* Touchstone by Simon & Schuster, New York.
- Dewey, J. 1990, *The School and Society and The Child and the Curriculum* University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London.
- Dewey, J. 1998, *The Essential Dewey: Pragmatism, education, democracy* Indiana University Press.
- Dewey, J. 2003, *Experience and Nature (1925)* Kessinger Publishing.
- Dewey, J. 2004, *Democracy and Education* Courier Dover Publications.
- Dewey, J. 2007, *Logic - The Theory of Inquiry* Saerchinger Press.
- Dewey, J. 2008, *The Later Works of John Dewey, Volume 3, 1925-1953: 1927-1928, Essay, Reviews, Miscellany, and Impressions of Soviet Russia* SIU Press.
- Dewey, J., Boydston, J. A., & Hook, S. 2008, *The Later Works of John Dewey, Volume 1: 1925, Experience and Nature* SIU Press.
- Doucet, F. & Tudge, J. 2007, "Co-Constructing the Transition to School," in *School readiness and the transition to kindergarten in the era of accountability*, R. C. Pianta, M. J. Cox, & K. L. Snow, eds., Paul H Brookes Publisher.
- Drew, V. & Mackie, L. 2011, "Extending the constructs of active learning: implications for teachers' pedagogy and practice", *The Curriculum Journal*, vol. 22, no. 4, pp. 451-467.
- Education Scotland. Curriculum for Excellence - All experiences and outcomes. 2009.
Ref Type: Statute
- Education Scotland 2014, *About Early Years* (patent).
- Edwards, C. P., Gandini, L., & Forman, G. E. 1998, *The Hundred Languages of Children: The Reggio Emilia Approach - Advanced Reflections*, Second edn, Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Edwards, R., Biesta, G., & Thorpe, M. 2009, *Rethinking contexts for learning and teaching: communities, activities and networks* Routledge as part of the Taylor & Francis Group, London and New York.

Edwards, S. 2005, "Children's learning and developmental potential: examining the theoretical informants of early childhood curricula from the educator's perspective", *Early Years*, vol. 25, no. 1, pp. 67-80.

EIS. EIS highlights fall in nursery teacher numbers across Scotland. EIS website . 19-9-2008. EIS. 1-12-2010.

Ref Type: Electronic Citation

EIS. Early Education in Scotland: Working to provide the best for Scotland's youngest learners. 2010. Edinburgh, Educational Institute of Scotland.

Ref Type: Pamphlet

Ekhholm, G. F. 1946, "Wheeled Toys in Mexico", *American Antiquity* no. 4, p. 222.

Elder, J. L. & Pederson, D. R. 1978, "Preschool Children's Use of Objects in Symbolic Play", *Child Development*, vol. 49, pp. 500-504.

Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. 1995, *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London.

Entwisle, D. R. 1995, "The Role of Schools in Sustaining Early Childhood Program Benefits", *The Future of Children*, vol. 5, no. 3, pp. 133-144.

ESRC. The Research Ethics Guidebook: a resource for social scientists. ESRC linked Research Ethics Guidebook website . 2011. ESRC, RDI and IOE.

Ref Type: Electronic Citation

Ethics Committee of BPS 2009, *Code of Ethics and Conduct: Guidance published by the Ethics Committee of the British Psychological Society*, British Psychological Society.

Eurydice at NFER 2010, *Compulsory age of starting school in European countries, 2010*.

Evangelou, D., Dobbs-Oates, J., Bagiati, A., Liang, S., & Choi, J. Y. 2010, "Talking about artifacts: Preschool children's explorations with sketches, stories, and tangible objects", *Early Childhood Research and Practice*, vol. 12, no. 2, pp. 1-16.

Farrell, A. 2005, *Ethical Research with Children* McGraw-Hill International.

Fielding, M. & Moss, P. 2010, *Radical education and the Common School: A democratic alternative* Routledge.

Fleer, M., Tonyan, H. A., Mantilla, A. C., & Rivalland, C. M. P. 2009, "A cultural-historical analysis of play as an activity setting in early childhood education," in *Childhood studies and the impact of globalization: Policies and practices at global and local levels*, M. Fleer, M. Hedegaard, & J. Tudge, eds., Routledge, New York, pp. 292-312.

Fleer, M. 2010, "Valued Curriculum Concepts," in *Early Learning and Development: Cultural-historical Concepts in Play*, Cambridge University Press.

Foner, E. 2011, *The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery* W W Norton & Company.

Francis, B. 2010, "Gender, Toys and Learning", *Oxford Review of Education*, vol. 36, no. 3, pp. 325-344.

- Geertz, C. 1973, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* Basic Books.
- Gelman, S. A., Manczak, E. M., & Noles, N. S. 2012, "The Nonobvious Basis of Ownership: Preschool Children Trace the History and Value of Owned Objects", *Child Development*, vol. 83, no. 5, pp. 1732-1747.
- Glassman, M. 2001, "Dewey and Vygotsky: Society, Experience, and Inquiry in Educational Practice", *Educational Researcher*, vol. 30, no. 4, pp. 2-14.
- Glassman, M. & Whaley, K. 2000, "Dynamic Aims: The Use of Long-term Projects in Early Childhood Classrooms in Light of Dewey's Educational Philosophy", *Early Childhood Research and Practice*, vol. 2, no. 1.
- Goldstein, J. H., Buckingham, D., & Brougere, G. 2004, *Toys, Games and Media* Routledge.
- Gonzales, R. L. 2012, *Exploring parents' crossings into schools: Understanding a critical step in the development of home-school relationships*, University of Maryland.
- Gould, S. Z. Toys Make a Nation: A History of Ethnic Toys in America. Dissertation Abstracts International, Section A: The Humanities and Social Sciences 72[3], 983. 2011. U of Michigan. 2010. Ref Type: Generic
- Grant, L. 2009, *Children's role in home-school relationships and the role of digital technologies*.
- Green, B. 2009, *Understanding and Researching Professional Practice* Sense Publishers, Rotterdam.
- Guerra, M. & Zuccoli, F. 2012, "Finished and unfinished objects: supporting children's creativity through materials", *Procedia - Social and Behavioural Sciences*, vol. 51, pp. 721-727.
- Gunter, B. & Furnham, A. 1998, *Children as consumers: a psychological analysis of the young people's market* Routledge, London.
- Guttek, G. L. 2004, *The Montessori Method: The Origins of an Educational Innovation: Including and Abridged and Annotated Edition of Maria Montessori's The Montessori Method* Rowman & Littlefield.
- Hague, M. S. 1999, *Restructuring development theories and policies: a critical study* State University of New York (SUNY) Press, Albany.
- Hahn, K. 1936, *Education and Peace: The Foundations of Modern Society*.
- Hamill, J. Children 'need male role models in the classroom'. Herald Scotland Online. 20-6-2010. 17-9-2010. Ref Type: Newspaper
- Hansen, F., Rasmussen, J., Martensen, A., & Tufte, B. 2002, *Children - Consumption, Advertising and Media* Marston Book Services, Abingdon, Oxfordshire.
- HMIE. The Key Role of Staff in Providing Quality Pre-School Education. <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/publication/krspqqse-06.html> . 2007. 25-3-2010. Ref Type: Electronic Citation

Holland, D. & Lachicotte, W. 2007, "Vygotsky, Mead, and the New Sociocultural Studies of Identity," in *The Cambridge Companion to Vygotsky*, H. Daniels, M. Cole, & J. V. Wertsch, eds., Cambridge University Press.

Holmes, R. M. & Procaccino, J. K. 2009, "Autistic children's play with objects, peers, and adults in a classroom setting," in *Transactions at play*, 9 edn, C. D. Clark, ed., University Press of America, Lanham, MD US, pp. 86-103.

Hopwood, N. Dwelling in complexity: relational-ecological understandings of context, space, place and the body in professional practice. Australian Association for Research in Education website . 2010. Australian Association for Research in Education.
Ref Type: Electronic Citation

Hughes, M. 2007, "Enhancing primary literacy and mathematics through home-school knowledge exchange", *Teaching and Learning: Research Briefing*, vol. March 2007, no. 22.

Hughes, M., Andrews, J., Feiler, A., Greenhough, P., Johnson, D., McNess, E., Osborn, M., Pollard, A., Salway, L., Scanlan, M., Stinchcombe, V., Winter, J., & Yee, W. C. "Exchanging knowledge between home and school to enhance children's learning", in *Contexts, communities, networks: Mobilising learners' resources and relationships in different domains*.

Isaacs, B. 2010, *Bringing the Montessori Approach to your Early Years Practice* Routledge.

Jackson, C. D. 2010, "From the Collection With Paper and Glue: Building the Commercial Success of an Arts and Crafts Toy", *Winterthur Portfolio* no. 4, p. 351.

Jackson, P. W. 1968, *Life in Classrooms* Teachers College Press.

Jensen, A. S. 2011, "Early literacy: Towards a unified approach for childcare and school", *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, vol. 12, no. 3, pp. 311-330.

Jones, L., MacLure, M., Holmes, R., & MacRae, C. 2012, "Children and objects: affection and infection", *Early Years: An International Research Journal*, vol. 32, no. 1, pp. 49-60.

Jordan, E. 1995, "Fighting Boys and Fantasy Play: the construction of masculinity in the early years of school", *Gender and Education*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 69-85.

Kagan, D., Ozment, S., & Turner, F. M. 2007, *Western Heritage: Since 1300*, AP edn, Pearson Education Inc.

Kemmis, S. 2010, "Research for praxis: knowing doing", *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 9-27.

Kibele, A. 2006, *At play with meaning: Toys and other favorite objects in the everyday lives of young children* ProQuest.

Kinchin, J. & O'Connor, A. 2012, *Century of the Child: Growing by Design 1900-2000* The Museum of Modern Art.

Kline, S. & Pentecost, D. 1990, "The characterization of play: marketing children's toys", *Play & Culture*, vol. 3, no. 3, pp. 235-255.

Kolb, D. A. 1984, *Experiential learning: experience as the source of learning and development* Prentice-Hall.

Learning and Teaching Scotland 2005, *Lets talk about pedagogy: towards a shared understanding for early years education in Scotland*.

Learning and Teaching Scotland 2006, *Let's talk about listening to children: towards a shared understanding for early years education in Scotland*, Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2.

Lee, N. 2005, *Childhood and Human Value: Development, Separation and Separability* McGraw-Hill International.

Liebschner, J. 2002, *A child's work: freedom and guidance in Froebel's Educational Theory and Practice* Lutterworth Press.

Lillard, A. S. 2013, "Fictional World, the Neuroscience of the Imagination, and Childhood Education," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Development of Imagination*, M. Taylor, ed., Oxford University Press, pp. 137-160.

Lindauer, O. & Arizona State Univ., T. D. o. A. 1997, *Not for School, but for Life: Lessons from the Historical Archaeology of the Phoenix Indian School. Office of Cultural Resource Management Report #95*.

Lindstrom, M. & Seybold, P. B. 2004, *Brand Child*, Revised edn, Kogan Page, London.

Lipman, M. 1988, *Philosophy goes to school* Temple University Press.

Lloyd, B. & Smith, C. 2011, "The social representation of gender and young children's play", *British Journal of Developmental Psychology* no. Online 12 July 2011.

LT Scotland 1999, *Curriculum Framework for Children 3-5* LT Scotland.

LT Scotland. Early Years Matters: Building the Curriculum 3 Update.

<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/earlyyearsmatters/issue14/CurriculumforExcellenceEarlyYearsUpdate.asp> . 14-10-2008.

Ref Type: Electronic Citation

LT Scotland. 5-14 Curriculum. <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/5to14/guidelines/index.asp> . 22-9-2009a.

Ref Type: Electronic Citation

LT Scotland 2009b, *curriculum for excellence: expressive arts experiences and outcomes*, LT Scotland, Glasgow.

LT Scotland 2009c, *curriculum for excellence: literacy and english experiences and outcomes*, LT Scotland, Glasgow.

LT Scotland 2009d, *curriculum for excellence: religious and moral education experiences and outcomes*, LT Scotland, Glasgow.

LT Scotland 2009e, *curriculum for excellence: sciences experiences and outcomes*, LT Scotland, Glasgow.

- Luckin, R., Connolly, D., Plowman, L., & Airey, S. 2003, "With a little help from my friends: children's interactions with interactive toy technology", *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning, special issue on Children and Technology*, vol. 19, no. 2, pp. 165-176.
- Macdonald, A. 2004, "Collegiate or compliant? Primary teachers in post-McCrone Scotland", *British Educational Research Journal*, vol. 30, no. 3, pp. 413-433.
- Maestro, S. & Muratori, F. 2008, "How young children with autism treat objects and people: Some insights into autism in infancy from research on home movies," in *Autism: An integrated view from neurocognitive, clinical, and intervention research*, E. McGregor et al., eds., Blackwell Publishing, Malden, pp. 169-192.
- Mammas, I. N. & Spandidos, D. A. 2012, "A 3,000-year-old child's toy", *European Journal Of Pediatrics*, vol. 171, no. 9, p. 1413.
- Marsh, J. 2003, "One-way traffic? Connections between Literacy Practices at Home and in the Nursery", *British Educational Research Journal*, vol. 29, no. 3, pp. 369-382.
- Marsh, J. 2004, "The techno-literacy practices of young children", *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 51-66.
- Martin, C. L. & Fabes, R. A. 2008, *Discovering Child Development* Cengage Learning.
- Martlew, J., Ellis, S., Stephen, C., & Ellis, J. 2010, "Teacher and child talk in active learning and whole-class contexts: some implications for children from economically less advantaged home backgrounds", *Literacy*, vol. 44, no. 1, pp. 12-20.
- McNess, E., Broadfoot, P., & Osborn, M. 2003, "Is the Effective Compromising the Affective?", *British Educational Research Journal*, vol. 29, no. 2, pp. 243-257.
- McPake, J., Stephen, C., Plowman, L., Sime, D., & Downey, S. 2004, *Already at a Disadvantage? ICT in the home and children's preparation for primary school*, BECTA.
- McPartland, J., Webb, S., Keehn, B., & Dawson, G. 2011, "Patterns of visual attention to faces and objects in autism spectrum disorder", *Journal of Autism & Developmental Disorders*, vol. 41, no. 2, pp. 148-157.
- Merrell, C. & Tymms, P. 2007, "what children know and can do when they start school and how this varies between countries", *Early Childhood Research*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 115-134.
- Miller, D., Meskell, L., Rowlands, M., Engelke, M., Maurer, B., Miyazaki, H., & Keane, W. 2005, *Materiality* Duke University Press, Durham and London.
- Monroe, P. 1911, *A Cyclopedia of Education* The Macmillan Company.
- Montessori, M. & Gutek, G. L. 2004, *The Montessori Method: The Origins of an Educational Innovation* Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, Maryland.
- Montessori, M. & Hunt, J. 2005, *The Montessori Method* Kessinger Publishing, Whitefish, Montana.
- Moss, P., Dillon, J., & Statham, J. 2000, "The 'child in need' and 'the rich child': discourses, constructions and practice", *Critical Social Policy*, vol. 20, no. May 2000, pp. 233-254.

- Moss, P. & Petrie, P. 2002, *From Children's Services to Children's Spaces: Public Policy, Children and Childhood* Routledge.
- Moss, P. E. 2013, *Early Childhood and Compulsory Education: Reconceptualising the relationship* Routledge, Abingdon.
- Moyles, J., Adams, S., & Musgrove, A. SPEEL Study of Pedagogical Effectiveness in Early Learning. Department of Education website . 2002. Directgov.
Ref Type: Electronic Citation
- Nadesan, M. H. 2002, "Engineering the entrepreneurial infant: Brain science, infant development toys, and governmentality", *Cultural Studies*, vol. 16, no. 3, pp. 401-432.
- National Research Council 2007, *Putting People on the Map: Protecting Confidentiality with Linked Social-Spatial Data* National Academies Press.
- Nordtomme, S. 2012, "Place, space and materiality for pedagogy in a kindergarten", *Education Inquiry*, vol. 3, no. 3, pp. 317-333.
- Nutbrown, C. 2012, *Review of Early Education and Childcare Qualifications: Interim Report*.
- Odegard, N. 2013, "When matter comes to matter - working pedagogically with junk materials", *Education Inquiry*, vol. 3, no. 3, pp. 387-400.
- Okoro, J. A. 2008, "Chapter 10. Clay Toys of the Grandchildren of a Potter in Salaga: Insights for Archaeology in Ghana", *BAR INTERNATIONAL SERIES*, vol. 1847, pp. 117-136.
- Olsson, L. M. 2009, *Movement and experimentation in Young Children's Learning: Deleuze and Guattari in Early Childhood Education* Routledge, Taylor & Francis.
- Osberg, D. & Biesta, G. 2008, "The emergent curriculum: navigating a complex course between unguided learning and planned enculturation", *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, vol. 40, no. 3, pp. 313-328.
- Osgood, J. 2006, "Professionalism and performativity: the feminist challenge facing early years practitioners", *Early Years*, vol. 26, no. 2, pp. 187-199.
- Paechter, C. & Clark, S. "Learning gender in primary school playgrounds: findings from the Tomboy Identities study", in ***Seminar 4: Cultures, values, identities and power*** .
- Palaiologou, I. 2012, *Ethical Practice in Early Childhood* Sage.
- Papatheodorou, T. 2009, "Exploring relational pedagogy," in *Learning Together in the Early Years: Exploring Relational Pedagogy*, T. Papatheodorou & J. Moyles, eds., Routledge, London and New York, pp. 3-17.
- Parke, R. & Gauvain, M. 2008, *Child Psychology: A Contemporary View Point* McGraw-Hill Education.
- Parsons, A. & Hower, N. 2006, "Superhero Toys and Boys' Physically Active and Imaginative Play", *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, vol. 20, no. 4, pp. 287-300.

Peters, S. 2009, "Responsive, reciprocal relationships: The heart of the *Te Whariki* curriculum," in *Learning Together in the Early Years: Exploring Relational Pedagogy*, T. Papatheodorou & J. Moyles, eds., Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, London and New York, pp. 23-32.

Piaget, J. 1976, *Piaget's Theory* Springer.

Plowman, L., Stevenson, O., McPake, J., Stephen, C., & Adey, C. 2011a, "Parents, preschoolers and learning with technology at home: some implications for policy", *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, vol. 27, no. 4, pp. 362-371.

Plowman, L., Stevenson, O., Stephen, C., & Adey, C. 2011b, "Parents, pre-schoolers and learning with technology at home: some implications for policy", *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, vol. 27, pp. 361-371.

Plowman, L., McPake, J., & Stephen, C. 2008, "Just picking it up? Young children learning with technology at home", *Cambridge Journal of Education*, vol. 38, no. 3.

Plowman, L., McPake, J., & Stephen, C. 2010, "The Technologisation of Childhood? Young Children and Technology in the Home", *Children & Society*, vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 63-74.

Plowman, L., Stephen, C., & McPake, J. 2008, "Supporting young children's learning with technology at home and in preschool", *Research Papers in Education* pp. 1-20.

Plowman, L., Stevenson, O., Stephen, C., & McPake, J. 2012, "Preschool children's learning with technology at home", *Computers & Education*, vol. 59, pp. 30-37.

Poddiakov, A. 2011, "Didactic objects for development of young children's combinatorial experimentation and causal-experimental thought", *International Journal of Early Years Education*, vol. 19, no. 1, pp. 65-78.

Powell, S. 2007, **PROGRESS REPORT – EDUCATION SERVICES – EARLY YEARS**, Perth and Kinross Council Lifelong Learning Committee, Perth, Scotland, 11 07/161.

Pramling-Samuelsson, I. & Fler, M. 2009, *Play and Learning in Early Childhood Settings: International Perspectives* Springer.

Priestley, M. 2011, "Whatever happened to curriculum theory? Critical realism and curriculum change", *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, vol. 19, no. 2, pp. 221-237.

Prochner, L. 2011, "'Their little wooden bricks': a history of the material culture of kindergarten in the United States", *Paedagogica Historica*, vol. 47, no. 3, pp. 355-375.

Prothmann, A., Ettrich, C., & Prothmann, S. 2009, "Preference for, and Responsiveness to, People, Dogs and Objects in Children with Autism", *ANTHROZOOS*, vol. 22, no. 2, pp. 161-171.

Raey, D. 2001, "'Spice Girls', 'Nice Girls', 'Girlies', and 'Tomboys': Gender discourses, girls' cultures and femininities in the primary classroom", *Gender and Education*, vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 153-166.

Rasmussen, M. L. 2006, "Play School, melancholia, and the politics of recognition", *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, vol. 27, no. 4, pp. 473-487.

Ray, D. C. 2011, *Advanced Play Therapy* Routledge.

- Readings, B. 1996, *The University in the Ruins* Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.
- Reeves, J. 2008, "Between a rock and a hard place? Curriculum for Excellence and the Quality Initiative in Scottish schools", *Scottish Educational Review*, vol. 40, no. 2, pp. 6-16.
- Roberts, J. W. 2011, *Beyond Learning by Doing: Theoretical Currents in Experiential Education* Routledge.
- Robson, S. 1993, "Best of all I like Choosing Time: Talk with children about play and work", *Early Child Development and Care*, vol. 92, no. 1, pp. 37-51.
- Rogers, S. & Evans, J. 2008, *Inside Role Play in Early Childhood Education: Researching children's perspectives* Routledge.
- Rogers, S. 2010, *Rethinking Play and Pedagogy in Early Childhood Education: Concepts, Contexts and Cultures* Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, London and New York.
- Rogers, S. 2011, "Play and pedagogy: A conflict of interest?," in *Rethinking Play and Pedagogy in Early Childhood Education: Concepts, Contexts and Cultures*, S. Rogers, ed., Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, London and New York, pp. 7-18.
- Rose, J. 2009, *Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum: Final Report*, Crown Copyright 2009.
- Saltmarsh, S. 2009, "Becoming economic subjects: agency, consumption and popular culture in early childhood", *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, vol. 30, no. 1, pp. 47-59.
- Schwandt, T. A. 2005, "On Modeling our Understanding of the Practice Fields", *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 313-332.
- Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum 1999, *A Curriculum Framework for Children 3 to 5*, Learning and Teaching Scotland, Edinburgh.
- Scottish Executive 2006a, *a curriculum for excellence: building the curriculum 1*.
- Scottish Executive. Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006. 2006b. 2006b.
Ref Type: Statute
- Scottish Executive 2007b, *A curriculum for excellence: Building the curriculum 2 - Active learning in the early years*, Crown copyright 2007, Edinburgh.
- Scottish Executive 2007a, *A curriculum for excellence: Building the curriculum 2 - Active learning in the early years*, Scottish Executive.
- Scottish Executive. a curriculum for excellence: building the curriculum 2 - active learning in the early years.
<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/earlyyears/about/curriculum/acurriculumforexcellence/earlyyears.asp> . 20-4-2007c. LT Scotland website.
Ref Type: Electronic Citation
- Scottish Government. The Four Capacities. Education Scotland. Education Scotland website . 2013.
Scottish Government. 1-1-2013.
Ref Type: Electronic Citation

- SCRC. Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care. <http://www.carecommission.com/> . 2010.
Ref Type: Electronic Citation
- Seiter, E. 1992, "Toys are us: Marketing to children and parents", *Cultural Studies*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 232-247.
- Sellers, M. 2013, *Young Children Becoming Curriculum: Deleuze, Te Whariki and curricular understandings* Routledge.
- SERA 2005, *Scottish Educational Research Association Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research 1005*, Scottish Educational Research Association.
- Serbin, L. A., Poulin-Dubois, D., Colburne, K. A., Sen, M. G., & Eichstedt, J. A. 2001, "Gender stereotyping in infancy: Visual preferences for and knowledge of gender-stereotyped toys in the second year", *International Journal of Behavioural Development*, vol. 25, no. 1, pp. 7-15.
- Sharon, M. S. A History of American Toys. Pop Culture Universe: Icons Idols Ideas . 2010. ABC-CLIO.
Ref Type: Generic
- Silver, P. & Silver, H. 2013, *The Education of the Poor: The History of the National School 1824-1974* Routledge.
- Simons, P. R. J. 2013, *Active Learning for Students and Teachers: Reports from Eight Countries*, Peter Lang, Paris.
- Simpson, D. 2010, "Becoming professional? Exploring Early Years Professional Status and its implications for workforce reform in England", *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, vol. 8, no. 3, pp. 269-281.
- Siraj-Blatchford, I., Sylva, K., Muttock, S., Gilden, R., & Bell, D. 2002, *Researching Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years*, Department for Education and Skills, London, Research Report RR356.
- Smidt, S. 2013, *Introducing Malaguzzi: Exploring the Life and Work of Reggio Emilia's Founding Father* Routledge.
- Smith, J. 2010, "Child's Play", *Archaeology*, vol. 63, no. 3, pp. 40-45.
- Smith, T., Edwards-Groves, C., & Brennan Kemmis, R. 2010, "Pedagogy, education and praxis", *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 1-8.
- Snyder, B. R. 1971b, *The Hidden Curriculum* Knopf.
- Snyder, B. R. 1971a, *The Hidden Curriculum* Knopf.
- Stengel, B. S. 2001, "Teaching in Response", *Philosophy of Education Archive* no. 1, pp. 349-357.
- Stephen, C. 2008, "Looking for Theory in Preschool Education", *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, vol. 27, no. 6, pp. 227-238.
- Stephen, C. 2010, "Pedagogy: The silent partner in early years learning", *Early Years*, vol. 30, no. 1, pp. 15-28.

Stephen, C. & Brown, S. 2004, "The culture of practice in pre-school provision: outsider and insider perspectives", *Research Papers in Education*, vol. 19, no. 3, pp. 323-344.

Stephen, C., Ellis, J., & Martlew, J. 2010, "Taking active learning into the primary school: a matter of new practices?", *International Journal of Early Years Education*, vol. 18, no. 4, pp. 315-329.

Sylva, K., Melhuish, E., Sammons, P., Siraj-Blatchford, I., & Taggart, B. Effective pre-school and primary education: Findings from the pre-school period. 2007. London, TLRP.
Ref Type: Pamphlet

Taguchi, H. L. 2007, "Deconstructing and Transgressing the Theory - Practice dichotomy in early childhood education", *Educational philosophy and theory*, vol. 39, no. 3, pp. 275-290.

Taguchi, H. L. 2010, *Going Beyond the Theory/Practice Divide in Early Childhood Education: Introducing an intra-active pedagogy* Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, London and New York.

Tassoni, P. 2008, *S/NVQ Level 3 Children's Care, Learning and Development: Candidate Handbook* Heinemann.

The Scottish Government 2006, *Curriculum for excellence - Building the curriculum 1 - The contribution of curriculum areas* The Scottish Government.

The Scottish Government 2007, *Curriculum for Excellence - Building the curriculum 2 - Active learning - A guide to developing professional practice*.

The Scottish Government 2009, *Curriculum for excellence - Building the curriculum 4 - Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work* The Scottish Government.

The Scottish Government 2010a, *A curriculum for excellence: Building the curriculum 2 - Active Learning - A guide to developing professional practice* Edinburgh.

The Scottish Government 2010b, *Curriculum for Excellence: Building the curriculum 3 - A framework for learning and teaching: Key ideas and priorities*.

The Scottish Government. Pre-school and childcare statistics, Scotland - 2009. Opening up government website . 2011. HM Government.
Ref Type: Electronic Citation

The UK Copyright Service. Using the work of others. 2009.
Ref Type: Pamphlet

Trevarthen, C. 1988, "Universal co-operative motives: How infants begin to know the language and culture of their parents," in *Acquiring culture: Cross cultural studies in child development*, G. Jahoda & I. M. Lewis, eds., Croom Helm, New York, NY, US, pp. 37-90.

UK Legislation. Copyright, Design and Patents Act 1988. 1988 c.48. 1988.
Ref Type: Bill/Resolution

Vallance, E. 1973, "Hiding the Hidden Curriculum", *Curriculum Enquiry*, vol. 38, pp. 5-21.

Van Laere, K., Peeters, J., & Vandenbroeck, M. 2012, "The Education and Care Divide: the role of the early childhood workforce in 15 European countries", *European Journal of Education Research, Development and Policy*, vol. 47, no. 4, pp. 527-541.

- Watkins, C., Carnell, E., & Lodge, C. 2007, *Effective Learning in Classrooms* SAGE.
- Watkins, C. & Mortimore, P. 1999, "Pedagogy: What Do We Know?," in *Understanding Pedagogy: And Its Impact on Learning*, P. Mortimore, ed., Sage.
- Wertsch, J. V. 2009, *Vygotsky and the social formation of mind* Harvard University Press.
- Weston, P. 2000, *Freidrich Froebel: His life, times & significance* University of Surrey, Roehampton.
- Wiggin, K. D. & Smith, N. A. 1895, *Froebel's Gifts* Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston and New York.
- Williams, E., Costall, A., & Reddy, V. 1999, "Children with autism experience problems with both objects and people", *Journal of Autism & Developmental Disorders*, vol. 29, no. 5, pp. 367-378.
- Winnicott, D. W. 1965, "Ego Distortion in Terms of True and False Self," in *The Maturation Process and the Facilitating Environment: Studies in the Theory of Emotional Development.*, International UP Inc, New York, pp. 140-152.
- Winnicott, D. W. 2005, *Playing and Reality* Routledge.
- Wood, D. J., Bruner, J. S., & Ross, G. 1976, "The role of tutoring in problem solving", *Journal of Child Psychiatry and Psychology*, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 89-100.
- Wood, E. 2009, "Developing a Pedagogy of Play," in *Early Childhood Education: Society & Culture*, A. Anning, J. Cullen, & M. Flear, eds., Sage, Los Angeles, pp. 27-38.
- Wood, E. & Attfield, J. 2005, *Play, Learning and the Early Childhood Curriculum*, Second edn, Sage.
- Woodrow, C. 2008, "Discourses of professional identity in early childhood: movements in Australia", *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, vol. 16, no. 2, pp. 269-280.
- Woodrow, C. & Press, F. 2007, "(Re)Positioning the Child in the Policy/Politics of Early Childhood", *Educational philosophy and theory*, vol. 39, no. 3, pp. 312-325.
- Young, R. 1995, "Liberalism, Postmodernism, Critical Theory and Politics," in *After Postmodernism: Education, Politics and Identity*, R. Smith & P. Wexler, eds., Routledge.
- Young, S. 2003, "Winning at retail: research insights to improve the packaging of children's products", *Young Consumers: Insight and Ideas for Responsible Marketers*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 17-22.