

Professional reading, learning and leading: who reads what? and why?

Jackie Brien

Dr Jane Page



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Professional reading, learning and leading: who reads what? and why?

This presentation will focus on:

- how early childhood professionals read
- what they choose to read
- and why.

These questions will be explored alongside key themes:

- leading self
- leading others
- and leading ideas.



Professional reading, learning and leading: who reads what? and why?

The topic for this study:

The perceptions and experiences of professionals in the early childhood sector regarding ways that professional reading supports them to engage with evidence-based practice to improve learning and development outcomes for young children



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Professional reading, learning and leading: who reads what? and why?

What are the perceptions of early childhood professionals about the impact of professional reading on:

- personal critical reflection and ongoing professional learning and development?
- their knowledge of practices which promote the learning, development and wellbeing of young children?
- their implementation of practices which promote the learning, development and wellbeing of young children?

What factors do early childhood professionals perceive to be supportive in encouraging them to engage in critical reflection through professional reading?



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Professional reading, learning and leading: who reads what? and why?

Professional reading materials include both print and online texts that:

- provide / disseminate information
- support knowledge and implementation of evidence-informed professional practice through critically reflective practice
(Pollard, 2008; MacNaughton, 2003; Barnes, 2013; Nolan, 2008; Spedding et al., 2004)
- provide opportunities for professionals to share their thoughts, learning, reflections and practice – practice-informed evidence
(Buysse and Wesley, 2006)

**Professional reading plays a critical role
in linking evidence and theory with practice**

(Council of Australian Governments [COAG], 2009; Lauwerys, 1957).



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Professional reading, learning and leading: who reads what? and why?

Professional reading has been found to be:

- a valuable way of learning
(Slusarski, 1992; Horder, 2004, 2006; Haddow, 2011; Roberts, 2016; Styhre, 2016)
- valuable as a tool to support critical reflection
- enables evidence-informed practice in a profession
- enables educators to make links between knowledge, reflection, learning and practice
(Slusarski, 1992; Smith, 1996).



Professional reading, learning and leading: who reads what? and why?

Although some educators do not have the time, support or inclination to read professionally, for many it is intrinsic to their practice, learning and leadership.



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Professional reading, learning and leading: who reads what? and why?

Professional reading materials:



What type of professional reading materials do you engage with?

And why?



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Professional reading, learning and leading: who reads what? and why?

Early Childhood Questionnaire on Professional Reading

Managers, Directors, Policy makers

Early Childhood Questionnaire on Professional Reading

Early childhood educators, Educational leaders, Early childhood intervention professionals



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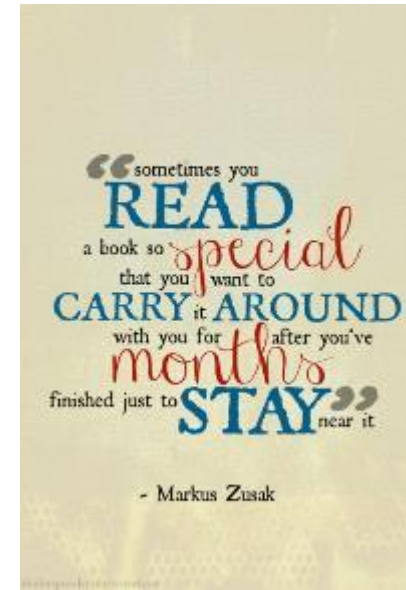
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Participant descriptions of professional reading

- Supports critically reflective practice
- Informs practice
- Empowers change
- Is integral to being "professional"
- Is important for leaders in supporting colleagues to understand concepts and evidence and be challenged to improve practice



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Links between professional reading and professional learning and development

- Encourages continual reflection and practice
- Concept of lifelong learning
- Is meaningful and contextualised
- Requires a commitment to practice improvement to support improved child development outcomes
- Aims to increase the knowledge, skills and attitudinal perspectives of professionals
(Guskey, 2000; Harvard Family Research Project, 2004; Watkins, 2001),
- Ultimately, directly or indirectly enables positive outcomes for young children



Examples of ways in which knowledge of evidence-based practice has been strengthened by professional reading

- Transformational change in understanding the child
- Transformational change in practice
- Deepened further engagement in understanding the child and evidence-based best practice



Knowledge of evidence-based practice, strengthened by professional reading,
directly or indirectly supports positive outcomes
for young children's learning, development and wellbeing

For early childhood educators, practical examples such as:

- supporting children's safety
- supporting children's emotional wellbeing
- provision of primary caregiver
- developing understanding of and practices to support children who experience stress
- promoting respect for children
- provision of play-based experiences to foster literacy and numeracy



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For early childhood leaders:

- Asking services re evidence underpinning their practice and curriculum decisions
- Sharing knowledge of evidence-based practice to support improved outcomes for children
- Encouraging critically reflective practice
- Supporting an expectation of change and improved practice
- Assisting leaders to articulate the reasons behind practice decisions
- Informing policy decisions and implementation



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**For leaders & policy makers,
ways that knowledge from professional reading
has enabled them to support those who work directly with children
to implement practices that promote learning, development & wellbeing of young children**

- creating a culture of shared learning and ongoing PD through reading
- articles and readings are sent via e-mail to all staff as well regular readings being made available to them in hard copy
- during induction, professional reading is mentioned as a form of PD
- asking clarifying questions when services refer to changes in their professional practices in line with their professional reading
- providing examples to support leader recommendations
- through a coaching model with younger teachers
- having evidence based professional reading provides additional weight to the necessity of reviewing policy and practice



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As early childhood leaders and professionals,
We can all make the most of professional reading
to critically reflect on the research evidence-base
and use it to inform our practice



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Professional reading, learning and leading: who reads what? and why?



What type of early childhood leader do you aspire to be?

And how does professional reading contribute to this?



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All early childhood professionals can demonstrate leadership qualities through:

- personal reflection
- ethical decision-making
- evidence-informed professional growth and learning
- sharing deepened understandings with others in their 'team around the child'

Professional reading is a valuable support for our learning and leading



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