

Book Review

Effective practices in early childhood education: Building a foundation

by Sue Bredekamp

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New insights into the importance and role of early childhood education, highlight the importance of knowledgeable, skilled teachers who can employ effective teaching strategies and teaching resources. Many newly qualified teachers who do not yet have the expertise will benefit from knowledge and skills shared by their more expert and experienced counterparts.

In this book, Bredekamp gives early childhood teachers access to information about developing engaging quality curriculum, and effective teaching strategies. Over the 16 chapters this book covers a range of subjects from foundations of early childhood education to learning and development theories, making a significant contribution to practical, hands-on tools for teachers.

Bredekamp's qualifications and experiences bring valuable depth of knowledge and insights into teaching in an early childhood setting. This book is well informed, covers a wide range of subjects, and is focused on developmentally appropriate practices. Although the book is written for teachers in the United States, its practical, developmentally appropriate and inclusive approach makes it relevant to our New Zealand context.

New Zealand's early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki: He Whāriki Mātauranga mō ngā Mokopuna o Aotearoa: Early Childhood Curriculum (Te Whāriki)* (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2017) is also informed by many of the same theorists. The book's sociocultural approach to teaching and learning is compatible with *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017), therefore, making teaching strategies suggested in the book, relevant to New Zealand early childhood centres.

I found the first part of the book especially informative and helpful. In these three chapters, we read about the foundations of early childhood education, its history, the importance of understanding the past, the theories and trends. Five significant responsibilities of a teacher are identified and described. Useful information and case studies accompany the description of each area of responsibility. Definition of terms and case studies are linked to videos and even recording of children's voice as they describe what it means to belong to a caring community of learners.

In part two, chapters four, five and six, Bredekamp identifies the key elements of the major developmental theorists such as Erikson, Maslow, Piaget, Vygotsky, Skinner, Bandura, and Bronfenbrenner, and their educational implication for early childhood practice. Bredekamp believes that teachers can use their knowledge of these theories to interpret children's behavior, be intentional in their planning by predicting the next sequences in learning and development, to understand the effects of sociocultural context on children's learning and development, and to detect possible individual learning needs.

In part three of the book (chapters seven to eleven), Bredekamp helps teachers to distinguish between the characteristics of contemporary families and offers strategies for building and maintaining two-way communication and reciprocal partnerships with families to achieve better outcomes for children. This book has a focus on inclusive practice and adapting to individual differences, making it ideal for a diverse society.

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We learn about teaching strategies in the subject content areas of language, science, math, technology, social studies, and physical development, in part four (chapters 12 to 16). Teaching strategies suggested in these chapters, together with the information offered in each area, are valuable tools to all teachers in the early childhood sector.

This book is written in a way that is easy to read, engaging and informative, and it could be used as a reference book by teachers and is a book that one might return to from time to time for information and ideas. I wholeheartedly recommend this book to early childhood student teachers, newly qualified early childhood teachers and experienced early childhood professionals.

References

Bredenkamp, S. (2017). *Effective practices in early childhood education: Building a foundation* (3rd ed.). United States: Pearson Education, Inc.

Ministry of Education. (2017). *Te whāriki: He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa: Early childhood curriculum*. Wellington, New Zealand: Author.