



University of Brighton



*Reconfiguring Quality:
beyond discourses and
subjectivities to matter,
bodies and becomings in
early childhood education*

Professor Jayne Osgood, Middlesex University

**Thursday 24th November, 1-2pm, A500,
Checkland Building, Falmer Campus**

A Thales of Two Qualities

**2014 ANNUAL
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quality definition



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quality

/ˈkwɒlɪti/

noun

1. the standard of something as measured against other things of a similar kind; the degree of excellence of something.

"an improvement in product quality"

synonyms: [standard](#), [grade](#), [class](#),
[classification](#), [calibre](#), [status](#),
[condition](#), [character](#), [nature](#),
[constitution](#), [make-up](#), [form](#), [rank](#),
[worth](#), [value](#), [level](#); [More](#)

2. a distinctive attribute or characteristic possessed by someone or something.

"he shows strong leadership qualities"

synonyms: [feature](#), [trait](#), [attribute](#),
[characteristic](#), [point](#), [aspect](#), [facet](#),
[side](#), [streak](#), [property](#), [peculiarity](#),
[idiosyncrasy](#), [quirk](#); [More](#)

adjective informal

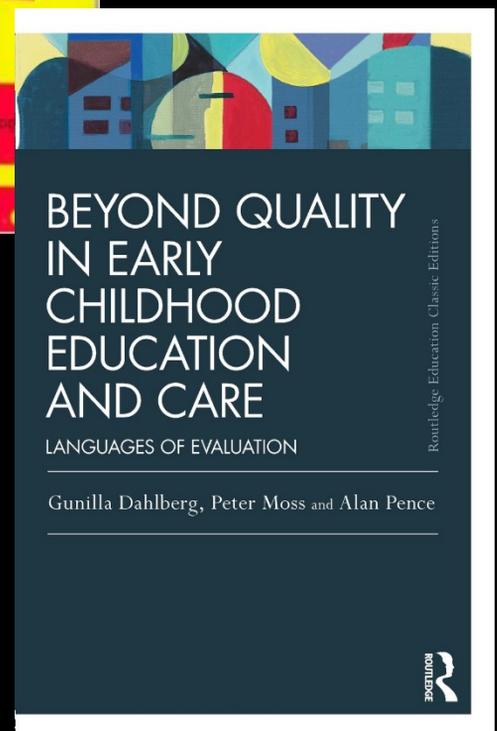
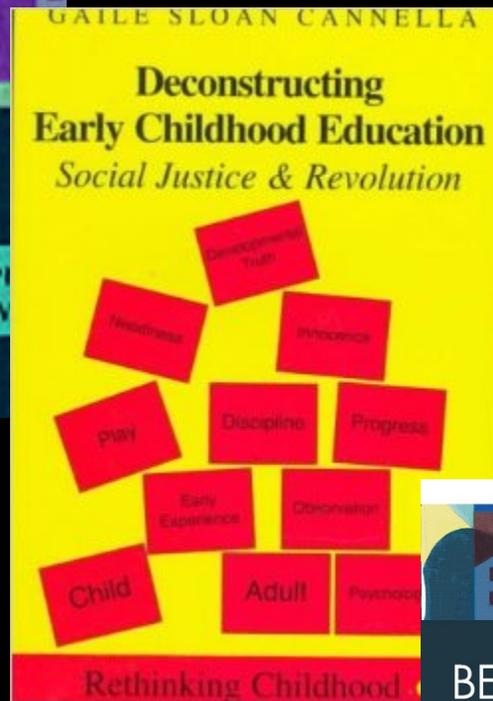
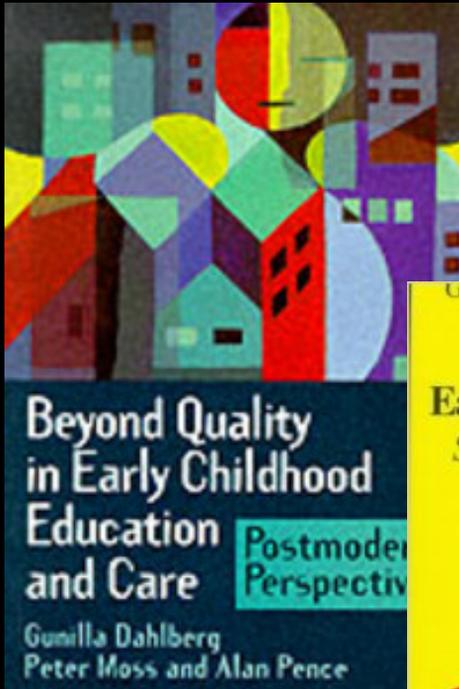
1. of good quality; excellent.

"he's a quality player"



Translations and more definitions

Deconstructing Quality: critique...



The
University of Melbourne

early childhood action



Early Childhood Action

This is to certify that

Miriam Sumner

Unhurried Pathways:

A New Framework for Early Childhood

in The University of Melbourne on

22 May 2010

Vice-Chancellor

© Early Childhood Action
Winchester
October 2012

University Secretary

www.earlychildhoodaction.com

The Early Years Learning
Framework for Australia

“Cat’s cradle is about patterns and knots...and can result in some serious surprises... ..Cat’s cradle invites a sense of collective work, of one person not being able to make all the patterns alone. One does not ‘win’ at cat’s cradle; the goal is more interesting and more open-ended than that. It is not always possible to repeat interesting patterns, and figuring out what happened to result in intriguing patterns is an embodied analytical skill... .. [it] is a game about complex, collaborative practices for making and passing on culturally interesting patterns.”

[Haraway, 1994]

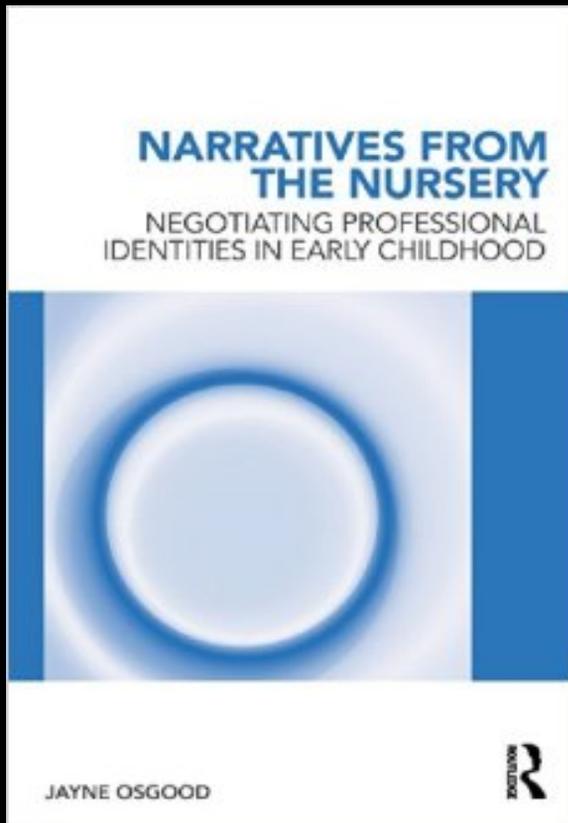
A Game of Cat’s Cradle



Kwah-Lee-Uh	Ode	Becoming	Scadoodle
Phonetic	To	Flamingo	Duende
Genetic	Method	Bingo	To
Latin	And	Dingo	End
quālis	Mode	Bark	Ay
Mimetic	Showed	Woof	
Nothing	Anode	Hoof	
Short	Abode	Scoof	
Of	To	Pandrogynic	
What	And	Energentic	
Sort	Froed	Synergetic	
Tha	Sensibility	©Delenetic	
Texture	Orange	Got	
Of	Hedgehog	It	
A	Purple	Shit	
Snort	Wings	Yeah	
Phenomenological	Silver	With	
Biological	Nine	Flair	
Sociological	Eclectic	Big	
FANTRANSMAGORICAL	Metric	Hair	
Dem	Obstetric	Despair	
Feels	Electric	Top	
Da	Lightning	Pair	
Scent	Scent	Stallion	
Of	Thunder	Mare	
Squeals	Taste	I	
Attachment	Rain	Do	
To	Window	Declare	
High	Pain	Plath	
Heels	Shatter	Math	
Meals	Scatter	Sociopath	
On	Matter	Diagnoses	
Wheels	Mad	Thrombosis?	
Sounded	Hatter	Not	
Odeling	Fairdinkym	This	
Reels	Schminken	Hula Hoop Heart	
Realing	Thinkin	PhArt	
TransMogRific	Tinkerin	Smart	
Deals	Missing	Dart	
Existential	Kissing	Kmart	
Experiential	Blissing	Part	
Experimental	Imaginary	Kitten	
ExAdental	Vaginary	Kaboodle	
Totally	Hadjyainary	Koobercaf	
Mental		Noodle	
FauX			
FurR			
Rental			
Bental			
Sequential			
Sentinel			



Staying with the trouble: Professional Subjectivities



Submitting to Quality discourses is a form of self-control, protection

Discursive analysis shuts down opportunities to 'go beyond'

Butler (1993) work with and beyond the subject

Quality is beyond the person – it is everywhere and part of everyday life.

Braidotti (2006:7) argues for 'a more specific and grounded sense of singular subjectivities as collectively bound...a re-grounding of the subject in a materially embedded sense of responsibility'

Post-humanism takes subjectivity beyond the individual towards collective, connective, affective assemblage of other bodies, matter, things.

Move from quality as discourse to quality as becomings.

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3. Osgood, J. (2015). Reconfiguring Play: material feminist possibilities to reimagine gender in early childhood, in J. Moyles (ed) *The Excellence of Play*.
4. Osgood, J. (2015). Postmodern Theorising in ECEC: making the familiar strange in pursuit of social justice in *Routledge Handbook of Philosophies & Theories of ECEC*.
5. Osgood & Giugni (2015). Putting post-humanist theory to work to reconfigure gender in early childhood: when theory becomes method becomes art. *Global Studies of Childhood*.
6. Osgood & Giugni (2015). Reconfiguring Quality: beyond discourses and subjectivities to matter, bodies and becomings in early childhood education, in Cannella, G.S. (ed) *Global Perspectives of Quality in Early Childhood*.

Reconfiguring Quality: Flexible Frameworks

Educators continually seek ways to build their professional knowledge and develop learning communities. They continually seek ways to build their professional knowledge and develop learning communities. They continually seek ways to build their professional knowledge and develop learning communities. They continually seek ways to build their professional knowledge and develop learning communities.

There are many ways of living, being and of knowing.

Children are born belonging to a culture, which is not only influenced by traditional practices, heritage and ancestral knowledge, but also by the experiences, values and beliefs of individual families and communities. Respecting diversity means within the curriculum valuing and reflecting the practices, values and beliefs of families. Educators honour the histories, cultures, languages, traditions, child rearing practices and lifestyle choices of families. They value children's different capacities and abilities and respect differences in families' home lives.

Educators recognise that diversity contributes to the richness of our society and provides a valid evidence base about ways of knowing. For Australia, it also includes promoting greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing and being.

When early childhood educators respect the diversity of families and communities and the aspirations they hold for children, they are able to foster children's motivation to learn and reinforce their sense of themselves as competent learners.

They make curriculum decisions that uphold all children's rights to have their cultures, identities, abilities and strengths acknowledged and valued, and respect to the complexity of children's and families' lives.

Educators think critically about opportunities and elements that can arise from diversity and take action to redress unfairness. They provide opportunities to learn about families and difference and about interdependence and how we can learn to live together.

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Reflective practice is a form of ongoing learning that involves engaging with questions of philosophy, ethics and practice. Its intention is to gather information and gain insights that support, inform and enrich decision-making about children's learning. As professionals, early childhood educators examine what happens in their settings and reflect on what they might change.

Critical reflection involves closely examining all aspects of events and experiences from different perspectives. Educators often frame their reflective practice within a set of overarching questions, developing more specific questions for particular areas of enquiry.

Overarching questions to guide reflection include:

- What are my understandings of each child?
- What theories, philosophies and understandings shape and assist my work?
- Who is advantaged when I work in this way? Who is disadvantaged?
- What questions do I have about my work? What am I challenged by? What am I curious about? What am I confronted by?
- What aspects of my work are not helped by the theories and guidance that I usually draw on to do my work? Are there other theories or knowledge that could help me to understand better what I have observed or experienced? What are they? How might those theories and that knowledge affect my practice?

A lively culture of professional inquiry is established when early childhood educators and those with whom they work are all involved in an ongoing cycle of review through which current practices are examined, outcomes reviewed and new ideas generated. In such a climate, issues relating to curriculum quality, equity and children's wellbeing can be raised and debated.

In search of leakages



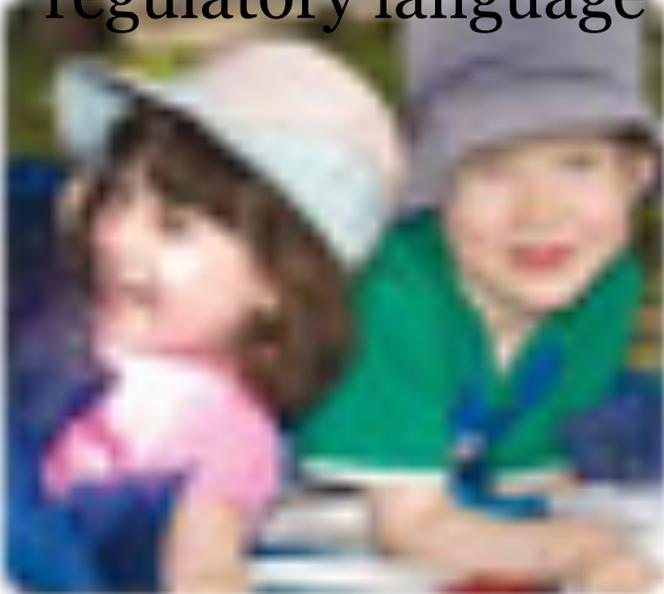
“The sector must play a role in determining how [standards] can be achieved as it strives for excellence. The sector is becoming more professional, and Government must support this diverse sector to make its own improvement. In all my recommendations I have specified high and achievable standards, and how Government might apply these. I have also aimed to allow *flexibility* in how the sector may work towards them” [p.5]



‘The ideal approach [to achieving ‘full and relevant’ qualifications] would be one that strikes the right balance by demanding consistency of content and pedagogical process whilst also allowing sufficient *flexibility* for different qualifications and philosophies’ [p.25]

“The EYLF can be thought of as a conversation starter about theory and practice and their interconnectedness, rather than a script for early childhood practice alone. In my teaching practice, activist practice and research practice, I have yet to encounter a curriculum, regulatory or quality assurance document that has captured all the complexities of what early childhood practice can become, perhaps because, to date, this complexity is yet to be successfully expressed in ‘regulatory language’”

[Giugni, 2012:12]



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To Go Beyond...

Engagement in post-humanist theorising in early childhood contexts represents a means of becoming active in reconfiguring processes, practices and policies in the field...

It involves taking account of personal philosophies, political motivations, subjectivities, identities – and crucially *moving beyond* reflection and reflexivity to diffractively grappling with the ruptures and leakages that afford opportunities to recognise relational entanglements of bodies, matter, things and to embrace the more opened out view of subjectivity that becomes available.

We move beyond 'quality' as a discourse to quality as an assemblage of multiplicities of vibrant matter, emotions, encounters, relationships, happenings always uncertain, shifting and contingent.

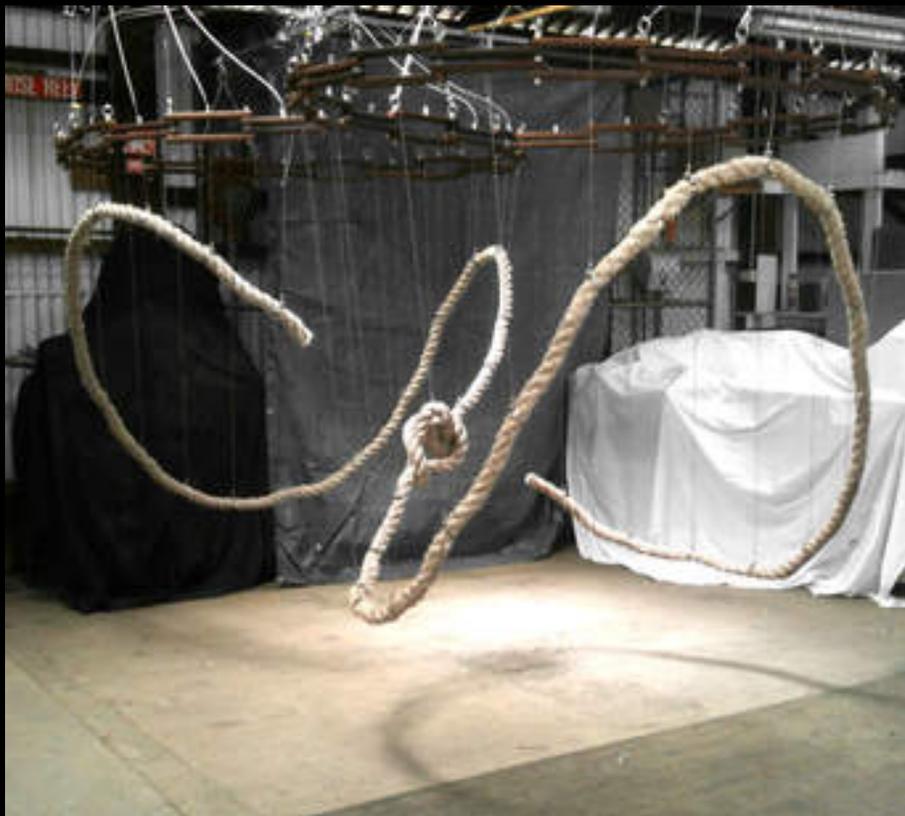
*Who do I touch when I touch my
dog?*

Consider the inter- and intra-
relationality between human,
dog and everyday life and how it
is situated politically, historically
and geographically

In ECEC such questioning
produces assemblages of
relational entanglements offering
new way to theorise practices
and what quality might mean.



Go Beyond
(4aPay, 2009)



Reconfigure (Godden, 2013)



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Research Interests: Education, Sociology, Feminist Theory, Feminist new materialism, Feminist Posthumanism, Posthumanism, and 49 more

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BOOKS

Reconfiguring motherhoods: transmogrifying the maternal entanglements of feminist academics (under review) in Henwood, A. & Scott, K (Eds) *Women Education Scholars and Their Children's Schools*. Routledge. [more](#)

by Jayne Osgood and Red Ruby Scarlet - Miriam Gaunt

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