Thinking about ‘Identity’ in the Early Years Learning Framework

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BECS (Hons)

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
of the degree of Master of Education (Research)

February 2014

Melbourne Graduate School of Education
The University of Melbourne

Produced on archival quality paper
Abstract

Australia’s curriculum for early childhood services caring and educating for people aged 0-5 years, the Early Years Learning Framework, has introduced ‘Identity’ as a Learning Outcome. This thesis explores how teachers are documenting children’s identities, as required by federal assessment bodies. The EYLF publications available suggest that ‘identity’ can be documented as a static, singular and objective truth.

Four early childhood teachers were recruited to participate in this qualitative research. The data was obtained through semi-structured interviews about the challenges and tensions of being accountable for documenting children’s identities. I also kept a research journal describing my own struggles of documenting children’s identities within my teaching while problematising this idea through research.

The conceptual framework used Deleuzian and Derridean ideas to destabilise the supposed knowable and singular ‘identity’ of children, providing the space to question why documentation of children’s identities is positioned as an objective truth.

The data showed significant ‘ontological insecurity’ about being accountable for documenting children’s identities. The use of rhizoanalysis exposed how the dominant discourses of children’s singular and static identities re-mapped particular truths through the EYLF and EYLF-branded documents, professional development, social media and media publications. The use of multiple theories- poststructuralist, feminist poststructuralist, critical whiteness, anarchist, postanarchist and queer- created ruptures within the dominant developmental discourses that shaped the data. Using Butler’s (1999) idea of performativity allowed for children’s gender and cultural identities to be
seen as multiple, partial and performed. This also exposed how children’s identities are shaped through the power and desirability of being understood in particular ways.

The thesis contributes the beginning of a conceptual framework for thinking about how performativity, rhizoanalysis and the ‘Ethics of an Encounter’ can be used to document children’s multiple, partial and shifting identities in ethical and equitable ways.
Declaration

This is to certify that
- the thesis comprises only my original work towards the Master of Education (Research)
- due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material
- the thesis is 24,113 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices.

Signed: _____________________________________

Rebecca Simpson-Dal Santo
Acknowledgements

Thank you...

To Heidi for the question that influenced this thesis.

To the four research participants who gave generously of their time and thinking.

To my supervisor Kylie for her ongoing guidance with these ideas.

To my two workplaces of 2013 who supported my experimentation and hypothesising within my practice and to the families in both workplaces for the insightful conversations about this complex idea of trying to document identities.

To the children I taught in 2013 for sharing their ideas and thinking about their own identities as I grappled with these ideas within my teaching, and to all the children I taught in the years before that, the memories of whom influenced many of the ideas within this research.

To the post-graduate research group for support and a space to think aloud. To Cassie, Gaby, Siobhán, Niloufar and Kane for the supportive and challenging conversations throughout the researching and writing of this work.

And mostly, to my husband, Dean, who so very patiently listened to all of these ideas during their formation and to my dad, Andrew, who began the conversations within this thesis with me during my childhood.

This thesis was researched and written on the lands of the Wurundjeri and Bunurong peoples.
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**Figure 1: Acronyms used throughout thesis**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EYLF</td>
<td>Early Years Learning Framework, Australia’s national curriculum document for early childhood services catering for people aged 0-5 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NQS</td>
<td>National Quality Standards, services are marked against these standards during assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NQF</td>
<td>National Quality Framework, included in this is the EYLF, NQS and National Regulations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEECD</td>
<td>Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victorian government department.</td>
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INTRODUCTION

This thesis is about the introduction of the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and the subsequent focus of teachers becoming accountable for documenting children’s ‘identity’, something unprecedented in Australian early childhood education.

The EYLF, Australia’s first national curriculum for early childhood (0-5 years old) education and care services, was introduced as part of Kevin Rudd’s Education Reform and written by a consortium of early childhood academics (DEEWR, 2009; Rudd & Macklin, 2007). Officially implemented from 2012, the EYLF was designed to combat the perceived threat of international competition within education and business and consequently “lift Australia’s rate of productivity growth” (Rudd & Macklin, 2007, p.3). Academics heralded a different significance, proclaiming the EYLF as an “ideological or theoretical platform for curriculum” (Barnes, 2008, p.57), providing the opportunity to “begin a critical dialogue” (Arthur, Barnes & Ortlipp, 2011, p.1) about the experiences of people within early childhood services.

Previously to the EYLF, early childhood services were governed by state regulations. In Victoria, the curriculums of long day care and family day care services, but not sessional kindergartens¹, were also regulated through the National Childcare Accreditation Council in which modernist and positivist theories, such as developmentally appropriate practice and ‘banking’ (Freire, 1996) or ‘transmission’ (Mac Naughton, 2003) methods of teaching, constructed the dominant educational discourses.

¹ - In Victoria, sessional kindergarten is offered as a shorter-hours program (15 hours per week for 4 year old groups and less than 6 hours per week for 3 year old groups) over 40 weeks a year. Long day care is typically offered from 7am to 6pm for children aged 3 months to 5.5 years over 52 weeks a year. Family day care is offered for children aged 3 months to 12 years with flexible opening hours within the educator’s home. Long day care programs are now required to offer kindergarten programs.
The EYLF aspired to challenge these traditional understandings (Sumson et al., 2009; Tayler, 2011): opening opportunities to theorise over a non-static framework (Guigni, 2011; Salamon, 2011) and to be flexible enough to avoid the dogmatic nature of its predecessors (Cohen, 2008). The political and media pressure on the 2008 draft releases (Bita, 2008; Mirabella, 2009; Sumson & Barnes, 2010) significantly diluted the explicit social justice and civic discourses of the draft. The impact of these political and popular discourses have caused the lead writers to name the final EYLF “a temporary settlement” (Sumson & Grieshaber, 2012, p.231).

The EYLF consists of:

**Principles**- secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships; partnerships; high expectations and equity; respect for diversity; ongoing learning and reflective practice.

**Practices**- holistic approaches; responsiveness to children; learning through play; intentional teaching; learning environments; cultural competence; continuity of learning and transitions and assessment for learning.

**Learning Outcomes**- Identity, Community, Wellbeing, Learning and Communication.

The Identity Outcome, ‘Children develop a strong sense of identity’, is limited into four dot points-

- Children feel safe, secure and supported.
- Develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency.
- Develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities.
- Learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect.

(DEEWR, 2009, p.21).
The Victorian state curriculum—the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) has the same Learning Outcomes as the national curriculum (DEECD, 2009). Victorian educators are expected to use both frameworks in their teaching. There are contradictory understandings about whether the outcomes are aspirational or achievable, which will be discussed in the literature review. The Identity Outcome has been cited in full in appendix 1.

All early childhood services are assessed against the National Quality Standards (NQS), which along with the EYLF and National Regulations, are part of the National Quality Framework (NQF). The EYLF supposedly heightens quality practice and teaching within early childhood, yet defining and judging quality is problematic. Dahlberg and Moss (2005, p.56) problematise rating quality when it is considered “soluble through the correct application of instrumental reason, scientific knowledge and technical expertise”. The NQS depends on rating quality through observation and the documentation educators write about their implementation of the EYLF and the Learning Outcomes. This thesis focuses on how the Identity Outcome is documented within early childhood services.

This research topic grew out of my perceived inability to summarise a child’s ‘identity’ in 200 words, as required by the Transition Learning and Development Statements that Victorian teachers must complete before children start primary school (DEECD, 2009). Describing my frustrations with this task to a child’s parent problematised my professional knowledge. Her reply of ‘his identity as who?’ allowed me to realise that in thinking about ‘identity’ through the EYLF, I had not considered the ways in which children understand their own identities. I realised that the language of the Identity Outcome was being “used to shut down partiality, possibilities” (Giroux, 1992, p.25). I had thought that the EYLF was offering non-prescriptive ways of understanding children when
it was simply offering a new prescription about early childhood education. Using a clôtural reading (Critchley, 1992), I began to consider how the EYLF created barriers, enclosed spaces and understandings that acted in defence of a discourse. Researching the documentation of identities could create an opening which “occurs within the closure, violating its vows and breaching its barriers, thereby offering the promise of a new beginning” (Critchley, 1992, p.63). Sanctioned by the discourses of anarchist punk music, I considered that hearing children speak their own ideas of identities could create this opening, dislocate the preconceived ideas of the EYLF and breach the barriers of the closures instated by the Identity Outcome.

This thesis presents a review of literature around ‘identity’, documentation and accountability in Chapter One. My methodology is explained in Chapter Two and the conceptual framework, drawing on Derridean and Deleuzian ideas, is in Chapter Three. In Chapter Four, I explore the data through rhizomes and lines of flight before drawing findings and recommendations in the conclusion, Chapter Five.

Throughout this work, Identity is used when referring directly to the EYLF outcome; ‘identity’ defines it as singular and “signal[s] that a term is a cultural construction” (Stratton, 1998, p.20) and identities is used to mark identities as multiple and shifting. I have (interchangeably and apolitically) named people working in early childhood as ‘educators’ and ‘teachers’. ‘EYLF-branded’ documents refer to the publications produced to support the implementation of the EYLF.
CHAPTER ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review is presented in four parts - an analysis of ‘identity’ within the EYLF and EYLF-branded documents, a review of pedagogical documentation, of accountability and then of the intersections between ‘identity’, documentation and accountability.

‘Identity’

‘Identity’ has multiple philosophical, sociological, spiritual, psychological, cultural, biological, popular and educational discourses. While defining such an elusive, multifaceted concept is difficult, Norton’s (as cited in Kendrick, 2005, p.10) suggestion that ‘identity’ is “how people understand their relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across space and time, and how people understand their possibilities for the future” will be used within this thesis. Identity is also included as an Outcome in the Irish (NCCA, 2009) and Ontario (Pascal, n.d) early childhood curriculums and is explicitly mentioned in the Norwegian (Ministry of Education and Research, 2006), Japanese (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2008), Finnish (National Board of Education, 2000), Korean (Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, 2007), Scottish (Scottish Government, n.d), Hong Kong (Curriculum Development Council, 2006), Swedish (Skolverket, 2010) and New Zealand (Ministry of Education, 1996) curriculums. While not a definitive exploration of international curriculums, it clearly demonstrates that many curriculums seek an educational understanding of ‘identity’. Analysing the EYLF and EYLF-branded documents uncover the recurring themes of ‘belonging’, ‘social relationships’, ‘culture and language’ and ‘past, present and future identities’ as comprising the EYLF’s conceptualisation of ‘identity’. Wider research on these themes was then sought for the literature review.

Belonging
The EYLF lists the concepts of ‘Belonging, Being and Becoming’ as underpinning all Practices, Principles and Learning Outcomes. Much of the EYLF literature locates the inter-dependence of ‘identity’ and belonging (CCCA, n.d1; DEEWR, 2009; Ministry of Education, 1996; Rameka, 2011; Saffigna, Franklin & Church, 2011), yet the EYLF’s concept of ‘belonging’ is sparsely explored. The sociological desire to ‘belong’ supposes that “to know who you are, where you are from and to whom you belong is a basic human entitlement” (HREOC, as cited in Bignall, 2010, p.81). Sumson, the lead co-writer of the EYLF, and Wong (2011, p.39) problematise belonging, stating that more conceptual work could “hold potential for radical transformations of early childhood settings”. Yuval-Davis (2006, p.202) extrapolates the inter-relations of ‘identity’ and belonging, explaining “identity as [a] transition producing itself through combined processes of being and becoming, belonging and longing to belong”. The exploration of these inter-relations could expose belonging as a “highly charged and contested political field” (Taylor, 2013, p.78) and thus “allow deep and challenging insights to emerge from the discursive construction of reality” (Fox, 2008, p.335) of how ‘identity’ is constructed and documented within early childhood services, rather than relying on simplified motifs.

Social relationships

The VEYLDF suggests that teachers, families and communities can create a shared, specific meaning of ‘identity’ (DEEC, 2009). The sociological concept of external influences on ‘identity’ formation is widely supported (Graham & Fitzgerald, 2010; Productivity Agenda Working Group, 2008; Wells & Crain, 2000; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Weigart, Teitge and Teitge (1986) propose that ‘identity’ can be formed through the ‘mirror theory’: a dual construction of social relations and personal understanding, in that it is a “reciprocal process in which how we see ourselves is very much influenced by how others perceive and behave towards us” (Cooper & Collins, 2008, p.15), including imagined preconceptions.
Wenger (1998, p.151) explains the reciprocal relationship between ‘identity’ and social relations as a “layering of events of participation and reification by which our experience and its social interpretation inform each other”, continuing that “our experience of life becomes one of identity”. Lemke’s (2002, p.40) statement that ‘identity’ is “partly relational, including the choice of who we are and who we are not, from the selections our community offers us. [Identity] is partly uniquely individual: who we have made ourselves to be and how we imagine ourselves to be, across many different experiences” suggests a pivoting between social and personal constructions of ‘identity’ (Zembylas, 2003).

This inter-relation of individual and social identities becomes pertinent when Farquhar (2012, p.294) positions early childhood services as social institutions, stating that these are “instrumental in an infant/child’s identity formation”, a relation that could easily become insidious. Fortier (2000, p.165) warns that this relationship could entail “manufacturing members who will fit in” and that “norms of belonging are invariably deployed in practices of identity”- plausibly marginalising and silencing those identities who do not meld within the institutional dominant discourses of early childhood services. Shamgar-Handelman (1994, p.250) suggests that there is “time in each person’s life which society allocates for the process of training to become the kind of member that the society wants him/her to be”. Rather than documenting ‘identity’ for the sake of compliance to the NQS, it must be interrogated whether the Identity Outcome centralises a limiting, superficial and normalised notion of ‘identity’ for teachers to understand children through and whether this has implications for equity work.

**Culture and language**

Culture and language, a common theme in the EYLF and EYLF-branded publications, predominantly suggests first language maintenance can prevent ‘identity’ from being
‘lost’ (AEU, 2009; DEECD, 2009; DEEWR, 2009, 2010; ECA, 2008; Kennedy & Stonehouse, 2012b, 2012c; Ministry of Education, 1996; Ministry of Education and Research, 2006; Productivity Agenda Working Group, 2008; Saffigna et al, 2011; Scottish Government, n.d). EYLF-branded publications for supporting Indigenous identities suggest personal ‘identity’ can be supported through representations of cultural ‘identity’ (Mason-White, 2012; SNAICC, n.d). While Jones (2011, p.12) claims that cultural ‘identity’ “doesn’t preclude Western children”, the statements in the EYLF about cultural ‘identity’ mainly refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children who do not speak English as their first/main language. These are absolutely integral, yet partial and marginalising, considerations of cultural ‘identity’. The EYLF also has a perplexing reference to supporting a “shared identity as Australians” (DEEWR, 2009, p.23). This idea supposes a singular ‘Australian identity’- as if there is one way to be Australian that all people living in Australia share and want to share. The EYLF Practice of ‘cultural competence’ (DEEWR, 2009) is also under-theorised, offering little platform for thinking about children’s identities. The concept of a ‘cultural identity’ within the EYLF and EYLF-branded publications implies a racial or ethnic culture, rendering social cultures as nonexistent in the EYLF.

Past, present, future identities
The EYLF and EYLF-branded publications have varied and contradictory perspectives on the notion of fixed/nomadic and singular/multiple identities. The EYLF (DEEWR, 2009) states ‘identity’ “is not fixed” (p.20), “change[s] during childhood” (p.7) and children “construct their own identities” (p.7). The VEYLF states that children have formed their ‘identity’ once they start school (DEECD, 2009). The ‘Educators Guide to the EYLF’ (DEEWR, 2010) says that ‘identity’ can be changed by children. The NQS-PLP newsletters state that “children form identity at an early age... shap[ing] the type of adult they will become” (Connor, 2012, p.4). The verbs used within the Identity Outcome mainly suggest
something that belongs to the future- such as build, establish, develop and learn (DEEWR, 2009), with similar representations within international early childhood curriculums (National Board of Education, 2000; Scottish Government, n.d; Skolverket, 1998). The verbs describing the teacher’s role within ‘identity’ include build, promote, maintain, develop and initiate, suggesting teachers as establishers of children’s future ‘identity’, a role explored later in this chapter.

Wenger’s (1998, p.153) statement that “we know who we are by what is familiar, understandable, usable, negotiable; we know who we are not by what is foreign” opens an assumption that ‘identity’ is shifting, as these understandings vary through time and circumstance. Kovarik (1994, p.102) uses the concept of a ‘life space’: the “totality of all possible events that influence a person from the past, from the present and from the future as it is being contemplated” to explain identities as multiple, nomadic and shifting, rather than a “finished text” (Fortier, 2000, p.10). Identities can become imagined or anticipated through possible worlds (Kanno & Norton, 2003; Wohlwend, 2009) that “reveal how children position themselves in the world” (Kendrick, 2005, p.5). Post-structuralist research within early childhood recognises and centralises the non-static, nomadic shifts of identities and its multiple, rather than singular and factual, nature (Cooper & Collins, 2008; Gerstl-Pepin, 2003; Leyshon & Bull, 2011; Sachs, 2001; Vandenbroeck, Roets, & Snoeck, 2009).

The EYLF and EYLF-branded publications suggest appropriate teaching will position ‘identity’ as ‘strong’ (CCCC, n.d1; DEECD, 2009; DEEWR, 2008, 2009, 2010; Kennedy & Stonehouse, 2012a; Marbina, Church & Tayler, 2011) and ‘positive’ (DEEWR, 2009; Saffigna et al, 2011). Strong, meaning “secure, stable or firmly established” (Oxford, 2001, p.1283) positions a “modernist assumption that identity is a unitary, coherent and fixed essence” (Edmiston, 2010, p.6), rather than nomadic, uncertain or shifting. Positive,
meaning “constructive, optimistic and confident” (Oxford, 2001, p.997), suggests there is no place for uncertainties or discontent within ‘identity’. This language contradicts the EYLF’s assertion that ‘identity’ is not fixed and contrasts unevenly with Probyn’s (as cited in Yuval-Davis, 2006, p.202) concept that ‘identity’ is “fuelled by yearning rather than positing identity as a stable state” and that “identity becomes more central... the less secure [children] feel” (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p.202).

The literature highlights assumptions that ‘identity’ is discoverable (Borginon, 2008); that ‘identity’ is to be supported as a means to support other learning (DEECD, 2009; DEEWR, 2009) and that relationships with teachers and communities can bestow ‘identity’ upon children (Linke & Radich, 2010). Zembylas (2003, p.112) problematises these understandings as they “assume identity is knowable... that it has a core, if one could only find the way to it” and Probyn (as cited in Fortier, 2000, p.1) further problematises this by suggesting that having an ‘identity’ “circulates as a feasible goal and [an] evident fact”.

The EYLF states that supporting ‘identity’ encourages children’s “willingness to engage in learning” (DEEWR, 2009, p.30) and EYLF-branded documents re-iterate that not doing so will risk future economic opportunities (ACECQA, 2011; DEECD, 2009; DEEWR, 2008, 2009, 2010; Goodfellow, 2009; Kennedy & Stonehouse, 2012c; Linke & Radich, 2010; Saffigna et al, 2011). International curriculums recognise this relationship, but state other purposes for supporting ‘identity’, such as feeling “respected and affirmed with own life stories” (NCCA, 2009, p.26) and to “express joy in their characteristics and identity” (Pascal, n.d, p.34). Wenger (1998) also suggests a relationship between ‘identity’ and learning, but without the neoliberal underpinnings of children as human capital, stating that “because learning transforms who we are and what we can do, it is an experience of identity” (p.215) and thus gives “coherence through time that connects the past, the present and the future” (p.154).
The thesis will consider how documentation of children’s identities can be seen as an “infinite multiplicity” (Bignall, 2010, p.84), rather than as a knowable prediction of their future learning.

Documentation

Introduction
Documentation is a multi-medium collection of teaching and learning artifacts. The NQS mandates that how the Learning Outcomes are conceptualised, taught, learnt and evaluated are documented and that this documentation is available for NQS authorised officers to check during assessment. The NQS and EYLF do not prescribe a particular method of documentation, however, ‘portfolios’ have been widely accepted by early childhood services for the benefits of making documentation easily collatable, accessible and assessable.

Historically, documentation was “a collection of documents used for demonstrating the truth of a fact or confirming a thesis” and is “historically correlated to the birth and evolution of scientific thought and to a conceptualization of knowledge as an objective and demonstrable entity” (Rinaldi, 2005, p.17). While through postmodernist paradigms documentation does not claim absolute truthfulness or objectivity (Kocher & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2011), positivist discourses suggest that truth and objectivity in documentation are possible and desirable. Walkerdine (1984), recalling the classic work of Isaacs, stated that pedagogy was to “classify, observe and monitor the developmental sequences” and “ensure the normalization” (p.180) of children’s learning. Walkerdine also critiques de Lissa’s 1939 work that teachers should “continuously watch [their] children at play and make some record of it... this will enable her to interpret and evaluate her observations, and give some insight into each child and the kind of help and
guidance he needs” (p.187). While the belief that developmental science, truth and objectivity exist as possibilities to inform teaching have been powerfully interrogated by the ‘Reconceptualizing Early Childhood Education’ movement (Jipson, 2001), this “powerful fiction” (Walkerdine, 1984, p.187) still echoes within the EYLF. Raban, Margetts and Church’s (2010) handbook for the EYLF suggests that “effective practice guides education towards forming a view of where each child is in their learning, their future learning and development, and the most effective practices to support children in getting there” (p.5); that “the purpose of making written records... is to see what changes are occurring in individual children, if they are progressing, and if any problems are emerging” (p.31) and that this documentation is a “factual description” (p.32). The “dominant belief in the possibility and worth of objective, non-introspective and non-philosophical studies of children” (Bloch, 1992, p.10) is a clear influence on some EYLF-branded publications.

Documentation becomes problematic when it is suggested that it “increase[s] children’s educational success” (Walters, 2006, p.3), demonstrates quality and supports children in their learning (Lindgren, 2012; Seitz & Bartholomew, 2008). It is often implied that completing more documentation equals a deeper knowledge of the child (Kroege & Cardy, 2006; Lindgren, 2012), thus allowing the teacher to make “accurate inferences” about the child’s needs (Mindes, 2007, p.60). The ‘assessment for learning’ Practice, instructs teachers to develop “the process of gathering and analysing information as evidence about what children know, can do and understand” (DEEWR, 2009, p.17), embedding the implication that the child’s ‘identity’ is observable, knowable, documentable and assessable.

**Learning Stories, New Zealand**
Carr’s (2001, 2002, 2005, 2012) Learning Stories have become remarkably prevalent and influential within Australia (DEEWR, 2010). Centralised within New Zealand’s early childhood curriculum, Te Whariki (Ministry of Education, 1996), Learning Stories are a documentation and assessment method purported to “protect learning” (Carr, 2001, p.176). The few criticisms of Learning Stories consider that there has been no large scale evaluation as an assessment method; that rigour should be maintained through alignment with qualitative research standards and that the prescribed writing sequence excludes important data (Blaiklock, 2008). Learning Stories position children as if they ‘own’ the learning, when it is actually underpinned by regulatory observation (Bath, 2012), exemplifying how “motivations become blurred” (Bradbury, 2012, p.180) when documentation plays dual roles of providing both evidence for teachers’ accountability and of children’s learning.

Learning Stories are positioned to provide opportunities for children to develop and undertake self-assessment and hence “accept and internalize its structure” (Reay & Wiliam, 1999, p.346), assuming that “assessment can make a difference to the child’s view of her or himself as a competent learner” (Carr, Jones & Lee, 2005, p.143). Given the high-stakes role documentation plays in accountability of Australian services, it becomes more likely that encouraging children’s self-assessment persuades children to conform to self-assessing themselves in particular ways that benefit the service’s status during NQS assessment. This would become about “supporting, rather than subverting or resisting, power” (Moss, Clark & Kjørholt, 2005, p.10). If assessment can “play a key role in identity formation” (Gipps, 2002, p.80), it must be challenged whether encouraging self-assessment is a Foucauldian-esque technique for surveilling and governing children (Mac Naughton, 2005), insidiously encouraging children to understand their ‘identity’ as an auditable commodity. When assisting children to become self-directed agents in their learning is consistently linked to children becoming ‘competent learners’, it becomes
difficult to problematise this as a neoliberal regime of truth. Newman’s (2010a, p.79) explanation of neoliberalism as a “political rationality that seeks to construct social relations and individual behaviours according to a market logic” problematises the ethics of children’s identities being shaped through self-assessment within documentation.

The Reggio Emilia Approach, Italy
The Reggio Emilia approach has been exported almost world-wide, with its pedagogical documentation appealing to the current ideology of documenting children’s voice and participation within the curriculum. While children should not be considered “unreliable witnesses about their own lives” (Qvortrup, 1994, p.2), there are difficulties of ensuring authentic children’s participation that does not simply continue to support the surveillance and government of children (Bragg, 2007; Moss et al, 2005; Vandenbroeck et al, 2009). The schools, built after WWII, are positioned as political and ethical “way[s] of living and thinking together” (Filippini, 2001, p.57). The ‘Project Approach’, as generated from the political educational practice of reconceptualising theories, positions documentation as the “search for the being, the essence, the meaning” (Rinaldi, 2005, p.101) as well as a research tool for “creating crisis” (p.98). The documentation of Reggio Emilia has become an international influence, yet, the political struggle which sustains the Reggio Emilia schools typically has not. In Reggio Emilia, documentation is strategically used to source public funding for the schools (Gandini, 2012).

Rinaldi warns that “what we believe about children thus becomes a determining factor in defining their social and ethical identity, their rights and the educational contexts offered to them” (2005, p.83), continuing, “in reality, you don’t document the child but your knowledge, your concept, your idea” (p.196).

Zapatista Schools, Mexico
The Zapatista schools, beginning as an alternative to “neoliberal destruction” (Shenker, 2012, p.441) and existing as a “living process of resistance” (Khasnabish, 2012, p.238), own similar politics to the Reggio Emilia approach. Community obligations dictate the school year calendar, with the curriculum conceptualised as a “collective and participatory communal project...derived from ethnic lore and collective memory” (Baronnet, 2008, p.117). The teachers, trained by political activists, are named as “promotores de educación” (Barmeyer, 2008, p.516), promoting education “rather than the passive absorption of information from an authoritative ‘teacher’” (Shenker, 2012, p.436). These schools grew from Mexican “postmodern revolution” (Collier & Collier, 2005, p.451) and suggest that “community based education has become key to empowerment and justice, and to cultural revival” (Shenker, 2012, p.443). With no exportable commodity, like a Learning Story or the Project Approach, these revolutionary politics of education are largely unheard and do not influence how learning is documented in other places.

**Accountability**

It is now positioned that the documentation of ‘identity’ is a problematic issue. The modernist assumption of ‘truth’ claims documentation as apolitical, as “evidence to underpin any concerns, and agreement about what needs to be done” (Raban et al, 2010, p.32) and entices educators to seek children’s participation within the assessment of their learning and thus into the assessment of teachers and services. Within this, neoliberal logic allows ‘identity’ to become a market value and for documentation to “equal new strategies for governing children down to their soul” (Moss, 2006, p.108). In the first year of primary school, children are rated against the ‘Australian Education Development Index’ test. Indicators in this test show that children’s ‘identity’ is “developmentally on track or vulnerable” (AEDI, 2012, p.1), plausibly providing a space to increase
accountability on early childhood services if particular groups of children are consistently judged as having a ‘vulnerable identity’.

The Identity Outcome supposes that teachers are responsible for making and documenting curriculum decisions that support ‘identity’ through relationships and inclusion of diversity (ACECQA, 2011; CCCC, n.d1, n.d2; DEEWR, 2008, 2009, 2010; ECA, 2008; Kennedy & Stonehouse, 2012c, 2012d; Linke & Radich, 2010; Marbina et al, 2011; Patterson & Fleet, 2011; Saffigna et al, 2011). Given the multiple understandings of ‘identity’, this is a particularly overwhelming aspiration.

Ontological insecurity
The EYLF’s introduction has been coupled with the professionalisation of educators (McDowall Clark & Baylis, 2012; Sumson & Barnes, 2010), bringing increased accountability for teachers and a “powerful expectation of compliance” (Hard, 2006, p.40) to the EYLF and NQS. As teachers are expected to understand, adapt and use the EYLF and its jargon, “old ways of thinking and relating [become] dated or redundant or even obstructive” (Ball, 2003, p.218), creating an environment of uncertainty and apprehension. Ball (2003) suggests the relationship between teachers and accountability is sustained on a “technology, culture and mode of regulation that employs judgments, comparisons and displays as means of incentive, control, attrition and change -based on rewards and sanctions” (p.216). He continues that throughout changes and reforms, teachers can become “ontologically insecure”, worrying whether they are “doing enough, the right thing, as much as others, as well as others, be better, be excellent” (p.220). Within this, teachers are trying to ‘evidence’ their legal requirement (MCEECDYA, 2011) of documenting and assessing children’s learning in relation to the Identity Outcome. Osgood (2006, p.9) warns that neoliberal reforms pose a “considerable threat to professional autonomy and wisdom”; applying to teachers and children alike as they are
positioned as “raw materials to be produced like commodities according to specified standards” (Au, 2011, p.27).

Urban (2008), a reconceptualist thinker, considers the inter-relations between accountability and outcomes, stating that when educators need to “achieve predetermined, assessable outcomes, [they] are increasingly being told what to do, what works and what counts” and become “subject to a powerful strategy to bring forward a particular view of professional practice” (p.139). When Raban et al (2010, p.13) state that the EYLF unites educators to “speak with the same voice”, Urban’s words suggest that promoting unity can silence dissent. Drawing on Foucault, Mac Naughton (2005, p.26) explains a regime of truth as “the normal and desirable ways to think, act and feel”. The idea of ‘what counts’ within the EYLF has quickly and powerfully become a regime of truth that marginalises and silences educators who think and speak differently about the EYLF. Urban’s work is not predominantly known within Australian early childhood education. Juxtaposed to this, Raban et al (2010, p.33), with at least 20 EYLF-branded publications between the authors, state that “learning outcomes that have been successfully addressed by the children can be noted”, re-mapping this regime of truth about achievable outcomes for children and consequently, achievable teaching of outcomes by educators.

Like children are normalised through their teachers’ assessment, service assessment by the NQS becomes a normalisation of teachers. The disciplinary techniques, dominant discourses and regimes of truth of assessment combine to “function through the concepts, conventions, classifications, categories and norms that we use to analyse, construct and describe reality, and which determine what is seen as true or false, normal or abnormal, right or wrong” and consequently “exclude alternative ways of understanding and interpreting the world” (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p.17). This ensures
“what cannot be measured becomes secondary, threatening” (Illich, 1973, p.46) and thus lies outside the regime of truth surrounding achievable outcomes.

Urban (2008, p.140) suggests the central regulatory body (in this case, the NQF) and professional code of conduct (in this case, the EYLF) act as “an effective means of producing and managing the professional body of knowledge”. Troubling the discourses of quality embedded within early childhood is difficult because it presents as an unquestionable truth, viewed as if “they were natural and obvious, rather than the product of particular power relations, particular mindsets, particular ways of seeing” (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p.17). Urban (2008) further suggests that quality can become “an effective means of control and regulation of diverse individual practice through dominant knowledge” (p.141) and highlights the use of “invented implements to formalize our control” (p.145).

Reflective practice
The EYLF has introduced many new ways for teachers to become accountable to assessment, one of which is using and documenting the Principle of ‘reflective practice’. The first large scale evaluation of the NQS shows standard 1.2.3- ‘critical reflection on children’s learning and development’ is the least achieved standard throughout all services who have been assessed thus far (Rothman, Kelly & Raban, 2012). The second large scale evaluation shows that, nationally, services are least likely to achieve ‘exceeding’ for quality area one- the educational program (ACECQA, 2013), making documentation of the curriculum a high-stakes commodity.

The assumption that critical reflection enables teachers to “read texts differently as objects of interrogation rather than slavishly through a culture of pedagogy... that teaches unquestioning reverence” (Giroux, 2011, p.3) is not witnessed through the proliferation
of implementation guides, apps and consultants offering pre-assessment assessments that have flooded the market. EYLF-branded apps offer documentation templates to “achieve EYLF outcomes”, “take the guesswork out of planning” (Place, 2012); to “complete fully compliant group observations” (Momentum EYLF, 2013) and include little space for interpretation and analysis (Kidsoft, 2012). In this overwhelming desire to make documentation ‘easy’ (Teaching Made Easy, 2009), Giroux’s (2011) notion that critical reflection “provide[s] tools to unsettle common sense assumptions” (p.3) is lost, as if teachers are not “ethically and politically accountable for the stories they produce, the claims they make upon public memory, and the images of the future they deem legitimate” (p.76), but just wanted to ensure their intellectual work was ‘easy’. Levinas (1998, p.13) suggests that “a particular being can take itself for a totality only if it is unthinking” - the EYLF can be taken as a totality, only if it remains unproblematised and modernist assumptions of achievable outcomes receive ‘unquestioning reverence’. A culture of “intellectual disobedience” (Mac Naughton & Williams, 2009, p.258) needs to be fostered to reject the desirability of unquestioning reverence to discourses of compliance and achievability.

**Intersections of ‘identity’, documentation and accountability**

bell hooks’ (as cited in Freire, 1998, p.xxvi) quote that there is “no need to hear your voice when I can talk about you better than you can speak about yourself” is useful for thinking about the intersections of ‘identity’, documentation and accountability.

The EYLF defines a Learning Outcome as “a skill, knowledge or disposition that educators can actively promote in early childhood settings” (DEEWR, 2009, p.46) and Oxford (2001, p.909) defines ‘outcome’ as “a consequence”. Is ‘identity’ to be considered a skill, knowledge, disposition or consequence? How could educators ‘actively promote identity’,
as if children would not have an ‘identity’ regardless? The structure of the Learning Outcomes are contested throughout various publications- the suggestion that these are not predetermined goals, exit points or milestones (CCCC, n.d2; DEECD, 2009; Patterson & Fleet, 2011; Stonehouse, 2011) juxtaposes against the discourses of ‘achievability’ (CCCC, n.d2; Fleet & Patterson, 2011; Hood, 2012). Seitz and Bartholomew (2008, p.64) state that documenting how children ‘achieve’ Learning Outcomes can be utilised for “showing that children are meeting standards... [and] that teachers are teaching that which has been set out for us to do”. In 2012, all Australian early childhood services received a publication stating “we will have done our job if every child leaves our care with a strong sense of identity” (CCCC, n.d1, p.8) - implying that ‘identity’ is the property and responsibility of teachers to transmit to children. There becomes a true danger here of ‘identity’ documentation becoming adult-led “fruitless tests of competence” (valentine, 2011, p.348). Mozere (2008, p.69) writes that “adults are not [a] homogenous addition of standard qualities”, and neither are children.

The pervasive discourse of ‘identity’ being learnable presents tensions around a learning/non learning binary. ‘Learning’ is used at least 250 times in the EYLF, perhaps suggesting all activities, relationships and time within early childhood services need to have a measureable outcome to be validated as ‘learning’, thus fulfilling the neoliberal logic of always improving oneself. If ‘identity’ is learnable, it follows that it is therefore teachable, relying on the banking method of education that renders the child as lacking agency within their own ‘identity’ and invests the teacher with the ultimate responsibility for children’s ‘identity’. Bogue’s (2008, p.15) Deleuzian interpretation of learning suggests that “genuine learning involves an engagement with such problems, a re-orientation of thought following its initial disorientation; such that thought may comprehend something new in its newness, as a structured field of potential metamorphic forces rather than a pre-formed body of knowledge to be mastered”, continuing that “one cannot teach the
truly new in its newness, but one can attempt to induce an encounter by emitting signs, by creating problematic objects, experiences or concepts”. Children’s ‘identity’ could be understood as being ‘new in the newness’ and expressions of ‘identity’ could be induced, rather than taught. However, the EYLF does not accommodate for this, instead presuming that all children will be knowable and teachable through the Identity Outcome prescribed.

My own narrative

As a kindergarten teacher, I struggle with the philosophical and ethical implications of respecting children’s identities by not claiming to know or understand more than I possibly could, while also meeting accountability requirements. I am “searching for a vocabulary that would adequately define... their senses of identity” (Fortier, 2000, p.120), as ‘learn’ and ‘develop’ commonly imply a transmission of teachable ‘identity’. While the EYLF positions ‘identity’ as observable, documentable and assessable, I consider if ‘identity’ is “something that we can experience directly, in the ‘first person’ from the ‘inside’, or is it something that others can observe about us from ‘outside’ perspectives?” (Zack, 1998, p.1).

The EYLF positions teachers, involved in children’s lives for a short time, as having the capacity to think, understand, document and assess children’s ‘identity’ within a very limited understanding of what ‘identity’ is. This positions the child as a “known quantity” (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p.93), as if the Identity Outcome encapsulates ‘identity’ for all children who have lived, are living or will live. I am searching for a platform to speak from “which foregrounds the construction of meaning, complexity and multiplicity, relations and contexts, subjectivity and perspectivism, provisionality and contestability” (Dahlberg
and Moss, 2005, p.95), challenging the Enlightenment understanding of the child’s ‘identity’ as lacking and incomplete.

Documentation becomes a powerful force as it can “enable dominant discourses to be challenged rather than reinforced, normative frameworks to be transgressed rather than more tightly drawn, governmentality to be undermined rather than applied” (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p.157). These narratives shape the methodology I will use to research this thesis.
CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

The contribution of this thesis is to consider a conceptual framework around the inter-relations of documentation, ‘identity’ and accountability, as these are linked within practice, yet no correlated conceptual framework currently exists to explain this relationship. Harrison et al (2011) suggests there is a significant research gap in exploring how the EYLF supports pedagogical practices and professional engagement in early childhood, positioning this thesis as ‘responsive’ research as it addresses this research gap.

Research question
What are teachers' understandings, thoughts and tensions on documenting ‘identity’?

Locating the discourse
Endeavouring to create contextual and provisional meanings about how ‘identity’ can be documented, this thesis initially drew on postmodernist and poststructuralist paradigms. Recognising the impact of discourses on choosing methodology, defining questions and data interpretation (Moss & Dahlberg, 2008), this is a qualitative research study- allowing “richly detailed cultural descriptions that re-align our present understandings” (Graue & Walsh, 1995, p.135). Semi-structured interviews were used for data collection, allowing flexibility for participants to incorporate their own thinking and experiences into the data. This provides the opportunity for “entanglement... promot[ing] the richness and authenticity of qualitative research” (Kendrick, 2005, p.11).

Recruitment of participants
The recruitment avenues were teacher network meetings within suburban Melbourne, online early childhood networks and ‘word of mouth’ recruitment (appendix 8). The criteria for participation was to be working as a kindergarten teacher (an educator with a
university level teaching qualification) in an early childhood setting (children under 5 years old) and have responsibility for completing documentation (appendix 3). In order to build contextual meanings, rather than generalisations, an ‘intensity sampling’ method was used, in which “rich examples of the phenomenon of interest” (Patton, 2002, p.234) were sought. I had aimed to recruit between 5-8 participants, yet a smaller sample size was recruited as seeking participants for this research proved difficult (appendix 8). Six educators had expressed interest, but could not find time to complete the interview². However, the smaller sample size fitted with the tight timeline permitted for Masters research and also allowed for the in-depth rhizoanalysis of the data. All of the participants worked in long day care settings within metropolitan Melbourne and with children aged between 3-5 years old (figure 2).

![Figure 2: Participant details](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Recruitment Avenue</th>
<th>Work Setting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ariel</td>
<td>Online early childhood network (Facebook)</td>
<td>Long day care 4-5 year olds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelli</td>
<td>Online early childhood network (Facebook)</td>
<td>Long day care 3-4 year olds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ria</td>
<td>Online early childhood network (Facebook)</td>
<td>Long day care 3-5 year olds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parvesh</td>
<td>Word of mouth</td>
<td>Long day care 3-5 year olds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

² Conversations within the Facebook groups I was recruiting through about unpaid overtime prompted the Australian Education Union (AEU) to begin two research studies ascertaining how much regular unpaid overtime teachers were doing. A subsequent third study determined how many teachers were consequently resigning from early childhood. No results have been reported, as yet.
Rigour
Prolonged engagement with the participants was sought through them conducting member checks on the interview transcripts (although no responses were received) and notes on the analysis of the data (one response received). This allowed for clarification of ideas and developed rigour and trustworthiness within the research. Throughout the research I kept a reflexive journal, providing an ‘audit’ of thinking trajectories, tensions and complexities while collecting and analysing the data (Ortlipp, 2008), as well peer debriefing notes from post-graduate research groups. This aids credibility, confirmability, transferability and dependability within the research (Erlandson, Harris & Skipper, 1993). In the recruitment flyer (appendix 3) and plain language statement (appendix 5), I clearly positioned myself as a kindergarten teacher who is also doing a research thesis, with the intent that participants will have ‘sufficient trust’ in the data collection through positioning me as a fellow teacher having the same struggles and issues (Johnson, as cited in Erlandson et al, 1993).

Ethical considerations
The University of Melbourne granted the ethics approval for this research and the DEECD granted permission to conduct research within early childhood services. The participants had the option of retaining their own name or selecting a pseudonym, the implications of which were explained in the plain language statement, consent form and in person at the beginning of the interview (appendix 4 & 5).

Methodological tools

Teachers
The participants had one semi-structured interview (approximately 60 minutes, appendix 4 & 5) and two participants provided a copy of documentation regarding ‘identity’ (with
no identifying information regarding children or their workplace. The use of semi-structured interviews emphasise the privileging of the participants’ voices and lived experience and works towards constructing a dialogical relationship (DeJean, 2010), ensuring the use of many narratives and perspectives to build the analysis (Moss, 2007) and also allowed for relevant information outside of the initial questions to be included (Dowling & Brown, 2010; Kervin, Vialle & Herrington, 2006). The participants received a copy of the questions (appendix 2) prior to the interview, ensuring opportunities to consider the ideas beforehand. The details of participation and data codes is in appendix 9.

I revisited (via email) all participants throughout the analysis period, seeking perspectives on ideas and thoughts that I weaved together throughout the data. While being an ethical consideration, it extended the questions and ideas within the analysis (Mac Naughton & Hughes, 2009). It supported the understanding that as a researcher, I am a learner (Smith, 2005) and that I wanted to construct meanings about documentation, ‘identity’ and accountability with the participants in a way that is not “leaving them voiceless” (Finlay, 2005, p.682).

**Myself as researcher**

I kept a research journal about my practical and academic struggles of documenting ‘identity’ within my workplaces while researching the same process. This became research data that exposed “the messiness of the research process” (Ortlipp, 2008, p.704), as well as centering the fact that I am “a participant in this researched world” (Freire, 1998, p.xiii). The research journal has been written as ‘my own narrative’ in chapters throughout this thesis, recognising the implications of my subjectivities on the research formation and analysis (Blaise, 2005).
Analytical framework

The data was initially analysed through seeking common themes emerging from the data-grounded theory-and then seeking how the data responded to the main themes of ‘identity’ from the literature review. This built the analytic scaffolding (Charmaz, 2005) through which many combinations of triangulation from interview data, documentation examples, journal excerpts, theory, EYLF excerpts and associated publications (Erlandson et al, 1993; Kervin et al, 2006) were found.

I recognised that this thesis cannot be about the one-way journey across the binary slash, crossing from modernist theory to postmodernist and poststructuralist theories, but is rather a journey that is “walking with two legs” (Dahlberg, 2012) - strategically using both modern and postdevelopmental theories. Blaise defines postdevelopmentalism as “alternative theoretical perspectives that question modernist assumptions of truth, universality, and certainty” (2005, p.3), encompassing the multiplicity of theories that came to be used in the data analysis. This research is not about seeking certainty, but rather creating a “pieced together set of representations that is fitted to the specifics of a complex situation” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.4). There are many pieces - both academic and non-academic - that are drawn on to connect the data and other texts and to “generate questions previously unimagined” (Kinchleto & McLaren, 2005, p.319).

It is for this reason that I have chosen to use rhizoanalysis to “disrupt and challenge the politics of the initial text” (Davis, Mac Naughton & Smith, 2009, p.50), drawing on multiple theories to create new meanings about the ways in which children’s identities are documented. There is a small body of work in early childhood using and exploring the possibilities offered by rhizoanalysis and it is from these texts - Davis et al (2009), Leafgren
(2009), Mac Naughton (2005), Olsson (2009), Sellers (2013), along with Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) principles of rhizoanalysis as connection, heterogeneity, multiplicity, asignifying rupture, cartography and decalcomania- that I have drawn inspiration and guidance in how to connect and rupture the data with itself and other texts to create and explore it as lines of flight within a rhizome.
CHAPTER THREE: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework discusses the theoretical perspectives I intend to draw on in the data analysis. Within this chapter, I discuss documentation through Derridean deconstruction, seeking how documentation is understood through binaries and cultural and linguistic capital. I consider how multiple paradigms and discourses can be used to think about documentation, identities and accountabilities. Finally, I will consider how Deleuzian ideas of deterritorialisation can rupture the ‘achievable outcomes’ presented in the literature review and provide the theoretical perspectives for crafting the data as a rhizome.

Deconstructing documentation

Lucy suggests that Derrida’s ideas of deconstruction are “not reducible to an attitude of nonconformity, oppositionality or principled resistance” (2004, p.11), but rather “an openness towards the Other” (Derrida, as cited in Critchley, 1992, p.28). Critchley (1992, p.29) writes that “in seeking to think the other, its otherness is reduced or appropriated to our understanding”, implying that the documentation of children’s identities is limited by what educators think they can know about them. Mac Naughton (2005, p.90) suggests there is no true meaning of deconstruction, rather that it occupies “meanings that are linked, cultural, historical, contradictory and shifting”, becoming about erasing and mapping meanings and possibilities.

Documentation itself could be positioned as deconstruction, in that it could become open to the Other; rather than building a knowledge, it could problematise how knowledge is built. Documentation could be pulled apart, the underpinning discourses sought and questioned and have connected meanings and complexities overlaid. This could rupture
the binaries embedded in documentation- “tackl[ing] its repression/silence by showing how pairs gain their meanings from each other” (Mac Naughton, 2005, p.86).

The modernist paradigm of supporting learning through documentation not only implies the lack of documentation is detrimental to learning, but that documentation contributes to the actual learning itself. If teachers hold the ultimate knowledge of children’s identities within documentation and this supposedly fosters learning, then children are being positioned as an empty slate, a *tabula rasa*, which positions teachers to “find or discover already defined answers about practices and/or about children” (Kocher & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2011, p.55). If documentation is supposed knowledge of who teachers think children are becoming, then this supposes that early childhood services have a totalising authority over children’s identities. If documentation is about who children are, it recognises that children have a life space (Kovarik, 1994), with identities already existing- a knowledge about themselves and their world already. Documentation could ask children to consider the importance they have already vested in these worlds and to incorporate meanings derived from their early childhood institution, but not treat the institution as the only space through which meaning develops.

Documentation thus becomes relational in the way that children relate to people within and without the institution, as well as to the institution itself. Within this repositioning, “each interpretation becomes a moment of rest in a continuous journey” (Kocher & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2011, p.51) and this continuous deconstruction and connection of meaning becomes like “loose threads [that] have to be knotted knowing they will come apart tomorrow and will have to be knotted again” (Bhabha & Comaroff, 2002, p.31) - presuming no specific end or destination, just a continual de- and re-territorialisation of relations, identities and thinking. Documentation of identities becomes a “nomadic act” (Kocher & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2011, p.55), challenging the idea of an achievable or pre-determined notion of ‘identity’. Opening the space of documentation for dialogue with
children, beyond a superficial soundbite, can illuminate the historically bounded contexts, the regimes of truth, the inherited discourses and the colonisation of thinking through which educators operate. The deconstruction of documentation can “provide new resources for thinking about ethical responsibility” (Critchley, 1992, p.188), opening the space to become ethically accountable to children in what we write about them.

Dahlberg and Moss (2005, p.13) question what early childhood institutions could be if they “foreground[ed] active personal responsibility for making ethical choices”, an imperative questioning when “using people, transforming others into a means for obtaining an end for oneself, is generally considered the very antithesis of ethical behaviour” (Johnson, 2000, p.47). The NQS dictates that the documentation of children’s identities is an end for the institution, contributing to the social status gained through assessment.

Dahlberg and Moss (2005) suggest that ethics is commonly understood as calculative, “balancing between rights and responsibilities” or contractual, “an agreement on duties and expectations” (p.67) - the combination ensuring that “rights can only be granted to those from whom we can demand corresponding duties” (Santos, as cited in Dahlberg & Moss, p.67). This idea, along with the idea that ethics can exist as “norms against which to judge what is right or wrong, good or bad, normal or not normal” (p.68), are modernist and technical understandings. Postmodern ethics would have connected themes of responsibility, relationships, situatedness and otherness. Rather than providing a normative framework, they would “trust in ethical capacities of individuals [and] their ability to make judgments rather than simply apply rules” (p.69).

These ideas scrutinise the perceived ability of teachers to observe and document ‘identity’ as a non-problematic construct. When teachers document and assess children’s
identities, they are “com[ing] to the Other with [their] typical ways of knowing, and make sense of the Other by applying them” (p.77).

Dahlberg and Moss write “there is an Other whom I cannot represent and classify into a category; this is an Other whom I cannot totalize and grasp, that is, seek to understand through a framework of thought I impose on the Other” (p.79). This could be understood as: “there is an Other whom I cannot represent and classify through Learning Outcomes; this is an Other whom I cannot totalize and grasp through a modernist lenses, that is, seek to understand through the Outcomes I impose on the Other”. Yet, the EYLF prescribes that teachers can and should ‘know’ a child, denying their alterity and making them into the Same. Bringing the ethics of an encounter (Levinas, 1987) into documentation means that any attempt to ‘know’ the child is colonising, reducing, dispossessing the alterity of the child and their possibility to be recognised as an Other.

Rejecting a totalisation of ‘knowing’ children’s identities is difficult with the current expectations of being an expert teacher who proves practice to regulatory bodies. This expectation could be “used to silence or overwrite the call of the Other” (Murray, 2003, p.72). Positioning educators as purposefully not ‘knowing’ children is seemingly counter-productive within the modernist discourse that states “a strong knowledge of child development is very important for understanding and implementing the EYLF” (Raban et al, 2010, p.20).

However, if these ideas are considered solely for accountability to regulatory bodies, then there is a true danger of “relationships becom[ing] consumer goods” (Gray, as cited in Hartas, 2008, p.42). If these ideas are instead considered as a responsibility towards the Other this “disrupts the entire project of knowing with a higher call” (Cohen, 1986, p.5)
and the accountability becomes to children, not to regulatory bodies. I return to the ethics of an encounter within Chapter Four.

**Binaries**

It is difficult to challenge binaries without creating a modernity/postmodernity dichotomy. Stronach and MacLure (1997, p.5) suggest that binaries should not be ignored but used to “complicate the relations between them” and to “rupture things...to make it harder to see clearly”. Kurokawa (2001, p.1027) states that modernity and its binaries cannot simply be rejected, but that “we must instead escape Modernism while walking arm-in-arm with it”. Kocher and Pacini-Ketchabaw (2011, p.46) suggest that pedagogical documentation can be used for “unpacking and destabilizing persistent binaries”, but this requires a desire to create documentation in this way. While the EYLF was released in 2009, it was not officially required to be implemented in 2012—-the same year that assessment of services began. This tight time frame for implementation has not provided a space for thinking about binaries as “knots, complications, folds and partial connections” (Stronach & MacLure, 1997, p.5), but rather has created a binary of implementing/not implementing the EYLF, as if the EYLF were a single application of values, teaching and learning with unproblematised discourses of accountability and status. Deleuzian ideas such as deterritorialisation and nomadic thinking can “resist the binary machine” (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987, p.26) and allow teachers to draw on multiple discourses and paradigms.

**A multiplicity of paradigms**

The idea of learnable identities positions teachers as able to anticipate and plan for children’s identities. If binaries are seen as master narratives (Loomba, 2005), it suggests
if teachers want to occupy the position of an “all-knowing, all-seeing” (Walkerdine, 1984, p.187) expert teacher then children must be positioned as immature so that the ‘identity’ and positionality created can be maintained. To reconceptualise the concept of being this all-knowing expert teacher and instead instate a pedagogy of unknowing (Zembylas, 2005) collides violently against the teacher-as-expert discourses within the EYLF, clearly rupturing what is considered desirable and appropriate. The use of multiple theories can create a paradigm shift, which Taubman (2010, p.4) explains as,

“a rupture or break in the given situation produced by what was in that situation but not acknowledged within it (the void) is adhered to by those who come to rearticulate, rename or re-conceptualise the older paradigm and thus through the fidelity to the new paradigm not only change the older state of things and produce what will become a new situation but also in their commitment to the consequences of this rupture, become other than who they were”.

EYLF-branded publications insist that teachers can know children through developmental discourses – positioning a teacher/child, matured/maturing binary. The use of writers and theories outside of early childhood can allow teachers to find “unfamiliar places from which to look ‘back’ at educational issues” (Stronach & MacLure, 1997, p.3), providing a space for connecting and rupturing ‘identity’ texts through multiple discourses. However, without the EYLF-branded sanction, these publications could become vulnerable to silencing or exclusion.

Modernity, in that it “cannot recognize that it is a paradigm... [being] unable to see itself as offering just one perspective, one way of thinking and practicing” (Moss & Dahlberg, 2008, p.3), offers an atheoretical assumption of early childhood. The use of multiple discourses could enable this “shift away from pedagogy as dehistoricised, atheoretical
practice” (Giroux, 1992, p.2). This seems desirable, but if modernity cannot recognise itself as a paradigm, how does one begin to think differently to question what has been grounded as natural and true? Giroux (1992) suggests that texts could be “decentered and understood as historical and social constructions marked by the weight of a range of inherited and specified readings” and through this, the “possibilities of reading against, within, and outside their established boundaries” (p.30) becomes plausible. Contention with an EYLF concept might indicate critical reflection and deterritorialisation, or it might indicate that the concept is not understood. Given the ‘achievability’ discourses readable throughout the EYLF, the assumption that the fault lies with the educator’s comprehension and not with the concept’s paradigm, could prevail.

If teachers could be understood as “exist[ing] within social, political, and cultural boundaries that are both multiple and historical in nature” (Giroux, 1995, p.57) and educational settings understood as “sites where borders are constantly drawn and redrawn- borders that define epistemic, ethical, cultural, social, political, economic, gender, racial and class spaces” (Janinohamed, as cited in Garbutt, Biermann & Offord, 2012, p.18) then the knowledge privileged in these settings loses its ability to remain static through finding connections to multiple texts, from which it then draws and re-draws its meanings.

Seeking a sanction for paradigm multiplicity

Using multiple paradigms to understand children’s identities is not as simplistic as just choosing to think differently. It must be questioned who will sanction those who reject the dominant discourses and seek alternate truths (Mac Naughton, 2005).

Hicks (2001), writing about colonialism, suggests that the United States “controls the images of itself as well as that of other countries” (p.1037) and that, in order to rupture
these dominant discourses, these countries can be “presented in their inter-action... rather than as cultural models” (p.1035). The EYLF acts as a dominant cultural model of early childhood in which it controls its own image - as well as the images of those who do not conform to its discourses. Rather than presenting the EYLF as a totalising and grand narrative of Australian early childhood, it can be understood through its inter-actions with other theories, paradigms and discourses. These connections to wider texts provide an opportunity for privileging a “subversive nature [that] disrupts the one-way flow of information” (p.1037) and “establish[es] conditions for dominant and subordinate texts to be read differently” (Giroux, 1992, p.30). Yet again, it must be considered who sanctions this deterritorialisation of thinking and practice, of understanding the inter-actions the EYLF has with other discourses of early childhood education.

**Cultural and linguistic capital**

Bourdieu’s concept of cultural capital acts as “a way for groups to remain dominant or to gain status” (Dumais, 2005, p.4). The ‘objectified state’ of cultural capital suggests cultural goods become “the trace of realization of theories” (Bourdieu, 1986, p.1). Documentation is a realisation of the early childhood theories employed - becoming a form of cultural goods about early childhood. The objectified state of cultural capital “presents itself with all the appearance of an autonomous, coherent universe which, although the product of historical action, has its own laws, transcending individual wills” (Bourdieu, 1986, p.3). The binds of historically bounded discourses, theories and regimes of truth are not always evident or acknowledged in documentation, giving it the appearance of being autonomous within its own contextual universe.

Documentation is positioned as the evidence of teaching and learning (DEEWR, 2009) and with publicly accessible assessment ratings, documentation is strongly linked to the service’s status. Trainor (2010) suggests that professional knowledge like this becomes
cultural capital. The current reforms in early childhood have instigated a new language for teachers. Fowler clearly conceptualises the relation between language and assessment, explaining that “high linguistic capital brings high symbolic profits” (1997, p.28). For educators with the ‘right’ linguistic capital, the language of the EYLF is not problematic. However, Fowler (1997, p.28) further suggests that “the social reality of the existence of linguistic capital is that some feel authorised to speak” - who has been silenced or marginalised through the introduction of new language (Azaola, 2012)? With developmentalist theories historically underpinning studies, it must be considered whether some knowledge has been disrupted through the introduction of new language and concepts, hence silencing and unauthorising the ability to speak. With cultural capital including “linguistic aptitude, previous academic culture, formal knowledge and general culture” (Lamont & Lareau, 1988, p.3), Bourdieu (as cited in Fowler, 1997, p.29) asks “who is mandated to speak for a group and how [do] they legitimate their authority?”

My own narrative

Hicks (2001) writes about deterritorialisation as leaving a place of origin and I consider what sanctioned me to choose to understand the EYLF in ways that “unravel the ideological interests embedded” (Giroux, 2001, p.111), highlighting my own practice and thinking as historical, political and cultural.

Having studied postmodernist and poststructuralist theories during my undergraduate degree, having ongoing access to publications and having the liberty of doing a research degree full time, I realise the ideas of linguistic capital within the EYLF position me, and others like me, as privileged. Paradoxically, my postmodernist problematisations of the EYLF have been silenced by previous workplaces dictating that the EYLF was to be enacted, not questioned. While Gregorčič (2009) suggests that cultural capital can be
reclaimed by marginalised groups, it must be considered whether cultural capital has a singular or multiple nature: my linguistic and cultural capital as a postmodernist teacher and beginning researcher was silenced. However, my linguistic and cultural capital as an anarchist punk was not. Ingrained in these particular capitals is the desirability of questioning propaganda and standing apart from the “straight line thinking of straight line thinkers” (Lucas, 1985, track 12), sanctioning my desire to speak about the EYLF. I, as a teacher, beginning researcher, feminist, anarchist and a punk, occupy many identities, which connect to and rupture each other in the expectations of compliance and resistance within each discourse. To each, I ask do I “wanna be a prisoner in the boundaries they set you?” (Crass, 1980, track 2).

Deleuzian ideas

The supposed linear, predictable path of children’s identities presents two options: to understand children’s identities through this model or to reconceptualise the paradigmatic thinking of this notion. Rhizomatic thinking offers this reconceptualisation, suggesting the “possibility of resisting normalising practices and envisaging new ways of relating to the world and to otherness” (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p.118). This becomes an “invitation and permission to challenge traditional/dominant ways” (Mac Naughton, 2005, p.132) of thinking, of questioning the origin of knowledge that is being utilised, to “go off in directions whose destinations are not guaranteed” (May & Semetsky, 2008, p.150). This is the antithesis of programmable, preconceivable conceptions of children’s identities.

Conceptualised by Deleuze and Guattari (1993), the rhizome is perceived as a “map that is always detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable, and has multiple entryways and exits and its own lines of flight... [and has] neither beginning nor end, but always a middle
from which it grows” (p.36). This could thus imply that identities have no start point and nor can be finalised before leaving the early childhood setting, nor in any other point in time. The rhizome produces lines of flight, ruptures and deterritorialisations- “ceaselessly establish[ing] connections” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004, p.8). This thesis brings together documentation, identities and accountability- suturing them together in theory, twisting these lines into a rhizome and following the consequent deterritorialised lines of flight produced by this merging. This suturing within the writing (Stronach & MacLure, 1997) creates a forced deterritorialisation that produces ruptures in thinking, in understandings, in practice; it becomes “fundamentally unsettling, or knocked into a different orbit or trajectory” (Roy, 2008, p.166). Deleuze and Guattari (2004, p.12) urge to “always follow the rhizome by rupture; lengthen, prolong, and relay the line of flight; make it vary, until you have produced the most abstract and torturous of lines of n dimensions and broken directions”.

This becomes nomadic thinking, in that this thesis is not searching for an end point or a final reterritorialised area in which to reside. It is searching, perpetually, for “mobile arrangements of space where thought can settle for a time and then multiply and recombine, always displacing the sedentary and unified” (St. Pierre, 1997, p.412). Through the consistent production of lines of flight, there is the consistent construction of openings, of ruptures, of sutures to explore and question. There is “no terminus from which you set out, none which you arrive at or which you ought to arrive at” (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987, p.2). These lines and openings provide a “resistance to closure” (Stronach & MacLure, 1997, p.6); a counter-attack to the smooth closures and finalised identities forced by EYLF publications. The reterrorialisation of documentation, identities and accountability will not be discontinued like the end product of deterritorialisation; rather it becomes part of a perpetual relation, in that it will “interlink and form relays in a
circulation of the intensities pushing the deterritorialisation further” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1993, p.33).

This brings in the notion of assemblages, beginning from the idea that “the writer invents assemblages starting from assemblages which have invented him” and “brings into play within us and outside us populations, multiplicities, territories, becomings, affects, events” (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987, p.51). Assemblages, like rhizomes, are “not fixed for all time, but are always being made and unmade, reterritorializing and deterritorializing” (Wise, 2005, p.79). This notion holds for a way of thinking about the documentation of identities. If children’s identities are considered to be made and unmade, to reterritorialise and deterritorialise, to become assemblages then it cannot be presumed that these identities are linear, fixed or singular. Identities no longer act as repositories of experience, but as something embedded in infinite multiplicities. Using rhizoanalysis to connect the data to wider academic and non-academic conceptualisations of identities will create lines of flight which rupture the meanings of the texts through acknowledging the multiplicity of meanings that can be read into a text.

In the data analysis, I will be seeking narratives of discourses, of paradigms, of reconceptualisations, of finding a place from which the ethics of an encounter with the Other could grow. This will create a collective assemblage, “the constellation of voice, concordant or not, from which I draw my voice” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004, p.93) - becoming an assemblage of the concordant and discordant voices of myself, research participants, EYLF publications, multiple texts and of sanctions which allow the unspeakable to be spoken. As the rhizome grew around, within and through the data, I found lines of flight within anarchist, postanarchist, queer and feminist theories- which will be explored through the data analysis chapter.
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS

In this chapter, I will revisit Ball’s (2003) ontological insecurity to explain how the participants talked about the anticipation of assessment and explore how this discourse contributes to a singular ‘identity’ of children. I will then position how rhizoanalysis can create ruptures within this developmental, singular ‘identity’. Following this will be the 3 lines of flight that explore the data through rhizoanalysis.

Ontological insecurity

Within the data, Ariel, Ria and Parvesh all spoke of an apprehension of NQS assessment. Shelli suggested that educators should have the ‘skills’ to ‘know what is going on’ and hence not feel anxious (figure 3a).

Figure 3a: Data re-mapping ‘the right way’

I think I’m doing a pretty good job... you look at blogs... and I get stressed, I think, is it good enough? (R451-2)
Are we doing it the right way, are we linking enough, is it good enough (R463)
Ria

Not even knowing if I was doing the right thing currently (P177)
We know we are doing the right thing and we are trying to do our best (P210)
You don’t want to make any mistakes... you hope you’re doing the right thing (P191-2)
Parvesh

It’s so horrible to second guess yourself and to think that someone could tell you that what you’re doing is wrong (A294)
Am I doing all of this right? (A260)
Ariel

I think people second guess or question themselves why they’re doing something, but actually they shouldn’t, because they’ve got the skills, they know what’s going on (S103-5)
Shelli
Ball’s (2003, p.220) ontological insecurity is characterised as a person worrying if they are, “doing enough, the right thing, as much as others, as well as others, be better, be excellent”.

This is evident through the right/wrong, good/bad binaries presented (figure 3a). These binaries imply that there is a singular way to perform documentation within the EYLF. Although ACECQA has actively denied the ‘myths’ around the EYLF and documentation (Connor, 2011), services are judged on how they utilise the EYLF, meaning there is no allowance for not using it, thereby actually instating a right and wrong way to perform documentation within Australian early childhood services.

The importance placed within knowing and representing the child’s ‘identity’ through the Transition Learning and Development Statements by Ria, Parvesh and Ariel adds to the regime of truth that documentation should be objectively informative about children’s singular and static ‘identity’. The statements presume that ‘identity’ can be represented as ‘true’ and remain ‘true’ through its reading across different consumers of the statement working in different sectors of education.

**Newspapers re-mapping ‘the right way’**

Since media pressure during the EYLF’s draft period was an effective means of controlling the discourses of early childhood education (Bita, 2008; Penberthy, 2009), it is important to understand how the media and social media now discuss the EYLF and documentation. The headlines from recent newspaper articles call documentation ‘red tape’, suggest that it is ‘drivel’, a regulatory burden and that ‘the right way’ to perform documentation is to do less of it (figure 3b).
Fear of legal battlegrounds as childcare centres swamped in red tapes (Akerman & Watson, 2013)

Kindy staff too busy reporting to care (Karvelas, 2013a)

Childcare call to lift the burden of red tape (Karvelas, 2013b)

Kids miss out as childcare workers spend four hours on paperwork (Bita, 2013)

Drivel getting in the way of early learning (O’Brien, 2013a)

During the writing of this thesis, the Liberal government won the September 2013 federal election, and has since removed funding for educators’ pay rises, tried to delay regulations for higher-qualified educators and threatened to review the EYLF. I am wary of challenging the EYLF in a way that positions me as an ally to this government. I need to enact my research in a way that supports the EYLF but challenges it go further and not in a way that challenges the EYLF like it should not exist. I cannot simply resist, I must comply with the EYLF and resist the EYLF simultaneously. This is a politically tense time to be teaching in early childhood, adding to the ontological insecurity.

During the election, it was suggested that Rupert Murdoch had swayed much of the mainstream journalism to be pro-Liberal (Jericho, 2013). Akerman and Watson’s (2013) article published in *The Advertiser*, a Murdoch owned newspaper, reveals the continued intersections between political rhetoric and media discourses. The article explains that a child was severely injured in a childcare centre and injuries, and hence litigation, will increase as educators are so consumed with EYLF-related documentation that they cannot adequately supervise the children, with two childcare bodies quoted as confirming this fear. Despite the injury happening in 2007 before the EYLF was even written, it is
positioned as a direct consequence of the EYLF and threatens frequent re-occurrence unless the EYLF is reviewed.

Australian Childcare Alliance, one of the bodies quoted, invited Sussan Ley— the Liberal Assistant Minister for Education— to speak at their annual conference and publish political propaganda in their journal. The other body quoted, Child Care South Australia, is a subgroup of Australian Childcare Alliance. It is plausible that the Murdoch-owned newspapers are presenting tightly controlled and partial narratives that privilege the Liberal government and their threat to roll back EYLF reforms.

Recently, two journalists (Karvelas, 2013c; O’Brien, 2013b) drew from conversational threads on EYLF-branded Facebook pages to construct their articles, dangerously sanctioning the social media commentary on the EYLF. Using Foucault’s conceptualisation of power, this is neither good nor bad, but simply dangerous (Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2006). This practice could allow for alternate and rhizomatic ideas to rupture the developmentalist discourses these newspapers commonly present, yet it did not. The ideas drawn from these Facebook pages simply re-map these discourses and by seemingly ‘officialising’ these ideas through publication, they more tightly bind the regimes of truth about the developing child. It is clear that the political discourse on documentation has found continued circulation within particular newspapers.

Professional development re-mapping ‘the right way’

The EYLF has inspired an influx of publications and consultants drawing almost exclusively on modernist theories, contributing to this myth of ‘the right way’ and becoming a regime of truth about the ways in which identities should be written about. Many consultants use social media to capitalise on the widespread ontological insecurity, promising an ‘exceeding’ rating to educators through their courses (Alina Dan, 2013; Be Inspired
Solutions, 2013; NQF Consultancy, 2013). In the data, Ria spoke of accessing information from blogs, Facebook forums, colleague networks, parent conversations and NQF-PLP newsletters; Ariel also accessed these newsletters, as well information from Reggio Emilia, studying and through colleagues. One Australian business, Alina Dan Consultancy, has become a major player in how ‘the right way’ of documentation is understood (figure 3c).

**Figure 3c: Professional development re-mapping ‘the right way’**

**Alina Dan Holistic Approach is the only approach in Australia that educates, empowers and practically shows early childhood educators how to document in over 25 different ways as well as how to create a Holistic Approach environment!** (Alina Dan, 2014)

**Alina Dan is the most experienced and highly specialised NQF presenter in Australia!** (Alina Dan, 2013)

‘Classical’ documentation formats (e.g. anecdotes, jottings and ‘boxed programs’) used to account for changes and progress in children’s development are no longer valid forms of documentation (Alina Dan, 2013)

**Is your team still documenting too much or not enough?** (Alina Dan, 2013)

**How to practically achieve the NQF Exceeding rating by focusing on children’s voices and practical solutions!** (Alina Dan, 2014)

Supporting the media suggestions of making documentation less time-consuming, her courses offer to make documentation easier and quicker while also making it ‘holistic’ (Alina Dan, 2013). This suggests that ‘the right way’ is transferable from professional development to documentation to assessment and supports the idea that children’s identities can be known in easy, ‘holistic’ ways. Brashly claiming throughout her website and Facebook page to be the ‘only’ and ‘most experienced’ documentation consultant in Australia (figure 3c), her popular workshop seduces educators to ‘Document More by Writing Less’. These claims support the ontological insecurity of the validity (or invalidity)
of ‘the right way’ of documenting, presuming that a certain amount of documentation becomes ‘enough’ to know and plan for a child’s identities.

When the NQS warns “the assessor sights documentation provided as evidence to support particular practices at the service” (ACECQA, 2011, p.17), it becomes understandable that educators seek easier ways to document their implementation of the EYLF. The emotional investment in ‘getting it right’ confirms documentation as a high-stakes cultural capital product of early childhood. It is fair to remember this is the first introduction of ‘identity’ into an Australian curriculum document. Shelli explains,

“It wouldn’t be a word I would use in my everyday conversation about talking about children and how they see themselves and how they see who they are. But it’s because of the changes that have happened, I feel like it’s a bit more readily used, but I still don’t use it a lot, it’s not a common word that I would use to describe” (S3-6).

The EYLF, NQS, EYLF-branded publications and consultants, media, social media and political discourses circulate, combine and construct powerful understandings of how to perform documentation in ‘the right way’, encouraging ontological insecurity in trying to comply with this regime of truth. Shelli’s suggestion of ‘having the skills’ becomes a neoliberal positioning that the knowledge of how to document in ‘the right way’ is available, making it the responsibility of educators to access and use this. There does become a ‘right way’ to document children’s identities within this discourse- a singular, easy, quicker and evidential ‘right way’.

The discourse of ‘the right way’ infiltrates the educator’s life, especially through social media, demanding interaction with its discourse. Foucault’s panopticon in which,
“An inspector arriving unexpectedly at the centre of the Panopticon will be able to judge at a glance, without anything being concealed from him, how the entire establishment is functioning” (Foucault, 1977, p.204),

emerges through these mediums as they seek to “alter behaviour, to train and correct individuals” (Foucault, 1977, p.203). While the desire to “perpetuate the dominant government professional discourse” (Bown & Sumption, 2007, p.10) may sometimes hold power, a space for resistance could begin to grow.

Resisting ‘the right way’
While the EYLF contains governmentally-sanctioned knowledge, the spaces that are accessed by teachers can sanction the rupturing and deterritorialising of modernist theories. Butler (1999, p.158) writes that “power can be neither withdrawn nor refused, but only redeployed”- accessible mediums like blogs and Facebook can redeploy power so that the marginalised paradigms of early childhood can be spoken about and heard by any audience. Drawing on an anarchist conceptualisation of education (Suissa, 2006), power can be redeployed to publish ideas that disrupt this discourse of ‘the right way’, also finding a space for the engagement with theories normally reserved for the university student, slightly dismantling the class privilege (hooks, 2000) of this knowledge.
The accessibility of these theories and discourses could provoke educators to become strategically and politically selective in the information they choose to consume and influence their documentation.

While teachers could use (limited) autonomy in deciding to perform particular discourses as it privileges their work, it is not as easy as suggesting that educators should seek sanctions from theoretical perspectives that resist ‘the right way’ discourses. This would forget how power and desirability circulate throughout sanctions, instead positioning the
educator as a ‘free agent’ in choosing how to document. ‘Sanction’ means to both approve of and punish actions. The ways in which power is weaved throughout the simultaneous approval and disapproval means that sanctions cannot be simplistically applied to support educators to think differently. A poststructuralist understanding of power and desirabilities positions that sanctions are always ambiguous and always risky. Documenting in risky ways can threaten employment- the blog ‘Anarchy & the EYLF Pirates’ recognises the risk in actively disrupting dominant discourses within the EYLF and subsequently write under pseudonyms to protect their identities and paid employment (Anarchy & the EYLF Pirates, 2013). Ria (R168-9) defied her management’s expectations of documentation, but acknowledged this was low-risk because she worked in a hard-to-fill position.

Newman’s postanarchist ideas suggest that people could be able “to think and to practice politics autonomously from the state” (2010b, p.272), an important connection to resisting ‘the right way’. Yet analysing the data in which participants explained how they document read like it was part of the EYLF, with Raban et al’s (2010, p.13) words of “speak[ing] with the same voice” echoing to suggest a governmental control of how educators talk about their work. Speaking outside of governmentally inscribed ideas becomes difficult because the language educators use is specific to and shaped by the EYLF. When the EYLF states that it “provide[s] a common language” (DEEWR, 2009, p.8), ‘the right way’ suggests there is an expectation to talk about early childhood education in particular ways.

It must be considered whether teachers have access to or knowledge of ways to seek this resistance. The EYLF offers the potential for this- stating educators can use developmental, socio-cultural, socio-behaviourist, critical and poststructuralist theories in their work, defining poststructuralist theories as “offer[ing] insights into issues of power,
equity and social justice in early childhood settings” (DEEWR, 2009, p.11). Yet, it does not suggest how to access these theories. The ‘Educator’s Guide to the EYLF’ links poststructuralism with the works of Foucault, Mac Naughton, Cannella and Grieshaber and the understanding that “children have complex and shifting identities as they move between and participate in different social groups” (DEEWR, 2010, p.59), but does not mention how power and desire influence these ‘shifting identities’. With theoretical books being expensive and/or inaccessible, this necessitates (free) social media publications to introduce and discuss these theoretical ideas.

Pacini-Ketchabaw and Pence (2011, p.5) suggest “instead of using curricula/frameworks as technologies of social control, educators can use these documents for the production of new worlds or new realities for themselves and the children they work with”, plausibly creating new understandings of what it means to document ‘identity’. Early childhood services must seem like they are performing the EYLF, even if their interpretation is radically different to what the EYLF stipulates. It is not about using/not using the EYLF, but about using the EYLF to build theoretical understandings that position documentation to acknowledge the power and desire that shapes children’s multiple and shifting identities. Rhizoanalysis holds a seductive promise of rupturing the singular and easy to access ‘identity’, allowing equitable and ethical understandings of children’s identities to emerge.

The need for rhizoanalysis

The interview data from the four participants- Ariel, Ria, Parvesh and Shelli- showed that they thought about and documented ‘identity’ in a (mostly) singular way through developmental and socialisation discourses, categorising ‘identity’ through children’s self-awareness of their ‘identity’, interests, gender ‘identity’ and cultural ‘identity’. Ria
provided an exception to this, recognising that her teaching was shaped through the intersectionality of her gendered cultural identities.

Rhizoanalysis allowed me to use multiple theories and discourses to rupture some of the tightly held developmental and singular understandings of children’s identities within the data. This allowed for multiple, confusing and messy understandings to emerge. Using the rhizo-principle of cartography, the rhizoanalysis is mapped out in its larger form (figure 5). The 3 lines of flight within the rhizome about self-awareness, gender and cultural identities have formed around and through the data from the participants’ interviews. Rhizoanalysis has allowed me to deconstruct the data, seek the binaries within this, connect and rupture these ideas with other texts, thereby seeking a multiplicity of paradigms and deterritorialising the data to understand it in diverse ways—as explained in the conceptual framework.

The analysis of Ria and Parvesh’s data necessitated the use of feminist theories. Although I identify as a feminist, beginning the literature review, I thought feminist theories would be irrelevant to my research. Consequently, I was forced to “re-meet [my] truths” (Mac Naughton & Smith, 2001, p.32) about how I conceptualised being and acting as a feminist within my research and teaching. In this moment, I realised I needed multiple theoretical perspectives that suited the data and explored how power operated to uphold ‘the right way’ discourse and to analyse the data through my own subjectivities as a white, feminist, anarchist teacher.

Subsequently, the rhizomes have been created from the data, the EYLF, EYLF-branded documents, theoretical texts, media texts, song lyrics, advertisements and storybooks. The theoretical texts I have specifically drawn on include anarchist (Goldman, 1908), postanarchist (Newman, 2010b), feminist poststructuralist (Butler, 1999; Mac Naughton,
2000), poststructuralist (Foucault, 1977), queer (Blaise, 2005; Robinson, 2013) and critical whiteness (Davis et al, 2009; Sullivan, 2006) theories. Each theory is explained as it is introduced in the line of flight. These theories expose and destabilise how power circulates through the discourses of gender, race, sexuality and governmentality. These were followed with the political and strategic intent of disrupting the dominant developmental discourses within the data and literature review. The larger rhizome³ (figure 5) shows how the lines of flight (figures 6a-d, 7a-e & 8a-d) are connected and disconnected from each other. The theories have been ‘colour-coded’ (figure 4) as a cartographical means to visually explain the dominance of modernist discourses. The underlining of texts indicates its ‘rupturing’ by another text within the line of flight, deliberately making it harder to read.

Figure 4: Colour-coding in rhizoanalysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colour coding in rhizome and lines of flight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Red:</strong> Modernist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Green:</strong> Poststructuralist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Blue:</strong> Feminist poststructuralist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purple:</strong> Queer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pink:</strong> Anarchist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Orange:</strong> Postanarchist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Light Grey:</strong> Critical whiteness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yellow:</strong> Posthumanist</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

³ The rhizome is limited by needing to submit it in a 2-dimensional format. Initially, the rhizome was crocheted. The use of wool became threads being knotted to come apart and be re-knotted (Bhabha & Comaroff, 2002), becoming Stronach and MacLure’s (1997) ‘sutured’ text. Lines of flight could unravel or ‘hook’ anywhere into this. Photography did not capture these complexities. This rhizome is computer-generated. The lines of flight left hanging are future explorations beyond this study.
Line of flight 1- Self-aware of what?

Ariel (A79) spoke extensively of children having a sense of self-awareness about their identities. Within this line of flight I have used Ariel’s data, the EYLF and the VEYLDF to re-map the dominant discourses around self-awareness. I use Parvesh’s data, feminist post-structuralist (Butler, 1999; Hughes & Mac Naughton, 2001), anarchist (Crass, 1980; Suissa, 2006) and postanarchist (Newman, 2001) theories to rupture the dominant developmental discourse to expose self-awareness as shaped through power and desire. This line of flight explains the introduction and need for postanarchist theories in this thesis.

Re-mapping the dominant discourse

Ariel’s data tells of the ‘self-aware’ child who confidently shares of themselves with the teacher, thus making their ‘identity’ easier to document (figure 6a) The child who is not self-aware is more difficult to observe, document and interpret, becoming harder for the teacher to understand the ‘internal view of herself’.
Figure 6a: Developmental self-awareness

I think... there’s some children that I find quite easy, they give you a lot and they are very self-aware and they are very confident in their identities, so they’re very active in verbalising that and sharing that with you and I think maybe what is a bit unbalanced is that some children... I have a couple of children who are very quiet and reserved and... to be honest, I don’t even know much about their personal likes or feelings about themselves or how they view themselves because... one little girl, some sessions she wouldn’t talk at all through the whole session and so... you realise how so much of what we know about each other is through our communication and without that, I don’t know a lot about her internal sort of view of herself

Ariel (A79-87)

Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency (DEEWR, 2009, p.22)

Children’s wellbeing, identity and sense of agency are dependent on their communication skills and are strongly linked to their capacity to express their feelings and thoughts, and to be understood (DEECD, 2009, p.30)

Self-aware children communicate, express and externalise their inner-most thoughts, thus making their ‘identity’ observable and documentable. This information becomes evidence in how teachers ‘know’ children when assessed against the NQS, thus producing the self-aware child, as shaped by propaganda from the Identity Outcome, as the product of a neoliberal agenda. The EYLF and VEYLDF excerpts presume that this agency, autonomy and communication of ideas will progress developmentally, uninfluenced by power circulating within these discourses. This positioning strengthens the developmental discourse of children becoming self-aware of their identities.

This developmental discourse is shaped by a binary of awareness/non-awareness, assuming that the newly born child lacks self-awareness, but that with the right application of teaching, the child’s self-awareness will develop linearly until they have reached a level of total self-awareness. This developmental discourse would presume that the application of the Identity Outcome can teach children to achieve and externalise
self-awareness and demands that people share their internal views of themselves to aid documentation and assessment. This would presume that self-awareness is always externalised to others and hence can be documented as ‘true’. If the teacher is positioned as able to control the development of self-awareness through appropriate documentation, this positions the child powerless and predictable. A supposed lack of self-awareness indicates the need for the improvement of the teaching, adding to the ontological insecurity of ‘the right way’ discourse.

A rupturing

The idea of observable and teachable self-awareness is ruptured by Parvesh’s data (figure 6b) that asks how children react to ‘inconsistent’ messages they receive within their complex social relations, implying that perhaps children could strategically comply or resist with these ‘inconsistent’ messages about who to listen to.

Figure 6b: Inconsistency

I think… there’s some children that I find quite easy, they give you a lot and they are very self-aware and they are very confident in their identities, so they’re very active in verbalising that and sharing that with you and I think maybe what is a bit unbalanced is that some children… I have a couple of children who are very quiet and reserved and… to be honest, I don’t even know much about their personal likes or feelings about themselves or how they view themselves because… one little girl, some sessions she wouldn’t talk at all through the whole session and so… you realise how so much of what we know about each other is through our communication and without that, I don’t know a lot about her internal sort of view of herself. Ariel (A79-87). It’s inconsistent, you’re saying you can’t do this and someone else is saying yes you can. If it’s not consistent what is the child meant to do? Who do they listen to? Parvesh (P103-31) Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency (DEEWR, 2009, p.22). Children’s wellbeing, identity and sense of agency are dependent on their communication skills and are strongly linked to their capacity to express their feelings and thoughts, and to be understood (DEECD, 2009, p.30)
The two common models of ‘identity’ formation- the ‘sponge model’ and the “free agent in a free market” model (Hughes & Mac Naughton, 2001, p.117) - do not encompass the ideas of compliance and resistance within self-awareness. The sponge model cannot accommodate for these inconsistencies in how children are expected to perform their self-awareness. The ‘free agent’ model fictionalises that children have absolute autonomy in enacting self-awareness. Hughes and Mac Naughton suggest rather than a free market, there is “a market in which some meanings are more available, more recognizable, more pleasurable, and therefore more powerful than others” (p.123).

The ways in which children’s self-awareness is externalised could be considered to be a performativity of their identities (Butler, 1999) - in that power and desire can shape when and how children will ‘perform’ self-awareness of their identities, something which a developmental discourse of self-awareness does not accommodate for. If self-awareness can be performed, this fractures the focus on teaching self-awareness and demands that teachers understand children’s identities in partial and contingent ways. The externalisation of one’s self-awareness becomes a matter of choice that changes in each moment, situation and relation; the unobservable cannot be categorised as the non-existent. This understanding opens a space for thinking about sites of compliance and resistance in the ways children take up or reject messages about how they are expected to perform their identities.

Communicating this analysis to Ariel, she wrote back “I think that no learning or development is linear per-se, but complex and layered” (A,Resp). She suggested that self-awareness could be socialised through religion, politics, human and non-human relationships, providing future line of flights exploring self-awareness through post-human (Taylor, 2013), religious and political perspectives.
The multiplicity of paradigms

Within the Identity Outcome, the EYLF encourages autonomy and agency as an achievable and measurable concept. Sellers (2013, p.74) suggests that the “agentic child emerges only through adult authorization” - positioning agency and autonomy as socially constructed and limited, rather than freely autonomous.

The image of absolute autonomy in selecting and enacting identities circulates as a possibility. Anarchist theories recognise that people are positioned as self-aware and autonomous while actually living within a manufactured system that tightly controls the available ‘choices’ (Stephenson Malott, 2012), making these theories useful for rupturing developmental autonomy and agency. The anarchist band, Crass, suggest that escaping these tightly controlled choices is simply a matter of ‘refus[ing] to play their game’ (figure 6c).
Figure 6c: Refuse to play their game

I think... there's some children that I find quite easy, they give you a lot and they are very self-aware and they are very confident in their identities, so they're very active in verbalising that and sharing that with you and I think maybe what is a bit unbalanced is that some children... I have a couple of children who are very quiet and reserved and... to be honest, I don't even know much about their personal likes or feelings about themselves or how they view themselves because... one little girl, some sessions she wouldn't talk at all through the whole session and so... you realise how so much of what we know about each other is through our communication and without that, I don't know a lot about her internal sort of view of herself. Ariel (A79-87) It's inconsistent, you're saying you can’t do this and someone else is saying yes you can. If it’s not consistent what is the child meant to do? Who do they listen to? Parvesh (P103-31) If you don’t like the rules they make, refuse to play their game (Crass, 1980, track 2) Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency (DEEWR, 2009, p.22). Children's wellbeing, identity and sense of agency are dependent on their communication skills and are strongly linked to their capacity to express their feelings and thoughts, and to be understood (DEECD, 2009, p.30)

However, while anarchist theories allow this recognition, an interesting parallel arises. The Identity Outcome links autonomy to “an increasing capacity for self-regulation” (DEEWR, 2009, p.22). A poststructuralist lenses exposes a human capital discourse, situating this autonomy as allowing people to live inside a neoliberal world as self-regulating and responsible citizens who do not require assistance from governmental bodies (Bloch & Popkewitz, 2000). An anarchist lenses situates this autonomy as allowing people to live outside the neoliberal world by becoming self-regulating and self-reliant people who do not require assistance from governmental bodies (Goldman, 1908). Both readings presume that absolute autonomy and self-regulation are a possibility.

What can anarchist theories offer?

Given that a completely anarchist, government-free utopia is unlikely to exist, this theory is of limited use. Suissa’s book Anarchism and Education (2006) suggests that while
anarchist and libertarian theories overlap, ‘absolute autonomy’ belongs to libertarian theories. She clarifies the anarchist utopia as not a utopia without conflict, but a utopia in which individuals can resolve conflict without governmental control.

This is a problematic positioning as it still presumes a utopia in which harmony and equality can exist if ‘top-down’ (governmental) power structures are eliminated; ignoring how Foucault’s ‘capillaries’ of power operate through discourses (Mac Naughton, 2005).

Newman (2010b), responding to this problematic utopia, suggests the idea of ‘postanarchism’- the merging of classical anarchism and poststructuralist thought with “a certain disengagement from its scientific positivism and its rationalist humanist foundationalism” (p.268). This postanarchism recognises the ways in which power operates (figure 6d).
Figure 6d: Power discourses

| I think... there’s some children that I find quite easy, they give you a lot and they are very self-aware and they are very confident in their identities, so they’re very active in verbalising that and sharing that with you and I think maybe what is a bit unbalanced is that some children... I have a couple of children who are very quiet and reserved and... to be honest, I don’t even know much about their personal likes or feelings about themselves, or how they view themselves because... one little girl, some sessions she wouldn’t talk at all through the whole session and so... you realise how so much of what we know about each other is through our communication and without that, I don’t know a lot about her internal sort of view of herself. Ariel (A79-87) It’s inconsistent, you’re saying you can’t do this and someone else is saying yes you can. If it’s not consistent what is the child meant to do? Who do they listen to? Parvesh (P103-31) If you don’t like the rules they make, refuse to play their game. (Crass, 1980, track 2) If we think that we can move to a world without power, then we are already trapped in the world that oppresses us (Newman, 2001, p.4) Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency (DEEWR, 2009, p.22) Children’s wellbeing, identity and sense of agency are dependent on their communication skills and are strongly linked to their capacity to express their feelings and thoughts, and to be understood (DEECD, 2009, p.30) |

Rather than positioned as ‘after’ anarchist theories, postanarchism is “the project of renewing the emancipatory politics of classical anarchism through radicalising its ontological terrain” (Newman, 2010b, p.268). This relationship to poststructuralism allows a recognition of how ‘top-down’ power influences the capillaries of power within services to comply, resist or ignore the top-down power discourses. Classical anarchism positions power as oppressing the ways in which “people can and should determine the direction of their own lives” (Mueller, 2012, p.15). The pairing with poststructuralist theories allows power to be understood as productive in the struggle (but not necessarily actualisation) of trying to determine the direction of one’s own life. This provides multiplicity for thinking about how power circulates and shapes the ways in which children perform self-awareness.
**My own narrative**

I want to clarify what postanarchist theories offer to the documentation of children’s identities. The image of the child in the EYLF - a governmentally sanctioned document- supports an autonomous, agentic, responsible, rational and logical person- essentially a neoliberal citizen prepared for a capitalistic society. This influences a clear image of the innocent, but capable, child and is then checked through assessment to see if educators have conformed to creating this neoliberal future citizen.

Suissa (2006) writes that the defining feature of anarchist theories is the rejection of governmental control, conceptualised in education through the political intent of pedagogical practices. Education settings can work for social justice and change, rather than being a “simply objectionable aspect of the machinery of state bureaucracy” (p.97).

Refusing to create citizens to hold capitalism and neoliberalism in place I choose, with very political intent, postanarchist theories for this thesis and my teaching. I need a line of flight that exposes Foucauldian governmentality within early childhood documents (Lemke, 2000), rupturing this to offer other ways of researching and teaching.

**Implications for documentation**

Mueller (2012, p.22) suggests the anarchist teacher acts as a “suggestive iconoclast and interlocutor with dominant social narratives”, sanctioning my desire to move in and out of discourses to continuously deterritorialise the theoretical interpretations of documentation.
Documentation of self-awareness could be conceptualised as narratives of who children think they will be if they comply or resist with the messages presented, becoming dialogues about the power and desirability of the messages presented by the supposed ‘free market’.

This first line of flight has begun to rupture the singular ‘truth’ of children’s identities and the next two lines of flight continue positioning identities as performances shaped by power and desirability.

**Line of flight 2- Gendered interests, gendered identities?**

In the data, Parvesh and Shelli talked about interests being indicators of children’s identities. Ria talked about her resistance to interest-based planning and she and Parvesh both spoke of their gender equity work. Within this line of flight I have used Parvesh and Shelli’s data, the EYLF, a deleted section of the draft EYLF, Sustainable Childcare Resources’ Facebook status update, the NQS and Rosback and Wilson’s EYLF ‘how to’ guide to re-map the dominant discourses around interest-based planning, including the silencing of gendered interests in the dominant discourse. I have then used Ria’s data and Butler’s gender performativity to rupture this discourse around interest-based planning. I use feminist post-structuralist (Butler, 1999; Hughes and Mac Naughton, 2001) and queer theories (Blaise, 2005; Robinson, 2013) to explore how gender identities are shaped through power and desire. Using Goldman’s anarchist text (1908) and Parvesh’s data, I then follow the line of flight to question the authoritativeness of the EYLF over curriculums.

**Re-mapping the dominant discourse**
The dominant discourse of ‘interest-based planning’ is mapped through identities being observable through what children are interested in (figure 7a). Interest-based planning is currently positioned as ‘best practice’ within Australian early childhood services, with Rosback and Wilson’s (2012, p.20) popular EYLF guide stating how children’s interests should shape the curriculum - this discourse circulates through Shelli and Parvesh’s data, Facebook pages and the NQS. The positivist discourse of ‘knowing’ children through observation (Hughes, 2010) extends to knowing children’s interests through observation.

Figure 7a: Re-mapping interest-based planning

| I’d describe identity as... their likes, their dislikes, their interests |
| Parvesh (P6) |
| The interest-based stuff, which I think is their identity, it’s who they are, it’s what makes them who they are |
| Shelli (S132-3) |
| [Teachers should] discover children’s interests, work out appropriate ways of teaching to support these interests and design the program around these |
| (Rosback & Wilson, 2012, p.20) |
| As children participate in everyday life, they develop interests and construct their own identities and understandings of the world (DEEWR, 2009, p.7) |
| Element 1.1.2 |
| Each child’s current knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program |
| (ACECQA, 2011, p.19) |
| How child directed is your program/curriculum? Take a moment to have a look and if it is not obvious straight away then it means that it needs work! This element within NQS is an important one as Assessors are looking for this and it should be obvious. Everything you do within your day should have come from the children, of course you extend upon this with your intentional teaching skills but the start must be child directed |
| (Sustainable Childcare Resources, 2013) |
Shelli suggested that children’s identities are shaped by their interests, therefore teachers who support children’s interests are supporting children’s identities. The EYLF’s suggestion of how children develop interests does not consider how power operates to normalise why children display particular interests. The NQS says that children’s interests must be the ‘foundation’ of the program but not which interests (ie, gender or class interests) or how these could be understood as matters of desire and power. Sustainable Childcare Resources’ status update revisits the ontological insecurity by claiming ‘what assessors are looking for’ and fosters the idea that to include something in the program, it has to ‘come from the children’. This relies on the discourse of children as innocent, because it is supposed that only rarely will children outright ask to be taught about equity and social justice issues and therefore, these become inappropriate, teacher-initiated ideas.

**A rupturing**

Interest-based planning positions children as free agents within their worlds, supposing that children are not constrained by the power of neoliberal marketing and gendered stereotyping. This pedagogical method does not question how these interests both position children within the world and are used by children to position themselves in the world. If interests are markers of identities, then identities can be seen as socially constructed and manipulated by neoliberal agendas and marketing. Ria and Parvesh both spoke explicitly about gendered interests and identities in the data. Ria ruptures the simplistic idea of using interests when she begins to speak about the power in why children are interested in certain items (figure 7b).
Feminist poststructuralist theories offer a way of exposing how power circulates through gender discourses and identities (Mac Naughton, 2000). Ria names herself as a feminist (R397) and recalls her upbringing as gender-oppressive as beauty was seen as integral to securing marriage and financial security. Her resistance to this cultural discourse brings her to the position of challenging and supporting girls to transgress through and within their gender identities. She explains,

“So I’m especially mindful of what I say to girls, because that was how I was raised, to look pretty all the time, so I don’t want them to do that” (R412-13).

Ria also resisted her co-educators privileging the feminine gender identities of girls, yet spoke of the perceived unspeakability of this: “because it’s hard when you work with
people, you can’t go and say to them, oh please stop telling girls how their dress is pretty” (R403-4). Rather, Ria used a conversation with a parent to sanction and speak about her own gender identities discourses with her co-educators. This line of flight will now continue from the ideas of gendered identities offered by Ria and Parvesh in the data.

**Gender binaries**

Parvesh explained how her workplace strategically used ‘dress up day’ as an opportunity to transgress gendered stereotypes- for boys to dress as girls and for the female staff to dress as ‘businessmen’. Butler (1999, p.194) describes the ‘heterosexual matrix’ as the “grid of cultural intelligibility through which bodies, genders, and desires are naturalized”. By providing an opportunity for children and staff to perform their gender differently, Parvesh’s data ruptures the gendered stereotypes within this matrix, but by presenting a singular image of girls (people who carry handbags and paint their nails) and of men (people who wear suits and go to work) it simultaneously reinforces this matrix. Throughout the curriculum, Parvesh continued to encourage boys to adopt these feminine appearances. This challenges the heterosexual matrix, but does so in a way that is still prescriptive to traditional gender binaries. Non-biased teaching is often seen as taking up the activities and appearance of the opposite gender, rather than taking up the desired activities and appearances in non-biased ways (Mac Naughton, 1998), as if adopting the gendered stereotype of the opposite gender can judge the success of non-biased teaching.

If the appearance and activities of a person can be considered the manifestation of non-biased teaching, then gender identities become observable and measurable by educators. If gender is a social construction (Yelland & Grieshaber, 1998), then it is plausible that regimes of truth about boys wearing nail polish as successful consumers of the non-
biased curriculum will emerge, creating a biased/non-biased binary through which to understand the activities and appearances of children.

**Transgender identities within the heterosexual matrix**

In her gender equity work, Ria actively ignored and silenced the cultural capital of feminine girls,

> “they would come and stand in front of me with the skirt and do the wiggle... there was this kind of expectation that was in a lot of girls, I felt really, you’re going to be disappointed with me because I’m not going to give it to you even though you are doing this whole twirl around me” (R385-8).

Blaise (2005) would suggest this action of twirling skirts to be a ‘body movement’ of ‘emphasised femininity’ within the heterosexual matrix. It could be positioned that this child performs this emphasised femininity to Ria, positioning her as a more experienced, heterosexual mentor who can guide and approve of these actions of the child trying to operate within the heterosexual matrix. Ria, however, disrupts this performance by ignoring it, as she likewise ignores and disrupts the ‘beauty talk’ that would otherwise “reinforce and strengthen the heterosexual matrix” (p.80).

Ria is actively “challenging the power of the heterosexual matrix by making new spaces within it” (p.150), further supported by her gender equity work for two transgender people within her service- a parent who became female and a male child in her group who, sanctioned by this, anticipated his ‘identity’ as female. The heterosexual matrix creates complexities for thinking about transgender identities. While the initial act of desiring to become female disrupts the ‘hegemonic masculinity’ expected of males within
this matrix, the subsequent performances as female affirm the ‘emphasised femininity’ and hence continue to support the identities offered in the matrix.

Very little is written about transgender identities and early childhood education. Brill and Pepper (2008) suggest that transgender and gender-variant children are often understood as being developmentally confused about their gender and that transgender discrimination is commonly experienced from the age of 3, presenting important equity and research considerations. With a lack of access to narrative and research on transgender equity, I have two perplexingly difficult questions.

While Ria challenges the emphasised femininity for biological females and it is plausible that Ria would react differently to the transgender child performing her ‘identity’ in this way, could this silencing of biological females’ emphasised femininity also silence the ways in which the transgender child feels sanctioned to transgress her hegemonic masculinity to access the desired cultural capital of femininity? Could witnessing the marginalisation of her desired gender ‘identity’ limit how she imagines possibilities for herself?

The typical notion that gender equity makes activities accessible to all children becomes problematic. If a boy puts on a dress to perform as a girl, does stating that it is equitable for boys to take up cultural capital products of femininity deny the medium through which it is accessible to transgress biological sex (ie, a child cannot access a gender confirmation operation, but can take up perceived feminine cultural capital products in order to enact a female ‘identity’)? Does this deny the way in which children could perform the “category membership” (Davies, 1998, p.133) required for their desired ‘identity’?
Even within this disruption of biological sex, there is still the presumption that there is only one ‘true gender identity’.

**Transgressing gender roles**

Layering another feminist poststructuralist rupture into the line of flight (figure 7c) allows gender identities to be seen as a ‘regulatory fiction’. This ruptures the ideas of teachers documenting through observation what gendered discourses children place within activities and appearances- thus meaning that a child performing their gender identities in a particular way does not automatically mean they are complying with or resisting gendered stereotypes. This moves away from non-biased teaching being measurable through the right application and use of activities and appearances. The power and desirability of this regulatory fiction begins to shake ‘the right way’ discourse.
I’d describe identity as their likes, their dislikes, their interests Parvesh [P6]. The interest-based stuff, which I think is their identity, it’s who they are, it’s what makes them who they are. Shelli [S132-3]

I like challenging children... even this morning, someone bought a Lego book, pictures of Lego and he’s showing me pirates and super stars or whatever and this girl says ‘oh, there’s girl Lego’ and because on the front page there was a girl with the home Lego, with the pinks and purples... and I started talking to the boy and the girl- why do you think it’s girl Lego and things like that Ria (R382-386)

Ria relied on socialisation theories that argue children’s gender discourses are controlled by teaching (Blaise, 2005); that because she ignored dominant gender discourses and supported transgender identities then, relying on the sponge model of ‘identity’ formation, so will the children. Butler’s (1999) idea of gender performativity suggests that children will enact multiple and contingent gender identities as it presents as a choice invested with power or desirability that privileges them- which could include the desirability of being seen as transgressing gender binaries in order to please the feminist teacher. Cannella (2001, p.18) warns that the “positioning of children within predetermined discourses and expectations immediately devalues them by placing limits
of how they see themselves, on how we see them, and on how we hear what they want to say” - which must include the positioning of children within feminist discourses.

It is difficult to challenge gender stereotyping within dominant feminine and masculine discourses. A modernist understanding positions discourses as a dominant/marginalised binary. Therefore, if the marginalised discourse becomes dominant, then the dominant discourse must become marginalised - fulfilling the binary obligation. Ria presumes that by ignoring the dominant feminine discourses and privileging feminist ways of acting the children will ‘soak up’ and enact the non-sexist identities desired (Mac Naughton, 2003), consequently marginalising and silencing the dominance of femininity within this group of children. However, feminism is not constructed via the absence of femininity, but is rather “a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression” (hooks, 2000, p.1). A generalisation of what is sexist or oppressive ignores the self-awareness utilised in the ways people comply with or resist these generalisations - thus becoming plausible to perform gender identities in feminine or masculine ways that are not sexist or oppressive. It becomes possible that dominant/marginalised binaries can be seen not as ‘master narratives’, but as shifting, relational and contextual.

Butler (1999, p.173) writes that “acts, gestures, and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance, but produce this on the surface of the body... that suggest, but never reveal, the organizing principle of identity as a cause”. Therefore, the activity (of twirling skirts or liking pink Lego) does not become a physical manifestation of the sexism or oppression, but rather, the activity becomes a medium for thinking about for what purpose discourses are taken up, performed and rejected.

A multiplicity of paradigms
Robinson (2013), a feminist poststructuralist and queer theory writer, suggests that dominant gender discourses in early childhood construct children as heteronormative. This line of flight shows that the best-intentioned gender equity work still relies on socialisation theories and persistent gender binaries. Robinson names early childhood a “queer time and space”, suggesting that early childhood settings hold the potential for “building a society that is more critically reflective about gendered and sexual relationships, and that contributes to new cultural norms” (p.131). Blaise (2005, p.184) defines queer theory as an “alternative perspective that is helpful for challenging generally accepted notions of gender”, a theory that, rather than ignoring the gender binary, attempts to ‘queer’ the power and desirability invested within conforming to these binaries. These ideas hold a potential line of flight for ‘queering’ the curriculum in ways that support multiple and shifting gender identities and rupture the persistent gender binary.

The EYLF does not speak about gender identities. The draft EYLF could have continued Butler’s rupture through the explicit explanations of play as a space of ‘politics and power relations’- providing sanctions and knowledge for positioning gender identities as shaped through power and desire (figure 7d). Yet due to media and political pressure, this was deleted from the final EYLF, and hence is underlined in red to show how this feminist poststructuralist idea has been controlled by the dominant discourses of early childhood.
Figure 7d: Silencing gender

I’d describe identity as… their likes, their dislikes, their interests. Parvesh (P6). The interest-based stuff, which I think is their identity, it’s who they are, it’s what makes them who they are. Shelli (S132-3) I like challenging children… even this morning, someone bought a Lego book, pictures of Lego and he’s showing me pirates and super stars or whatever and this girl says ‘oh, there’s girl Lego’ and because on the front page there was a girl with the home Lego, with the pinks and purples… and I started talking to the boy and the girl—why do you think it’s girl Lego and things like that Ria (R382-386) [teachers should] discover children’s interests, work out appropriate ways of teaching to support these interests and design the program around these (Rosback & Wilson, 2012, p.20). As children participate in everyday life, they develop interests and construct their own identities and understandings of the world (DEEWR, 2009, p.7). The postulation of a true gender identity would be revealed as a regulatory fiction (Butler, 1999, p.180). Sometimes it can be cruel, unfair and unjust a space for politics and power relations, where children are excluded on the basis of gender, age, size, skin colour, proficiency with English, class, ethnicity, sexuality and more (DEEWR, 2008, p.8). Element 1.1.2 Each child’s current knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program (ACECQA, 2011, p.19). How child directed is your program/curriculum? Take a moment to have a look and if it is not obvious straight away then it means that it needs work! This element within NQS is an important one as Assessors are looking for this and it should be obvious. Everything you do within your day should have come from the children, of course you extend upon this with your intentional teaching skills but the start must be child directed (Sustainable Childcare Resources, 2013)

Analysing Ria and Parvesh’s transcripts demanded I justify the omission of gender identities in the literature review. The EYLF does not talk about gender, other than to state “Being involves children developing an awareness of their social and cultural heritage, of gender and their significance in their world” (DEEWR, 2009, p.20) and the within the definition of ‘inclusion’. The VEYLDF has only the ‘inclusion’ definition. The EYLF-branded documents and international curriculums write about gender almost always as an equity statement about inclusion or about transgressing gender binaries but only to the other side of the binary (Ministry of Education, 1996; Ministry of Education
and Research, 2006; Skolverket, 2010). In the Irish curriculum, *Aistear: Creachthraclam na Luath-Oige*, its Identity Outcome states “Children will have strong self-identities and will feel respected and affirmed as unique individuals with their own life stories” and within this is: children will “appreciate the features that make a person special and unique (name, size, hair, hand and footprint, gender, birthday)” (NCCA, 2009, p.26).

This return to the literature influenced the scrutinisation of theoretical paradigms within the works referenced. The article ‘*Insider perspectives*...’ (Sumson et al, 2009), which explains the political dilution of the EYLF, references reconceptualist and social justice research continuously. Sumson’s (the lead EYLF co-writer) previous and subsequent work draws on reconceptualist, social justice and equity writers. The EYLF references *none* of these works. It could be considered that some publications were tightly controlled by people contracting the authors to write in particular ways and the publications released after the EYLF clarify what the authors really wanted to say. Given the historical silencing of gender equity and identities within curriculum documents (Mac Naughton, 2000), the exclusion from the EYLF is not surprising.

Sumson and Wong (2011, p.30) write that ‘footholds’ in the EYLF “kept alive the vision that the EYLF should offer possibilities for sustained intellectual and political work of the kind advocated by critical curriculum theorists”. As the draft version of the EYLF’s statement about cruel and unfair play is deracinated from the final EYLF, the places in which ‘gender’ is written simplistically are possibly acting as ‘footholds’ for educators and researchers, and a time when a progressive government contracts a socially just re-write of the EYLF.

While Ria and Parvesh’s data shows that educators can become invested in ideas not included in the EYLF, the EYLF is used to sanction practice. For example, Rudd’s Stolen
Generations apology became a sanction to include Indigenous perspectives in the EYLF and position the EYLF to work for reconciliation (Sumson et al, 2009). It could be considered that gender may have been written about differently if it suited the government’s agenda. However, Goldman’s anarchist text (figure 7e) ruptures the idea that social justice and equity work can be achieved simply by instructing educators to include it in their curriculums. This positions social justice and equity work as educators just needing to choose to act or think differently, ignoring the power and desirability invested in these choices or presuming that implementing the EYLF holds the most desire within an educator’s life.
I’d describe identity as... their likes, their dislikes, their interests. Parvesh (P6)
The interest-based stuff, which I think is their identity, it’s who they are, it’s what makes them who they are. Shelli (S13)
I like challenging children... even this morning, someone bought a Lego book, pictures of Lego and he’s showing me pirates and superstars or whatever and this girl says ‘oh, there’s girl Lego’ and because on the front page there was a girl with the home Lego, with the pinks and purples... and I started talking to the boy and the girl- why do you think it’s girl Lego and things like that. Ria (R382-386)
[teachers should] discover children’s interests, work out appropriate ways of teaching to support these interests and design the program around these. (Rosback & Wilson, 2012, p.20) As children participate in everyday life, they develop interests and construct their own identities and understandings of the world (DEEWR, 2009, p.7).
the postulation of a true gender identity would be revealed as a regulatory fiction (Butler, 1999, p.180). Sometimes it can be cruel, unfair and unjust a space for politics and power relations, where children are excluded on the basis of gender, age, size, skin colour, proficiency with English, class, ethnicity, sexuality and more (DEEWR, 2008, p.8).

[Government legislation] never induced man to do anything he could and would not do by virtue of his intellect or temperament, nor prevented anything that man was not impelled to do by the same dictates (Goldman, 1908, p.2)

Element 1.1.2 Each child’s current knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program. (ACECQA, 2011, p.19)

How child directed is your program/curriculum? Take a moment to have a look and if it is not obvious straight away then it means that it needs work! This element within NQS is an important one as Assessors are looking for this and it should be obvious. Everything you do within your day should have come from the children, of course you extend upon this with your intentional teaching skills but the start must be child directed (Sustainable Childcare Resources, 2013).

Goldman’s anarchist understandings of government literature suggest that the EYLF may not change educators’ attitudes towards gender equity and identities work- the educators who do not want to teach about gender identities will not be forced to by a curriculum and the educators who do want to teach about gender identities will not wait until the curriculum tells them to. Parvesh explains how she became invested in gender equity work,
“And if you’re not confronted with things that you haven’t experienced... I went into placement and one of the little boys had a necklace and a Barbie and I just assumed that he was using one of the girls’ and he’s like, no it’s mine and I was like, oh okay. But I had never come across that in any of my prior placements... that was one moment for me when I was like... ‘cause I just said it without even thinking and when you haven’t come across that before, it’s not really your fault, it’s just something that you have to experience... and that one moment really taught me a lot now working with the children and hearing those types of things” (P365-85).

For Ria, it was her childhood that shaped her commitment to gender equity work. Mac Naughton (2000, p.198) suggests that educators could use their stories “to generate new questions, rules, ideas and imaginations about gender. They could allow parents, staff and children to voice their understandings, desires and feelings about gender” to create emotional, intellectual and pedagogical investments into gender identities work. These stories of personal experiences could become a generative force for thinking about gender identities in multiple ways.

My own narrative

Considering the importance of gender stories in my teaching, I wrote about a ‘treasure hunt’ in which every treasure bag had both Barbie and Spiderman stickers,

“I had wanted to see what comments and thoughts would be told as the children found the images of a hyper-feminine and hyper-masculine cultural icon within their bag... As I have been doing my Masters research on the documentation of ‘Identity’, I have been thinking about how children de/re-construct their ideas of
gender identities. I would like to include ideas and narratives about gender within our stories and my first step was to gauge a basic understanding of how children understand these cultural icons through their ideas of gender. Who are these toys for? Why? What happens when someone has a different idea or tells a different narrative about these characters?” (Journal11/13).

Taking the lines of flight that came out of this hunt, a group of children and myself wrote a gender story each day for story time about the sanctions of transgressing gender roles, of the expectations within the heterosexual matrix, about seeking alternate truths and ways of being and the multiplicity of gender identities. These subsequent gender discussions found me re-telling to children and families the feminist narratives my father had woven into Disney movies I watched as a child.

I have long reacted against hyper-feminine discourses, partially under the naming of myself as a feminist, yet I realised this created a binary of feminist/feminine. If identities are multiple, then a person can be both and can choose to perform different discourses as it privileges them. Using Butler’s words, there is no ‘true gender identity’ for myself, the children or their families.

Enacting the narratives of this thesis within my own teaching allows me to find “disruptive spaces” (Campbell & Smith, 2001, p.90) to explicitly speak about gender identities with children and their families. The investment in gender stories becomes more important: while the Liberal government’s threat of reviewing the EYLF has not yet materialised, a review of the primary and secondary school curriculum has been announced (Hurst, 2014). Kevin Donnelly, one of the two reviewers appointed, states that teaching for gender equity is “wrong” and “normalise[s] what many consider aberrant behaviour” (2005). This threatens not only children as they move between curriculums
that actively silence gender equity but also to the promised review of the EYLF. I anxiously think about what would be at stake in a review of the EYLF.

Implications for documentation

Although Ria and Parvesh were explicitly committed to gender equity work, neither spoke of how they documented this or what they would use documentation of gender identities for (R,Docu). I wonder if the silencing of gender in the EYLF has positioned gender identities as ‘subjugated knowledge’ that is “buried under the dominant forms of knowledge” (Robinson, 2013, p.28).

Ariel’s documentation example (A,Docu) uses the book ‘It’s Okay To Be Different’ (Parr, 2001) as a discussion provoker for how the children she teaches consider themselves to be ‘different’. Storybooks provide conflicting messages about identities, but a search for certainty implies that one message will always hold true to each person and situation. Messages like ‘everyone is different and that’s okay’ (Parr, 2001), ‘you have to let go of your own gender desires to fit in’ (McLean & McLean, 2000), ‘gender is fixed at birth’ (Waxman, 1976), ‘you can’t fit in if you are different’ (Donaldson, 2007) and ‘we can accept you if you are gender-variant’ (Kilodavis, 2009) hold the opportunity for discussion of gender identities and the situations in which these messages would be desirable and in which they would not be.

Recording these conversations and discussions can create gender stories, documenting the messiness of how gender discourses are constructed and expressed. It is not about ‘proving’ that the child’s gender identities exist, but finding ways to highlight the multiple discourses that de/re-construct gender identities. This idea can use both published books and oral stories.
This documentation can become a ‘gender map’ (Lowe, 1998) that acknowledges the performativity and multiplicity of gender identities, the challenging of individual ideas of sexism and oppression, the lived experience of seeking sanctions and spaces to perform gender identities in the ways desired, rather than seeking a static understanding of how a person enacts their gender ‘identity’. Using feminist poststructuralist and queer theories recognises how power and desirability operate through interests to influence relations, discourses, privileges and the positionality of children and teachers within this space.

**Line of flight 3- Cultural identities**

Ria and Parvesh both spoke of cultural ‘identity’ in the data. Within this line of flight I have used their data, the EYLF, a quote from Howard- a past Liberal prime minister- and a storybook to re-map the dominant discourses around racial culture and cultural competence. I use Davis et al’s (2009) text to expose the Australian identity as ‘white’ and explore how this is shaped by political and social discourses. The introduction of critical whiteness theories (Davis et al, 2009; Sullivan, 2006) ruptures the dominant discourse of children’s knowledge of ‘race’ as innocent and developing. I use Hester’s (2012) text and Ria’s data to consider cultural identities as plural and intersectional.

**Re-mapping the dominant discourse**

The dominant discourse of cultural identities is understood as racial, singular and static-set at birth, rather than shaped through desire. The developmental discourse presumes that when children ask questions about ‘race’, it is because their knowledge is developing and if educators can provide appropriate resources then children will be socialised into anti-biased understandings of racial culture. This discourse is upheld as it circulates
through Ria and Parvesh’s data, the EYLF’s introduction of ‘cultural competence’, Howard’s words and Fox’s storybook (figure 8a).

Figure 8a: Re-mapping racial identity

I’m Indian and one of my assistants is Irish and another one’s Australian, so we are from very different countries... so we started talking about different countries, cultures, we bought a map, a globe... they’re looking at different countries, just the identity of different languages. We had another boy who was Indian and he moved here and he didn’t speak any English so I talked to him in Hindi
Ria (R324-31)

[A child] came over and just did this (pulls up sleeve) and I said what are you doing and they said ‘I’m just checking to see if you’re the same colour all over’... the skin colour all over thing just stuck in my mind because I thought it was fascinating because I didn’t even think, oh, they didn’t know that, maybe they think I’m different underneath my clothes
Parvesh (P341-7)

Educators should support children’s ‘shared identity as Australians’ (DEEWR, 2009, p.23)

If [national identity] is open to contest, this is an expression of national weakness (Howard, as cited in Stratton, 1998, p.106)

[Cultural competence] is the ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures (DEEWR, 2009, p.16)

Their skins may be different from yours... but inside, their hearts are just like yours (Fox, 1997, p.4-12)

The EYLF’s statement presumes that cultural competence becomes achievable via the educator completing the task of communication. This emphasis on communication and effective interactions implies the existence of linguistic barriers; linguistic barriers implying that culture inhibits effective (English) communication, constructing culture as being ‘non-English’. By positioning cultural competence like a task to be completed it becomes something that educators can ‘do’ to children/families while also expecting children/families to perform their cultures in specific ways so that educators can achieve
cultural competence. This supposes the (non-English speaking) Other requires the assistance of the (English speaking) teacher to function effectively within the service. Families’ cultural identities must be knowable to the educator so they become culturally competent and thus perform in ‘the right way’. Intriguingly, the VEYLDF does not include ‘cultural competence’ as a practice.

The EYLF states that cultural competence “respect[s] multiple cultural ways of knowing, seeing and living, celebrate[s] the benefits of diversity” (DEEWR, 2009, p.16). As the EYLF speaks mainly of a singular ‘identity’, the multiple cultural ways read as there are many cultures in society rather than there are many cultures within the individual. This simplistically presumes that if educators can observe and locate the cultural ‘identity’ of the child, they can then objectively apply this cultural ‘identity’ to the curriculum and documentation. The idea that the benefits of diversity can then be ‘celebrated’ ignores racism, discrimination, sexism, contradictory perspectives and prohibited cultural practices, presuming that all people can live in harmony if they just try.

When the child ‘checks’ Parvesh’s skin colour, the developmental discourse suggests that the child is developing their understanding of skin colour and books like ‘Whoever You Are’ (Fox, 1997) could be used to confirm while people do look different, the supposedly universal emotions of love and pain position everyone as being ‘the same on the inside’. Ria and Parvesh both emphasised this ‘same inside’ message (R346; P354).

Although often touted as ‘anti-bias’, I initially considered that positioning everyone as the ‘same’ silenced the lived experience of cultural identities. However, I do not know what it is like to have a child ‘check’ my skin colour. The impact of my “skin privilege” (McIntosh, 1990, p.1) meant that I cannot know what plausible acts of discrimination make the ‘same on the inside’ message have power and desirability.
**A rupturing**

Reading Parvesh’s data example through the EYLF’s idea of a ‘shared identity as Australians’ becomes problematic. While this ‘shared identity as Australians’ cannot possibly be based on geographical birthplace of all children in early childhood services, it therefore could be positioned as aspirational, hence silencing children’s alternative and multiple national identities and assuming that people born on the land of Australia want to identify as Australians. Reading this ‘shared Australian identity’ through Davis et al’s quote (figure 8b) ruptures the developmental discourse of children innocently learning about ‘race’ by exposing the political and social construction of the Australian ‘identity’ as white and English-speaking.

Figure 8b: Exposing whiteness

I’m Indian and one of my assistants is Irish and another one’s Australian, so we are from very different countries... so we started talking about different countries, cultures, we bought a map, a globe... they’re looking at different countries, just the identity of different languages. We had another boy who was Indian and he moved here and he didn’t speak any English so I talked to him in Hindi Ria (R324-31) [A child] came over and just did this (pulls up sleeve) and I said what are you doing and they said ‘I’m just checking to see if you’re the same colour all over’... the skin colour all over thing just stuck in my mind because I thought it was fascinating because I didn’t even think, oh, they didn’t know that, maybe they think I’m different underneath my clothes Parvesh (P341-7)

Educators should support children’s ‘shared identity as Australians’ (DEEWR, 2009, p.23)

Australian government discourses about Australian citizenship were actively and deliberately reinscribing whiteness as a nonspoken yet essential ingredient to be a ‘real’ Australian citizen (Davis, Mac Naughton & Smith, 2009, p.58)

**Cultural competence** is the ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures (DEEWR, 2009, p.16) Their skins may be different from yours... but inside, their hearts are just like yours (Fox, 1997, p.4-12)
John Howard’s (as cited in Stratton, 1998, p.106) words support the discourse of a singular, static racial culture. To be intersectional, plural or shifting would be ‘weakness’. The ‘shared identity as Australians’ reinforces a simplistic binary of being Australian or unAustralian. The threat of being branded ‘unAustralian’ is significant through political and social discourse in Australia (Smith & Phillips, 2001), thereby positioning being ‘Australian’ as a desirable and powerful ‘identity’. Australia’s colonial flag has been appropriated by racist rioters (Kennedy & Murphy, 2005), white pride groups (Blood and Honour Australia, 2013) and printed alongside slogans that position pride in one’s (white) blood heritage as being ‘Australian’ (Full Blooded Skips, 2013) - these social discourses of an ‘Australian identity’ further ingrain it as singularly white and English-speaking, also marginalising the identities of the white, English-speakers who are not Australian.

Following this line of flight into critical whiteness theories presents a re-reading of ‘Whoever You Are’. Critical whiteness theories expose whiteness as “a political strategy that produces and reproduces whiteness as a position of privilege as it demonizes otherness” (Davis et al, 2009, p.50). The story presents a narrative about tolerance and acceptance and shows children of different races around the world living their lives. Reading this through critical whiteness theories privileges the Anglo-Celtic person as the reader (Guigni, n.d), and thereby marginalises the non-Anglo-Celtic person as someone to be tolerated, “enshrine[ing] white normativity” (Delgado, as cited in Orelus, 2011, p.10).

The social discourses enshrining this white normativity and upholding the ‘white Australian identity’ become evident (figure 8c).
This photo was taken as I considered the political and historical discourses of the ‘white Australian identity’ and Australia Day. The model is a white, tanned male surfer. The beach and the surfer both play a central, iconic role in Australian summer culture. This advertisement has not been replicated with other models, marking this white man as the embodiment of all Australians. Australia Day marks the landing of the First Fleet, the subsequent hoisting of the Union Jack and the beginning of genocide, oppression and colonisation of the Aboriginal peoples. I read this surfer with his flag on the beach.
celebrating Australia Day as a distinct re-imagining of colonisation and also of the Cronulla Beach race riots. John Howard’s infamous words ‘we will decide who comes to this country’ (Hickey, 2010) are consistently re-spoken during the current asylum seeker debate. The white Australian surfer becomes a ‘patroller’- checking and defending who is coming to Australia via the beach, and consequently, defending who can hold this ‘Australian identity’.

Making the ‘white Australian identity’ further explicit, two major franchises- Aldi and Big W- removed Australia Day celebratory t-shirts from sale that stated ‘Australia, est. 1788’ after social media backlash (SBS, 2014; Varnham O’Regan, 2014), demonstrating how social media can disrupt dominant discourses. The Big W shirt also stated ‘authentic series’- further inscribing who can be considered an authentic Australian. This ‘white Australian identity’ is heavily inscribed through social and political discourses.

Reading these racist and colonial discourses into Parvesh’s data example problematises the developmental discourses of racial ‘identity’. I cannot know, but I can wonder, if the child was ‘checking’ to see if Parvesh ‘fits’ with political and social discourses of a ‘white, Australian identity’ rather than because their cognitive development did not yet allow a mature understanding of skin colour.

**A multiplicity of paradigms**

While the EYLF introduced ‘cultural competence’ to Australian early childhood, it is already problematically conceptualised in other fields. Hester (2012, p.285), in writing about health care, disrupts the possibility of being ‘competent’ in another’s culture - “as if these differences were unchanging and intrinsic to the patient, rather than socially produced and negotiated based on dominant ideologies and prevailing social norms”. The
singular, static cultural ‘identity’ is reinforced by the ideas of being ‘competent’. However, in the data, Ria disrupts this through speaking about the intersections of her gender and cultural identities (figure 8d).

**Figure 8d: Becoming intersectional**

I’m Indian and one of my assistants is Irish and another one’s Australian, so we are from very different countries... so we started talking about different countries, cultures, we bought a map, a globe... they’re looking at different countries, just the identity of different languages. We had another boy who was Indian and he moved here and he didn’t speak any English so I talked to him in Hindi. Ria (R324-31)

[A child] came over and just did this (pulls up sleeve) and I said what are you doing and they said, ‘I’m just checking to see if you’re the same colour all over’... the skin colour all over thing just stuck in my mind because I thought it was fascinating because I didn’t even think, oh, they didn’t know that, maybe they think I’m different underneath my clothes. Parvesh (P341-7)

Educators should support children’s ‘shared identity as Australians’ (DEEWR, 2009, p.23) if national identity is open to contest, this is an expression of national weakness (Howard, as cited in Stratton, 1998, p.106)

Australian government discourses about Australian citizenship were actively and deliberately reinscribing whiteness as a nonspoken yet essential ingredient to be a ‘real’ Australian citizen (Davis, Mac Naughton & Smith, 2009, p.58) I was raised in India and in India, they give a lot of stress to girls being pretty because that’s your meal ticket, if you are beautiful and dumb and pretty you will get married... when you’re raised in that environment when everything you do is about that, ‘don’t run on the road because you’re going to get a mark on your leg if you fall down’ or ‘don’t do this’ or ‘put cream on your face and hands because you need to have soft hands and things like that’. So I think I feel more strongly about it than a lot of people who haven’t been raised in that environment. Ria (R399-407)

[Cultural competence] is the ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures (DEEWR, 2009, p.16) their skins may be different from yours... but inside, their hearts are just like yours (Fox, 1997, p.4-12)

For Ria, there were instances where she did apply ‘multicultural’ resources to the curriculum to explore the many languages and ethnicities of the children and teachers
and there were instances where her intersectional gendered cultural identities explicitly influenced her teaching. Relating to her own ‘identity’ as an immigrant in Australia, Ria spoke strongly of culture being important for children’s identities and described both the exploration and challenging of cultural expectations. This is not a simplistic, singular view of culture; rather than a one-way application of culture to teaching practice, it becomes a relationship which, for Ria, exists as a partial compliance and partial resistance and one in which Ria’s feminist identities disrupts her cultural identities which then disrupts the simplistic assumption of cultural competence consisting of communication and interactions. Becoming ‘competent’ in culture also presumes that culture itself is static and singular. Rather than teachers being “incited to ‘mastery’ over culture” (Hester, 2012, p.280), cultural identities could be understood as sites of compliance and resistance—exploring how people shift through their performances of cultural identities, rather than relying on socialisation theories that presume children will become culturally competent by absorbing the culture surrounding them in the curriculum. Using critical whiteness theory, the idea of being ‘competent’ in another’s culture presents as “commodifying non-white peoples and cultures...transform[ing] them into objects for white appropriation and use” (Sullivan, 2006, p.122), a problematically colonial positioning.

While not explicitly naming it as ‘culture’, all of the participants spoke of the influence of family identities, structure and life on children’s identities (A26, R9, S9, P111). These ideas could be expanded to envelop the social, racial, religious, gender and class cultures of families. There is scope here to enlarge the vision of cultural competence, to welcome the multiple and intersectional cultural identities of children. It disrupts the discourse to shift from cultural competence existing as the product of effective communication and moves towards postmodernist understandings in which there is no homogenous, measurable narrative about what constitutes a culture and the ways in which this culture should be utilised. Butler’s (1999) gender performativity could be used to consider how power and
desirability shape the performance of cultural identities, as well as the lived experience of what it is like to perform multiple cultural identities.

My own narrative

The idea of skin-colour checking, shared identities as Australians and being a ‘white Australian’ circulated in my thinking- overlapping, connecting, rupturing each other continuously. I can only (officially) be named as an Australian because of colonial invasion, the renamings of this land, the White Australia policy and that this land has not been invaded or renamed during my life span. Because of this, I consider my ‘national identity’ to be a fiction, held in place by political and social discourses and the official documentation of my life as an Anglo-Celtic Australian. Critical whiteness theories provide a line of flight to recognise the privilege this ‘identity’ promises. While I consider that I can use my own whiteness to disrupt white racist thinking (Gillburn, as cited in Orelus, 2011), I am wary of Sullivan’s (2006) warning that the focus on disrupting white privilege can still centre white ways of knowing and thinking.

Crosley-Corcoran’s (2013) class-based critique on McIntosh’s (1990) infamous ‘white knapsack’ article forces me to consider the intersectionality of white privilege and my multiple cultural identities. The EYLF’s concept of singular, racial, cultural competence renders my racial cultural identities in the early childhood classroom as irrelevant because I can speak English fluently while also rendering my social cultural identities as an anarchist, feminist, punk and as (desired) working-class as irrelevant through the non-inclusion of social cultures into the cultural competency definition.

Implications for documentation
The ability to document cultural identities presumes that culture can be observed and articulated and that through its transference from a lived experience into an activity and then into written documentation it can retain an objective meaning and that as it transfers between these contexts and persons, it is not affected by power or desirability.

This is a difficult assumption as a child performing cultural identities cannot be held as irrefutable evidence of attaining cultural competence. The observation alone is not enough to understand the motivation for the performance or the meaning this documentation has for the ‘identity’ of the child. Thus how discourses of cultural identities are shared and discussed with children should be considered. This could open a space to think about intersectional, shifting and multiple cultural identities through documentation. Documentation of cultural identities could be disrupted and re-read through the discourses of belonging in the EYLF, postcolonial theories and critical whiteness theories.

While Ria and Parvesh spoke explicitly of cultural identities, they did not speak of how they documented this or what they would use this documentation for. Documentation could make explicit how children use political and social discourses to position their own national identities, the identities of others and become positioned by others. This could be used in strategic ways in teaching for equity.

However, while I feel sanctioned to write these ideas in my thesis, what would it mean to document children’s performances of national identities and perhaps name these as racist or colonial? What could teachers risk if they use the highly desired cultural capital of documentation to talk about these ideas?

Ethics of an encounter as a theoretical positioning for documentation

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In the methodology, I asked:

*What are teachers’ understandings, thoughts and tensions on documenting ‘identity’?*

These lines of flight have shown that ‘identity’ is often thought about in singular, socialised ways- yet there is a desire to speak about the gender and cultural identities of children. The participants all stated that they would choose to do documentation if it were not a legal requirement, claiming documentation to give “respect” (R534), “validity” (S90), have a “profound impact” (A379) and act as “evidence” (P300). It could be suggested that the participants are using their documentation with the political intent of gaining respect from families and the wider community. The data about completing Transition Learning and Development Statements has begun to draw out the tensions of communicating non-static interpretations of ‘identity’ to families and educators in primary school settings- while also possibly becoming a document educators use to demonstrate the value of early childhood education and their teaching. While ‘validity’ and ‘evidence’ are embedded in the language of modernity, these terms can be appropriated to document identities in political and strategic ways that will privilege or benefit the situations, discourses or people involved; thus becoming ‘evidence’ that gender and cultural identities are relevant and important to be thinking about in early childhood services rather than remaining “subjugated knowledge” (Robinson, 2013, p.28). Shelli talked of the “tap” (S187) that educators have into the vast expanse of people’s lives; something which could be accessed to tell stories within and beyond the developmental expectations of early childhood.

I have begun to draw out the ethical and legal implications of documenting identities within this chapter. The idea of documenting identities for the sole purpose of becoming accountable to governmental bodies has now been positioned as a neoliberal and disrespectful idea. Through postanarchist theory, this would be seen as “political power.
[that] distorts and stultifies what would otherwise be free human relations” (Newman, 2010b, p.36) - meaning that if documentation is created for the sole purpose of assessment, then it is constructing identities, cultures and relationships as market commodities, rather than being the encounters between people within the early childhood setting. Documentation of children’s identities must recognise it can only ever be partial and its purpose becomes to disrupt the tightly held developmental discourses that constrain how children’s identities are understood. This has important equity considerations for how children understand the gender (including transgender) and racial identities of themselves and each other.

It is grossly presumptuous to expect that a person can be taught how to possess their own ‘identity’, let alone to expect a teacher to be able to observe an ‘identity’ and construct ‘goals’ to plan for the development of this ‘identity’. In talking about the teacher’s role within ‘identity’, Parvesh states “my role isn’t to change it” (P235) and Ariel says “it’s more like you’re just helping them to share it really” (A232). I now return to Bogue’s (2008) idea of ‘inducing an encounter’ and Levinas’ (1987) ‘ethics of an encounter’.

Newman (2010b, p.54) explains Levinas’ ethics of an encounter as “the sense in which we are disturbed by the encounter with the other... this is an ethical moment because it imposes upon us a radical responsibility for the other”. This radical responsibility shifts the accountability from assessment and the ontological insecurity of finding ‘the right way’. When the encounter disturbs our intentions, it disturbs the ways in which ‘identity’ is positioned as observable and knowable. Recalling Bogue’s (2008, p.15) words, he states- “one can attempt to induce an encounter by emitting signs, by creating problematic objects, experiences or concepts”. The use of multiple theories
problematises the objects, experiences and concepts of early childhood, demanding the re-orientation of thought Bogue requests.

The documentation of these induced encounters could embrace the ‘infinite multiplicities’ of children’s identities I longed for in the literature review. This deterritorialises the EYLF-specific knowledge the teacher holds and widens the infinite possibilities for understanding children’s identities as multiple, shifting, performed and partial. This documentation can become rhizoanalysis that is done with children and the previous “monologic transmission” (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p.101) of documentation is displaced. This becomes Levinas’ (1987, p.125) “ethical event of communication”.

Within this encounter of being together “the importance of being in a community for creating and re-creating theories (many, diverse and provisional) as part of a continuous process of learning that involves theorising, dialogue, reflection and negotiation” is created and welcomes “something incalculable” (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p.101). Through this, children’s and teacher’s identities become interweaved and documented through and within these created theorisations, with the implications for equity and social justice continuously considered and re-framed.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

My research aim was to consider a conceptual framework for thinking about accountabilities of the documentation of identities. While such a thing could never become ‘complete’, there are many concepts which have now been placed for thinking about documenting identities such as Butler’s (1999) performativity and Levinas’ (1987) ethics of an encounter. I anticipate building on these ideas through future research. In this chapter, I summarise 4 main findings and the recommendations within each for documentation, research and the continuation of the rhizome.

Beginning to use rhizoanalysis in this thesis and my own documentation has allowed me to make visible the dominant discourses that position identities as singular and static and position documentation as an objective truth. With political intent, I have been able to access other texts which create cracks within these discourses to expose multiple theorisations of documenting identities. Using critical whiteness theories shifted my understandings significantly in uncomfortable and unsettling ways, and in doing so, offered much to my understandings of being a teacher and a beginning researcher. Feminist poststructuralist and queer theories made me interrogate and reconceptualise the data and my own gender equity work in ways that exposed my own teaching as relying on gender binaries. A significant research gap in working for transgender equity was also exposed. Anarchist and postanarchist theories provided an important space for seeking how powerful political discourses circulate throughout the EYLF and to seek understandings of how and why people comply or resist with ‘top-down’ power discourses. All of these theories expose how power circulates through gender, racial and governmentality discourses, providing the space for teachers to think differently about children’s identities.

Findings and recommendations
**Finding 1- Teacher identities**

The data showed that teachers were emotionally invested in ‘getting it right’ when documenting the identities of children, which was exacerbated by political, media and social media discourses re-mapping the dominant discourses that documentation should be ‘quick’, ‘easy’ and ‘achievable’. This, in turn, strengthens the concept of children having a singular, static ‘identity’ that can be easily and quickly documented, again influencing the significant ontological insecurity around performing documentation in ‘the right way’. The use of multiple theories and texts began to destabilise ‘the right way’ discourse and offered the possibility to understand the documentation of identities as always partial.

**Recommendations**

For documentation

Using social media to reach a wide audience, teachers can use their documentation in political and strategic ways that disrupt the ‘the right way’ discourse. Rhizoanalysis unsettles this discourse to show the complexities in documenting children’s identities. This is not to create more ontological insecurity, but is to rupture the binary thinking that presumes documentation can be ‘right’ or ‘wrong’. Using rhizoanalysis in documentation can show the partiality and multiplicity of how children are observed, of how identities can be theorised and makes the question of ‘the right way’ become moot.

While writing this thesis, my own documentation has changed- positioned as an encounter, it refuses to create anything more than a temporary platform to speak from. My dialogue with children has become about the discourses they shape, the ‘rules’ they adhere to, the ways in which they find sanctions and barriers and use these to support
their theorisations, while acknowledging that this can only ever be a partial understanding, blurred by my own subjectivities and discourses and of what the child chooses to share with me. With documentation creating only a temporary platform, it resists modernity’s need for closure (Moss, 2013) and rather presents as …to be continued...

I anticipate disseminating much of this research through professional development, allowing a space where professional and pre-service development can circulate counter-discourses to unsettle the singular, static ‘identity’. I also anticipate disseminating the research through social media spaces, to directly contest and unsettle the work of consultancies who are re-mapping the singular, static and knowable identities of children. There is also a need for professional development that explores ways of using rhizoanalysis in services with other educators, families and children.

For research
There is a research gap to explore how the prevalence of social media, mainstream and alternative media and political discourses are shaping the discourses of documentation in early childhood and the impact of this on government policies, service policies and the practices of teachers.

For the rhizome
The rhizome can be continued through postanarchist theory, exploring the ways in which regimes of truth are created and give power to support particular political perspectives and to seek disruptions that begin to create alternate narratives.

Rhizoanalysis has the potential to allow documentation of children’s identities to be read and re-read through diverse texts, such as academic/non-academic texts, popular culture,
children’s stories and so on. It needs to be considered whether postdevelopmental theories are accessible and useable within documentation, while also recognising that ‘non-academic’ works provide theoretical insights and ruptures.

**Finding 2- Singular identities**

The data showed that identities were often thought about in singular ways. I believe this is largely influenced by ‘the right way’ discourse as well as the way the EYLF writes about ‘identity’ as a singular concept. Where self-awareness and interests were talked about, the use of rhizoanalysis made it possible to understand these ideas through many theoretical lenses, opening the possibility to think about identities as intersectional, multiple and complex within documentation.

**Recommendations**

**For documentation**

It is tempting to document singular identities to meet ‘the right way’ discourses. However, rhizoanalysis has disrupted the developmental underpinnings of self-awareness and interest-based planning. Using the ethics of an encounter as a site for documentation, these postdevelopmental understandings can be explored with children to continue exposing identities as multiple and shifting performances.

**For research**

As interest-based planning is positioned as ‘best practice’ in Australia, there is a definite research gap to continue troubling this idea and thinking about interests through class, racial, gender, sexual and religious identities and to consider what these means for documenting identities and curriculum development.
For the rhizome

Continuing from Ariel’s reply to the analysis, self-awareness could be read through post-humanist lenses to uncover how this could continue to disrupt developmental ideas of self-awareness.

Finding 3- Gender identities

The major finding here is that gender identities are absent from the EYLF, yet despite this, two participants were committed to gender identities work. A finding within this is that educators do not need gender identities to be included within the EYLF to sustain their emotional and personal investments in gender identities work. This opens future possibilities for considering how and why educators become and remain committed to gender identities work, as well as what theories educators are using to think about gender identities within the curriculum.

Another finding is that young children are identifying as transgender and there is a distinct lack of theoretical and practical narratives on transgender equity to assist educators within their gender identities work.

Recommendations

For documentation

The ‘heterosexual matrix’ provides a tool for thinking about why children perform particular gender identities. It can provide a space within documentation to speak about children’s shifting and multiple performances of gender. Storybooks, movies, TV shows, songs and oral stories are part of our personal gender stories - the accessibility of these makes them powerful mediums for theorising with children about gender identities. This
also provides a space to become “actively trans-positive” (Dykstra, 2005) within the service. Well-known narratives and stories can be ‘queered’ in their re-tellings, problematising how dominant storytellers (ie, Disney) normalise the possibilities for gender identities (Griffin, 2000; Giroux & Pollock, 2010) and inducing an encounter in which children can articulate the ways in which they find sanctions and possibilities for thinking about the identities of themselves and others.

For research
Narratives about transgender children are becoming more frequently heard in mainstream media (Brockie, 2013; Campbell, 2013), but there is little research or publications for educators to access to support transgender equity work, creating a clear research gap. Such research could be framed within queer theories to question and problematise the heteronormativity embedded in mainstream early childhood studies and practices (Blaise, 2005; Janmohamed, 2010; Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2006; Sumara & Davis, 1999).

For the rhizome
Documenting gender identities with children could continue this rhizome through children’s theorisations of gender identities and expressions, as well to continue seeking disruptions through queer theories.

Finding 4- Cultural identities

The data and ‘cultural competence’ within the EYLF showed that cultural identities are mostly thought of in singular, racial ways but also held promise for understanding identities as intersectional and expanding the concept of ‘culture’ within the EYLF.
Using critical whiteness theories, the data on children’s understandings of skin colour was deconstructed to consider how powerful discourses, such as the ‘white Australian identity’, operate to influence the relationships between people within early childhood settings.

**Recommendations**

**For documentation**
Documentation could be used as a dialogue to explore how national identities are held in place by the media (Stratton, 1998) and how the utilisation of these discourses create what Srinivasan (2012, p.87) names a ‘terra strike’- the “commitment to their borders, ‘terra’, the nation and national identity”. Documentation could be strategically used to induce encounters about race and racism.

**For research**
The use of critical white theories could further interrogate the idea of the ‘shared identity as Australians’ and begin to unmask how white privilege operates within ‘cultural competence’ for children, families and educators. While children’s racial identities have been researched recently within Australian early childhood services (Davis et al, 2009; Srinivasan, 2012), this still seems a risky conversation within practice, yet the equity implications of these understandings outweighs the perceived awkwardness of talking explicitly about racial identities. Mac Naughton (2001, p.36) writes that educators “cannot afford to simply wait for them to grow out of sorting and classifying themselves and others in nationalities and ‘races’”. Further research could work to continue centreing racial identities as an important conversation, as well as continuing to strengthen the idea of culture being more than racial culture.
For the rhizome

Hester’s (2012) suggestion that if cultural competence was considered through critical race theory that it would necessitate a shift in both name and theoretical foundations, offers a continued line of flight from the developmental and socialisation discourses of ‘cultural competence’.

Continuing the research

This research was limited by the sample size and time constraints required by the Masters degree. Extending these research ideas over a longer timeframe and with more participants, including children and families, could yield a wider range of data and considerations on documenting identities. Class, religious and sexual identities that were silent in this data could be purposively sought.

There is also the consideration that the participants have not presented a ‘whole’ account of their ideas, but rather performed their identities as teachers in specific ways. Ria explained at the end of her interview:

“I thought I would write a few points last night and I was thinking do I just want to do all my best things or what I’m not doing…” (R542-3).

The rhizome can be endlessly continued and has many lines of flight leading into political history, queer theory, post-humanist theory and the ways in which children use, or are used by, cultural capital in the performance of their identities. During this time of government reform, there is a particular need for continuing the rhizome with postanarchist theories to problematise how the assessment system works to enshrine Foucauldian governmentality of early childhood education and ways to resist this. There
is also space for contesting the academic/non-academic binary I am aware of positioning throughout this rhizome.

A final note

Writing about transgender identities as ‘imagined’ identities initially seemed insensitive when ‘imagined’ is the opposite to ‘real’. However, I began to consider that all identities are imagined and explore the way people position themselves in the world and use the world to position themselves- identities (racial, national, gender, class, religious, sexual, etc) are shaped through the desire to be perceived as or connected to a particular group or ideology. While some identities are strongly held in place by socially constructed discourses (ie, performing a ceremony in a particular way sanctions the title of ‘wife’), these are all ‘imagined’ identities. It is understanding why these become desirable, how power discourses support or limit the performance of these identities and recognising the struggles people have in trying to perform the identities they want to associate with that becomes important. In recognising this, ‘imagined’ exposes that all identities are ‘un-real’, illuminating how people use socially constructed discourses in why and how they imagine or do not imagine themselves to be and, in doing so, opens the possibilities to think otherwise.

If all identities are considered a matter of desire, then this has enormous implications for documentation and the Identity Outcome. It positions that identities cannot be quantifiable or observable, but that documentation of identities becomes an ongoing dialogue with children and a re-turn to Giroux’s (2011) ideas of being ethically and politically accountable for the stories produced. Within these induced encounters of ongoing dialogue, there is not the aspiration to reach a ‘truth’ or a finalised conceptualisation of children’s identities. Documentation becomes a continued, messy,
intersectional and rhizomatic narrative in which, in light of the findings above but certainly not limited to, educators and children can create and re-create stories of identities and desire. Within this, there are many texts that can be drawn on to both support and challenge these stories and to consistently work for equity. The use of rhizoanalysis within documentation holds the potential to continue to “destabilize and challenge the known” (Leafgren, 2009, p.113).
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APPENDIX ONE: IDENTITY OUTCOME IN THE EYLF

The EYLF’s Identity Outcome is written below in full.

Preamble:
OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF IDENTITY
Belonging, being and becoming are integral parts of identity. Children learn about themselves and construct their own identity within the context of their families and communities. This includes their relationships with people, places and things and the actions and responses of others. Identity is not fixed. It is shaped by experiences. When children have positive experiences they develop an understanding of themselves as significant and respected, and feel a sense of belonging. Relationships are the foundations for the construction of identity – ‘who I am’, ‘how I belong’ and ‘what is my influence?’ In early childhood settings children develop a sense of belonging when they feel accepted, develop attachments and trust those that care for them. As children are developing their sense of identity, they explore different aspects of it (physical, social, emotional, spiritual, cognitive), through their play and their relationships. When children feel safe, secure and supported they grow in confidence to explore and learn. The concept of being reminds educators to focus on children in the here and now, and of the importance of children’s right to be a child and experience the joy of childhood. Being involves children developing an awareness of their social and cultural heritage, of gender and their significance in their world. Becoming includes children building and shaping their identity through their evolving experiences and relationships which include change and transitions. Children are always learning about the impact of their personal beliefs and values. Children’s agency, as well as guidance, care and teaching by families and educators shape children’s experiences of becoming.

DEEWR, 2009, p.20
OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF IDENTITY
Children feel safe, secure and supported

This is evident, for example, when children:
• build secure attachments with one and then more familiar educators
• use effective routines to help make predicted transitions smoothly
• sense and respond to a feeling of belonging
• communicate their needs for comfort and assistance
• establish and maintain respectful, trusting relationships with other children and educators
• openly express their feelings and ideas in their interactions with others
• respond to ideas and suggestions from Others
• initiate interactions and conversations with trusted educators
• confidently explore and engage with social and physical environments through relationships and play
• initiate and join in play
• explore aspects of identity through role play

Educators promote this learning, for example, when they:
• acknowledge and respond sensitively to children’s cues and signals
• respond sensitively to children’s attempts to initiate interactions and conversations
• support children’s secure attachment through consistent and warm nurturing relationships
• support children in times of change and bridge the gap between the familiar and the unfamiliar
• build upon culturally valued child rearing practices and approaches to learning
• are emotionally available and support children’s expression of their thoughts and feelings
• recognise that feelings of distress, fear or discomfort may take some time to resolve
• acknowledge each child’s uniqueness in positive ways
• spend time interacting and conversing with each child

DEEWR, 2009, p. 21
OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF IDENTITY
Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency.

This is evident, for example, when children:
- demonstrate increasing awareness of the needs and rights of others
- be open to new challenges and discoveries
- increasingly co-operate and work collaboratively with others
- take considered risk in their decision-making and cope with the unexpected
- recognise their individual achievements and the achievements of others
- demonstrate an increasing capacity for self-regulation
- approach new safe situations with confidence
- begin to initiate negotiating and sharing behaviours
- persist when faced with challenges and when first attempts are not successful

Educators promote this learning, for example, when they:
- provide children with strategies to make informed choices about their behaviours
- promote children’s sense of belonging, connectedness and wellbeing
- maintain high expectations of each child’s capabilities
- mediate and assist children to negotiate their rights in relation to the rights of others
- provide opportunities for children to engage independently with tasks and play
- display delight, encouragement and enthusiasm for children’s attempts
- support children’s efforts, assisting and encouraging as appropriate
- motivate and encourage children to succeed when they are faced with challenges
- provide time and space for children to engage in both individual and collaborative pursuits
- build on the culturally valued learning of individual children’s communities
- encourage children to make choices and decisions

DEEW, 2009, p. 22
OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF IDENTITY
Children develop knowledgeable and confident self identities.

This is evident, for example, when children:
• feel recognised and respected for who they are
• explore different identities and points of view in dramatic play
• share aspects of their culture with the other children and educators
• use their home language to construct meaning
• develop strong foundations in both the culture and language/s of their family and of the broader community without compromising their cultural identities
• develop their social and cultural heritage through engagement with Elders and community members
• reach out and communicate for comfort, assistance and companionship
• celebrate and share their contributions and achievements with others

Educators promote this learning, for example, when they:
• promote in all children a strong sense of who they are and their connectedness to others – a shared identity as Australians
• ensure all children experience pride and confidence in their achievements
• share children’s successes with families
• show respect for diversity, acknowledging the varying approaches of children, families, communities and cultures
• acknowledge and understand that children construct meaning in many different ways
• demonstrate deep understanding of each child, their family and community contexts in planning for children’s learning
• provide children with examples of the many ways identities and culture are recognised and expressed
• build upon culturally valued approaches to learning
• build on the knowledge, languages and understandings that children bring
• talk with children in respectful ways about similarities and differences in people
• provide rich and diverse resources that reflect children’s social worlds
• listen to and learn about children’s understandings of themselves
• actively support the maintenance of home language and culture
• develop authentic children’s understanding of themselves

DEEWRR, 2009, p. 23
OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF IDENTITY
Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect.

This is evident, for example, when children:
• show interest in other children and being part of a group
• engage in and contribute to shared play experiences
• express a wide range of emotions, thoughts and views constructively
• empathise with and express concern for others
• display awareness of and respect for others’ perspectives
• reflect on their actions and consider consequences for others

Educators promote this learning, for example, when they:
• initiate one-to-one interactions with children, particularly babies and toddlers, during daily routines
• organise learning environments in ways that promote small group interactions and play experiences
• model care, empathy and respect for children, staff and families
• model explicit communication strategies to support children to initiate interactions and join in play and social experiences in ways that sustain productive relationships with other children
• acknowledge children’s complex relationships and sensitively intervene in ways that promote consideration of alternative perspectives and social inclusion

DEEWR, 2009, p. 24
APPENDIX TWO: QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEW
The focus of my research is exploring the relationship between documentation (the written work we produce), identity (as in the first Learning Outcome of the EYLF) and our accountability requirements (how we are responsible for documenting the curriculum for the NQF and assessment purposes). I am interested in whether accountability requirements should be linked to children’s sense of identity and the implications of this.

Questions
1. How would you describe identity? What do you use to help you think about identity within your workplace? (For example- other teachers, theory, the Early Years Learning Framework, readings, seminars?)

2. How do you document and interpret identity or understandings of identity within your workplace? How/why do you document and interpret the changes and developments in children’s identities over time? What difficulties or tensions surround this?

3. What do you use this documentation for? Who or what do you feel accountable to within your documentation? How is it shared with families, children, the community?

4. In your role as a teacher, do you intentionally include ideas of ‘identity’ within the curriculum? Why? Could you give an example of this? How do you see your role regarding children’s identities?

5. What implications do you feel assessment puts onto your work regarding documentation and identity? If you have been assessed through the NQF validation, what opportunities did you have to share your thinking or documentation?

6. Although we need to document to meet legal requirements, some researchers suggest that there could be more of a focus on ethical accountability within documentation. Is this something you have considered within your own work? Can you explain your ideas?

7. If documentation wasn’t required by assessment, would you still document? If so, what would you choose to document? What purpose could documentation fulfill outside of accountability requirements?
APPENDIX THREE: RECRUITMENT FLYER

Thinking about ‘Identity’ in the Early Years Learning Framework

My name is Rebecca Simpson-Dal Santo and I am studying for my Master of Education at the University of Melbourne. My supervisor is Dr. Kylie Smith. I am undertaking research regarding documentation, identity and accountability within early childhood settings. I want to explore what this means for teachers working in kindergartens and long day care centres and how they use the Early Years Learning Framework to think about documentation and identity. As a kindergarten teacher myself, this is an area of interest to me.

I am planning to interview up to eight early childhood teachers between August and early October.

What is this research for?
The purpose of this research is to explore how teachers think about and enact practice around identity, documentation and accountability in light of new requirements through the Early Years Learning Framework. I am interested in whether accountability requirements should be linked to children’s sense of identity and the implications of this.

Participant criteria for this research is:
Qualified kindergarten teacher currently employed in an early childhood setting with responsibilities for documentation.

What do you have to do?
If you are interested in participating in this research or would like to find out more, please contact me via email or telephone. If you would like to participate, we can arrange a convenient time and place for conducting an interview. Please note that the closing date for registering your Expression of Interest is September 25, 2013.

Email: rebecca.simpson-dalsanto@hotmail.com

Phone or text: 0425.xxx.xxx
APPENDIX FOUR: CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS

PROJECT TITLE:
“Thinking about ‘Identity’ in the Early Years Learning Framework”

Name of participant:

Name of investigator(s): Rebecca Simpson-Dal Santo (Master of Education student) Dr. Kylie Smith (Research Supervisor)

1. I consent to participate in this project, the details of which have been explained to me, and I have been provided with a written plain language statement to keep.

2. I understand that after I sign and return this consent form it will be retained by the researcher.

3. I understand that my participation will involve one semi-structured interview and I agree that the researcher may use the results as described in the plain language statement. The length of the interview will be approximately 60 minutes. I acknowledge that I will be provided with a copy of the questions prior to the interview and that I have been asked to bring a piece of documentation regarding identity. It is my choice whether the researcher can retain a copy of this or not. I understand that I will be contacted via email or telephone post-interview to read the transcript of the interview and discuss the analysis of the data. This will span up to approximately 60 minutes.

4. I acknowledge that:

(a) the possible effects of participating in the interview have been explained to my satisfaction;

(b) I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without explanation or prejudice and to withdraw any unprocessed data I have provided;

(c) the project is voluntary and for the purpose of research;
(d) I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded subject to any legal requirements;

(e) I have been informed that with my consent the interview will be audio-taped and I understand that audio-tapes will be stored securely and will be destroyed after five years;

(f) I have been informed that a copy of the research findings will be forwarded to me, should I agree to this.

Participant signature: _____________________________ Date: ______________________________

I wish to receive a copy of the research findings
☐ yes  ☐ no
(please tick)

I want to be identified by my own first name in the research report/publications
☐ yes  ☐ no
(please tick)

I want to be identified by a pseudonym in the research report/publications
☐ yes  ☐ no
(please tick)

If yes, please write a preferred pseudonym ______________________________

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APPENDIX FIVE: PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT

Dr. Kylie Smith (supervisor)
Melbourne Graduate School of Education
ph: 8344 4084
kylieas@unimelb.edu.au

Ms. Rebecca Simpson-Dal Santo (Masters student)
Melbourne Graduate School of Education
ph. 0425 xxx xxx
rebecca.simpson-dalsanto@hotmail.com

Project: “Thinking about ‘Identity’ in the Early Years Learning Framework

Introduction
My name is Rebecca Simpson-Dal Santo; I am a kindergarten teacher and Masters student at the University of Melbourne. In my Masters thesis, I am exploring the relationship between documentation (the written work teachers produce), Identity (as in the Learning Outcome from the Early Years Learning Framework) and accountability requirements (as in assessment through the National Quality Framework). I am seeking teachers to be involved in this research to explore meanings and understandings about documentation, identity and accountability. This project has received clearance by The University of Melbourne’s Human Research Ethics Committee.

What will I be asked to do?
Should you agree to participate, you would be asked to contribute in two ways. There would be one semi-structured interview- this would be about exploring your own ideas about documentation, identity and accountability and questions would be provided before the interview. As a participant, you will also be asked to bring a (de-identified) piece of documentation about identity with you; I would like to retain a copy of this, with your permission. The interviews would be tape-recorded to ensure an accurate record of what you say. When the interview has been transcribed, you would be provided with a copy of the transcript, so that you can verify that the information is correct and/or request omissions or alterations. Secondly, as I am analyzing the interviews and data, I will contact you to gain your perspective on how I have written about this. I estimate that the semi-structured
interview would take up to 60 minutes and would be conducted at a mutually convenient time and place between August and September. The post-interview discussion should span approximately 60 minutes and will take place via email or telephone.

**How will my confidentiality be protected?**

Your anonymity and the confidentiality of your responses will be kept to the fullest possible extent, within the limits of the law. Your name and contact details will be kept in a separate, password-protected computer file from any data that you supply. In the final report, you may choose to be referred to by a pseudonym or your own first name in the research report and any subsequent publications. This option is on the consent form. If you choose to be identified by your own first name, the right to anonymity is waived. By choosing a pseudonym, any references to personal information that might allow someone to guess your identity will be removed, however, you should note that as the number of people who will be interviewed is small, it is possible that someone may still be able to identify you. The data will be kept securely for five years within the Education Department at Melbourne University from the date of publication, before being destroyed.

**How will I receive feedback?**

I will provide feedback to you as I am analyzing and writing about the data to ensure you are comfortable about what has been written. After completion, I would be honoured to provide you with a general research report. I will endeavour to contact you prior to any academic presentations or publications that may arise from this research. You are also welcome to call or email me with questions, ideas or concerns and my research supervisor, Dr. Kylie Smith, is also contactable.

**Will participation prejudice me in any way?**

Please be advised that your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Should you wish to withdraw at any stage, or to withdraw any unprocessed data you have supplied, you are free to do so without prejudice.

**Where can I get further information?**

Should you require any further information, or have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact myself or Dr. Kylie Smith on the numbers given above. Should you have any concerns about the conduct of the project, you are welcome to contact the Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics, The University of Melbourne, on ph: 8344 2073, or fax: 9347 6739.
How do I agree to participate?
If you would like to participate, please indicate that you have read and understood this information by signing the accompanying consent form and returning it via email, post or in person. I will then contact you to arrange a mutually convenient time to organize an interview.
APPENDIX SIX: LETTER TO DIRECTOR OF SERVICE

Dr. Kylie Smith (supervisor)
Melbourne Graduate School of Education
ph: 8344 4084
kylieas@unimelb.edu.au

Ms. Rebecca Simpson-Dal Santo (Masters student)
Melbourne Graduate School of Education
ph. 0425 xxx xxx
rebecca.simpson-dalsanto@hotmail.com

Project: Thinking about ‘Identity’ in the Early Years Learning Framework

Introduction
My name is Rebecca Simpson-Dal Santo; I am a kindergarten teacher and Masters student at the University of Melbourne. In my Masters thesis, I am exploring the relationship between documentation (the written work teachers produce), Identity (as in the Learning Outcome from the Early Years Learning Framework) and accountability requirements (as in assessment through the National Quality Framework). I am seeking teachers to be involved in this research to explore meanings and understandings about documentation, identity and accountability. This project has received clearance by The University of Melbourne’s Human Research Ethics Committee.

I am inviting teachers to participate in this study.

The teachers will participate in one semi-structured interview- this would be about exploring their own ideas about documentation, identity and accountability and questions would be provided before the interview. The participants will also be asked to bring a (de-identified with no information about the service or children) piece of documentation about identity with them; with their permission, I will retain a copy of this. The interviews will be tape-recorded to ensure an accurate record of the interview. When the interview has been transcribed, the participants will be provided with a copy of the transcript, so that they can verify that the information is correct and/or request omissions or alterations. Secondly, as I am analyzing the interviews and data, I will contact the participants to gain your perspective on how I have written about this. I estimate that the semi-structured interview would take up to 60 minutes and would be conducted at a mutually convenient time and place between August and September. The post-interview discussion should span approximately 60 minutes and will take place via email or telephone.
How will their confidentiality be protected?

The participants’ anonymity and the confidentiality of their responses will be kept to the fullest possible extent, within the limits of the law. Their names and contact details will be kept in a separate, password-protected computer file from any data. Participants will have the option to be referred to in the research report and subsequent publications by their own first names or a pseudonym. If they choose a pseudonym, any references to personal information that might allow someone to guess their identity will be removed, however, as the number of people who will be interviewed is small, it is possible that someone may still be able to identify the participants. The data will be kept securely for five years within the Education Department at Melbourne University from the date of publication, before being destroyed.

Where can I get further information?

Should you, or the teachers participating in the study, require any further information, or have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact myself or Dr. Kylie Smith on the numbers given above. Should you have any concerns about the conduct of the project, you are welcome to contact the Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics, The University of Melbourne, on ph: 8344 2073, or fax: 9347 6739.
APPENDIX SEVEN: CONSENT FORM FOR DIRECTORS

PROJECT TITLE:
“Thinking about ‘Identity’ in the Early Years Learning Framework”

Name of director: 

Name of investigator(s): Rebecca Simpson-Dal Santo (Master of Education student)  
Dr. Kylie Smith (Research Supervisor)

1. I consent for the early childhood teacher employed in my service to participate in this project, the details of which have been explained to me, and I have been provided with a written plain language statement to keep.

2. I understand that after I sign and return this consent form it will be retained by the researcher.

3. I acknowledge that:

(a) the possible effects of participating in the interview have been explained to the satisfaction of the early childhood teacher.

(b) the early childhood teacher has been informed that they are free to withdraw from the project at any time without explanation or prejudice and to withdraw any unprocessed data they have provided;

(c) the project is voluntary and for the purpose of research;

(d) the early childhood teacher has been informed that the confidentiality of the information they provide will be safeguarded subject to any legal requirements;

(e) the early childhood teacher has been informed that with their consent the interview will be audio-taped and understand that audio-tapes will be stored securely and will be destroyed after five years;

(f) the early childhood teacher has been informed that a copy of the research findings will be forwarded to them, should they agree to this.

Director signature: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________
### APPENDIX EIGHT: RECRUITMENT AVENUES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Avenue</th>
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<th>Recruitments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'A' Online early childhood network (Facebook group)</td>
<td>1/8/13</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'B' Online early childhood network (Facebook group)</td>
<td>1/8/13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘C’ Council Teacher Network Meeting</td>
<td>14/8/13</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘C’ PSFO email</td>
<td>17/8/13</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘D’ PSFO email</td>
<td>17/8/13</td>
<td>Council didn’t reply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘E’ Kindergarten Association</td>
<td>22/8/13</td>
<td>Association didn’t reply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘C’ PSFO email</td>
<td>28/8/13</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Education class</td>
<td>28/8/13</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word of Mouth</td>
<td>30/8/13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘F’ Council email</td>
<td>10/9/13</td>
<td>Council didn’t reply</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX NINE: PARTICIPANT TIMELINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Consent PLS sent</th>
<th>Qs sent</th>
<th>Interview</th>
<th>Artifact collected</th>
<th>Transcript sent</th>
<th>Member check received</th>
<th>Analysis Sent</th>
<th>Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ariel</td>
<td>1/8</td>
<td>3/8</td>
<td>12/8</td>
<td>Yes Data code (A)</td>
<td>13/8</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>19/12</td>
<td>Yes Data code (A,Resp)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelli</td>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td>15/8</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>16/8</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>19/12</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ria</td>
<td>22/8</td>
<td>24/8</td>
<td>28/8</td>
<td>Yes Data code (R,Docu)</td>
<td>5/9</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>19/12</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parvesh</td>
<td>9/9</td>
<td>19/9</td>
<td>7/10</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>8/10</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>19/12</td>
<td>No</td>
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</table>
Author/s:
SIMPSON-DAL SANTO, REBECCA

Title:
Thinking about 'Identity' in the Early Years Learning Framework

Date:
2014

Persistent Link:
http://hdl.handle.net/11343/40979

File Description:
Thinking about 'Identity' in the Early Years Learning Framework