

Resource reviews

By Phillip Rowell

Skilled dialogue: Strategies for responding to cultural diversity in early childhood.

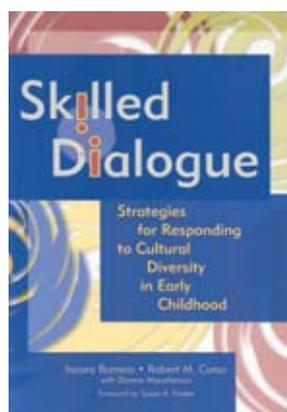
This resource provides child care professionals with the opportunity to engage in discussion and exploration of cultural diversity. The book is divided into three sections which address the:

- challenges of communicating cross culturally with stakeholders;
- process of developing an understanding of skilled dialogue; and
- development of practices and documentation tools which can assist in creating positive responses to cultural diversity.

This resource introduces the concepts of 'anchored understanding of diversity' and '3rd space', which can be broadly understood as thinking about culture from different perspectives.

The authors discuss how people often perceive diversity as a personal or group characteristic of a culture instead of the interactions and relationships which occur between people. They explain how diversity is dependent upon a range of variables, some of which are clearly identifiable such as traditions and customs, while others are more subtle.

Practitioners are encouraged to think 'outside the square' when considering cultural differences and the perceived stereotypes or cultural roles.



This resource is useful for child care professionals who aspire to understand the needs of different stakeholders and improve their understanding of cultures ■

Barrera, I., Corso, R.M., & MacPherson, D. (2003). *Skilled dialogue: Strategies for responding to cultural diversity in early childhood*. Baltimore, Md: P.H. Brookes Publishing.

Just discover! Connecting young children with the natural world.

This 'hands on', easy to read book, discusses the shift towards child care environments that reflect an urbanised society which increasingly uses artificial textures.

The authors discuss how the play that children initiate and their play experiences are affected when the natural world is removed from their learning environments, influencing their perception of the world and their relationship with animals and plants.

The resource also challenges children's understanding of the world and aims to provide children with experiences and opportunities to connect with, explore, and discover their natural environment by developing analytical thinking and cognitive skills.

The chapters include practical experiences for animal and plant science, human growth, and conservation and recycling, which are appropriate for children aged from birth to eight years. However, some older school aged children may be interested in taking part or expanding upon experiences to meet their needs.

The book also discusses several important 'best practice' guidelines, which can assist services when planning environmental experiences. For example, by focussing on children's interests and allocating plenty of time for children to complete a task.

There is an extensive list of references and websites, along with the contact details of organisations such as museums, zoos, aquariums and environmental agencies in each Australian state and territory ■



Young, T., & Elliot, S. (2003) *Just discover! Connecting young children with the natural world*. Croydon, Vic: Tertiary Press.