Connecting organisational cultures and educational leadership in early childhood centres

Andrea McFarlane
Institute of Early Childhood
Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia
- Background to reasons for present Master of Research study, including Australian education reforms
- Master of Research study details
- Organisational culture and leadership in EC, and multiple cultures
- Organisational culture/climate/ethos terminology
- Bolman and Deal’s (2013) frames of analysis of organisational culture and leadership
- Metaphors of organisational culture and leadership
- Questions
Background study: 
Barriers to Participation (B2P)

Barriers to Participation: 
The experience of disadvantaged young children, 
their families and professionals 
in engaging with early childhood services.

- Rebekah Grace, Jennifer Bowes, Michelle Trudgett, Andrea McFarlane, Toby Honig.

- Children & Families Research Centre, Institute of Early Childhood, Macquarie University.

- Funded by the New South Wales Department of Human Services, 2010.
Introduction in 2009 of the

*Early Years Learning Framework (ELYF)*

(DEEWR, 2009)

A national EC framework
designed as a guide for staff in their practices in working with children and their families.
1. How is the EYLF (DEEWR, 2009) being communicated among staff?

2. How do the structures and processes within centres support this communication?
Introduction in 2011 of the *National Quality Framework (NQF)* (ACECQA, 2011) and the *National Quality Standard (NQS)* (ACECQA, 2011)

First national approach to assist in the provision of quality EC education and care, including a national EC accreditation system.
1. How is the EYLF (DEEWR, 2009) being communicated among staff?

2. How do the structures and processes within centres support this communication?

3. How will the NQF (ACECQA, 2011) and the NQS (ACECQA, 2011) be communicated among staff?
Theoretical conceptualisations of Australian EC sector today

- Reform agenda is an ‘historically significant marker’ for EC sector (Sumson, 2009)

- EC sector is in a ‘liminal’ social state (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006)
Theoretical conceptualisations of Australian EC sector today

- Reform agenda is an ‘historically significant marker’ for EC sector (Sumsion, 2009)

- EC sector is in a ‘liminal’ social state (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006)

- A transitional phase of interpreting, understanding and putting into practice regulatory requirements

- A practice of leadership addressing actual reforms, not simply following regulations is needed (Rodd, 2013; Fenech, Giugni & Bown, 2012)
Connecting organisational cultures and educational leadership in early childhood centres

Two key research questions of the MRes study:

1. How are the requirements of the *National Quality Framework* (ACECQA, 2011) communicated within early childhood centres?
2. What factors influence the daily organisation of early childhood centres?
1. The type of leadership necessary for management of EC centres is integrally linked to positive organisational culture (Culkin, 1997).

2. Organisational culture is a relatively new notion in EC sector.

3. New focus needs to be applied to actual practice and processes of organisational culture and leadership, rather than individual traits and behaviours (Coleman, 2003; Ebbeck & Waniganayake, 2004).
- 3 Sydney metropolitan long day care centres.
- Semi-structured interviews with Directors, teachers and teaching assistants on everyday routines.
- Questionnaires completed by Directors, teachers and teaching assistants on demographics.
- Analysis of duty statements, policy statements, daily schedules, staff rosters, staff meeting agendas and minutes, Annual Reports, etc.
- Analysis of head office and centre websites.
Structural & process-relational indicators

**Structural indicators**
Waniganayake et al (2013); Fenech & Sumsion (2007)
Staff:child ratios, group sizes, teacher qualifications, indoor and outdoor spaces, health and safety.

**Process-relational indicators**
Stimulating and developmentally appropriate programming, staff and child interactions, parental involvement.
Development of organisational culture & leadership thinking

- Schein (1992) – ‘culture and leadership are two sides of the same coin’ and development of organisational culture is a group activity.

- Culkin (1997) – the leadership that is required for management of EC centres is integrally linked to positive organisational culture.

- Nivala (2002) - harmony in organisational culture is more dependent on a commitment to the present leadership model than on the content or quality of the leadership ideology.

-Muijs et al (2004) - organisational climate is strongly influenced by the quality of leadership.
Organisational culture or organisational cultures

- Multiple cultures exist in EC centres with ‘top-down’ local authority hierarchy and ‘bottom-up’ participative internal culture of the practice team.

Haltunnen (2010)
- Integration plus differentiation in organisations enables a notion of ‘subcultures’ and opportunity for individuality and group activity.

Baker (2002)
- Cultural complexity needs to be identified with a recognition of cultural differentiation and no ‘single overarching culture’.
Organisational culture terminology

**Culture**

Actual work practices with an emphasis on flatter organisational structures with teamwork, collaboration, participation and learning.

**Climate**

Mutual support and collective perceptions, attitudes, social attitude, beliefs and values which enable trust and openness.

**Ethos**

Shared visions, purpose and philosophical commitment in a context of advocacy and professionalism.
Four Frame Model: Adapted from Bolman and Deal (2013)

**Structural**
- **Factory or machine**
  - Rules, roles, goals, policies, technology, environment
  - **Leadership** – social architecture
  - **Challenge** – attune structure to task, technology, environment

**Political**
- **Jungle**
  - Power, conflict, competition, organisational politics
  - **Leadership** – advocacy, political savvy
  - **Challenge** – develop agenda and power base

**Process**

**Symbolic**
- **Carnival, temple or theatre**
  - Culture, meaning, metaphor, ritual, ceremony, stories, heroes
  - **Leadership** – inspiration
  - **Challenge** – create faith, beauty, meaning

**Human Resource**
- **Family**
  - Needs, skills, relationships
  - **Leadership** – empowerment
  - **Challenge** – align organisational and human needs

**Organisational culture**

Organisational culture

Four Frame Model: Adapted from Bolman and Deal (2013)
Metaphors in organisational culture

Jorde Bloom (1991)
Environment (outside world), people (cast of characters), structure (formal and informal arrangements), processes (how things get done), culture (what makes it unique), outcomes (effects of the program).

Culkin (2000)
Family, activity, entertainment, resilient, connections, change, growth, nurturing, surprise.

Karila (2008)
Hustle and bustle, garden, second home.

Messenger (2013)
Symbols (language, uniform), heroes (leaders, professional bodies), rituals (work practice, protocols), values (view of children, diversity).
1. Can organisational culture and leadership in EC centres be examined through frames alone?

2. Can organisational culture and leadership in EC centres be examined through metaphors alone?

3. Should organisational culture and leadership in EC centres be examined through frames and metaphors, with each informing the other?
References

References

- Facing the mountains cartoon. Retrieved on 29 May, 2014 from https://www.google.com.au/search?q=climb+mountain+cartoon&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ei=tiuHU9ecBsbGkA X9IlHYBA&ved=0CAYQ_AUoAQ&biw=900&bih=650#facrc=_&imgdii=_&imgrc=bzS8FFrSi7sDSM%253A%3BvhEKGdEZjHvoaM%3Bhttp%253A%252F%252F1.bp.blogspot.com%252F_NfKuzlQf7QdY%252FS8NNUNozNhI%252F%252FAAAABABXa%252F%252FxU0mjNvjpWA%252Fs1600%252F%252Fdec06%252Fwoman-climbing-mountains.png%3Bhttp%253A%252F%252Fpositiveinfinity.blogspot.com%252F2010%252F04%252F%252Ffacing-mountains.html%3B400%3B646