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Playing With Environmental Education

Amy Cutter-Mackenzie[1] & Susan Edwards[2]
[1]*Southern Cross University, Gold Coast Campus, Queensland, Australia*
[2]*Australian Catholic University, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia*

This article represents the early collaboration of Cutter-Mackenzie and Edwards in early childhood environmental education. The article grappled with the notion of knowledge and its role in the teaching and learning of early childhood education. At that time, 'knowledge' was viewed as difficult to integrate with play-based approaches to learning in early childhood education due to reliance in the field of traditional theories of play as a basis for early childhood pedagogy. This meant that open-ended or free play dominated practice, where the role of the teacher was invariably to *be seen but not heard*. Since the publication of this article, Cutter-Mackenzie and Edwards have rapidly expanded upon these early ideas through an active research agenda focused on the pedagogies of play in early childhood environmental education (Cutter-Mackenzie & Edwards, 2013; Cutter-Mackenzie, Edwards, Moore, & Boyd, 2014; Cutter-Mackenzie, Edwards, & Widdop Quinton, 2014; Edwards & Cutter-Mackenzie, 2011, 2103). In their most recent book, entitled *Young Children's Play and Early Childhood Education in Environmental Education*, Cutter-Mackenzie et al. (2014) identified two principles of play-based learning, drawing on three types of play, namely open-ended play, modelled play, and purposefully framed play. The first principle is that all three play-types are as equally pedagogically valuable as each other. The second principle is that the play-types can be used in multiple combinations to help teachers integrate knowledge into children's play-based learning experiences. This work represents a new approach towards the pedagogy of environmental education in early childhood. Such work repositions the early childhood educator as a pedagogue with a central role in supporting the development of conceptual learning through play-based pedagogies.

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Biographies

Amy Cutter-Mackenzie is an Associate Professor in the School of Education, Southern Cross University. She is the Director Research for the School of Education and Research Leader of the Sustainability, Environment and Education (SEE) Research Cluster (http://scu.edu.au/education/index.php/45). Amy is also the Editor of the *Australian Journal of Environmental Education*. Email: Amy.Cutter-Mackenzie@scu.edu.au

Susan Edwards is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education and Arts at the Australian Catholic University. She has research interests in play-based pedagogies in the early years. Susan is currently a Co-Editor of the *Asia Pacific Journal of Teacher Education.* Email: Suzy.Edwards@acu.edu.au

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