

CESCEO Curriculum Group

ICT Use for Years K-2

Background

1. The issue of Information Technology use within the early years of schooling has been raised in the paper *What to make, and why: Principles of the design and development of online curriculum* commissioned by Curriculum Corporation for SOCCI. The paper stated:

It is recommended that, for the time being, online content should not be developed for use in the first two years of schooling, viz Kindergarten, Reception, Preparatory and Year 1.

2. As a consequence of debate generated by this issue, particularly at the SOCCI seminar in Adelaide on 7-9 February, it was considered important to develop a position statement that reflected the views and understandings of early childhood educators in the States and Territories of Australia.
3. On Friday 16 March, 2001 members of CESCEO Early Childhood Working Party, an academic expert and two classroom teachers, currently working with online resources within Navigator Schools, met to discuss the issue. Members of the working party were:

Valerie Burns	Western Australia
Lynne Bigg	Northern Territory
Glenda Strong	Victoria
Kendall Yates	Queensland
Alan Rice	New South Wales
Jenni Connor	Tasmania
Gerry Mulhearn	South Australia
Jill Farrely	Australian Capital Territory
Bridie Raban	The University of Melbourne
Lee Ann Green	Bayswater Primary School
Pauline Ellis	Apollo Parkways Primary School
Margery Hornibrook	Curriculum Corporation (Chair Person)
Helen Eades	Curriculum Corporation (Executive Officer)

Issues

4. The meeting agreed that:
 - the discussion in the paper did not recognise the variety of conditions, people and situations that exist in early years classrooms;
 - the research findings did not fully reflect the overall view of the documents from which they were drawn and that current research resources had not been included in the paper, in particular the work of Dr Nicola Yelland; and
 - commercially oriented sites for young children far out number public sites where children can engage in age-appropriate, safe activities.

Position Statement

5. The following position statement reflects the views and understandings of the CESCEO Early Childhood Working Party on the development of online curriculum content for use within the first two years of schooling. These views are based upon observation of children in classrooms, consideration of current research on the use of digital resources with young children, and recognition that ICT use is only one component of high quality early childhood learning environments.

The CESCEO Early Childhood Working Party recommends that:

- there is a need for high quality online content for young children;
- that online curriculum content for children in the early years of schooling should be developed as an integral component of the early childhood curriculum along side traditional manipulative resources and not as a replacement for them;
- development of online resources should reflect the exemplary principles of instructional design regardless of the age of students;
- digital media should be as much a part of the early literacy experiences of many young children as more conventional forms of print; and
- educators recognise the value of building on all early literacy experiences of children in the early years of schooling including digital literacy.

The working party further recommends that in developing online curriculum content for the early years of schooling recognition should be given to:

- the role of the early years educator in enhancing learning by providing quality learning experiences that support children in expressing themselves and making sense of their environment, providing opportunities for interaction and encourage risk-taking.
- the role of professional development to both support and challenge early childhood educators to reflect upon their beliefs and understandings and encourage them to design and support learning environments where young children can interact effectively with online resources.