**[Caroline Cohrssen]:** So we've used the planning cycle as the structure for the documents, because it's a logical process. I think that's really what underpins it, it's a logical process, from starting with information from multiple sources, analysing that information aligning it with, with the evidence markers that I think we'll probably need to come back to a little bit later on, what we're calling evidence markers. Planning with specific aims for learning within the context of play and then within that space that's really where the concept development element comes in. And to explain what we mean by concept development, I actually need to speak a little bit about some research, and then I'll bring it back to the specifics. So the notion of concept development comes out of a particular assessment instrument, quality assessment instrument that we used in the E4Kids Study. And a lot of you, I think will probably be familiar with the E4Kids Study, you may have been involved with the E4Kids Study. It was a very big Australian study that followed about two and a half thousand children, the E4Kids children we called them, and a control group from the age of about 3 or 4 years, up into the age of 8. And when we, when we looked at the quality of interactions in the classrooms and looked at these children's outcomes, we found that what's called emotional support in our Australian classrooms is super high, which is brilliant. That's how comfortable children feel in the space, how responsive we are and that's really great. We found that classroom organisation was in the high-mid range. We're pretty good at that as well, making sure that our routines are managed effectively, making sure that there's plenty for children to do, but when we came to what this particular instrument calls, instructional support, we found that there's some work for us to do to improve that in our classrooms. And instructional support is where concept development sits. So, instructional support includes concept development, quality of feedback, and language modelling. And if you look at the structure of the planning cycle resource you will see quite clearly that we, we address concepts in the, in the planning, we talk about feedback, we talk about the types of questions we could ask children, we talk about the kinds of language we could model. But if we focus specifically now on concept development, what does that actually mean? And content development is when we're looking at how we support children's analysis and reasoning, what types of questions do we ask them, and to encourage them to do the thinking. How do we actually integrate what we do in our programs with what they know in the real world, so that they make those connections. How do we build on what children know already? And so this concept development has to be based on, on an assessment of children's interests and capabilities at the moment. Because if we aren't basing it on clear observations, then we're making assumptions about children. And so again you see the link to the planning cycle, the early years planning cycle. But what you're also probably hearing coming through is a connection with the National Quality, Standard and quality area one. So, educational program and practice. Because we know that our programs need to enhance each child's learning and development, and we also know that children's learning and development needs to be assessed or evaluated as part of that ongoing cycle. So, you can see, I hope, how the resource that VCAA has developed, aligns with research outcomes from the E4Kids, but also helps us achieve the National Quality Standard. So. After going through that long sort of process, let me bring it back specifically to something that might be familiar. If you, I'm reminded of that National Quality Standards video, where there are a group of children talking about butterfly markings. I don't know if you remember it, and there were the two eyes on the butterfly's wings, and the educator is talking to the children then all of a sudden one of the children uses the word 'predators'. I'm not sure if you remember that but all of a sudden that word 'predator' gets introduced. And that is just brilliant because we see then how the education responds to that and from talking about beautiful butterflies, the concept of predators is brought into the interaction. And so the conversation moves from being just about butterflies being beautiful to actually talking about camouflage. And so we see how in that moment, the educator is attuned to the children and picks up on a concept and then runs with the concept. And what we're hoping that this resource will do is to highlight how ordinary everyday conversations, ordinary everyday events, can create opportunities for educators to support concept development. Sometimes we respond in the moment like with the butterfly camouflage, but at other times we intentionally plan, based on the evidence we've got from the children or from their families, or from co-educators in the room, and we focus on a concept. And so once again, this process is focusing on, this document is focusing on the process. How you might in your own room, respond to an observation of a child will vary, but we might be in the process of taking it from a superficial conversation about beautiful butterflies, to the concept that's involved in the learning.

**[Catharine Hydon]:** And it's very exciting that isn't it, because it really goes to some of those big ideas, philosophical ideas we have and the belief that we have that children are capable and confident, and that they can engage in very sophisticated intellectual ideas.

**[Caroline Cohrssen]:** Exactly.

**[Catharine Hydon]:** That are quite complex, you know big physics ideas of gravity and all sorts of things like that. And I guess it's an interesting concept, isn't it? Because I think I have conversations with educators to invite them to, to engage in an intellectual discourse with children. An intellectual engagement with children that explore some of that. So it's a little bit scary because if you think, oh, gosh, what do I know about maths, but I guess you're inviting us to think a bit more about the intellectual offering that we give to children. And that Carolyn, you can answer that bit, and tell us why it matters? What does it matter that children would be engaged in concept development?

**[Caroline Cohrssen]:** Well, first of all you're exactly right. And the, the other thing that I think we need to remember and it gives us some, some confidence, is when we co-construct knowledge with children, we don't have to have all the answers. You know, when we're co-constructing knowledge with children we can say, well, I don't know much about butterflies, or insects or gravity, let's go, let's go look it up and we can look in books. We can, we can get out a tablet. We can show children. We can model to children how to use digital devices in a program in a constructive way, rather than just using them for games. You know we, there are multiple levels in which we can be supporting children's learning in that space. And why is it important? Because it's the, the higher order thinking that comes with concept development is when we ask children, why do you think that? And how do you know, and how can we find out? Those sorts of open-ended questions, which you will also see reflected in this document. When we ask children those higher order questions, they set up opportunities for children to show us what they know, in order that we can then respond to them and authentically scaffold. Rather than making assumptions about what we think children know and what we think is the next step in our planning.

**[Catharine Hydon]:** And I guess seeing it planned in this way, gives it a level of rigor, and also helps us to identify what we are in fact supporting children to achieve. So, there's a thinking process here, and some of this, of course, is really fantastic to be able to showcase what children know, can do and understand, as children move to the next part of their educational life. It's fascinating. We could talk about that all day I think, but we won't, because I want to see whether Mary wants to come into this and add a thought or two about this concepts space and other features, that might be a part of this. So, Mary are you there?

**[Mary Holwell]:** Yes, I'm here. Look, I think Caroline has more than aptly described the concept development side of things. So there's probably just two very simple features I'd like to highlight. One is that in the learning sample plans that are included in the resource, most of them are only 1 to 2 pages in length. And all of the information related to that child's participation in that particular learning opportunity is there. There are some real benefits in something that's as, um, it's kind of neat and tidy, as packaged as that, for want of a better description. Because what it allows you to do is gather the series, a collection of different learning sample plans so that you can easily and quickly review the child's progress over time when it comes time for you to write a summative assessment. You've got all your information there in one place. You're not having to go to a reflective journal for something, to something else, to something else, to something that's on the wall for another piece of information. It's all there. The other thing that it allows you to do by having it all there and contained is make it easily accessible to your colleagues. So, who may be involved with the child as well, and to their families. So you've got something really easy to present and talk about to engage in a conversation with families about the child's learning. And I think they're really valuable things. The other thing that you will almost certainly notice is there are no photographs accompanying any of the learning stories. And that's been a very purposeful decision from us as we developed the resource. I think sometimes there's a lot of um, good intention and a lot of effort that goes into adding photographs into learning stories, and I'm not saying that there's never a place for a photograph, but rather, um, this is an attempt, I suppose, to remind people that the photograph doesn't tell us what we really need to know. What we really need to know is what the child has been learning or has learned, and the photograph doesn't give us that. It tells us what the child did, rather than what they learned.

**[Catharine Hydon]:** And there's a lovely can of worms there Mary, but that's a really good one for us to note. Because I think we've got a whole range of different ideas in the mix here.

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