



## Review

## An integrative review of transitions to school literature

Tess Boyle<sup>a,\*</sup>, Susan Grieshaber<sup>b</sup>, Anne Petriwskyj<sup>c</sup><sup>a</sup> Southern Cross University, Locked Mail Bag 4, Coolangatta, 4225, Australia<sup>b</sup> La Trobe University, School of Education, Bundoora, 3086, Australia<sup>c</sup> Queensland University of Technology, GPO Box 2434, Brisbane, 4001 Australia

## ARTICLE INFO

## Keywords:

Transitions to school

Integrative literature review

Multi-theoretical perspectives

Continuity

## ABSTRACT

An integrative literature review critiques and synthesizes representative literature on a topic in order to reveal new perspectives. An analysis of extant reviews (2002–2013) of transitions to school literature led to the identification of four theoretical perspectives of transitions: developmental, ecological, socio-cultural, and critical; and six recurrent concepts across these perspectives. These perspectives and concepts were used to develop the conceptual framework for the integrative review of transitions literature published between 2000 and 2015. Subsequent to the critique and analysis processes required by an integrative literature review, the findings revealed three significant shifts across this period of time: i) ecological and socio-cultural perspectives and relationships concepts now influence concepts of transitions more strongly than developmental perspectives and readiness concepts, ii) an evolving representation of critical perspectives that offers new insights into socially just approaches to transitions to school, and (iii) the emergence of the concept of continuity. Finally, the paper reports new perspectives of transitions to school that seek to address persistent concerns of (dis) continuity within the literature. By reframing the review findings as relational, practical and policy continuity, the paper concludes by suggesting ways these concepts could be applied to innovative approaches to and research about transitions to school.

## 1. Introduction

This paper presents an integrative review of transitions to school literature published between 2000 and 2015. Unlike other review methodologies (e.g., systematic, theoretical, thematic) an Integrative Review (IR) adopts a comprehensive methodology that encompasses a range of approaches and theoretical frameworks, and so has the capacity to provide a panoramic perspective of complexities associated with a topic. The panoramic lens of this IR aims to reveal shifts in thinking and generate insights into persistent concerns and conflicting approaches to children transitioning to school. As there is little procedural advice regarding this methodology, we have drawn on the work of [Torraco \(2005\)](#) to develop a six-step framework for the IR process. These six steps have also been used to inform the structure of the paper and are explained in what follows, beginning with Step 1.

## 2. Identify the topic and justify the need for the integrative review (step 1)

Global interest and investment in making a strong start to formal schooling is reflected in the enduring and expanding corpus of literature associated with the topic of transitioning to school. The extant literature associated with this topic reports the development

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: [tess.boyle@scu.edu.au](mailto:tess.boyle@scu.edu.au) (T. Boyle), [s.grieshaber@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:s.grieshaber@latrobe.edu.au) (S. Grieshaber), [a.petriwskyj@qut.edu.au](mailto:a.petriwskyj@qut.edu.au) (A. Petriwskyj).

of knowledge from a range of perspectives over a sustained period of time and therefore can be classified as a “mature topic” (Torraco, 2005, p. 357). Inherently, mature topics encompass an array of philosophical standpoints and contexts, resulting in an equally diverse array of key terms and definitions. In this review, the term ‘transitions to school’ has been used to identify the topic and acknowledge the complex range of transitions activated as children move from pre-compulsory to compulsory school sectors. The parameters of the topic (field) have been set to include literature published between 2000 and 2015, providing an extended time-frame to identify shifts in the field.

An initial search and analysis of extant reviews of transitions to school literature was undertaken to satisfy the requirement for an IR to make “a contribution to the discipline and its constituents” (Torraco, 2005, p. 358). The search located ten extant reviews published between 2002 and 2013. These reviews were analysed using the following criteria: a) review methodology (2.1), b) theoretical perspectives (2.2), and c) recurrent concepts (2.3). Criteria a) and b) were identified by searching the documents for specific mention of a review methodology and/or theoretical framework; and c) was identified using thematic coding (Gibbs, 2007). The summarized data were then synthesized to identify gaps in the extant reviews (2002–2013), justify the need for further review, and inform the development of a conceptual structure for the IR.

### 2.1. Methodologies identified in the extant reviews

Of the ten extant reviews (2002–2013), three (McTurk, Nutton, Lea, Robinson, & Carapetis, 2008; Peters, 2010; Petriwskyj, Thorpe, & Tayler, 2005) stated that a systematic approach was used but this methodology was not clearly detailed. In contrast, one review (Centre for Equity and Innovation in Early Childhood [CEIEC], 2008) employed a modified best evidence methodology and explained the process. The remaining six reviews (Bohan-Baker & Little, 2002; Dockett & Perry, 2013a; Hirst, Jervis, Sojo & Cavanagh, 2011; Skouteris, Watson, & Lum, 2012; Vogler, Crivello, & Woodhead, 2008; Yeboah, 2002) identified the literature search procedure but not a specific review methodology. The lack of explicit methodological statements revealed a gap in procedure and informed the development of the structured approach for the proposed IR. No IRs were identified, suggesting the potential for an integrative approach to make a contribution to the field.

### 2.2. Theoretical perspectives identified in the extant reviews

Four major theoretical perspectives were evidenced in the extant reviews: developmental, ecological, socio-cultural and critical (see 3.1 for definitions). The earliest extant review (Yeboah, 2002) identified the prevalence of developmental perspectives, however, seven subsequent reviews revealed that ecological and/or bioecological perspectives were more prevalent. Peters (2010) used socio-cultural perspectives and Vogler et al. (2008) adopted developmental, ecological and socio-cultural perspectives to critique transitions to school concepts and practices. More recent critical perspectives were not named, yet two reviews (Petriwskyj et al., 2005; Vogler et al., 2008) took a critical stance. The presence of a range of theoretical perspectives across the extant reviews suggests that a review that integrates multiple theoretical perspectives is warranted.

### 2.3. Recurrent concepts identified in the extant reviews

Thematic coding (Gibbs, 2007) of the extant reviews (2002–2013) revealed six recurrent concepts: *readiness, relationships, transitions activities, pedagogy, power, and policy*.

The majority of items reviewed by Dockett and Perry (2013a) addressed the concept *readiness*, yet two constructions of readiness were evident across the ten reviews. The first is informed by the premise that children can be made ‘more ready’ to start school by acquiring specific skills and dispositions (Yeboah, 2002). The second suggests readiness is influenced by contextual and relational factors. Positive *relationships*, often described as collaborations among stakeholders (Hirst, Jervis, Visage, Sojo, & Cavanagh, 2011) were critical to ‘successful’ transitions (Yeboah, 2002). Reciprocal communication with families (Petriwskyj et al., 2005) and across systems (Dockett & Perry, 2013a) had the capacity to permeate other key contributors for successful transitions (McTurk et al., 2008; Peters, 2010). *Transitions activities* included practices designed to familiarise and inform children and families about starting formal schooling in order to bridge the gap between the sectors (Vogler et al., 2008). These can be short-term orientation events (Petriwskyj et al., 2005) or long-term transitions programs involving a range of stakeholders (CEIEC, 2008). Earlier reviews (Bohan-Baker & Little, 2002; Yeboah, 2002) identified differences in *pedagogy* across early years sectors as problematic. The analysis suggests that pedagogical continuity is being re-framed from expectations of seamlessness (mirror images) across the sectors to anticipation of inevitable differences (Dockett & Perry, 2013a). McTurk et al. (2008) and Peters (2010) noted the need for culturally inclusive pedagogies. *Power* is discussed in relation to the capacity of effective transitions practices to empower participants (Hirst et al., 2011) by involving stakeholders, particularly children as partners (Dockett & Perry, 2013a). Institutions, predominantly schools (CEIEC, 2008), have the capacity to render stakeholders more or less powerful (Dockett & Perry, 2013a). Establishing stronger *policy* links among stakeholders (Yeboah, 2002) and across systems (Bohan-Baker & Little, 2002) is recommended if prior and concurrent experiences of transitions are to be valued and acknowledged (Peters, 2010). Differences in policies guiding pedagogy and curriculum across the sectors were identified as a source of discontinuity (Skouteris et al., 2012). All of the extant reviews provided commentary about these recurrent concepts primarily from mono theoretical perspectives, indicating a gap in the field. Applying multiple theoretical perspectives to interrogate these recurrent concepts and provide a panoramic view of shifts in the field justified the need for the IR.

### 3. Establish a conceptual structure for the integrative review (step 2)

According to [Torraco \(2005\)](#), “conceptual structuring of the topic requires the author to adopt a guiding theory, model or point of view about the topic” (p. 359). Responding to the gaps identified in Step 1, the conceptual structure for this IR employs two analytical devices, *theoretical perspectives* (3.1) and *recurrent concepts* (3.2) to review, critique and reconceptualise the mature and expanding corpus of transitions literature.

#### 3.1. Theoretical perspectives

The theoretical perspectives identified in the analysis of the 10 extant reviews (*developmental, ecological, socio-cultural, and critical*) have been used to categorize perspectives in the IR. As there are inconsistencies in the application of theories across the transitions literature, the following definitions are offered in full acknowledgement that alternative interpretations exist. *Developmental* perspectives espouse a view of childhood as a period of natural, universal growth and maturation - a state of becoming ([Vogler et al., 2008](#)). Developmental perspectives of transitions to school reflect hierarchical progressions through stages associated with chronological age ([Piaget, 1964](#)), and developmental features or adaptations such as temperament and adjustment ([Ladd, Herald, & Kochel, 2006](#); [Margetts, 2007](#)). Whilst adults may prompt or nurture maturation, progression through stages is portrayed as an individual change experience ([Crain, 2011](#)). The term *ecological* applies to theoretical perspectives informed by ecological systems theory ([Bronfenbrenner, 1979](#)) and bioecological theory ([Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006](#), pp. 793–828). According to this theoretical perspective children develop within a complex system of multi-layered relationships that influence their life experience ([Paquette & Ryan, 2001](#)). Transitions are explained as negotiated interactions among the ecologies of the systems. Ecological models of transitions ([Dunlop & Fabian, 2007](#); [Rimm-Kaufmann & Pianta, 2000](#)) offer a platform for interdisciplinary collaborations across systems and attend to children's broader transitional contexts. The term *socio-cultural* is used to categorize an array of perspectives, including socio-cultural approaches and the sociology of childhood ([Corsaro, 2011](#); [Prout & James, 1990](#)), that reflect the way historical, social and cultural contexts influence how children construct meaning within their world. Socio-cultural perspectives represent a significant shift from conceptions of “children as human beings” to more inclusive and agentic perceptions of children as “human beings” ([Vogler et al., 2008](#), p. 6). Socio-cultural perspectives of transitions are informed by [Vygotsky's \(1935\)](#) view that development (change) occurs as a result of children actively participating in actions that are mediated by their social, cultural and historical world. [Rogoff \(2003\)](#) and [Corsaro \(2011\)](#) extended this view to highlight the dynamic nature of relationships among people, places and time. The term *critical* is used to categorize theoretical perspectives that seek to understand difference and inequity. Influenced by [Habermas \(1984; 1987\)](#) and later [Freire \(1970\)](#), [McLaren \(2007\)](#) and [Giroux \(2011\)](#), critical theories reassess the relationship between theory and practice by critiquing the conditions of practices ([Carr & Kemmis, 1986](#)). Critical perspectives of transitions seek to reframe normative assumptions and ideas (e.g., readiness) to more inclusive considerations of participation ([Petriwskyj & Grieshaber, 2011](#)).

#### 3.2. Recurrent concepts

Key concepts of transitions to school (*readiness, relationships, transitions activities, pedagogy, power and policy*) identified in the 10 extant reviews framed analysis in the IR. International variance in use of the term *readiness* is an indication of the multifarious and conflicting application of the term in the literature. In this review, it is taken to mean the assessment (formal and informal) of children's preparedness to commence compulsory schooling ([McTurk et al., 2008](#)). This category was applied in this review when first, the term was used explicitly by the author/s; and, second, when it was associated with the process of children commencing school. In transitions literature, the term *relationships* is used to describe the interactions among and between key stakeholders, and these include but are not limited to children, families, teachers, and the wider community. During transitions to school, relationships can be unidirectional (transactional), bi-directional/multi-directional (reciprocal) or as [Skouteris et al. \(2012\)](#) noted, absent. *Transitions activities* are defined as actions implemented to orientate and/or induct children and their families into the school environment. The terms ‘transitions’ and ‘orientations’ are commonly used to describe these programs or priming events ([Corsaro, Molinari, & Rosier, 2002](#)). Any activities named or identified that sought to establish links between transitions settings qualified the item for inclusion. *Pedagogy* is defined as “early childhood educators' professional practice, especially those aspects that involve building and nurturing relationships, curriculum decision-making, teaching and learning” (Commonwealth of Australia [COA], 2009, p. 9). Any discussion of educators' practices, including commentary on philosophical and pedagogical differences across the pre-compulsory and compulsory school sectors, qualified the item for inclusion. *Power* is acknowledged as being a contested concept, however for the purposes of this review a two-fold definition is used. First, as power-over, which means the ability or right to control people and things such as resources and events; and second, as power-to, which relates to the potential individuals, groups or practices have to generate cooperative consensual collaborations. Items included in the first definition were located using the term power, or associated terms such as status, control, and hierarchy. Items included in the second understanding of power related to equity. *Policy* is defined as “a process and a product” ([Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard, & Henry, 1997](#), p. 24) and as “both text and action, words and deeds, it is what is enacted as well as what is intended” ([Ball, 1994](#), p. 10). Therefore, items that cited policy documents, discussed particular transitions processes or courses of action, or noted the absence of policy guidance or support were included in this category.

**Table 1**

Process undertaken to retain, discard or extend the body of literature.

| Criteria           | Consequence                                                                                             |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Duplication        | Discarded items duplicated across databases                                                             |
| Relevance          | Discarded items related to other transitions e.g., to high school                                       |
| Education specific | Discarded science/health items                                                                          |
| Peer reviewed      | Discarded items related to readiness as a standalone concept, not associated with transitions to school |
|                    | Only peer reviewed items were retained                                                                  |
| Citations          | Reports and policy documents were discarded                                                             |
| Evidence based     | Extended by reviewing reference lists of all items included                                             |
| Edited texts       | Discarded items not reporting or discussing empirical studies                                           |
|                    | Extended by adding individual chapters in peer reviewed edited collections                              |

#### 4. Search and retrieve appropriate literature (step 3)

As “literature is the data of an integrative review” (Torraco, 2005, p. 360) searching for and retrieving appropriate literature followed a rigorous and replicable protocol. With this in mind the keywords “transition\* to school” (abstract) and “early years\*” (anywhere) were used to search the EBSCOHOST (82 items identified), PROQUEST (115 items identified) and INFORMIT (27 items identified) databases. Additional criteria for the search included date of publication (2000–2015), referee status (peer-reviewed), format (journals, books, book chapters), and language (English). The criteria (Table 1) to retain, discard or extend items were negotiated among the authors. In applying these criteria, the final list containing 230 items was saved as an EndNote™ library. These items included research reports, discussion papers or chapters, theoretical material and discussion on transitions within curriculum areas (references cited in the following sections are illustrative rather than exhaustive).

#### 5. Analyse the literature (step 4)

Following the establishment of the body of literature to be reviewed, a three-phase analysis process was undertaken. In Phase 1 the conceptual structure was used to construct an analytical device that Webster and Watson (2002) call a “concept matrix” (p. xvii) (5.1). The second phase employed visual summaries (5.2) to compare the representation of theories and concepts within the data set and across time. In the final phase the analysis was extended by constructing thematic summaries of multi-theoretical perspectives of the recurrent concepts (5.3).

##### 5.1. The concept matrix (analysis phase 1)

The process began by following recommendations from Torraco (2005) that analysis “often requires the author to first deconstruct a topic into its basic elements” (p. 361). According to Webster and Watson (2002), high quality literature reviews are concept-centric rather than author-centric, and a conceptual organisational framework such as a concept matrix should be used to structure the review. The concept matrix lists the articles by year (most recent first) and author (alphabetically) on the vertical axis, with recurrent concepts and theoretical perspectives listed across the horizontal axis. The author list corresponds with the full bibliographic details of literature reviewed (see Appendix 1). The matrix was set up as an Excel™ spreadsheet so that frequency counts and data searches could be easily achieved. A text search of each item listed in the matrix was undertaken to identify theoretical perspectives, and if not named specifically (and most were) an electronic search of the document was undertaken using key terms (i.e., theory labels and theorists’ names). Once identified a cross was added to the appropriate column on the matrix. Recurrent concepts were also identified using a text search of key terms. Items in the final matrix were cross-referenced by the authors and where necessary, consensus reached on the coding and inclusion of questioned items. However, the size and format of the matrix made it difficult to identify shifts within and across the elements, thus prompting the development of a strategy for the second phase of analysis.

##### 5.2. Visual summaries (analysis phase 2)

As some evidence may not have been revealed through the matrix process, Excel™ graphing tools were used to compare the representation of theories and concepts within the data overall (2000–2015) and across time (2000–2005, 2006–2010, 2011–2015) as visual summaries (Appendix 2). This strategy is consistent with the advice provided by Webster and Watson (2002) who recommend isolating concepts by units of analysis to provide a “crisper view” (p. xvii) of the data. Three outcomes of this analysis appear to contradict dominant discourses and assumptions about the topic. Visual Summary 1 (VS1 Appendix 2) shows that developmental perspectives are not dominant in the transitions literature reviewed. From 2011 to 2015, there was a markedly greater increase in attention to other perspectives than to developmental perspectives. Visual Summary 2 (VS2 Appendix 2) shows the concept ‘relationships’ ranked first and ‘readiness’ fourth of the six concepts identified, challenging extant review findings in which readiness dominated (Dockett & Perry, 2013a). Visual Summaries 4 to 6 (VS4–6 Appendix 2) reveal shifts in the way the concepts have been represented across time and an incremental rise in the volume of literature. The 38 sources published between 2000 and 2005 are dominated by ecological perspectives of relationships and transitions activities (see VS4), reflecting the theme of the first

*Starting Strong* report (OECD, 2001) related to ‘strong and equal partnerships’. In the 67 sources published between 2006 and 2010 increased attention to other concepts, particularly policy and pedagogy (see VS5) was noted, reflecting key themes from *Starting Strong II* (OECD, 2006). The 117 sources identified between 2011 and 2015 represent a significant increase in the volume of literature (see VS4,5,6). Whilst ecological perspectives and relationships concepts remained dominant, the distribution of concepts across perspectives was generally more even. Decreased attention to transition activities alongside increased attention to other concepts such as policy and pedagogy indicates an awareness of the complexity of transitions. Attention to power from 2010 onwards in all but developmental perspectives suggests the increasing presence of critical discourses (see VS6). Deeper analysis to illuminate these key changes was warranted.

### 5.3. Multi theoretical perspectives of recurrent concepts (analysis phase 3)

In keeping with Torraco's (2005) guidance, analysis “... allows the author to reconstruct, conceptually, the topic for clearer understanding of it and to assess how it is represented in the literature” (p. 362). In Phase 3 the literature was analysed again to identify how the theoretical perspectives (developmental, ecological, socio-cultural, critical) represented the six recurrent concepts (relationships, readiness, transitions activities, pedagogy, power, policy). Returning to the matrix, subsets of data were created by filtering the spreadsheet by concept (e.g., readiness) and theoretical perspective (e.g., critical). Portable document files (PDFs) of the literature identified within each subset were then imported into NVivo™ to conduct text/word frequency searches, and generate reports. Regular cross checking against excerpts and sometimes whole documents was undertaken to ensure faithfulness to the content of the literature. These reports were then used to code the data, identify common themes and construct the concept tables (Appendix 3). These tables and accompanying thematic analysis synthesize the extensive body of literature reviewed and provide a new representation of the topic in the form of a multi-theoretical analysis of the six recurrent concepts. Each recurrent concept is discussed in order of prevalence within the literature.

#### 5.3.1. Relationships

In this IR, ‘relationships’ was the most frequently noted recurrent concept, representing 26.14% of the concepts identified (Appendix 2: VS2). As shown in Table 2 (Appendix 3), three relationship themes persisted across the theoretical perspectives, these were: *nature*, *characteristics* and *conditions*. Developmental perspectives discussed the *nature* of relationships, particularly peer relationships, in terms of their contribution to children's adjustment during transitions to school (Ladd et al., 2006; Yeo & Clarke, 2006). Ecological perspectives emphasized the contextual nature of relationships (Ahtola et al., 2015; Dockett & Perry, 2012; Einarsdottir, 2011) forming a transition ‘bridge’ that Huser, Dockett, and Perry (2015) argued is bidirectional. Socio-cultural perspectives stressed the dynamic, complex interactional nature of relationships formed and sustained as children start school (Crafter & Maunder, 2012; Fluckiger, 2010; Huf, 2013). Critical perspectives considered the professional nature of relationships, advocating negotiation of the conditions upon which relationships are formed during transitions (Boyle & Petriwskyj, 2014). Henderson (2012) argued that differences should act as a force across relationships rather than operating in just one direction. Ecological and socio-cultural perspectives identified the value of relational continuity offered by peers and families (Peters, 2014).

*Characteristics* of relationships were coupled with the *conditions* in which they were composed, so these two themes are presented concurrently. Developmental perspectives linked positive relationships with engagement, defined as children's participation in planned activities and cooperation with peers and adults (Robinson & Diamond, 2014); and negative relationships with children's disengagement and poor adjustment to school (Ladd et al., 2006). Ecological perspectives profiled collaboration as a characteristic of supportive relationships (Dockett & Perry, 2008; Miller, 2015), or argued that respectful relationships are sustained by meditating conditions of communication (Hopps, 2014; Noel, 2011; Peters, 2014). Socio-cultural perspectives proposed interpersonal skills as key characteristics of relationships, with Ebbeck, Saidon, Rajalachime, and Teo (2013) noting reciprocity and accommodating power differences as enabling conditions. Critical perspectives characterized transitions relationships as steeped in power differentials (Henderson, 2012; Petriwskyj, 2014), suggesting that new conditions for the facilitation of emancipatory actions were needed (Boyle & Petriwskyj, 2014). In summary, positive relationships were identified as an integral component of successful transitions (Ahtola et al., 2015; Einarsdottir, 2011; Perry, 2014). The unidirectional and causal nature of transitions relationships in developmental perspectives shifted to more reciprocal understandings in other theoretical perspectives.

#### 5.3.2. Transitions activities and policy

Initial analysis of the recurrent concepts *transitions activities* and *policy* showed less change from earlier reviews and less distinction between theoretical perspectives than for other recurrent concepts, indicating that further extensive analysis was not warranted. *Transitions activities*, representing 18.91% of the concepts identified (Appendix 2: VS2), tended to be preparatory or orienting in function, with differences between developmental and other perspectives in the range and length of time across the activities that were offered and their goal. The prevalence of short-term or one-off school orientation events in developmental perspectives (Burchinal, Vandergrift, Pianta, & Mashburn, 2010) broadened in socio-cultural and critical perspectives to collaborative events that stretched across several months before and after school entry (Hartley, Rogers, Smith, Peters, & Carr, 2012; Petriwskyj, 2013). The goal shifted from school adjustment (LoCasale-Crouch, Mashburn, Downer, & Pianta, 2008) to continuity of experience (Einarsdottir, Perry, & Dockett, 2008). *Policy*, representing 17.73% of the concepts identified (Appendix 2: VS2), appeared most commonly as products in the form of sector or context specific documents focussed on preparation for school and continuity of learning. There were differences between developmental and other perspectives of policy, which were evident in a shift from policy as product in the form of universal structural policies (McLachlan, 2008), toward more nuanced process orientated policies that addressed community

disadvantage and educational inequity (Dockett & Perry, 2013b; Petriwskyj, Thorpe, & Tayler, 2014; Podmore, Sauvao, & Mapa, 2003).

### 5.3.3. Readiness

In this review readiness concepts accounted for 14.48% of the total concepts identified (Appendix 2: VS2). The persistence of 'readiness', framed as children's preparedness to commence compulsory schooling, was challenged by alternate views about the readiness of schools and communities. As shown in Table 3 (Appendix 3), three themes (*assessment*, *programs* and *communication*) were identified across the theoretical perspectives attending to concepts of readiness. Developmental perspectives considered readiness *assessment* of individual children, including competency-based assessments and checklists (Margetts, 2013; Yeo & Clarke, 2006). Ecological perspectives shifted readiness responsibility from the individual child to the systems that support children transitioning to school (Ahtola et al., 2011). Dockett and Perry (2009) noted that ecological factors (family, school, community) interact to form dispositions and provide a more contextually relevant assessment. Socio-cultural perspectives extended this notion by suggesting that assessment should attend more broadly to the influence of intrapersonal, interpersonal and community factors on children's transitions (Ebbeck et al., 2013). Critical perspectives contested normative assessments that rendered children from minority groups as 'at risk' and set up expectations of problematic educational trajectories (Henderson, 2013; Petriwskyj & Grieshaber, 2011).

The aim of readiness *programs* informed by developmental perspectives was improvement in children's capacity to commence school (Burchinal et al., 2010; Janus, 2011). Ecological and socio-cultural perspectives broadened the sphere of influence to the community (Amerijckx & Humblet, 2015; Emfinger, 2012) and supported long-term community-wide programs (Bell-Booth, Staton, & Thorpe, 2014; Dockett & Perry, 2007). Interdisciplinary programs informed by socio-cultural perspectives respected the views of minority groups and the role of professionals, typically from the health and welfare systems, in supporting transitions to school (New, Guilfoyle, & Harman, 2015; Sarja, Poikonen, & Nilsson, 2012). In contrast, critical perspectives took the view that readiness programs were problematic, political, and conflated readiness and transitions (Dockett, 2014). Programs that established binaries rendering children 'ready or not' were critiqued for the deficit approach they ascribed and the hegemonic norms they perpetuated (Graue & Reineke, 2014, pp. 159–174; Taylor, 2011).

In developmental perspectives, *communication* was uni-directional as information such as reports or checklists about individual children's readiness was gathered and sent to the school (Ladd et al., 2006). Ecological perspectives indicated that communication across the sectors was infrequent (Brostrom, 2003; Hopps, 2014), and that enhanced bi-directional communication would support sharing information about prior learning and improve continuity (Ebbeck et al., 2013; Noel, 2011). Socio-cultural perspectives advocated multi-directional communication to improve collaboration during transitions to school (Emfinger, 2012). From a critical perspective, the persistence of culturally biased homogeneous norms, communicated as expectations of the school-ready child, devalued family insights into children's strengths and influenced narrow hegemonic approaches to transitions (Petriwskyj & Grieshaber, 2011; Taylor, 2011).

### 5.3.4. Pedagogy

In this review pedagogy concepts accounted for 13.74% of the total concepts identified (Appendix 2: VS2). As shown in Table 4 (Appendix 3) three themes of pedagogy emerged across the theoretical perspectives: (*dis*)*continuity*, *approaches* and *understandings*. Pedagogy was highlighted in ecological and critical perspectives, but its explicit discussion within developmental and socio-cultural perspectives was limited. *Continuity* as a contributor to transitions has been defined as "coherence of experience" (Hopps, 2014, p. 406). The impact of (*dis*)continuity across transitions to school was noted across all theoretical perspectives, yet there was a shift in focus between developmental and the other three perspectives from discontinuity for children to the role of teachers or sectors in addressing continuity. Although developmental perspectives were not strongly represented in this concept category, Grant (2013) identified different pedagogy across the compulsory and pre-compulsory sectors as being problematic due to the lack of cognitive continuity. Proponents of ecological and socio-cultural perspectives suggested that transitions would be more coherent if teachers worked toward establishing shared understandings of pedagogy (Chan, 2009) through collaborative dialogue (Ashton et al., 2008). Critical perspectives focused on the lack of alignment between sectorial policies informing pedagogy across the early years (Petriwskyj et al., 2014).

Strategies to manage sectorial differences in pedagogic *approach* varied from imposing greater similarity across sectors, to encouraging stakeholders to be more agentic in negotiating change. Developmental perspectives focused on preschool approaches that addressed preparation for school (Yeboah, 2002; Yeo & Clarke, 2006), but ecological and critical perspectives questioned the imposition of school pedagogies on preschools as a means of achieving continuity (Dockett & Perry, 2007; Hopps, 2014; Petriwskyj & Grieshaber, 2011). Ecological approaches included pedagogic adjustment in both sectors to create smooth transitions (Timperley, McNaughton, Howie, & Robinson, 2003) as well as support for children negotiating change as they entered school (Mirkhil, 2010; White & Sharp, 2007). Socio-cultural approaches emphasized the role of relationships, particularly peer relationships, in mediating discontinuity by supporting children's sense of agency (Huf, 2013). Socio-cultural and critical perspectives considered home-school congruence and the cultural relevance of pedagogic approaches (Ashton et al., 2008; Taylor, 2011). Further, critical perspectives pointed to philosophical differences evident in policy and practice as a source of tension across the sectors, suggesting that deeper debate about pedagogic approaches is required (Henderson, 2014).

Responding to these tensions, proponents of ecological perspectives suggested that mutual *understandings* of pedagogical practices and influences on these practices (Dockett & Perry, 2012; Peters, 2014) would enhance transitions experiences for all stakeholders (Chan, 2009). Critical perspectives focused on understanding the complexities of early years pedagogy (Alcock & Haggerty, 2013;

Graue & Reineke, 2014), including pedagogical representation in policies across the sectors, and the influence of philosophical differences on pedagogical divergence (Petriwskyj, 2010, pp. 120–125). The influence of power in interactions between stakeholders emerged as a factor in addressing the challenge of shared understanding (Henderson, 2013; Petriwskyj, 2014; Sarja et al., 2012).

#### 5.3.5. Power

In this IR power concepts accounted for 9.01% of the total concepts identified (Appendix 2: VS2). Analysis identified three recurrent themes with respect to power: *context, distribution and approach* (see Appendix 3: Table 5). All theoretical perspectives located power within a contextual framework and noted an uneven distribution of power amongst stakeholders, yet differences were apparent between critical and other perspectives in the impact of power relations on transitions. Identification of this concept increased significantly between 2010 and 2015 (Appendix 2: VS5; VS6) alongside an increased presence of critical perspectives within transitions to school literature (Appendix 2: VS4; VS5; VS6). Developmental, ecological and socio-cultural perspectives suggested that external *contextual* factors - institutional influence, systemic or structural features and social situations - have power-over families or individuals (Crafter & Maunder, 2012; Griebel & Niesel, 2009). The predominance of external power indicated the influence of universal approaches and top-down systemic policies. In contrast, critical perspectives emphasized power-to generate transitions approaches in the locus of community contexts where relationships and identities are constructed and agency is recognized (Boyle & Petriwskyj, 2014; Dockett, 2014).

*Distribution* of power in favor of schools was attributed in developmental, ecological and socio-cultural perspectives to their supervisory and reporting functions (Griebel & Niesel, 2009), historical imbalances between home and school systems (Gill, Winters, & Freidman, 2006), and hierarchical dominant discourses that might be disrupted when there were significant ideological differences (Ashton et al., 2008). Critical perspectives noted instead the invisible barriers arising from covert actions such as labelling children (Petriwskyj & Grieshaber, 2011) and from the internalization of subtle messages that impact transitions power relations (Henderson, 2012).

*Approaches* to power differed by perspective with respect to their locus and function. Developmental and ecological perspectives focused on the power of interventions to promote the acquisition of readiness skills and behaviours (Margetts, 2007) or the predictive power of risk assessments that targeted community-level interventions (Daley, Munk, & Carlson, 2011). These external approaches shifted in critical and socio-cultural perspectives to shared agency and broader functions. For instance, socio-cultural perspectives considered the innovative power of partnerships such as the 'Voices of Children' project (Perry & Dockett, 2011) or collaborations in which power can be considered as both process and product (Sarja et al., 2012). Critical perspectives suggested that dialogic interactions and critical reflection were required to negotiate power differentials and shared understandings of transitions (Boyle & Petriwskyj, 2014; Henderson, 2013). Contrasts in notions of power emerged between perspectives in which the focus was power-over children's successful transitions, and those in which attention turned to power-to generate more equitable transitions strategies. This change reflected a critique of reliance on universal solutions to transitions concerns and a shift in the locus of control away from schools towards shared responsibility for transitions.

In summary, this third phase of analysis illustrates the attention to ecological perspectives and relationships concepts identified in the Phase 2 Visual Summaries. However, it indicates two significant shifts: first, between developmental and other perspectives, and second, between earlier perspectives noted in the extant reviews (developmental, ecological) and more recent socio-cultural and critical perspectives. The first shift, from developmental to other perspectives was accompanied by increasing recognition of the complexity of influences on transitions and the range of stakeholder considerations. The second shift revealed that themes of power-to and equitable relationships were limited in developmental perspectives (5.3.5), yet were prominent in critical perspectives. These shifts framed markedly different notions of transitions policy and practice, interactions between sectors, and the influence of a range of stakeholders. Although continuity was not initially identified as a key concept, it emerged as a permeating theme across literature from 2010 to 2015, linked to understandings of transitions to school (Dockett & Perry, 2012; Early, Pianta, Taylor, & Cox, 2001; Hopps, 2014; Huf, 2013; Peters, 2014). Key differences emerged in constructions of continuity and in mechanisms to address discontinuity. The developmental perspective of continuity as making preschool more school-like (Yeo & Clarke, 2006) contrasted with socio-cultural and critical perspectives of continuity as engaging transitions capital, supportive relationships and children's agency in negotiating change as they enter school (Dunlop, 2007, pp. 151–169; Huf, 2013; Peters, 2014).

## 6. Critique the literature (step 5)

In this step, we draw on Torraco's (2005) ideas of critique as identifying "the strengths and key contributions of the literature ... any deficiencies, omissions, inaccuracies and other problematic aspects of the literature ... [and] any inconsistencies among published perspectives on the topic" (p. 362). To this end the critique focuses on inconsistencies, omissions and the emerging area of power, after briefly considering strengths. One strength is the amount of literature that focuses on transitions to school as it provides an ongoing and established basis for coherent analyses and critique, which can be used to inform further research. Another is that this body of literature has expanded to include a variety of theoretical perspectives since being informed in the extant reviews by mostly developmental and ecological perspectives. A third strength is the availability of a wide variety of research that can be used to inform policy decisions.

Inconsistencies are understood as contradictions or discrepancies amongst published perspectives on the topic (Torraco, 2005, p. 362). Three inconsistencies are discussed: the problematic nature of universal approaches to children transitioning to school; the limitations of the rigid nature of school expectations, and the presence/absence of children and families and their voices. First, in universal approaches such as those informed by developmental, and some versions of ecological perspectives, western norms are used

as the basis for decision making. This usually amounts to deficit approaches such as individual children being considered school ready or not according to how they are measured by developmental norms; and locating individual children at the centre of ecological models, which separates them system-wise from families and communities, and other social and cultural groups. Some ecologically informed literature has built on the idea of developmental deficit by suggesting that those children who might not be considered ‘ready’ using developmental benchmarks can be made ‘more ready’. Alternatively, critically informed theoretical perspectives challenge normative constructions of children, readiness, and transitions to school, suggesting that there are other ways to conceptualize children, families, communities, as well as other ways of knowing, learning and developing besides those informed by a one size fits all approach.

Second, the rigid nature of school expectations that are based on universal norms limits and in some cases, dismisses understandings of diversity (e.g., social, cultural, ethnic, economic, ability, inclusion, location etc.). This rigidity extends to expecting children to conform to normative understandings of child development and learning, and is often expressed by the unidirectional and causal nature of transitions relationships, which have uniform goals for children to cooperate and engage in adult-planned activities. Care is needed so that targeted interventions and readiness programs designed for specific sections of the population recognize capacity as culturally and contextually constructed, and do not position children and families as lacking. Critical theoretical perspectives demonstrate the problematic and contested nature of such comparative assumptions, and some socio-cultural approaches have questioned the ways in which specific populations such as migrant and refugee children and families have been positioned as lacking by universal approaches. Schools can offer more responsive, flexible, local and site-specific approaches to address transitions and diversity.

The third inconsistency is the absence/presence of children and families, and their voices. Developmental approaches can mute the voices of children by being adult centric and speaking for and about children. They can also silence families because universal and unidirectional approaches position families as responsible for children being prepared for and oriented to schooling as directed by the school. Instead of expecting uniformity and conformity, approaches informed by socio-cultural and critical perspectives construct children as competent and agentic, and able to make informed decisions about their lives. Further, critical theoretical perspectives indicate the ethical and moral responsibilities of attending to children and their families, as does the rights perspective of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). When considered as part of relationships, children, families and communities can be understood as contributing positively to transitions to schooling as agentic and informed citizens.

In terms of omissions, we signal two points, the first being the conflation of readiness agendas with transitions to school, which we locate in the pressure for academic outcomes and accountability in the current climate of performativity and international comparison. Developmental and ecological perspectives have influenced policy and practice, exemplified by the creation of short-term orientation programs and multi-disciplinary interventions, as well as legislation such as the *No Child Left Behind Act* in the USA. Conversely, socio-cultural perspectives have supported long term community based partnership programs that focus on the alignment of social and cultural contexts. The second point is the limited attention to cross-sectorial perspectives, particularly those of teachers and educators who enact transitions policies and practices. Critical theoretical perspectives work towards cross-sectorial programs that are long term, inclusive, socially just, and negotiated with families and communities. They also challenge normative and stereotypical constructions of readiness, transitions, standards and standardization.

The emergence of power as a theme within the literature is consistent with the application of critical theoretical perspectives to transitions to schooling. It raises issues concerned with the context, transitions practices, and distribution of power and its impact. Hierarchical power structures associated with many schools mean that communication is often unidirectional and focused on the supervisory and reporting functions schools perform. These ways of communicating are being challenged by adopting aspects of socio-cultural theories, and of critical theoretical perspectives that contest hierarchically oriented concepts of power. Critical theories are known for rejecting dominant practices such as the universal application of ideas, for privileging alternative perspectives, and for their aims for socially just societies.

In summary, this critique has highlighted omissions, inconsistencies, and emergent areas in the corpus of transitions to school literature. Omissions include limited interrogation of the conflation of readiness and transitions, and a dearth of cross-sectorial perspectives. Inconsistencies reflect a concern for the agency of children and families, critiques of the impact and distribution of power. Emergent areas reflect an evolving but scant representation of critical theoretical perspectives of recurrent concepts. The following section presents the final step (Step 6) of the IR framework by drawing on [Torraco's \(2005\)](#) ideas of the nature and purpose of the synthesis aspect of an IR. To do this we identified core issues as they intersected with the emerging concept of (dis)continuity. In doing so we contribute to the field by establishing new conceptual and theoretical connections and suggesting new directions for future research.

## 7. Synthesize the review and report new directions (step 6)

(Dis)continuity permeated all perspectives as an emerging concept within the literature reviewed (5.3.1; 5.3.2; 5.3.3; 5.3.4; 5.3.5). The reframing of continuity expectations noted in one extant review ([Dockett & Perry, 2013a](#)) is expanded in this IR to incorporate a range of continuity possibilities. However unresolved differences in understandings of continuity across the theoretical perspectives were identified, particularly between developmental and other perspectives. In Step 6, we capitalize on the panoramic view afforded by the IR process to integrate an array of continuity constructions (*relational, policy, and practical*) and contribute to new directions for future research in an attempt “to create a new formulation of the topic” ([Torraco, 2005](#), p. 362).

Investigating *relational continuity* addresses the core issue of limited attention to cross-sectorial perspectives of transitions to school, particularly those of educators implementing transitions policies and practices with children and families. Systemic splits

between the pre-compulsory and compulsory early years sectors were referenced in the literature as a significant source of discontinuity (5.3.1; 5.3.4; 5.3.5). Of particular note were references to fundamental philosophical and pedagogical differences in the way educators discussed, understood and enacted transitions practices (Henderson, 2014; Hopps, 2014). Research investigating factors that enable and constrain cross-sectorial professional relationships would make a contribution to the field by providing insights into relational continuity and its impact on transitions.

Consistent with the definition of policy as “process and product” (Taylor et al., 1997, p. 24) and as “both text and action, words and deeds, it is what is enacted as well as what is intended” (Ball, 1994, p. 10), we suggest the field is yet to capitalize on and report empirical evidence of transitions *policy continuity*. Conceptualizing policy in this way provides opportunities to speak back to the conflation of readiness and transitions. Drawing on the transitional capital (Dunlop, 2007, pp. 151–169) of families, communities and educators across the sectors using a negotiated and dialogic process of policy development represents a significant disruption to universal top down policies informed by normative assessments of school readiness. As previously argued (5.3.3), policies that conflate transitions and readiness fail to acknowledge and address the diverse and complex practices of children transitioning to school.

Continuity of practices (*practical continuity*) addresses the core issue of the distribution of power and its impact. This issue, evident in the literature particularly 2010–2015, as ‘power to’ and ‘power over’ (5.3.4) presents opportunities for research to harness powerful practices that draw on the strengths of all stakeholders (Dockett, 2014). Emerging perspectives on power in transitions decisions and processes indicated the need to consider alternative notions of stakeholder relationships (5.3.4) (Henderson, 2012). Our critique suggested that this could include cross-sectorial professional relationships as limited research has been undertaken to date.

## 8. Conclusion

Application of the Torracco (2005) IR methodology to transitions to school literature (2000–2015) has enabled rigorous examination of a complex topic across international boundaries over an extended time period. Broadening the analytic lens to include multiple theoretical perspectives offers enhanced opportunities to frame more responsive transitions approaches reflected in the diversity of children, families, communities and educational sites. The findings reveal three significant shifts in the field across this period of time: i) a trend away from developmental perspectives, readiness concepts and universal approaches in the extant reviews towards ecological and socio-cultural perspectives, relationships concepts, and nuanced approaches relevant to specific families and communities; ii) an evolving representation of critical perspectives and attention to power-to promote socially just approaches to transitions to school, and (iii) the emergence of the concept of continuity. By reframing the review findings as relational, practical and policy continuity, the paper suggests ways these new understandings could be applied to innovative approaches to and research into transitions to school. Finally, the review identified the need for research approaches and educational change frameworks that take account of the complexities of stakeholder voices and educational sites to offer fresh insights into persistent concerns surrounding transitions.

## Appendix A–C. Supplementary data

Supplementary data related to this article can be found at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2018.05.001>.

## References

- Ahtola, A., Silinskas, G., Poikonen, P.-L., Kontoniemi, M., Niemi, P., & Nurmi, J.-E. (2011). Transition to formal schooling: Do transition practices matter for academic performance? *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 26(3), 295–302. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2010.12.002>.
- Ahtola, A., Turunen, T., Bjorn, M., Poikonen, P.-L., Kontoniemi, M., Lerkkanen, M.-K., et al. (2015). The concordance between teachers and parents perceptions of school transition practices: A solid base for the future. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 60(2), 168–181. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2014.996598>.
- Alcock, S., & Haggerty, M. (2013). Recent policy developments and ‘schoolification’ of early childhood care and education in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Early Childhood Folio*, 17(2), 21–26.
- Amerijckx, G., & Humblet, P. C. (2015). The transition to preschool: A problem or an opportunity for children? A sociological perspective in the context of a ‘split system’. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 23(1), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1350293X.2014.991098> 99–111.
- Ashton, J., Woodrow, C., Johnston, C., Wangmann, J., Singh, L., & James, T. (2008). Partnerships in learning: Linking early childhood services, families and schools for optimal development. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 33(2), 10–16.
- Ball, S. (1994). *Education reform: A critical and poststructuralist approach*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.
- Bell-Booth, R., Staton, S., & Thorpe, K. (2014). Getting there, being there, staying and belonging: A case study of two indigenous Australian children's transition to school. *Children & Society*, 28(1), 15–29. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1099-0860.2012.00441.x>.
- Bohan-Baker, M., & Little, P. (2002). *The transition to kindergarten: A review of current research and promising practices to involve families*. Cambridge: Harvard Family Research Project.
- Boyle, T., & Petriwskyj, A. (2014). Transitions to school: Reframing professional relationships. *Early Years: An International Research Journal*, 34(4), 392–404. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09575146.2014.953042>.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bronfenbrenner, U., & Morris, P. A. (2006). The bioecological model of human development. In R. M. Lerner, & W. Damon (Eds.). *Handbook of child psychology* Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons 6th ed.
- Brostrom, S. (2003). Problems and barriers in children's learning when they transit from kindergarten to kindergarten class in school. *Transitions, European Early Childhood Education Research Monograph Series*, 1, 51–66.
- Burchinal, M., Vandergrift, N., Pianta, R., & Mashburn, A. (2010). Threshold analysis of association between child care quality and child outcomes for low-income children in pre-kindergarten programs. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 25(2), 166–176. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2009.10.004>.
- Carr, W., & Kemmis, S. (1986). *Becoming critical*. Melbourne: Deakin University Press.
- Centre for Equity and Innovation in Early Childhood (CEIEC) (2008). *Transition: A positive start to school* (RFQ reference No. 200809AS). Retrieved from <http://www>.

- education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/transitionschool/research.htm.
- Chan, W. L. (2009). The transition from kindergarten to primary school, as experienced by teachers, parents and children in Hong Kong. *Early Child Development and Care*, 180(7), 973–993. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03004430802586130>.
- Commonwealth of Australia (2009). *Belonging, being & becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia*. Canberra, ACT: Commonwealth of Australia. Retrieved from: <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Search/results.aspx?k=Belonging%2C%20being%20and%20becoming%3A%20The%20early%20years%20learning%20framework%20for%20Australia>.
- Corsaro, W. (2011). *The sociology of childhood* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.
- Corsaro, W., Molinari, L., & Rosier, K. (2002). Zena and Carlotta: Transition narratives and early education in the United States and Italy. *Human Development*, 45(5), 323–348.
- Crafter, S., & Maunder, R. (2012). Understanding transitions using a sociocultural framework. *Educational and Child Psychology*, 29(1), 10–18.
- Crain, W. (2011). *Theories of development concepts and applications* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Daley, T. C., Munk, T., & Carlson, E. (2011). A national study of kindergarten transition practices for children with disabilities. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 26(4), 409–419. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2010.11.001>.
- Dockett, S. (2014). Transition to school: Normative or relative? In B. Perry, S. Dockett, & A. Petriwskyj (Eds.). *Transitions to school: International research, policy and practice* (pp. 187–200). Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-7350-9\\_14](http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-7350-9_14).
- Dockett, S., & Perry, B. (2007). *Transitions to school: Perceptions, expectations and experiences*. Sydney, NSW: University of New South Wales Press.
- Dockett, S., & Perry, B. (2008). Starting school: A community endeavour. *Childhood Education*, 84(5), 274–280. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00094056.2008.10523024>.
- Dockett, S., & Perry, B. (2009). Readiness for school: A relational construct. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 34(1), 20–26.
- Dockett, S., & Perry, B. (2012). "In Kindy you don't get taught": Continuity and change as children start school. *Frontiers of Education in China*, 7(1), 5–32. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3868/s110-001-012-0002-8>.
- Dockett, S., & Perry, B. (2013a). Trends and tensions: Australian and international research about starting school. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 21(2/3), 163–177. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09669760.2013.832943>.
- Dockett, S., & Perry, B. (2013b). Families and transition to school. In K. Margetts, & A. Kienig (Eds.). *International perspectives on transition to school: Reconceptualising beliefs, policy and practice* (pp. 111–211). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Dunlop, A.-W. (2007). Bridging research, policy and practice. In A.-W. Dunlop, & H. Fabian (Eds.). *Informing transitions in the early years: Research, policy and practice*. New York, NY: Open University Press.
- Dunlop, A.-W., & Fabian, H. (2007). *Informing transitions in the early years*. Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press.
- Early, D. M., Pianta, R. C., Taylor, L. C., & Cox, M. J. (2001). Transition practices: Findings from a national survey of kindergarten teachers. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 28(3), 199–206. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1023/A:1026503520593>.
- Ebbeck, M., Saidon, S., Rajalachime, G., & Teo, L. (2013). Children's voices: Providing continuity in transition experiences in Singapore. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 41(4), 291–298. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10643-012-0556-3>.
- Einarsdottir, J. (2011). Icelandic children's early education transition experiences. *Early Education & Development*, 22(5), 737–756. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2011.597027>.
- Einarsdottir, J., Perry, B., & Dockett, S. (2008). Transition to school practices: Comparisons from Iceland and Australia. *Early Years: An International Research Journal*, 28(1), 47–60. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09575140801924689>.
- Emfinger, K. (2012). Literacy readiness: Transitional partnerships between preschool and kindergarten. *Childhood Education*, 88(4), 258–265. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00094056.2012.699863>.
- Fluckiger, B. (2010). Culture-switching in different worlds: Young children's transition experiences. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 35(4), 101–108.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. London, UK: Penguin.
- Gibbs, G. (2007). *Analyzing qualitative data*. London, UK: Sage. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781849208574>.
- Gill, S., Winters, D., & Freidman, D. (2006). Educators' views of pre-kindergarten and kindergarten readiness and transition practices. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 7(3), 213–227. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2304/ciec.2006.7.3.213>.
- Giroux, H. (2011). *On critical pedagogy*. New York, NY: Continuum International Publishing.
- Grant, A. (2013). Young gifted children transitioning into preschool and school: What matters? *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 38(2), 23–31.
- Graue, E., & Reineke, J. (2014). The relation of research on readiness to research/practice of transitions. In B. Perry, S. Dockett, & A. Petriwskyj (Eds.). *Transitions to school: International research, policy and practice* Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-7350-9\\_12](http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-7350-9_12).
- Griebel, W., & Niesel, R. (2009). A developmental psychology perspective in Germany: Co-construction of transitions between family and education system by the child, parents and pedagogues. *Early Years: An International Research Journal*, 29(1), 59–68. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09575140802652230>.
- Habermas, J. (1984). *The theory of communicative action: Volume 1-Reason and rationalisation of society* (Trans. T McCarthy). Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Habermas, J. (1987). *Theory of communicative action: Volume 2: Lifeworld and system: A critique of functionalist reason*. (Trans. T McCarthy). Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Hartley, C., Rogers, P., Smith, J., Peters, S., & Carr, M. (2012). *Crossing the border: A community negotiates the transition from early childhood to primary school*. Wellington, NZ: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.
- Henderson, L. (2012). The early childhood - school relationship: Overcoming invisible barriers. *Early Childhood Folio*, 16(2), 20–25.
- Henderson, L. (2013). Partial and incomplete voices: The political and three early childhood teachers' learning. *Educational Action Research*, 22(1), 21–38. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09650792.2013.851610>.
- Henderson, L. (2014). When early childhood and school meet: Exploring potential within early childhood - school relationships. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 39(3), 29–36.
- Hirst, M., Jervis, N., Visage, K., Sojo, V., & Cavanagh, S. (2011). *Transition to primary school: A review of the literature*. Canberra, ACT: Commonwealth of Australia.
- Hopps, K. (2014). Preschool + school + communication = what for educator relationships? *Early Years: Journal of International Relations and Development*, 34(4), 405–419. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09575146.2014.963032>.
- Huf, C. (2013). Children's agency during transition to formal schooling. *Ethnography and Education*, 8(1), 61–76. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17457823.2013.766434>.
- Huser, C., Dockett, S., & Perry, B. (2015). Transition to school: Revisiting the bridge metaphor. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 24(3), 439–449. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1350293X.2015.1102414>.
- Janus, M. (2011). Impact of impairment on children with special needs at school entry: Comparison of school readiness outcomes in Canada, Australia, and Mexico. *Exceptionality Education International*, 21(2), 29–44.
- Ladd, G. W., Herald, S. L., & Kochel, K. P. (2006). School readiness: Are there social prerequisites? *Early Education & Development*, 17(1), 115–150. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s15566935eed1701\\_6](http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s15566935eed1701_6).
- LoCasale-Crouch, J., Mashburn, A., Downer, J., & Pianta, R. (2008). Pre-kindergarten teachers' use of transition practices and children's adjustment to kindergarten. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 23(1), 124–139.
- Margetts, K. (2007). Preparing children for school - benefits and privileges. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 32(2), 43–50.
- Margetts, K. (2013). What new children need to know: Children's perspectives of starting school. In K. Margetts, & A. Kienig (Eds.). *International perspectives on transition to school: Reconceptualising beliefs, policy and practice* (pp. 79–98). New York, NY: Routledge.
- McLachlan, C. (2008). Early literacy and the transition to school: Issues for early childhood and primary educators. *New Zealand Research in Early Childhood Education*, 11, 105–118.
- McLaren, P. (2007). *Life in schools: An introduction to critical pedagogy in the foundations of education* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education Inc.
- McTurk, N., Nutton, G., Lea, T., Robinson, G., & Carapetis, J. R. (2008). The school readiness of Australian indigenous children: A review of literature. Retrieved from [http://library.bsl.org.au/jspui/bitstream/1/3734/1/The\\_school\\_readiness\\_of\\_Australian\\_Indigenous\\_children\\_review\\_of\\_literature\\_aracy2008.pdf](http://library.bsl.org.au/jspui/bitstream/1/3734/1/The_school_readiness_of_Australian_Indigenous_children_review_of_literature_aracy2008.pdf).
- Miller, K. (2015). The transition to kindergarten: How families from lower-income backgrounds experienced the first year. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 43(3), 213–221. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10643-014-0650-9>.

- Mirkhil, M. (2010). 'I want to play when I go to school': Children's views on the transition to school from kindergarten. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 35(3), 134–139.
- New, R., Guilfoyle, A., & Harman, B. (2015). Children's school readiness: The experiences of African refugee women in a supported playgroup. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 40(1), 55–62.
- Noel, A. (2011). Easing the transition to school: Administrators' descriptions of transition to school activities. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 36(4) 44–25.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2001). *Starting strong: Early childhood education and care*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264192829-en>.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2006). *Starting strong II: Early childhood education and care*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264035461-en>.
- Paquette, D., & Ryan, J. (2001). Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. Retrieved from <http://www.usd.edu/~mremund/bronfa.pdf>.
- Perry, B. (2014). Social justice dimensions of starting school. In B. Perry, S. Dockett, & A. Petriwskyj (Eds.). *Transitions to school: International research, policy and practice* (pp. 175–186). Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-7350-9\\_13](http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-7350-9_13).
- Perry, B., & Dockett, S. (2011). 'How 'bout we have a celebration!' Advice from children on starting school. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 19(3), 373–386. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1350293X.2011.597969>.
- Peters, S. (2010). Literature review: Transition from early childhood education to school. Retrieved from [http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/ECE/98894/Executive\\_Summary](http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/ECE/98894/Executive_Summary).
- Peters, S. (2014). Chasms, bridges and borderlands: A transitions research 'across the border' from early childhood to school in New Zealand. In B. Perry, S. Dockett, & A. Petriwskyj (Eds.). *Transitions to school: International research, policy and practice* (pp. 105–116). Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-7350-9\\_8](http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-7350-9_8).
- Petriwskyj, A. (2010). Kindergarten transition and linkages to primary school. In *International encyclopedia of education* Vol. 2 Oxford, UK: Elsevier. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-044894-7.01180-5>.
- Petriwskyj, A. (2013). Pedagogies of inclusive transition to school. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 38(3), 45–55.
- Petriwskyj, A. (2014). Transitions in the early years. In K. Cologon (Ed.). *Inclusion in the early years: Right from the start* (pp. 263–279). Melbourne, VIC: Oxford University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09669760.2014.911078>.
- Petriwskyj, A., & Grieshaber, S. (2011). Critical perspectives on transition to school: Reframing the debate. In D. M. Laverick, & R. M. Jalongo (Eds.). *Transitions to early care and education: International perspectives on making schools ready for young children* (pp. 75–86). New York, NY: Springer. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-0573-9\\_7](http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-0573-9_7).
- Petriwskyj, A., Thorpe, K., & Tayler, C. (2005). Trends in construction of transition to school in three western regions, 1990–2004. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 13(1), 55–69. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09669760500048360>.
- Petriwskyj, A., Thorpe, K., & Tayler, C. (2014). Towards inclusion: Provision for diversity in the transition to school. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 22(4), 359–379. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09669760.2014.911078>.
- Piaget, P. (1964). Development and learning. In R. Ripple, & V. Rockcastle (Eds.). *Piaget rediscovered: A report of the conference on cognitive studies and curriculum development* (pp. 7–20). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Podmore, V. N., Sauvaio, L. a. i. M., & Mapa, L. (2003). Sociocultural perspectives on transition to school from Pacific Islands early childhood centres. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 11(1), 33–42. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0966976032000066073>.
- Prout, A., & James, A. (1990). *Constructing and reconstructing childhood*. Basingstoke: Falmer.
- Rimm-Kaufmann, S., & Pianta, R. C. (2000). An ecological perspective on the transition to kindergarten: A theoretical framework to guide empirical research. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 21(5), 491–511. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0193-3973\(00\)00051-4](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0193-3973(00)00051-4).
- Robinson, C. D., & Diamond, K. E. (2014). A quantitative study of Head Start children's strengths, families' perspectives, and teachers' ratings in the transition to kindergarten. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 42(2), 77–84. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10643-013-0587-4>.
- Rogoff, B. (2003). *The cultural nature of child development*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Sarja, A., Poikonen, P., & Nilsson, M. (2012). Inter-professional collaboration in supporting transition to school. In P. Tynjala (Ed.). *Transitions and transformations in learning and education* (pp. 87–101). Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-2312-2\\_6](http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-2312-2_6).
- Skouteris, H., Watson, B., & Lum, J. (2012). Preschool children's transition to formal schooling: The importance of collaboration between teachers, parents and children. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 37(4), 78–85.
- Taylor, A. (2011). Coming, ready or not: Aboriginal children's transition to school in urban Australia and the policy push. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 19(2), 145–161. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09669760.2011.602593>.
- Taylor, S., Rizvi, F., Lingard, B., & Henry, M. (1997). *Educational policy and the politics of change*. London, UK: Routledge <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0895904897011001001>.
- The United Nations (1989). Convention on the rights of the child. *Treaty Series*, 1577, 3.
- Timperley, H., McNaughton, S., Howie, L., & Robinson, V. (2003). Transitioning children from early childhood education to school: Teacher beliefs and transition practices. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 28(2), 32–40.
- Torraco, R. J. (2005). Writing integrative literature reviews: Guidelines and examples. *Human Resource Development Review*, 4(3), 356–367. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1534484305278283>.
- Vogler, P., Crivello, G., & Woodhead, M. (2008). *Early childhood transitions research: A review of concepts, theory and practice*. Working paper No 48. Bernard van Leer foundation. Retrieved from [http://oro.open.ac.uk/16989/1/Vogler\\_et\\_al\\_Transitions.PDF.DAT.pdf](http://oro.open.ac.uk/16989/1/Vogler_et_al_Transitions.PDF.DAT.pdf).
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1935). Mental development of children and the process of learning. M. Lopez Morillas, Trans In M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Soubberman (Eds.). *L. S. Vygotsky: Mind in society* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1978.
- Webster, J., & Watson, R. T. (2002). Analyzing the past to prepare for the future: Writing a literature review. *MIS Quarterly*, 26(2) xiii–xxiii.
- White, G., & Sharp, C. (2007). 'It is different... because you are getting older and growing up.' How children make sense of the transition to Year 1. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 15(1), 87–102. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13502930601161882>.
- Yeboah, D. A. (2002). Enhancing transition from early childhood phase to primary education: Evidence from the research literature. *Early Years: An International Journal of Research and Development*, 22(1), 51–68. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09575140120111517>.
- Yeo, L. S., & Clarke, C. (2006). Adjustment to the first year in school - a Singapore perspective. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 14(2), 55–68. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13502930285209911>.