PIECCE

PROJECT FOR INCLUSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE & EDUCATION

WHAT IS PIECCE?

PIECCE is the Project for Inclusive Early Childhood Care and Education. This is a multi-sectoral teacher education project that will contribute to the professionalisation of the ECD sector through the development of a standardised framework for the training of practitioners working in Birth to Four.

Click here to read more about PIECCE

PIECCE Report: Baseline Findings

A PIECCE Resource

Overview of the Literature Reviews and Surveys
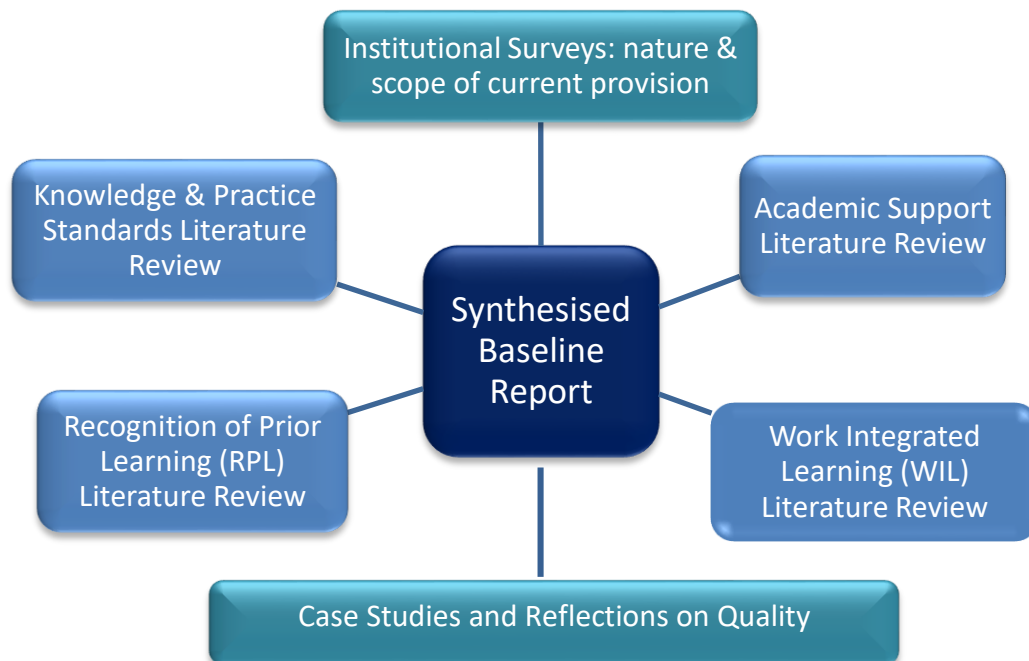
A Knowledge Product from PIECCE

higher education & training
Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Purpose of the Baseline Research

The aim of PIECCE is to develop a national programme framework to guide programme design for a Diploma or Degree for educators dealing with 0-4 year olds. In order to inform the framework, the team undertook a research review of key categories in programme design and how these play out in a sample of existing ECD programmes and interventions for pre-service and in-service training educators. The scope of the review is set out below.

Institutional Surveys: nature & scope of current provision

Knowledge & Practice Standards Literature Review

Academic Support Literature Review

Synthesised Baseline Report

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Literature Review

Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Literature Review

Case Studies and Reflections on Quality

The Baseline Findings Knowledge Product

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Knowledge Product is to:

- Share and spread the knowledge coming out of PIECCE in order to support collaboration in ECD.
- Provide an illustrative 'taster' of some of the key findings of the research review.
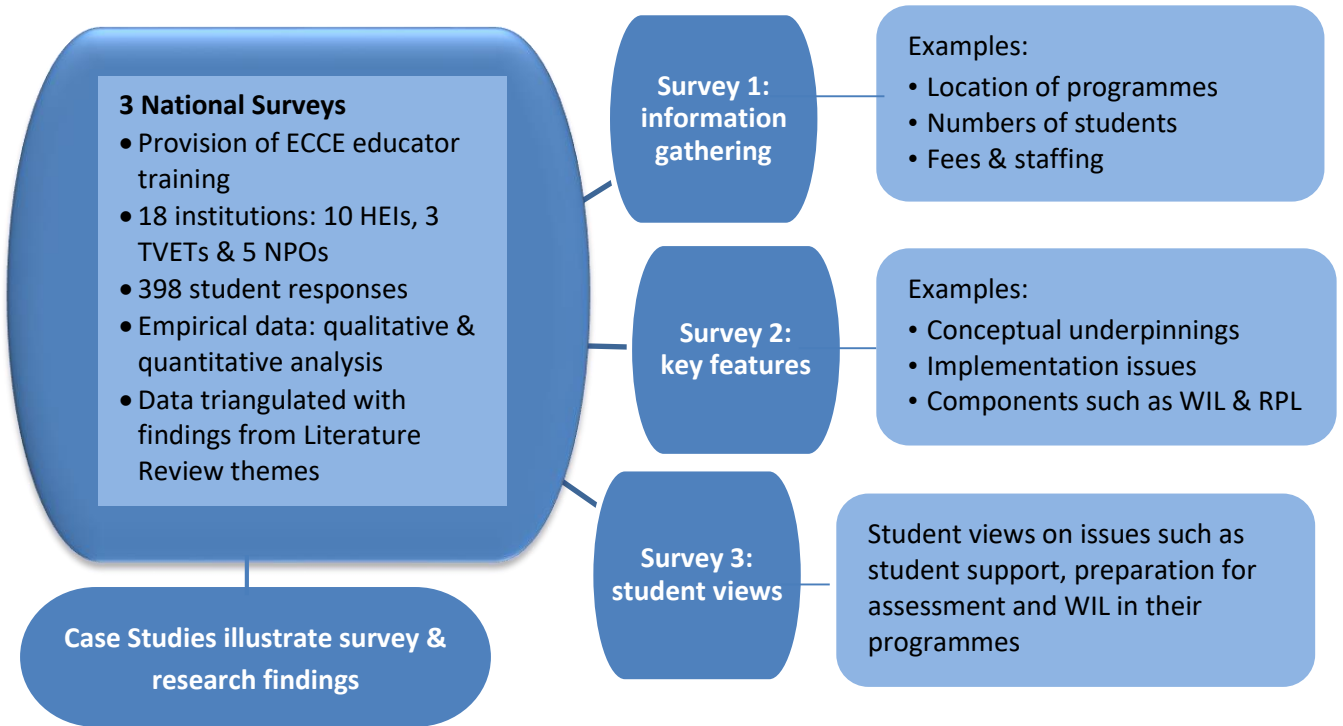- Serve as a 'quick resource' to other stakeholders by providing links to relevant documents.

STRUCTURE & CONTENT

The content of this Knowledge Product includes:

- A one-page overview of the main Baseline Report, focusing on the survey findings, the common trends coming out of the four thematic reviews, and the discussion of quality.
- A one-page overview of each of the four categories for the thematic reviews, focusing on:
  - Broad definitions
  - Illustrative components or models for each category
  - Summary of recommendations given for the PIECCE work.

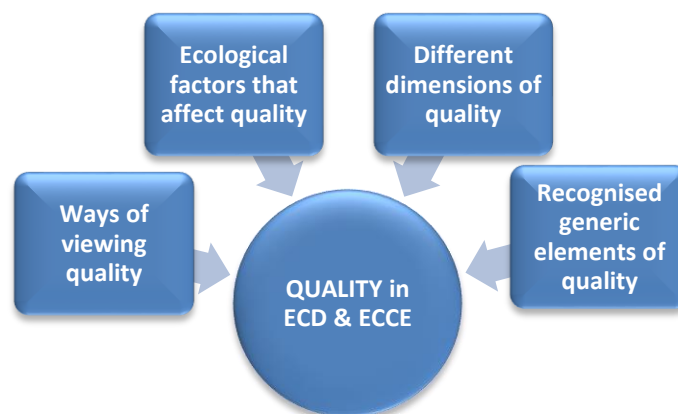Access the full Baseline Report here. This report includes details from the thematic reviews.

Overview of the main Baseline Report

3 National Surveys
- Provision of ECCE educator training
- 18 institutions: 10 HEIs, 3 TVETs & 5 NPOs
- 398 student responses
- Empirical data: qualitative & quantitative analysis
- Data triangulated with findings from Literature Review themes

Survey 1: information gathering

Examples:
- Location of programmes
- Numbers of students
- Fees & staffing

Survey 2: key features

Examples:
- Conceptual underpinnings
- Implementation issues
- Components such as WIL & RPL

Survey 3: student views

Student views on issues such as student support, preparation for assessment and WIL in their programmes

Case Studies illustrate survey & research findings

Examples of common themes from survey & research findings

Context is key	• Students need to understand & be prepared for the varied contexts in which ECD takes place, which has implications for WIL. • Institutions & staff need to understand the diverse contexts from which their students come, as this affects programme pedagogies.
Academic Support	• Mentorship is a vital component of academic support. • A combination of integrated and non-integrated approach to different forms of academic support appears to be most effective.
Reflective Practice	• While the value of reflective practice is noted by students as well as lecturers, and appears in a number of models and case studies, there are challenges to its effective use.
Role of ECCE Policies	• Policies in place for the training of ECCE educators provide guidance and suggest a competency-based approach. • There are policies in place for the implementation of ECD in general, but there are many gaps between policy and implementation.

The report explores understandings of Quality as a key driver for programme design in PIECCE.

Ecological factors that affect quality

Different dimensions of quality

Ways of viewing quality

Recognised generic elements of quality

QUALITY in ECD & ECCE

Click here to read the full Baseline Report

Click here to read the Case Study on the ECD Quality Reflection Tool

Knowledge & Practice Standards Literature Review

The *Policy on Minimum Requirements for Programmes Leading to Qualifications in Higher Education for ECD Educators* (PLMRP, 2017) supports a **competency-based model** for initial and continuing teacher education.
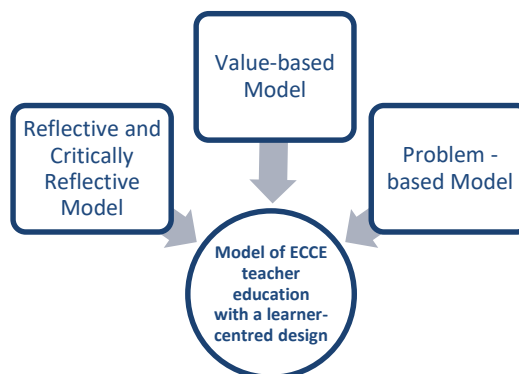
Four **key messages** from the review:

1	Children in early childhood in SA experience many vulnerabilities that need to be addressed in teacher education – context matters
2	SA policies provide foundations for the preparation of ECCE educators
3	A competency-based model with knowledge and practice standards can be used flexibly to guide the preparation of the ECCE educators
4	A shift from a technical to a more engaging approach is needed for curriculum development for ECCE ITE

Key principles for setting out relevant minimum standards which define knowledge and practice in ECCE:

- The ECCE field and profession owns and oversees the standards.
- Standards are flexible and can be adapted to contexts: there is no 'one-size-fits-all'.
- Professional pathways are taken into account.
- Provide a shared vision and understanding of knowledge and practices to unite a fragmented field.

Professional knowledge (Knowing)

Professional practice (Doing)

Professional mindset, roles and responsibilities

Themes for organising professional competencies

Value-based Model

Reflective and Critically Reflective Model

Problem - based Model

Model of ECCE teacher education with a learner-centred design

Potential models for ECCE teacher education in the SA context

10 Core Competencies as a starting point for developing ECCE Knowledge and Practice Standards	
1	Becoming a professional by paying attention to mindset, roles and responsibilities
2	Understanding and promoting child development and learning in different contexts
3	Building family and community relationships
4	Ensuring effective health, safety and nutrition practices
5	Creating effective care and learning environments including managing behaviour
6	Planning and facilitating care and learning through play and other transformative pedagogies in appropriate ways (developmentally, culturally, linguistically)
7	Using curriculum and relevant content knowledge to build meaningful learning (e.g. 6 ELDAs in NCF)
8	Observing, documenting and assessing to support young children's development and learning
9	Understanding and addressing diversity, inclusion and equity to act in the best interest of all children
10	Showing basic leadership, management and administration skills

Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Literature Review

Understandings of WIL

Curriculum, pedagogy & assessment practices in a professional programme that allow students to apply theory to practice: learning **in** and **from** practice.

Some of the elements:

Learning through action & classroom-based work experience	Integrating knowledge & practical skills	Showing evidence of progress from novice to proficient in the workplace	Showing evidence of applied skills in practical contexts

Examples of benefits of WIL for students

Gain experience & practical skills associated with the qualification
Improve academic competencies (e.g. critical thinking, problem solving, disciplinary understanding)
Increase confidence & motivation
Engage in active & collaborative learning
Reflect on own learning
Gain generic 'workplace-readiness' skills (e.g. time management, reporting, communication & cooperation with colleagues)
Understand the demands of the profession and its career paths

Points to consider for planning WIL

- Need for a structured programme with defined tasks and outcomes
- Type of model
- Timing, sequence & length of WIL within overall programme (e.g. teaching practicums or in-service)
- Student support
- Nature and location of workplace sites
- Participants (e.g. mentors, coordinators, assessors, workplace supervisors)
- Roles and responsibilities of all WIL participants
- Evidence gathering mechanisms and assessment systems (e.g. logbooks, tools for reflection, portfolios)
- Implementation issues (e.g. policies and procedures, administrative concerns)

Recommendations

- **MENTORSHIP** as a key component. Consider:
  - Training of mentors
  - Multiple sources (e.g. tutors, class teachers, peers)
  - Feedback loops
- **TECHNOLOLGY**. Consider:
  - Using video clips to illustrate practice
  - Communication platforms
  - Online availability, access & support
- **REFLECTIVE PRACTICE**. Consider:
  - Ways of 'selling' the concept through useful approaches and tools
  - Built in reflection on own application of knowledge, lessons learned from experience, and ways of improving pedagogy

Academic Support Literature Review

Defining Academic Support

Purposes include helping students to: meet standards, accelerate progress, catch up with peers, identify and address gaps and succeed in their studies.

Strategies & methods include: supplemental courses, after hours or vacation programmes, remedial education, tutoring, counselling, mentoring, and alternative ways of grouping and instructing students.

Academic support can be seen as **developmental education**, which '… examines the way structures such as curriculum, language, literacy and pedagogy intersect with race and social class in order to produce inequity. It thus sees 'disadvantage' or 'unpreparedness' more holistically and directs attention not just to the qualification but to the institution (system, pedagogy and curriculum etc.) as a whole.'

In planning for a diploma and degree programme for initial and emerging ECCE educators:

Recommendations

Use active learning pedagogies in a supportive learning community.

Facilitate a growth mind-set for each student which promotes realistic self-efficacy beliefs in each student, and encourages grit and resilience.

Include compulsory, credit bearing, foundational courses or course elements including:
- English: conversational, written and verbal presentation, essay writing, case studies, discipline specific discourse, etc.
- Mathematical Literacy/Foundational understanding
- Digital literacy
- Academic: information literacy, discipline specific reading and writing, discipline specific discourse
- Practicum/WIL: teaching assignments, record keeping, placements requiring specific proficiencies in written and spoken English, knowledge and understanding of the cultures of schooling and context-specific ways of interacting with colleagues and students
- Orientation: time-management, study skills, college rules and procedures, exploration of learning styles, career exploration, multicultural diversity, class participation and other topics relevant to a new student.

Model and link basic skills instruction into the professional-technical content, in one curriculum.

Use mentors, tutors and peer assistance.

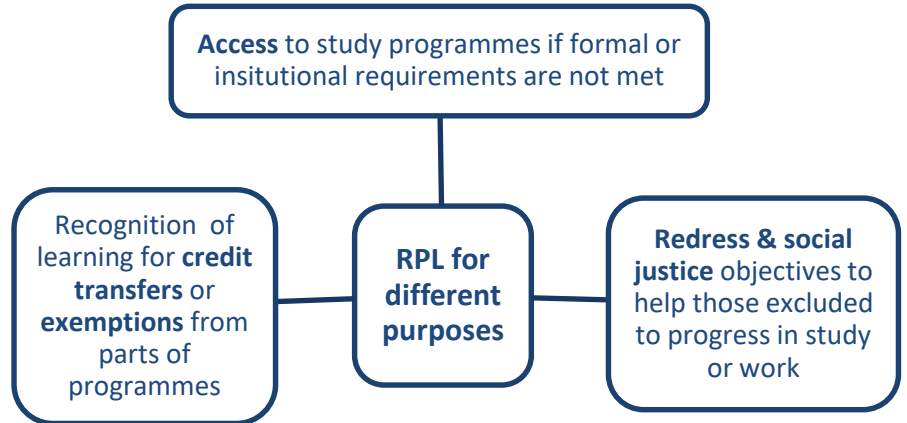Include opportunities to link own observation of ECD practice with research activities.

Include practices and opportunities for students to reflect on their learning individually, with peers and with mentors. These opportunities should target both career pathway and the constructs of persistence, GRIT and resilience.

Use a Quality Criteria checklist for evaluating academic support programmes.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Literature Review

SAQA defines RPL as:
'…a process through which formal, non-formal and informal learning are measured, mediated for recognition across different contexts and certified against the requirements for credit, access, inclusion or advancement in the formal education and training system or workplace.' (2004)

Key principle: validating the skills, knowledge, and competencies gained through work and life experience.

Access to study programmes if formal or insitutional requirements are not met

Recognition of learning for **credit transfers** or **exemptions** from parts of programmes

RPL for different purposes

Redress & social justice objectives to help those excluded to progress in study or work

PIECCE must consider the target for enrolment in the Diploma and Degree, and the profile of many ECD practitioners. Recognition of equivalence of occupational and vocational qualifications at lower levels will be important for non-traditional students and/or experienced practitioners who do not have matriculation exemption for university entrance.

Summary of Recommendations

Aiming to address some of the barriers and limitations of current RPL in HEIs identified by the review

Develop guidelines for designing and implementing RPL programmes which address social justice, equity & inclusion objectives, facilitate access to RPL & to programmes, and build on current best practice.
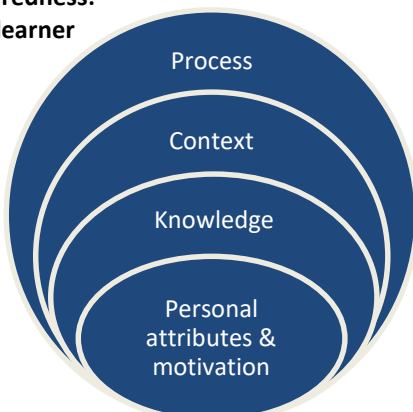
Approach RPL as a specialized pedagogical practice.

Propose a credit accumulation, exemption, recognition and transfer system, supported by a rationale for the ECD context. Consider: (i) credit recognition for practitioners with experience in the early childhood workplace (non-traditional HEI students); (ii) credit transfer for students with qualifications or part qualifications from another training provider; (iii) recognition of equivalence of Level 4 ECD qualifications to Grade 12/matric; (iv) credit transfer towards teaching practice requirements; and (v) allocation of credits against modules where appropriate.

Design RPL to include pedagogical support & other forms of student support: e.g. transitioning to higher education; developing academic literacy skills in order to deal with RPL assessments and academic learning; moving from experiential learning & knowledge to formal learning & codified knowledge.

Augment portfolio assessment: e.g. use workplace assessment, interviews, simulations and admission tests.

Student centeredness: the holistic learner

Process

Context

Knowledge

Personal attributes & motivation

Repositioning RPL

Mediation

RPL as pedagogy

Learner Agency

Enabling policies

Diverse contexts of knowledge

Social Mandate