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Can you share a little about your qualifications, experience and current work in the EC sector?

I am an EC teacher with over 35 years of experience in the sector. I completed a childcare certificate straight out of high school, and in subsequent years completed my Bachelor of Teaching (EC) and a Masters of Educational Leadership and Management. I've worked in preschools, long day care centres, health, disability and support services, public schools, universities, regulatory authorities and with the national authority. Throughout my early career, I had three sons, and am very recently a proud grandmother. Currently I teach at Sydney University and I have my own EC consulting business. My career has been diverse and has stretched me professionally and personally at every turn, but there are some fundamental principles that underpin my work and the professional decisions that I make every day. They are that children must be at the forefront of both operational and pedagogical decisions, and that children are innately skilled learners with rights as active social citizens. I believe that EC education is the perfect platform to create a just and fair society, and that children have the capacity to enact the change that is so necessary in today's complex world.

How do you use social media in your work to inspire and empower educators to reflect on and work towards quality EC education for young children?

Over the years, and particularly in more recent times, social media has become a powerful communication tool that has brought with it many advantages. The moment my granddaughter was born in Paris, I could see her on FaceTime and congratulate her parents! Social media has the power to strengthen relationships, to shrink vast geographical distances and to advocate for fairness and justice. But conversely, it is equally capable of doing exactly the opposite. Facebook forums, for instance, can be a source of support for EC educators as they share practice and reflect on their work. Mentoring relationships can be established online that can build the confidence of educators and hone their expertise, and contribute to longstanding relationships being formed. But equally, differences in philosophical perspectives can lead to division, questioning educators' practices and undermining their confidence, contributing to a sense of professional isolation and uncertainty.

In my current consulting work, I use a range of social media tools to both advocate for the rights of children and families, and to support educators to grow and develop as confident and capable practitioners. This hasn't come easily to me though. I'm not from a generation that is technologically literate, and so using social media tools is a skill that I've had to work hard to develop. Initially, I saw this as necessary to be current in the market, and something that I had to do, but certainly didn't want to! But in a relatively short space of time, I've come to see social media as a powerful and valuable communication tool that can bring about effective and positive change. An example of this is a project that I recently led with three remote services in Western Australia. Because I couldn't physically be at their centres on a regular basis, and they were located around 600 kilometres apart, social media proved to be an effective way to overcome their geographic isolation, and their lack of face-to-face networking opportunities. This project centred around educators and teachers reflecting on their routines and practices to think about opportunities for children's agency. As they modified their practices, they reflected both in images and writing, and then uploaded their reflections to a closed Facebook group established for this purpose. I then provided feedback and further ideas for them to think about and implement as they went about the process of change. Once a week, we met by Skype

and educators shared their practice, reflections and further ideas for improvement. This built their ability to reflect on practice, their collaboration skills as they worked together, and the development of a positive and supportive culture leading to a professional learning community. As their skills developed throughout the project, I was able to withdraw my support, knowing that the group would continue and that the learning and development would be sustained.

Can you share some insights about how an awareness of power and ethical considerations can assist an intentional leader's effective use of social media in their everyday practice?

While this proved to be a successful project, there were some important ethical considerations and agreements that needed to be established prior to its implementation, such as ensuring that:

- the approved provider understood the project and endorsed it in writing, including the use of Facebook as a learning and development tool
- ground rules about acceptable communication are established; for example, always using respectful and professional language
- permission from children and families was given to share images and reflections with the group
- images would not be shared beyond the closed Facebook group by using appropriate privacy settings
- a single moderator would be responsible for approving posts, providing a source of accountability
- personal Facebook accounts, required to join the group, were adjusted to protect the personal information and privacy of participants
- no additional participants would be added to the group without the permission of existing members, and that information would not be shared beyond the membership of the group.

With these agreements in place, the group was confident to fully participate, adding to the project's ongoing success.