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Meddling with Mosaic: reflections and adaptations

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ABSTRACT

The Mosaic approach has been used as a form of participatory research for over two decades. It has been popular with researchers in the early childhood education and disability sectors because it encourages the participants to utilise a large range of communication tools, rather than relying on verbal and written data. Promoters of the Mosaic approach generally place great importance on capturing children's voices in response to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF 2015), and the need to address the inequities of the child participant/researcher and the adult researcher. Furthermore, the findings should be passed on to those adults who make decisions that affect the children, thereby increasing children's agency. While these are imperative components of the Mosaic approach, the authors argue that there are times when adults' voices, such as parents, carers, practitioners and educators, can add to the richness and meaning of Mosaic data that the children have originally captured but are not understood by other adults, potentially adding weight to children's voices when advocating to those who make decisions that affect children's lives. Reflecting on the original framework for listening to children's voices by Clark and Moss [2011. *Listening to Children: The Mosaic Approach*. London: National Children's Bureau], we adapted the model to suit a particular research context and project. Reflecting on and expanding the framework may be of interest to researchers and practitioners who work with the Mosaic Approach and who gather and promote marginalised voices.

KEYWORDS

Mosaic approach; children's voice; children's agency; early childhood; partnerships

Introduction

This paper argues that the inclusion of adults' voices to interpret data collected by children in the Mosaic approach enhances the richness and meaning of children's intended research. The Mosaic approach enables children's agency and voice in decisions that affect them. In this way children are empowered in research. The approach is a popular mode of research with early childhood education researchers that aims to actively involve children in research. This mode of the construction of data seeks to ensure that the research is owned by the participants (Gallagher 2008). Originally the Mosaic approach to data collection methods, identified by Clark and Moss (2005), was designed to reflect on the views and experiences of young children in the early childhood settings.

Clark expanded this framework to include educators (2011), and this paper now advocates for the inclusion of parents, as well as educators, as another piece of the Mosaic. The paper commences with an introduction to the Mosaic approach, and then progresses through three framework iterations based on an exemplar research project.

Principles of the Mosaic approach: children's agency and voice

As a society, we need to accept that there are important reasons why we must listen to children's perceptions and views, on services and matters that affect them. Prior to the mid-1990s, while researchers aimed to find ways to enhance the lives of children and their families, most research focused *on* the child, rather than *with* the child. This ignored the views of children, who can be key sources of information, and active agents about matters that affect them. Mazzoni and Harcourt (2014), when reporting on policies from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF 2015), advocate for children to be active participants in research, with the right to engage with researchers so the researchers know about children's ideas and beliefs. To do this effectively, a robust framework is required to listen to children's, mostly marginalised, voices.

Children and research

Qualitative research is designed to reveal information about what the participants in the research feel and understand about their beliefs and experiences. Therefore, meaning belongs to the individual, or in the case of participatory research with children meaning is co-constructed with the researcher: that is, 'research that facilitates equal partnership between at least one academic party and one non-academic party' (Horner 2016, 8). Historically, children were not considered capable of conveying their experiences and understanding clearly, but there has been a re-conceptualisation of the way children are viewed, which emphasises the strengths and rights of the child (Clark and Moss 2011; Clark and Statham 2005; Darbyshire, McDougall, and Scheller 2005; Greenfield 2011). This has been included in various curriculum frameworks, including the Australian *Being, Belonging Becoming: Early Years Learning Framework* (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations [DEEWR] 2009). Subsequently, Clark and Moss (2011) have created a theoretical framework for the Mosaic research approach that includes three basic beliefs about young children outlined in Figure 1 based on children's rights, children's skills and children's knowledge; and identifies how children are capable to make decisions about issues in their lives that affect them. This paper presents an argument for an expanded Mosaic approach with children, by including adults. Interpretation of data has been found to be enhanced when adults' voices, such as parents, carers, teachers, and educators, are included, as the adults' perspectives can add to the richness and meaning to the Mosaic data. Their extra voices add weight to children's voices when advocating to those who make decisions that affect children's lives. This paper provides an exemplar of how this occurred with three vignettes that demonstrate how adults contributed to making meaning of data.

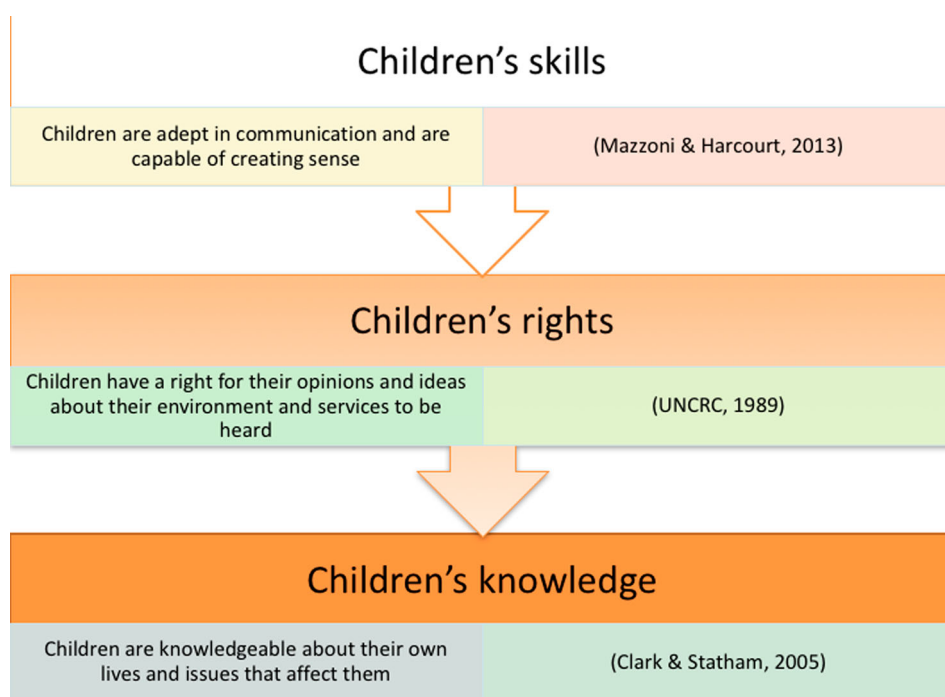


Figure 1. Framework for Mosaic research (adapted from Clark and Moss 2011, source Rogers 2017).

The Mosaic approach

Over the past decade, Clark and Moss (2011) have described multiple methods of qualitative data collection to gather children's perspectives and beliefs. By handing the research tools over to children, Mazzoni and Harcourt (2014) believe researchers enable children to demonstrate, in a range of expressive languages, what they value. Clark (2001) describes the Mosaic approach as one that 'brings together the tools of observation and interviewing with participatory tools to construct a composite picture or "mosaic" of children's lives' (117). Similar to a mosaic picture, the Mosaic approach is comprised of data of small pieces that should be viewed together as a whole, to make meaning. With a mosaic picture, stepping back can give the viewer the ability to see themes and patterns. Stepping back further gives perspective and distance to view the entire picture clearly. Within Mosaic research, a combination of physical, verbal, and visual expression of children facilitates the collection of rich data that is analysed using thematic analysis. One of the important features of the Mosaic approach is that the findings need to be shared with those adults who make decisions that affect children, thereby increasing children's agency. The way relationships are enacted between children and adults are key to supporting children's skills, rights, and knowledge, which are only visible with adults who seek to listen to children (see Figure 1).

But it must be asked if it is only the children's voices that are heard? Is it satisfactory for the adults' voices to be silent? Can new knowledge be discovered by including the adults' voices that support the interpretation of what children intended to mean? If researching with children who are two to five years of age, how can they report their data without

the assistance of an adult? This paper presents an argument for an expanded Mosaic approach with children, by including adults. The data gathered can be enhanced when adults' voices, such as parents, carers, teachers, and educators, are included, as the adults' perspectives can add richness and meaning to the Mosaic data. Their extra voices add weight to children's voices when advocating to those who make decisions that affect children's lives.

Research context

The research project was titled 'Young Children's Understanding and Experiences within an Australian Defence Force Family' (Rogers 2017) and investigated children's experience in their daily lives of having a parent working away for long periods of time and what they understood about parental deployment. Until this study, young children's voices had been marginalised from military family research worldwide, so the project addressed a global research gap (Rogers 2017). Additionally, military family research in Australia was scarce (McFarlane 2009; Siebler and Goddard 2014), so the project provided much-needed data about military families (Chandra and London 2013), concentrating on the voices of children. Many themes in the findings were similar to findings in other countries, such as children's responses to parental deployment (physical, emotional, social, cognitive) (Brooks 2011; Paris et al. 2010), family transitions (DeVoe and Ross 2012), risk and protective factors (Wadsworth 2010; Hollingsworth 2011), organisational support (Siebler 2015) and communication (Andres et al. 2015). The importance of narrative, ritual and acculturation were not emphasised within the literature however, they were important themes within the findings of this research (see Baber 2016). Additionally, the findings demonstrated there was a dearth of age and culturally appropriate resources and programs available for these young children, their parents and educators (Rogers and Bird 2020; Rogers, Bird, and Sims 2019), and that early childhood educators and social media groups provided much-needed support to families (Rogers-Baber 2017).

The theoretical and ethical framework of an exemplar research project

This paper argues, with reference to a research project, that adults' voices included in the Mosaic approach ultimately lead to deeper understanding and meaning of children's life experiences being generated as a result. The research presented in this study used a theoretical framework that aligned with the Mosaic approach grounded in qualitative research. The theoretical framework and the ontological perspective of the authors viewed knowledge construction as being grounded in the socio-cultural context (Vygotsky 1978) where children's meaning-making is integral to the process. Using the same theoretical framework regarding knowledge generation the authors of this paper this research project illustrates how the Mosaic approach was enhanced when adults' voices were included: voices that provided interpretation of children's behaviours and actions that would not otherwise be known. During the process of collecting data via the Mosaic approach it became apparent to the researcher that adjustments were required to the data collection, and so the theoretical framework was adjusted to include adults' voices in the data. The adjustments are outlined below and are illustrated to show the changes.

The participants were children aged from two to five years old, who had at least one member of their family on military deployment, or recently deployed with the Australian Defence Force. The children's families were located in three different geographical states of Australia at four different military bases. The data reported in this paper was collected using the Mosaic approach at an early childhood centre on a military base for twenty days over a five-week period. While most two- to five-year-old children in the service participated (with parental permission) in the research activities, data could only be collected from those who were participants with parental consent.

Data were collected from twelve children at the early childhood centre, with six of these children chosen to do additional data collection activities for in-depth case studies. Indirectly, another five children were involved in the study from families in other locations and military bases. Secondary data was collected about these additional children from their parents and educators using a narrative approach, through informal face-to-face interviews, emails, phone calls and by sharing family photos. The Mosaic approach was viewed as ideal for exploring the experiences and understandings of young children in regard to parental deployment because it afforded rich data types in multiple forms. This is due to the fact that Mosaic researchers are able to examine the phenomenon from a range of children's contexts and perspectives. Ethics approval to research with these children, families and educators was gained from the University of New England ethics committee.

Procedural ethics and ethics in practice were contemplated in the early stages of research question design, planning and methodology (Rogers 2017). When utilising visual methods of research with children, such as the Mosaic approach, researchers face many significant procedural ethical decisions (Phelan and Kinsella 2012). Many of these significant incidents are unpredictable and require researcher reflexivity and ethical awareness to solve dilemmas in a professional manner. During the project, there were delicate issues that required high levels of researcher integrity. The researcher used the Code of Ethics (ECA 2016) that promotes children's wellbeing by prioritising their best interests. Flannery Quinn and Manning (2013) raised the researcher's awareness around required reflection, such as assent, representation, the use of photographs and imbalances of power.

Ethics in practice issues were also addressed in the project. Although parental consent was gained, care was taken to ensure children's assent was also obtained ethically as recommended by Phelan and Kinsella 2012. This assent was sought in age-appropriate ways. Verbal assent was used for those that were unable to write. Children generally gave their verbal assent, but occasionally they said they did not want to be involved in a particular research activity because they wanted to continue their play. At a later date, they often became involved in the activity when it was repeated with other children and they asked to be involved, or they were invited to participate. They were never pressured to participate: an approach recommended by Lewis and Porter (2007) and Phelan and Kinsella (2012). The researcher initially collected the children's artwork; however, a challenge arose when one child wanted to keep his drawing to show his parents. The educators were able to suggest the researcher utilise the photocopier, so colour photocopies were made after each activity to provide the children a copy of their work to take home.

Initial expansion of the theoretical framework for the research project

The initial choice of the Mosaic approach for this research aligned with the research questions and philosophy of the research framework. However, upon reflection it became apparent that children's voices which were used exclusively when employing the Mosaic approach, meant silencing the voices of those adults who cared for the children, such as their parents and educators. This was viewed as impeding knowledge generation. A review of the literature also highlighted the tight nature of the defence community, the isolation many families face due to frequent relocations and the prolonged and frequent separations due to training and deployment. This meant that the children were very reliant on their parents and educators because they were often living away from extended family.

As a result, the framework was expanded and clarified to include additional elements (see Figure 2) to take into account this unique context. The focus on the children for data collection and the obvious crucial role educators and parents have within the lives of these children required a revision of the framework to include and understand the

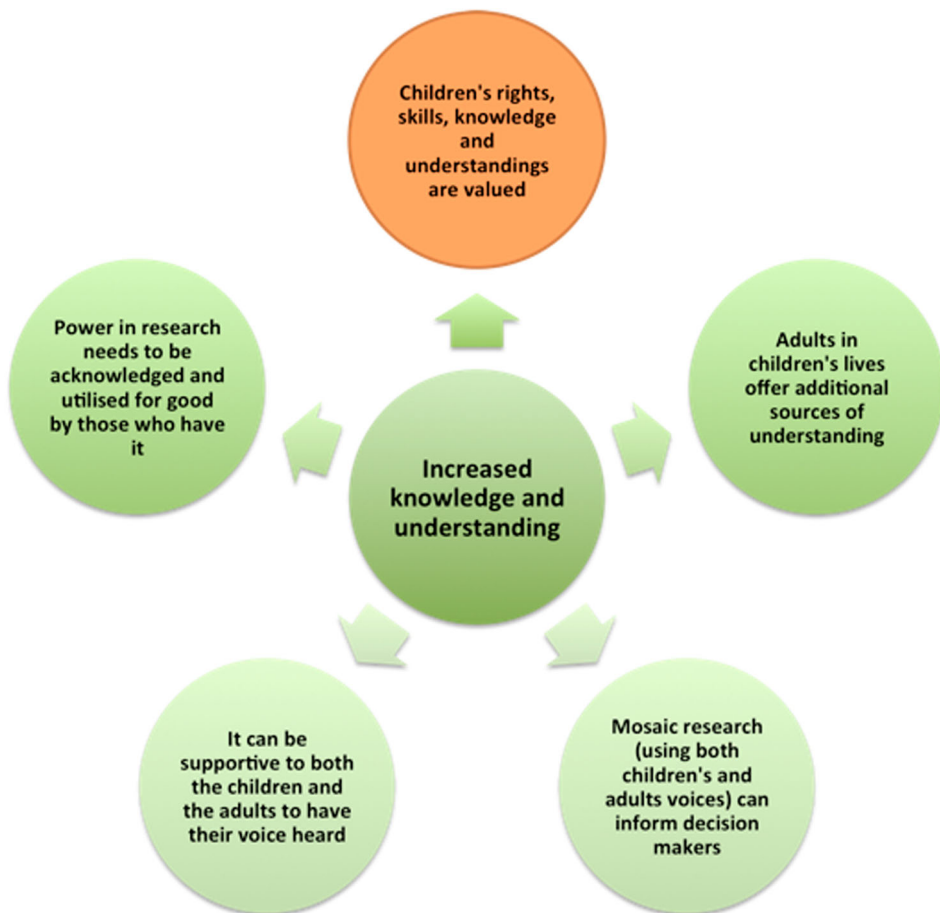


Figure 2. Expanded framework for listening to children's voices (Rogers 2017).

knowledge adults have in children's lives. Thus, framework which was depicted in [Figure 1](#) included children enacting their skills, rights and knowledge is shown in [Figure 2](#) in the orange bubble. The green circles are new areas, representing the caring adults in the children's lives, and the important element of research power.

Research power is a key consideration in participatory methods of research. When discussing research power, Gallagher (2008) calls for a more nuanced approach than the one sometimes employed in the participatory research field with children (Gallagher 2008). For example, researchers' and adults' influence on data has been viewed as inherently negative, even when the adults and researcher have been acting in the interests of the children. As a reaction to this, Kesby (2005), questions the need to imagine power as a commodity that needs equal dispersal. Participation can be powerful in research: it can take the form of the positive use of power (Kesby 2005), or as Walker et al. (2007) state power in research participation can empower marginalised people. Polarisation, depicting children as having no power, and researchers as adults having unlimited power are also unhelpful. Moreover, Kesby (2005) questions the notion that power is 'inherently negative, limiting or repressive' (2040). Children's lives are situated within the context of their community, education and care services, and their family. Therefore, the adults in children's lives can provide nuanced insights into children's ways of thinking and being; and offer assistance with theme verification during data analysis. It is also useful for both children and the adults in their lives, to have their beliefs and experiences heard, giving them a voice about issues that affect them. This type of multilayered research data can be of use to policy and decision makers, which has been included to the new expanded framework depicted in [Figure 2](#).

This expanded Mosaic approach framework, shown in [Figure 2](#), was developed and utilised to gather children's voices and analyse their experiences and understandings. A variety of qualitative research tools were utilised during data collection that were recommended by other Mosaic researchers, such as a researcher journal, photo and story elicitation, artwork, craftwork, children's photographs, observations, individual and group chats (see Greenfield 2011). The tools were trialled in initial data collection activities and then the researcher kept using those tools that worked well with particular groups of children and adapted or abandoned those that did not, while trying to maintain a variety of ways the children could communicate their experiences and understandings. The researcher found storybook elicitation to be the most effective way to start discussions and to springboard the children's ideas into craft, artwork, role and puppet play activities. The researcher felt most confident in using this method due to initial success and its familiarity as a method of teaching. Initially, the researcher thought the reflective journal was too time consuming and tedious, but later found it was very helpful and provided an extra source of data when presenting and analysing the data.

All the listed tools were used in the study with a number of children initially at the early childhood centre, then within a case study with children and parents at the main research site which was a long day care centre attached to a military base. In this way the case study applied various data collection tools to enable the researcher to create a more in-depth study (Walter 2013), and to depict a 'typical or exemplary' example (O'Toole and Beckett 2013, 51). The case studies in this study focused on 'individual instances rather than on a broad spectrum' (Walter 2013, 382).

During the project, children's experiences of parental deployment were openly communicated during chats, comments and conversations. Their experiences were also communicated through photographs, play, drawings, craft, art, rhymes and raps. Their understandings of parental deployment were nuanced in these responses and their related comments. Sophisticated understandings and high levels of empathy were demonstrated by the children and their peers, when discussing the characters in the storybooks who were experiencing transitions at home due to parental deployment. They also demonstrated their understandings of parental deployment related to other children's experiences or a character's experiences in the researcher's storybooks used as data collection tools (e.g. https://www.defence.gov.au/DCO/_Master/documents/Books/Anthonys-Story.pdf). The research with the children was conducted over a period of four weeks, providing a snapshot of their experiences and understanding at that time. Similarly, interviews with parents captured the intensity of the experiences at that time, rather than later, in research that was carried out post-deployment e.g. Timor-Leste study interviews (McGuire et al. 2012; Siebler 2009). Additionally, many case study families provided updates via email and phone calls over the next two years about family events and how the children and family were coping with transitions. As such, frequency of contact and access influenced the findings.

Underlying principles of the research project

Within the Mosaic approach elements of the Reggio Emilia educational approach (Malguzzi 1998), and the conceptual frameworks of social research with populations who are disempowered; and narrative and ethnographic principles, are utilised (Clark and Statham 2005). The Mosaic approach may therefore seem piecemeal at times, but the underlying beliefs are intrinsic philosophical underpinnings. These beliefs involve methods to best procure children's ideas and relationships between the child and the researcher (see Figure 3). Overall, Mosaic research brings benefits for the educators and children (Greenfield 2011) and strived to expand our understandings of children's ideas about their world by listening to their voices, which are often marginalised. It is important to note that we believe that empowerment is not a redistribution of power, but a reinforcement of confidence by groups and individuals as they understand and exert their rights and to have more say and responsibility in their lives (Oxford University 2016), a view expanded in this reference.

The Mosaic approach in the research project

The research approach explained in this paper collected data using a range of tools to gather the children's voices as outlined in Table 1. After commencing data collection with the children, it was apparent that the non-deployed civilian parents and the educators also had a wealth of information. They began volunteering information and confirming what the children were saying, so retrospective consent was gained to utilise this information with an ethics variation. The methods of data collection for parents differed because of their different and preferred styles of communication and availability.

The educator interacts with the child to identify what the craft means for the child. This values children's knowledge and provides understandings of what the child intended

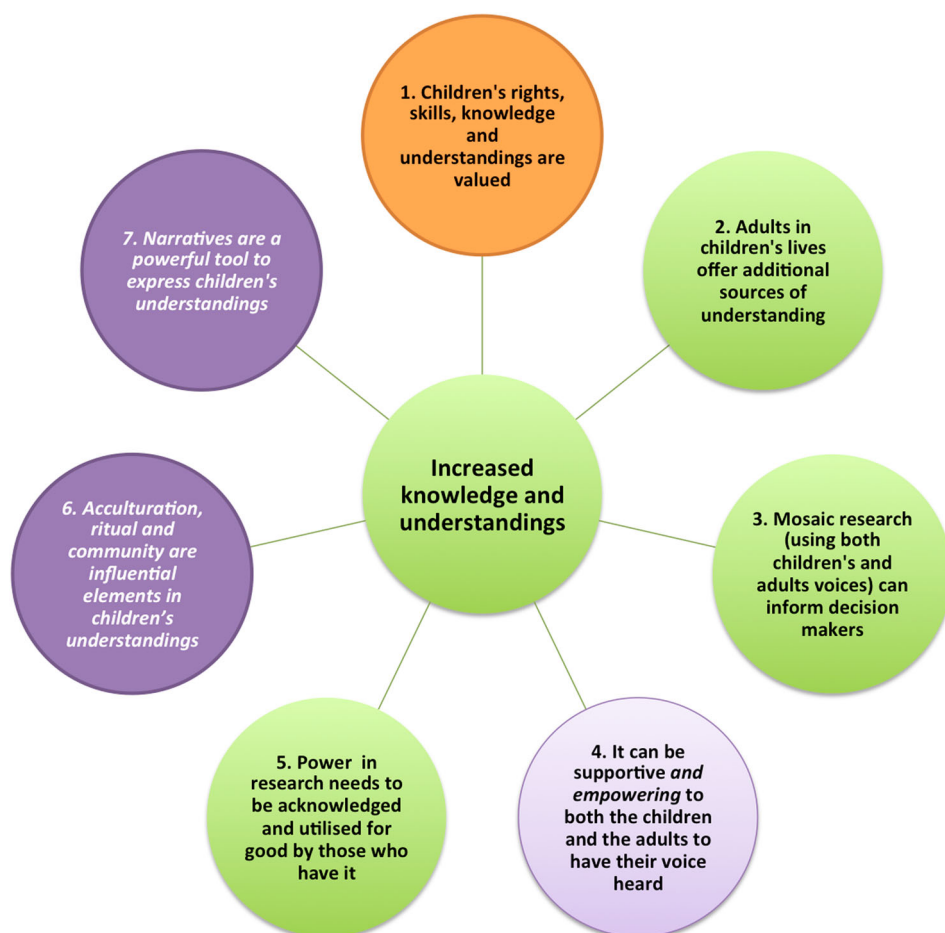


Figure 3. Expanded framework for listening to children's voices (Source: Rogers 2017).

Table 1. Data collection tools.

	Children's voices	Parent voices	Educator voices
Researcher reflective journal	✓	✓	✓
Reading story books about deployment to elicit group discussions and other responses	✓		
Craft	✓		
Drawings	✓		
Chats with individual children face-to-face	✓	✓	✓
Chats with groups of children face to face	✓		✓
Chats via phone		✓	
Email communication		✓	
Adults taking photos using a disposable camera under children's instructions		✓	
Children taking photos using a disposable camera	✓		
Sharing family photos		✓	
Reading story books about deployment to children to elicit discussions		✓	✓
Rhymes and raps	✓		
Puppet play	✓		
Role play	✓		
Imaginative play	✓		
Observations	✓		

(Kesby 2005). Additionally, it needs to be acknowledged that there will always be research bias within data. For example, observations are often influenced by what information was sought, what is of importance to the researcher and what was filtered out. Craft and artwork that the children make may be skewed towards what they think the researcher wants them to create, what materials are provided, and indeed, researcher questions may inadvertently guide their explanations. To try to counteract this to some degree, in this research project, the parents and educators confirmed data, added to the children's explanations, and verified emerging themes throughout the process.

Revising the framework

The original Mosaic framework informed the research project, especially the tools that were chosen for data collection, analysis and the narrative presentation of data. To enhance the manner in which young children's voices were listened to, the framework

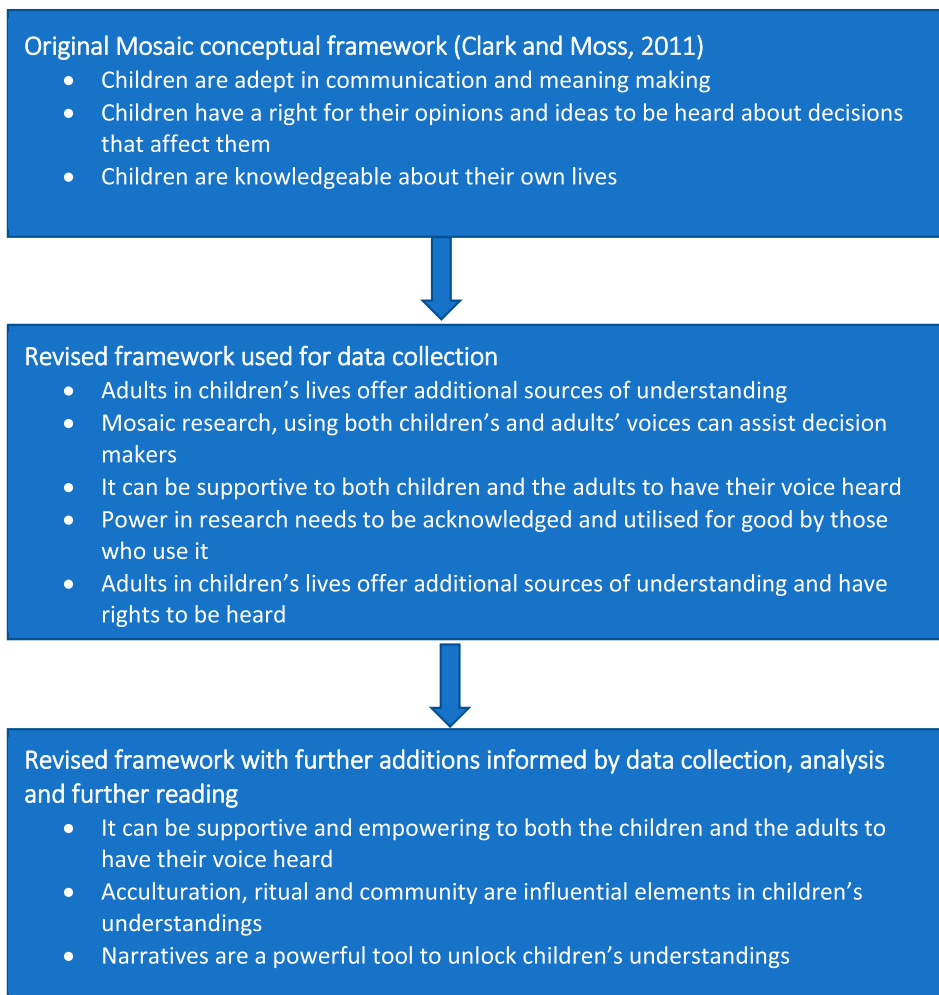


Figure 4. Modified conceptual framework (Rogers 2017).

was further expanded and is presented in [Figure 3](#). This built in [Figure 2](#) which had included the listening and shared power of children and adults in the research. [Figure 3](#) includes new points (purple and lilac coloured circles). The green circles depicted the additional concepts from the initial modification of [Figure 1](#) concerning data collection and analysis. Three overall changes to [Figure 2](#) (listed below) were recommended for the revised framework demonstrated in [Figure 3](#). The overall changes to the framework are summarised in [Figure 4](#):

- First, an extra word ‘empowering’ (lilac circle) was added to describe listening to both children’s and adults’ voices.
- Second, two new points are shown in purple addressing the way ritual and acculturation affect children’s understandings of their parent’s deployment.
- Third, the final change (again in purple) highlights the powerful effect of narrative to convey these understandings and gather insight into the ritual and acculturation within children’s lives.

Learning from the children

Utilising the lens of the revised research framework, this section explores the implications of this method of data collection for learning from the children. The seven circles in the framework presented in [Figure 3](#) align with the data collection methods of the open conversations, comments and chats explained the children’s experiences of parental deployment at times. The children’s experiences were portrayed through artworks, raps, rhymes, craft, puppet play, role play and dramatic play at other times. Nuanced understandings were present within these outputs and the comments they inspired. The children and their peers frequently showed sophisticated understandings and advanced levels of empathy for one other and characters in the storybooks created for data collection, who were experiencing parental separation due to deployment or training. They sometimes articulated their understandings of parental deployment related to experiences of their peers or a character’s experiences in the storybooks. Importantly, the data collection occurred over a period of four weeks, giving a picture of what the children were understanding and experiencing over this period. Chats with parents during data collection capture the intensity of the experiences, rather than later, as was the case of the Timor-Leste study interviews (McGuire et al. 2012), that occurred after deployment. Within this research project of children with deployed parents, the majority of the families provided additional information after data collection via phone calls and emails over the next year or two about family events and the impacts of those changes on the children and family as a whole. Therefore, the frequency of contact and access with the family and the immediacy of the deployment affect the findings. Multiple access points provided opportunities to add to their stories, update the researcher on what was happening in their family, and how the children were responding and developing.

Parents often honestly expressed their experiences, frustrations, failures, joys, struggles, gratitude, tears and achievements. The compounding stresses they conveyed reminded the researcher of a pressure-cooker with the heat increasing at certain times during the deployment cycle. The families showed remarkable resilience to stay together and

remain with the ADF at times. Despite, this they were able to communicate positive parts of their situations, even when discussing stressful events, displaying significant resilience. They did not question the system that was responsible for placing enduring and often unpredictable pressure on their family, apart from one parent. Stoicism within military families was commented upon by Siebler (2009) and Brooks (2011), who stated, 'that most families cope with the numerous stresses involved is testament to their strength, especially when other families around them are living lives without these stresses' (469). The long-term impact of this type of life on the children and parents was reflected upon by the researcher when listening to parent's chat. Another reflection was whether family members would see their sacrifice and service to the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and the country as worthwhile in the future. Brooks (2011) states that military families do best if they are able to attribute meaning to their service and the impacts on their lives, hence, adopting the narrative of 'service and sacrifice' within military organisations.

In this project, themes were identified, verified and presented by using a selection of the methods used by Mosaic researchers. A conscious awareness was needed during photo analysis to promote a more accurate interpretation (Pink 2007). This assisted the researcher to avoid preconceived notions and to promote awareness of time management and social settings. Photo analysis can be challenging, time-consuming and heavily influenced by the images of childhood they elicit (Fasoli 2003). Verification from children and other adults who knew the children assisted with this.

Additionally, both the children's and their parents' skills, knowledge and understandings were merged to form a sharper picture of the findings. The addition of adults' voices clarified some of the themes and added details to the children's voice. It also added further, nuanced insight into family life for the children and the effects of parental deployment and training on the children and the whole family. Importantly, children's beliefs and experiences were heard in issues that affected them. Their knowledge, understandings and skills were appreciated and utilised within the Mosaic approach. In the revised conceptual framework, adults in children's lives are situated as additional sources of understandings and are therefore included. By combining both elements, a variety of new insights were made.

Learning from the adults

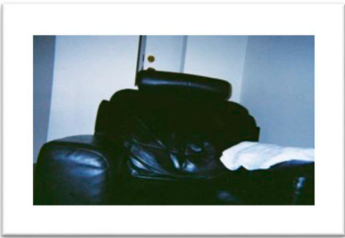
Three vignettes demonstrate the power of including adults voices in the Mosaic approach, that enhance the research findings. During the research project, there were a number of incidents where adults' voices were really important. The parents were able to communicate their experiences with the children, which gave further insight into the information they had provided in group and individual chats, drawings, craftwork, rhymes and raps, puppet and role plays. The educators were able to expand and verify themes and stories the children told and give further insight into older siblings within the family and the quality of their relationship with the participant child. There were three particular incidents listed below, where parents were able to communicate hidden meanings in the photographs the children had taken showing their experiences during parental deployment and training. The author had seen the photographs and had thought them irrelevant, so would have dismissed them as being important data, because the children had not been

able to verbalise the significance of the photos. However, the adults’ explanations of the photos clearly demonstrate the power of how including the adults’ voice in this mosaic data collection approach provided meaning for how children are experiencing their parent’s deployment.

The first story is that of Bella who was 2.5 years old. She was given a disposable camera to take photos of aspects of her life at home that related to deployment. Bella had taken a photo of her dog, which she had told the researcher was her dog, and the researcher did not think it of importance. However, when Bella’s mother was asked about the photo, she explained that this was an integral part of how Bella experiences her father’s deployment. When her father is away the dog was allowed to come into the house to protect the family at night so that the family did not get scared. The adult/parent’s voice was needed in the research to explain the meaning of the photo. Clearly this child understood how the presence of the dog inside their home meant that her father was deployed, and she had then taken a photo to show the researcher.

The second photo story was that of a picture of grandad pushing Bella (two years old) on the swing that Blake, her brother (five years old) had taken. Again, the researcher did not attribute much importance to this photo until she spoke with their mother who explained that this was Blake’s experience of his father being away: the children go to stay more often at the grandparent’s house to assist his mum. The conversation

Table 2. Parent information about the children’s photographs.

Name and age of the child and their explanation of the photo	Photograph	Meaning attributed by the parent
1. Bella (2.5-years-old) – ‘My dog’		Bella took a photo of her dog because it is only allowed inside when her father is deployed. The dog can protect them at night, so they don’t get scared.
2. Blake (5-years-old) – ‘My sister being pushed on the swing by Poppy’.		During parental training and deployment, sleepovers and visits with their grandparents are much more common as part of extended family support. This is something that is special for the children when their father is away
3. Blake (5-years-old) – ‘Dad’s couch’		Their Dad’s lounge-chair becomes a very special place in our house when he is on deployment or training.

between the researcher and Blake's mum validated the lived experience of Blake of his father's deployment.

The third example of the power of adults' voice giving meaning to photos was again that of Blake who had photographed his father's couch which the researcher had dismissed as being unimportant. The parent revealed, the children were not allowed to sit on this couch when he was at home. But when he goes away, they are allowed to sit on his couch, which seems to give them comfort (Table 2).

Discussion and implications

The aim of this paper was to present a revised conceptual framework of the Mosaic approach (Clark and Moss 2011) grounded in a research project. The research project aimed to investigate children's experience in their daily lives of having a parent deployed. Using the Mosaic approach as a springboard the voices of adults were significant in interpreting the children's data they had collected. This data from parents was included as an additional data collection method. In the early stages of data collection, the researcher had identified that the adults' voices provided meaning that was not evident in other data collection methods, as outlined in Table 1. Therefore, the adults' voices were included as a narrative presentation of the data. While acknowledging the power differences between adults and children, it was also acknowledged that the adults wanted what was best for the children. In this way, power was used for the greater good (Gallagher 2008) as the researcher gained deeper insight into children's experience of having a parent deployed, which has been used to inform policy (Rogers 2020) and develop programs and resources for young children from military families (see website for Early Childhood Defence Programs project www.ecdefenceprograms.com). The findings report (Rogers 2020) has been used by the Defence Community Organisation (DCO), an agency that supports Australian military families, to leverage further support for families. Developing insight into how children experience a parent's deployment can help to support children who may suffer parental separation anxiety and instability in their lives in this context.

The initial framework, proposed by Clark and Moss (2011), that children have rights, skills and knowledge, and are adept at meaning-making, was further developed to include adults' voices in children's lives, to make children's meaning more authentic as illustrated with the three vignettes. The adults were viewed to have power in the research as their voices were heard, and these voices informed the research findings of children's lived experiences of having a parent deployed. The adults were a conduit to the child's world explaining why Bella's dog, for example, was so significant in Bella's life with her father deployed. The voice of the adults, who want the best for their child, enables the child to express views and be understood in ways that would otherwise not be possible. Understanding how children experience a parent who is deployed will assist other children by sharing the findings and acting on them. Thus, the revised framework is summarised and presented in Figure 4. This framework was informed by the outcomes of this research project that used the original framework of Clark and Moss (2005) as a springboard for delving more deeply into understanding children's experiences. The framework builds on the two previous frameworks and highlights how being heard can be an empowering and supportive process within a specific culture such as the Australian Defence Force community.

Conclusions and recommendations

This manuscript has explained how the conceptual framework of the Mosaic approach was adapted in a research project to include adults' voices in order to highlight children's lived experiences. The title of the manuscript, *Meddling with Mosaic: Reflections and adaptations*, has addressed how the Mosaic approach supports children's participation and voice in research, yet also how the voices of adults significant in children's lives can aid the meaning that children intend when they are collecting data. In the examples provided in this paper the data collected by the children were photographs, and the adults' narratives about these photos from within their family community, provided deeper meaning for the researcher. The adults shared their power with the children, which in turn empowered the children, as their intended meaning was clear. This additional meaning gave a deeper understanding of how children experienced a parent who was deployed.

The experience of including adults' narratives to children's data collection, enabled the rethinking and expanding of the framework. This approach may be of interest to researchers and practitioners who work with the Mosaic Approach and who gather and promote the voice of children and those with disabilities.

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