



# Building and sustaining a quality early childhood teacher workforce

National Workforce Forum

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### Professional recognition

Workforce professional standing, including pay and conditions, registration, and community perceptions and value.

### Data and evidence

Enhanced national data collection, analysis, and strategic discussion.

### Qualifications and career pathways

Supporting quality, improving consistency and reducing complexity, as well as enabling flexible career progression.



### Attraction and retention

Workforce diversity, including attracting the right people into the sector, and valuing and retaining high calibre staff.

### Leadership and capability

Workforce culture, including professional development, leadership and mentoring, and management capability.

### Wellbeing

Helping service providers to have strong mental health and wellbeing supports for their workforce.

***How can the supply of a quality ECT workforce in Australia be developed and sustained?***

What EC ITE program features best prepare graduates to work in ECE?

What factors influence preservice and graduate ECTs' teaching quality, career intentions, motivation, satisfaction, efficacy, and wellbeing over time?

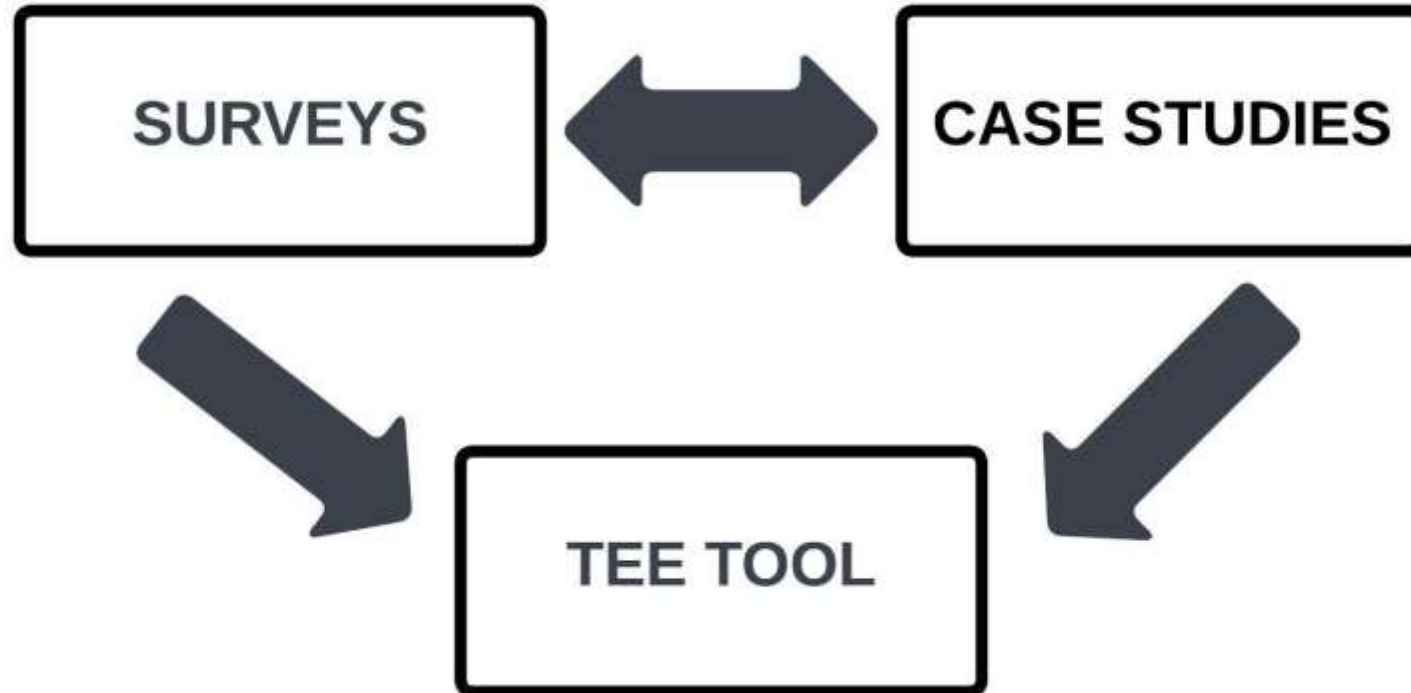
How can teacher quality in the early years be assessed to reflect the work that ECTs do?

What is the quality of Australia's diverse ECT graduates like?

How can government, higher education, and EC sector workforce initiatives support and sustain a quality ECT workforce?



# Methods



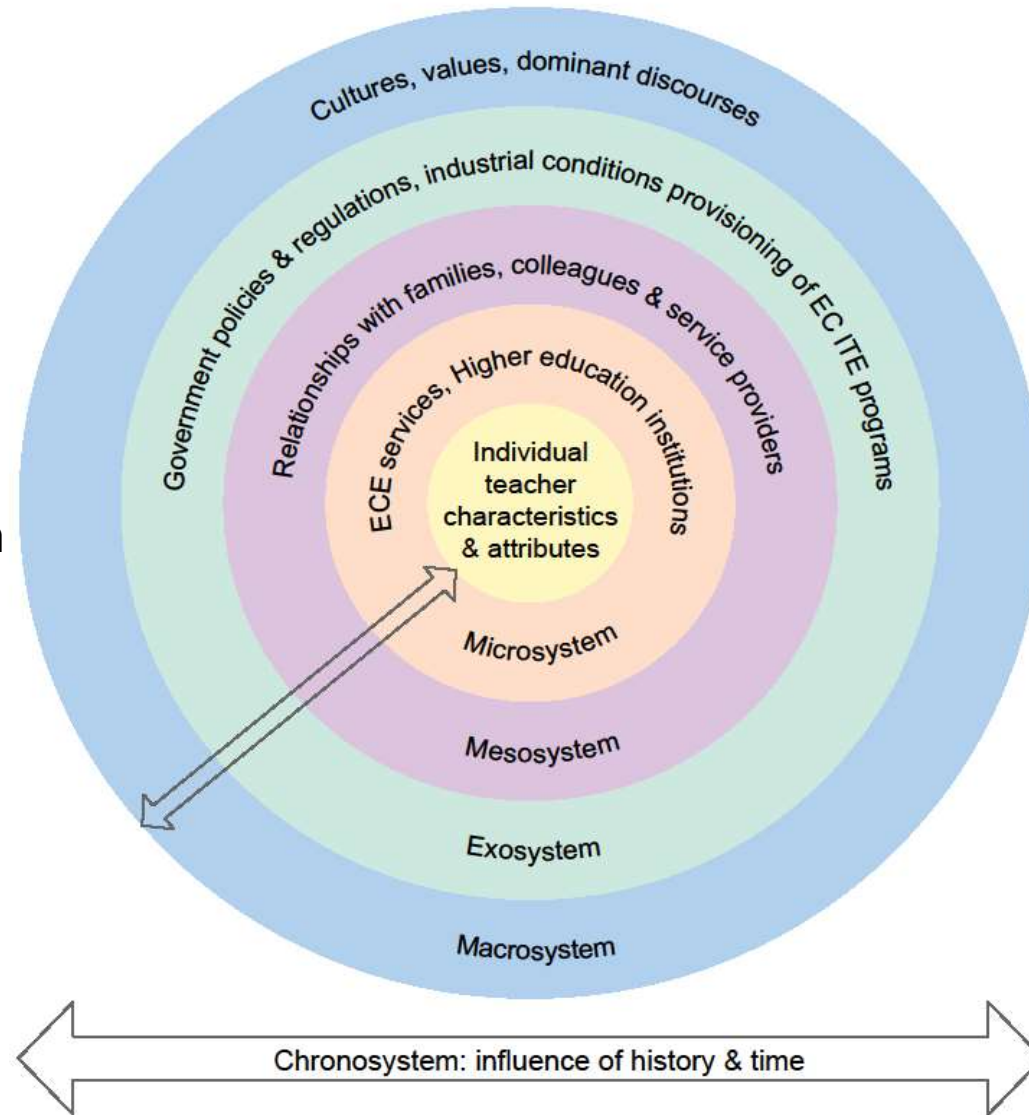
# Survey methodology

Holistic, ecological, social constructionist conceptualisation of ECTs

Longitudinal survey research design

Tracking first & final year preservice ECTs from degree entry to early career (national)

Wave 1 (May 2023) n=47 institutions (587 respondents)



# Measures

Variables/Constructs	Item examples
Demographic/ Background (13 items <sup>1</sup> )	Have you had any overseas employment experience and/or training in ECEC?
Current studies (14 items <sup>1</sup> )	What is the focused age-range of your program? [B-5, B-8, B-12]
Career aspirations and plans (9 items <sup>1</sup> )	Indicate your intention to teach the following age groups of children: [B-5, B-8, B-12]
Beliefs about teaching/self as student teacher [10 items <sup>2</sup> ]	Please rate the extent to which the pair of traits applies to you [Sympathetic, Warm]
Motivation to teach [FIT-Choice: 13 items <sup>3</sup> ]	I chose to become a teacher because a teaching career is suited to my abilities
Motivation & Engagement [MES-U/C: 11 items <sup>4</sup> ]	I believe I can do well in my teaching degree
Adaptability <sup>3</sup> [ITE students: 9 items]	In my program, I am able to adjust my thinking or expectations to assist me in a new situation.
Resilience <sup>4</sup> [ITE students: 10 items]	When something goes wrong in my teaching degree, I don't take it too personally.
Teacher Self-Efficacy <sup>5</sup> [6 TSE + 5 ECT-SE items]	How confident are you that you will be able to promote play and peer interaction?

<sup>1</sup>Self-developed or adapted from Gibson's pilot Workforce Study; <sup>2</sup>Gosling et al. (2003); <sup>3</sup>Watt & Richardson (2007);

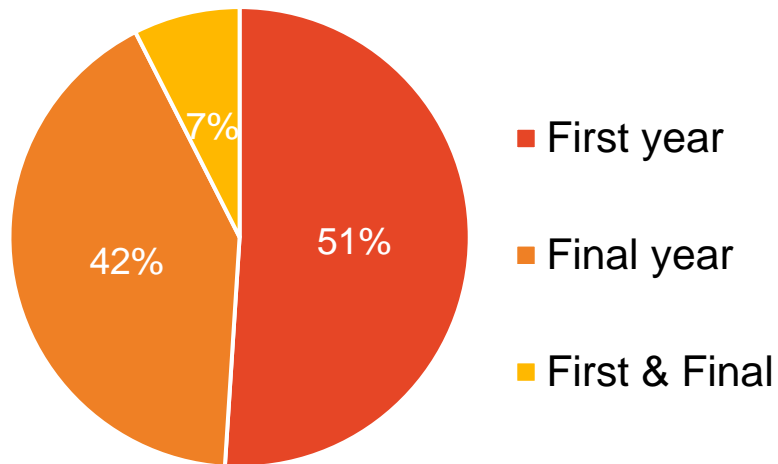
<sup>4</sup>Martin (2009); <sup>5</sup>Collie & Martin (2016); <sup>6</sup>Mansfield & Wosnitza (2015); <sup>7</sup>Tschannen-Moran & Hoy (2001)

# Findings: Who are the participants?

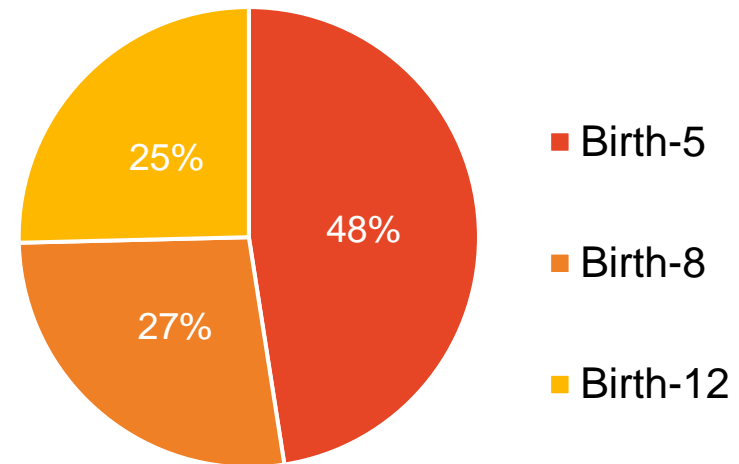
- 587 participants from 45 institutions across 8 states/territories in Australia
- Majority Female (87.9%)
- Most 17-35 years of age (76.2%), *Mean age = 28.96, SD = 9.20 (Range 17-60)*
- 13.4% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (78 out of 587)
- 31.7% speak English + other language(s)
- 48.7% have primary care responsibilities

# Findings: Who are the participants?

Year in ITE Program



Focused Age Range of ITE Program



76.9% enrolled as domestic students

48.6% in a university/institution in NSW

58% studying FT; 29% PT; 13% combination

**96% intend to finish their program**



# Findings: Career Choice

<i>Is teaching your first choice as a career?</i>	Focused age range			N
	Birth to 5	Birth to 8	Birth to 12	
<b>Yes</b>	230 (90%)	145 (99%)	129 (95%)	504
<b>No</b>	26	2	7	35
<b>Total</b>	256	147	136	539



<i>Is teaching children aged birth-5 years your first career choice?</i>	Focused age range			N
	Birth to 5	Birth to 8	Birth to 12	
<b>Yes</b>	<b>203 (88%)</b>	<b>101 (70%)</b>	<b>67 (52%)</b>	371
<b>No</b>	27	44	62	133
<b>Total</b>	230	145	129	504

# Findings: Top Reasons



## **Enrolling in current ITE program**

1. I have a passion for teaching
2. I enjoy being with young children
3. I want a job where I can make a difference

## **Staying in current ITE program**

1. I want to graduate and work as a teacher
2. Future job opportunities
3. Flexibility of the program

# Findings: Program Differences

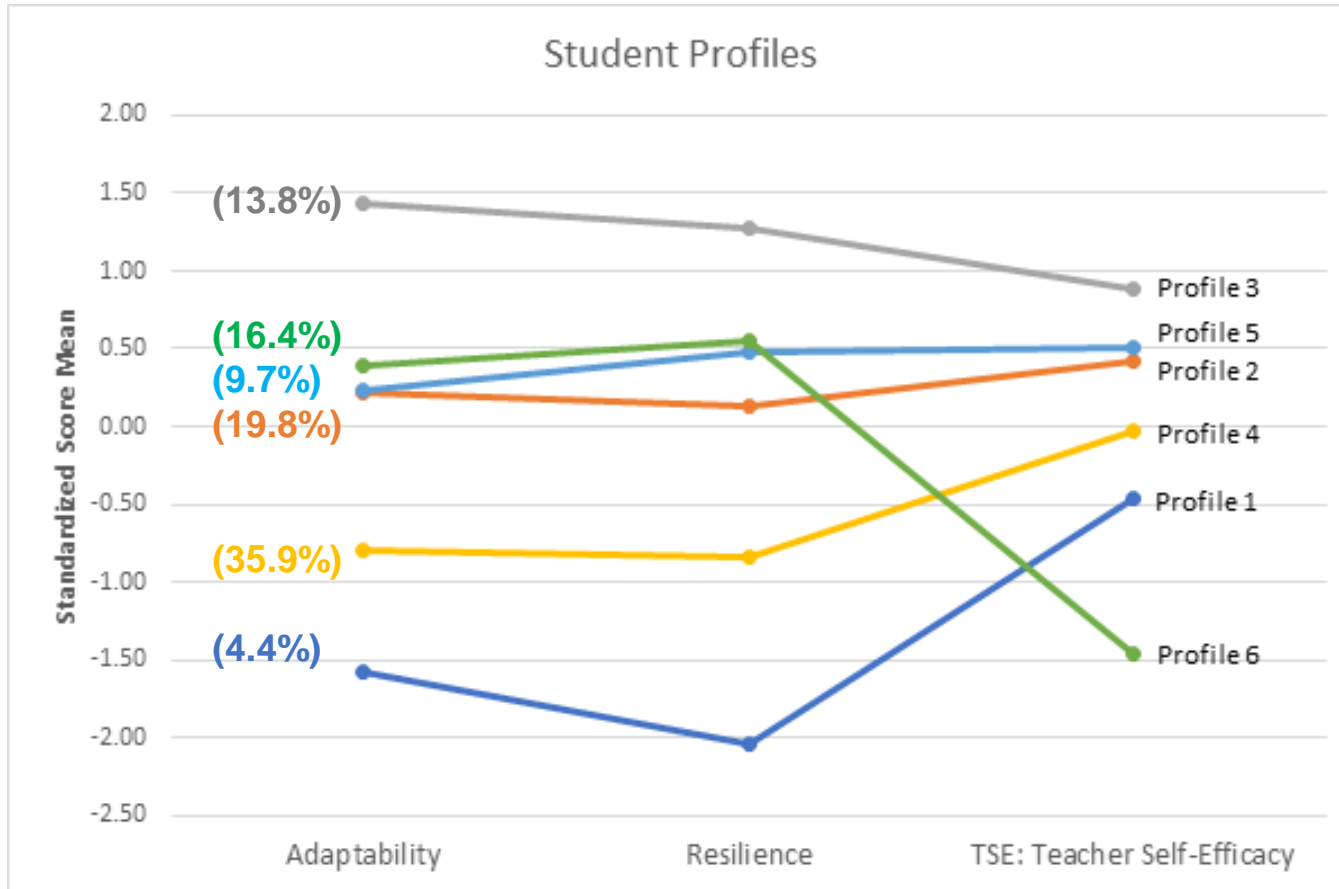
One-way ANOVA suggested that there were statistically significant differences in mean scores across the three programs (B-5, B-8, B-12).

Key Constructs	
Motivation to teach	$F_{(2, 532)} = 1.293, p = .275$
<b>Motivation &amp; Engagement</b>	<b><math>F_{(2, 567)} = 4.114, p = .017</math></b>
<b>Adaptability</b>	<b><math>F_{(2, 565)} = 3.854, p = .022</math></b>
Resilience	$F_{(2, 561)} = .567, p = .568$
<b>Teacher Self-Efficacy</b>	<b><math>F_{(2, 555)} = 7.987, p = .001</math></b>

Tukey post-hoc tests revealed significant results:

- B-12 group had lower motivation and engagement scores in comparison to the B-5 group ( $p = .013$ )
- B-12 group had lower adaptability scores in comparison to the B-5 group ( $p = .016$ )
- B-12 group had lower teacher self-efficacy scores in comparison to the B-5 group ( $p = .002$ )
- B-8 group had lower teacher self-efficacy scores in comparison to the B-5 group ( $p = .004$ )

# Findings: Profiles



- (3) Higher ADAPT and RES, high TSE 👍👍👍
- (5) Above-average ADAPT & RES, relatively high TSE 👍👍
- (2) Moderate ADAPT & RES, relatively higher TSE 👍
- (4) Below-average ADAPT & RES, close to average TSE 🗨️
- (1) Lower ADAPT & RES, moderate TSE 🗨️🗨️🗨️
- (6) Moderate-high ADAPT & RES, low TSE 🗨️

Latent profile analysis = six-profile solution most appropriate (significant results with comparatively lower AIC and BIC values; BLRT p = .01)

# Why We Need a TEE tool to measure ECT quality

- Teacher quality matters! But this has been difficult to substantiate.
- Extant research fails to differentiate between teachers on quality indicators.
- We need a way to assess teacher quality in order to:
  - Facilitate more nuanced research investigating relationships between ECTs, contextual factors (incl. ITE) and quality of programs.
  - Recognise and reward those ECTs who do meet and exceed quality benchmarks / standards.
  - Identify areas where ECTs (either as individuals or as a group) are not meeting quality benchmarks / standards - ***so as to support and sustain ECTs' practice and improve ECT preparation and professional development.***

**What constitutes a quality ECT is contentious, controversial and multi-perspectival, *and* no tool currently exists to measure the quality of ECTs.**



# What 'is' the TEE tool & how are we developing it?

- Tool for assessing ECT quality *holistically* – within the context in which they work, and their career stage
  - Tool for researchers; providers; teachers; stakeholders. It needs to be:
    - *robust*
    - *valid & reliable*
    - *informed by national standards*
    - *acceptable,*
    - *fit for purpose*
- Co-designing with stakeholders using implementation science approaches



# What is Implementations Science?



Metz, A. et al. (2015). *An integrated framework for implementation of EC programs*. Washington Dept of Human Services.

# TEE Tool design approach: Four Stages

## 1. Exploration (2023):

- Examined literature / existing measures
- Drawn on expert knowledge: Stakeholder event / Delphi process.

## 2. Installation (2024):

- Develop a prototype through a collaborative iterative process.
- Draw on expert / user feedback: Stakeholder events / Delphi process.

## 3. Initial Implementation (2024-2025): Test & refine the prototype.

- Pilot / useability study (what works or doesn't / for whom / when etc?)
- Psychometric assessment to establish initial validity & reliability

## 4. Full Implementation: (2026):

- Utilise the tool within this study.
- Analysis to determine quality of the participant teachers – as measured by the tool.

## Beyond the study

- Partners able to use the tool (caveats).
- Further work to establish reliability.





# Stage 1. Exploration

- Examined literature: theoretical and empirical research; existing measures; policy documents; grey literature; professional standards; codes of ethics (etc)
  - *what / how is ECT quality defined and assessed*
- Gathered expert knowledge:
  - 2-day workshop: presentations; facilitate discussion; generate ideas.
  - 32 participants: researchers, teachers, providers, policy makers, unions, peak bodies etc

## Data:

- responses to facilitated provocation questions related to the **purposes, principles, content, and design & usability features** of the TEE Tool
  - What would you want the TEE tool to do?
  - What do you consider should be underlying principles of the TEE Tool?  
Philosophical, theoretical, practical
  - What do you consider is essential to include in the TEE Tool?
- contributions via follow-up email
- open text comments on post workshop evaluation
- participant identified source documents.



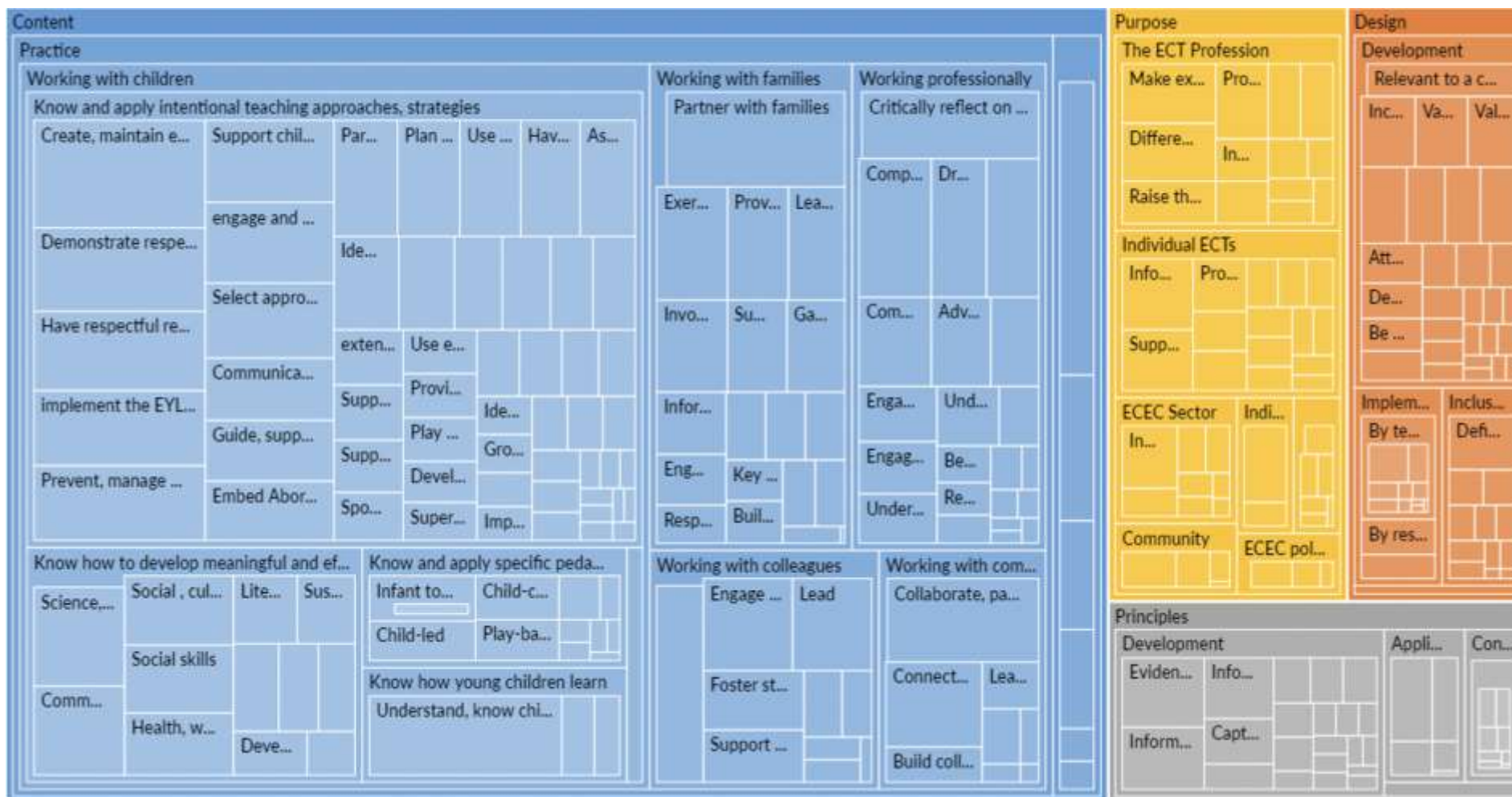
# Stage 1. Exploration

## Data Analysis (via Nvivo platform)

- Deductive Content Analysis using data driven heuristic:
  - Purpose
  - Principles
  - Content
  - Design
- Inductive thematic analysis
  - open-coding - memoing and
  - comparative – mapping / thematicising
  - consensus
  - several iterations
  - refined the coding tree

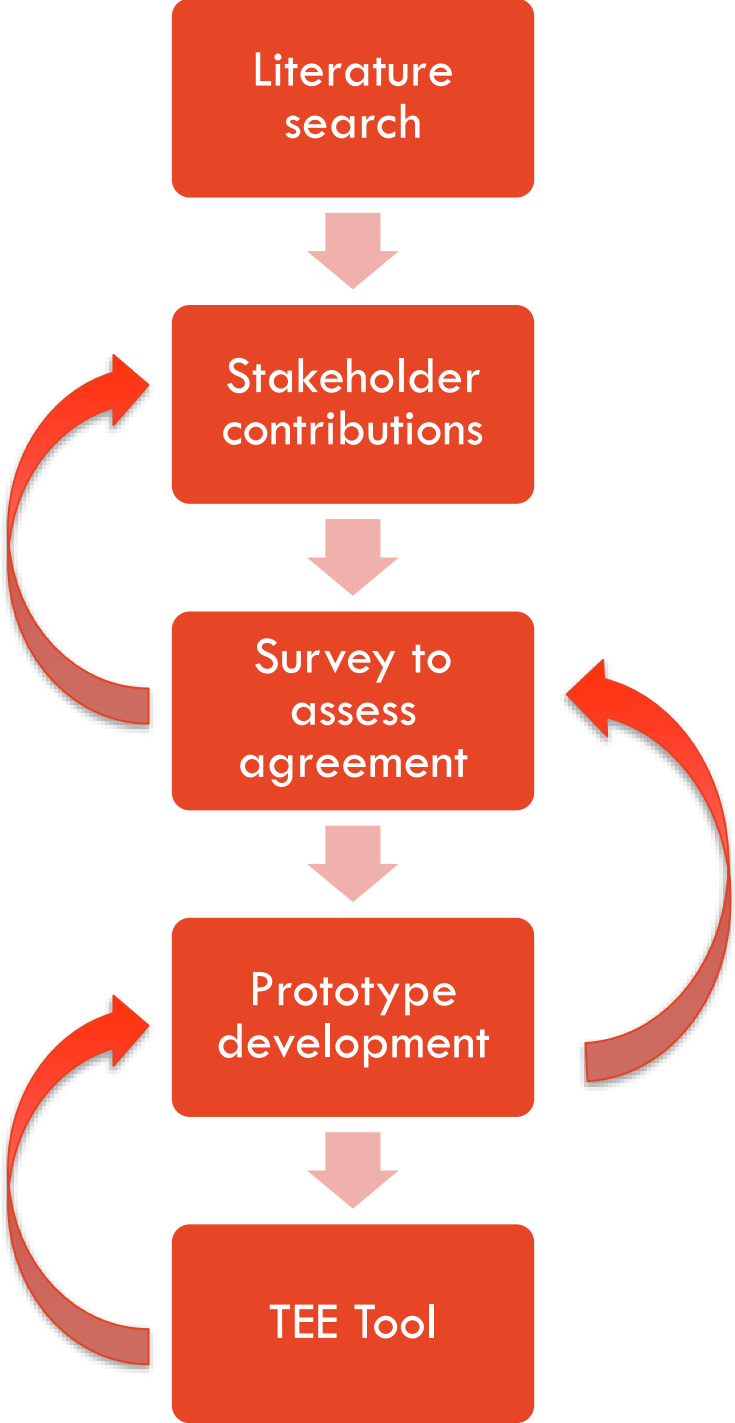


# Nvivo snapshot



# Stage 1. Exploration

Delphi Process (Green, 2014)



## Stage 2: Installation (2024)



Metz, A. et al. (2015). *An integrated framework for implementation of EC programs*. Washington Dept of Human Services.

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