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JOURNAL OF THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

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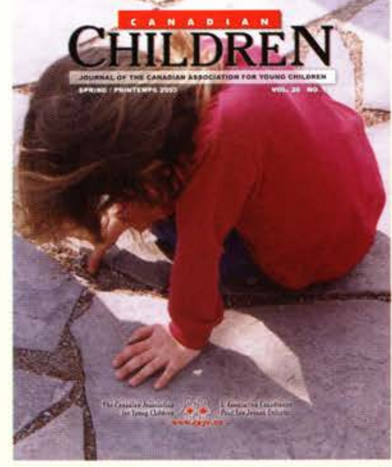

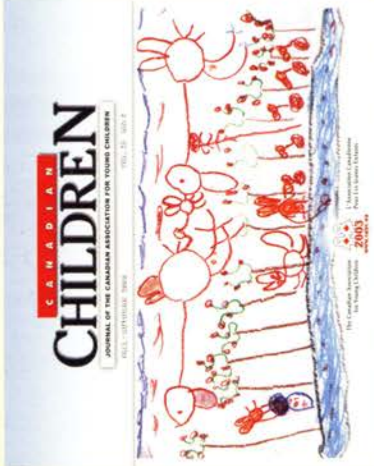

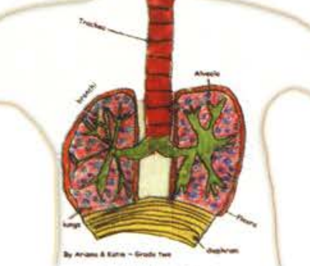

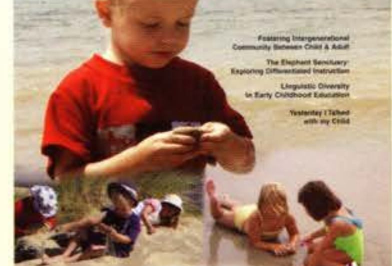

The Canadian Association for Young Children

L'Association Canadienne Pour Les Jeunes Enfants

www.cayc.ca

THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

WHAT IS THE CAYC

The Canadian Association for Young Children (CAYC) grew out of Council for Childhood Education and was officially recognized in 1974 by the granting of a Federal Charter. It is the only national association specifically concerned with the well-being of children, birth through age nine at home, in preschool settings and at school. Members of the multidisciplinary association include parents, teachers, caregivers ,administrators, students and all those wishing to share ideas and participate in activities related to the education and welfare of young children.

MISSION STATEMENT

CAYC exists to provide a Canadian voice on critical issues related to the quality of life of all young children and their families.

THE AIMS OF THE CAYC

1. To influence the direction and quality of policies and programs that affect the development and well-being of young children in Canada.
2. To provide a forum for the members of Canada's early childhood community to support one another in providing developmentally appropriate programs for young children.
3. To promote and provide opportunities for professional development for those charged with the care and education of young children.
4. To promote opportunities for effective liaison and collaboration with all those responsible for young children.
5. To recognize outstanding contributions to the well-being of young children.

IMPLEMENTING THE AIMS OF THE CAYC

1. **The National Conference:**
   The National Conference is a highlight of the CAYC. The program includes lectures by internationally renowned authorities on children, workshops, discussion groups, displays, demonstrations, school visits and tours.
2. **Provincial and Regional Events:**
   The organization of members at the local and provincial level is encouraged to plan events to deal with the issues and concerns pertaining to young children. These events may take the form of lectures, seminars or a local conference.
3. **The Journal:**
   An outstanding multidisciplinary journal is published twice yearly. Articles by nationally and internationally known experts in early childhood education and child rearing are presented in the Journal of the CAYC. Inside CAYC provides information on Association activities.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND MEMBERSHIP

Membership fees are payable on application and renewable annually on an evergreen basis. To be considered a voting member, fees must be paid no later than 60 days prior to the Annual General Meeting.

Members of the CAYC receive newsletters and special rates for national and regional conferences

Per annum: $40 General, $25 Student, $75 Associations.

Please direct all subscription and membership correspondance to:

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1009 London Street,
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wrailton@telus.net

ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE POUR LES JEUNES ENFANTS

QU'EST CE QUE L'ACJE

L'Association Canadienne pour les Jeunes Enfants, issue du *Council for Childhood Education*, a reçu sa charte fédérale en 1974. Elle demeure la seule association nationale vouée exclusivement au bien-être des enfants, de la naissance jusqu'à l'âge de neuf ans, dans leur foyer, à la garderie et à l'école primaire. L'ACJE est composée de parents, d'enseignants, de professionnels de la petite enfance, d'administrateurs et d'étudiants, ainsi que de tous ceux et celles qui sont intéressés à partager leurs idées en participant à des activités liées au bien-être et à l'éducation des jeunes enfants.

SA MISSION

L'ACJE s'est donné comme mandat de faire entendre une voix canadienne sur les questions essentielles ayant trait à la qualité de vie de tous les jeunes enfants et de leur famille.

SES OBJECTIFS

1. Jouer un rôle sur le plan des orientations et sur la qualité des politiques et des programmes touchant au développement et au bien-être des jeunes enfants canadiens.
2. Créer un forum pour les membres de la communauté canadienne oeuvrant dans le domaine de la petite enfance afin de susciter une collaboration active dans l'élaboration de programmes appropriés au développement des jeunes enfants.
3. Encourager et offrir des possibilités de perfectionnement professionnel au personnel responsable du bien-être et de l'éducation des jeunes enfants.
4. Promouvoir des occasions pour une meilleure coordination et collaboration entre tous les responsables des jeunes enfants.
5. Récompenser et souligner les contributions exceptionnelles faites en faveur des jeunes enfants.

EXÉCUTION DES OBJECTIFS DE L'ACJE

1. **Le congrès national:**
   Il constitue le grand évènement de l'ACJE. Des sommités de renommée internationale en matière de petite enfance y prononcent des conférences et on y participe à des ateliers, des débats, des expositions, des démonstrations, et à des visites guidées d'écoles.
2. **Les évènements provinciaux et locaux:**
   L'ACJE encourage ses membres à organiser des conférences, des séminaires ou des congrès au niveau local et régional afin de débattre des problèmes relatifs aux jeunes enfants.
3. **La revue :**
   Publication bisannuelle et multidisciplinaire de premier ordre, la revue regroupe des articles traitant de questions d'éducation et de formation des jeunes enfants. On y retrouve également des articles écrits par des experts de renommée nationale et internationale. La rubrique *Inside CAYC* renseigne les lecteurs sur les activités de l'Association.

ABONNEMENT ET COTISATION DES MEMBRES

Les cotisations doivent être réglées au moment de l'adhésion et celle-ci doit être renouvelée chaque année. Pour se prévaloir de son droit de vote, tout membre doit acquitter sa cotisation au moins 60 jours avant l'Assemblée Générale annuelle.

Les membres de l'ACJE reçoivent le bulletin périodique et bénéficient de tarifs spéciaux pour participer au congrès national et aux évènements régionaux:

Tarif des cotisations annuelles: général : 40 $; étudiants: 25 $; associations: 75 $

Veuillez faire parvenir toute demande de souscription ou d'adhésion à l'ACJE à l'adresse suivante :

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Looking for back copies?

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Cover Photo: The cover is a celebration of 5 years of Canadian Children covers, each created with children in mind... Contributors both young and old from Canada and Internationally.

GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

Canadian Children is the journal of the Canadian Association for Young Children (CAYC), the only national association specifically concerned with the well-being of children of preschool and elementary age in Canada. The journal is published twice yearly and contains articles, book reviews and announcements of professional conferences .

Canadian Children is a multidisciplinary journal concerned with child development and early childhood education. Authors from across Canada, and elsewhere, are invited to submit articles and book reviews which reflect the variety and extent of both research and practice in early childhood education and child rearing.

CONTENT:
Submissions should appeal to an audience that includes parents, professionals in the field of childhood education and child services, as well as teachers and researchers. Most issues are multi-theme in nature and the editor will attempt to balance articles that are research-related with articles of a practical nature relating to programming, curriculum, classroom practice or child rearing.

FORM, LENGTH AND STYLE:
ARTICLES may be of varying length, written in a readable style. Style should be consistent with an acceptable professional manual such as the **Publication Manual** (3rd Edition) of the American Psychological Association. Articles should be sent as an email attachment to the email address below or sent to the postal address, on a 3.5" IBM or IBM compatible diskette or a CD in Microsoft Word with three (3) printed copies on 21.5 x 28 cm. (standard 8 1/2 x 11") paper directly to the editor at the address listed below. Type should be double spaced. If appropriate, authors should send accompanying black and white glossy print photographs, tables, figures or illustrations with complete captions, each on separate pages. Authors are to obtain releases for use of photographs prior to mailing. Please include a brief biographical sketch including the author(s) full name, title, professional affiliation, and other relevant information, such as acknowledgements, grant support or funding agency . It is expected that authors will not submit articles to more than one publisher at a time.

ACCEPTANCE AND PUBLICATION:
The editor will acknowledge receipt of, and review all solicited and unsolicited manuscripts received. The final publication decision rests with the editor, and will be communicated within three months. Manuscripts not accepted for publication will be returned only if a stamped self-addressed envelope is included.

DEADLINES:
Submission Deadlines are as follows:
FALL Issue : August 1
SPRING Issue: February 1

GUIDE A L'INTENTIION DES AUTEURS

Canadian Children est la revue de l'Association pour les Jeunes Enfants (ACJE). Elle demeure la seule association vouée exclusivement au bien-être des enfants de niveau préscolaire et primaire au Canada. Cette revue bisannuelle regroupe des articles, des comptes rendus de livres et des avis de conférences professionnelles.

Canadian Children est une publication multidisciplinaire qui traite du développement de l'enfant et de son éducation durant la petite enfance. Les auteurs du Canada et d'ailleurs sont invités à soumettre des articles et des comptes rendus de livres qui mettent en évidence la variété et l'étendue de la recherche et de la pratique dans le domaine de l'éducation au cours de la petite enfance.

CONTENU:
Les articles doivent s'adresser à un public composé de parents, de professionnels de l'éducation et de services à l'enfance, ainsi que d'enseignants et de chercheurs. Chaque numéro traite de divers thèmes et le rédacteur en chef tentera d'y inclure tant des articles portant sur la recherche que des articles portant sur des aspects pratiques de l'éducation comme la gestion et la mise œuvre de programmes d'études, les méthodes d'enseignement en salle de classe et les techniques utilisées pour élever les enfants.

FORME, LONGUEUR ET STYLE :
LES ARTICLES peuvent être de longueur variée et doivent être rédigés dans un style accessible à tous les lecteurs. La présentation doit être conforme aux normes du ***Publication Manual*** (3e édition) de l'*American Psychological Association*. Les articles devront être en Microsoft Word ou Word Perfect (format IBM PC), attachés à un courrier électronique ou enregistrés sur une disquette 3.5" ou sur un CD et envoyés au rédacteur en chef à l'adresse indiquée ci-dessous. Les trois (3) copies doivent être dactylographiées en double interligne. Les auteurs devront fournir, s'il y a lieu, les photographies accompagnant les articles, tirées en noir et blanc sur papier glacé, ainsi que les tableaux, figures ou illustrations avec leurs légendes, imprimés chacun sur une feuille. Ils devront obtenir le permis de reproduction des photographies avant de les faire parvenir au rédacteur. Il est recommandé d'inclure une brève notice biographique contenant le nom complet de l'auteur, ses titres, affiliations professionnelles et autres informations pertinentes telles que remerciements, supports financiers ou organismes de subvention. Il est entendu que les auteurs ne soumettront leurs articles qu'à une seule revue à la fois.

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Le rédacteur en chef accusera réception et tiendra compte de tous les manuscrits reçus, qu'ils aient été sollicités ou non, et soumettra les textes qu'il aura retenus à au moins trois lecteurs externes au comité de rédaction. La décision de publier est sous la responsabilité du rédacteur en chef et sera communiquée à l'auteur dans un délai de trois mois. Les manuscrits non retenus pour publication seront retournés à leurs auteurs seulement s'ils sont accompagnés d'une enveloppe pré-adressée et affranchie.

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Preferably email as an attachment to: **editor@cayc.ca**

MABEL. F. HIGGINS
EDITOR

...the governor of the Bank of Canada, states that we need to build an "infrastructure for early childhood development".

Early Childhood Development seems to be sitting at the pinnacle of all things "happening" in Canada at the moment ... Today we found our profession reflected upon in an unlikely section of the newspaper - The National Post's financial page headlines, March 31st, 2005 read, *"Daycare Plan Key to Job Skills: Dodge" - Canada's central bank chief backs the national infrastructure"* ... David Dodge the governor of the Bank of Canada, states that we need to build an *"infrastructure for early childhood development"*. His comments were tied to the need for Canada to improve lagging productivity growth... He continued to suggest that, *"The first step to improving skills is to build an excellent infrastructure for early childhood development [...]."* (FP3, 2005)

Yet more excitement in Canada... Some 38 years ago people across Canada and around the world were making a pilgrimage to Montreal to visit expo '67... This May, an exodus of sorts, will make its way to Montreal to celebrate shared interests in the well-being of children at the *WORLD FORUM on Early Care and Education.* We are happy to play a role on this momentous occasion, extending a warm welcome to the delegates. We invite them to join the CAYC membership in reading this Spring 2005 issue of *Canadian Children*. We hope that you will enjoy the wide range of contributions made by Canadian and International authors.

To mark this moment in our history... we designed a COVER depicting the journal's last five years. It portrays nine covers caringly designed, mindful of the message that it inspired. Contributions came from across Canada and Internationally - each one set in the child's voice... Collaboration with the gracious guidance of the Publications Chairs, Carol Jonas and more recently Wayne Eastman, along with graphic designer, Debbie Cunningham of John Abbott College Press has made this a joyful undertaking.

It seems that each journal has become an important HISTORICAL MARKER. Recent events have injected themselves into this editor's work... On a personal note, the death of my dear Grandmother, Carmela at the age of 106 does cause me reflection. This grand woman, who lived in three centuries influenced the lives of her ten children and their offspring... It seems fitting to dedicate my continued work for children to her memory. Like so many, the Canadian Children team was saddened by the Asian Tsunami's devastation: the loss of so many lives; the loss of a way of life for so many, including children... With this in mind, an article has been invited to tell the story of a Canadian family's journey with the survivors... relating the children's experiences. Such stories together with current peer reviewed research will, in the words of The Right Honourable Prime Minister Paul Martin, 2004, continue to *"contribute to the promise of the future"*. With a third grandchild on the way, this promise gives me hope.

With an eye to future journals, I invite submissions focusing on important Environmental Concerns that impact children - defending the environment for the children and supporting their involvement with it.

Warm Regards, Mabel

NOTE BENÉ

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Drawing at the Centre

Patricia Tarr

Patricia Tarr, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Calgary. Her background is both art and early childhood education. She has found that the Reggio approach to early childhood has brought both of these areas together and so she has been researching the Reggio approach for the past 14 years.

Abstract
This article, adapted from an earlier paper presented at the National Art Education Association Conference in Denver, Colorado in 2004, proposes that drawing should play a more central role in early childhood programs. The author begins with a brief overview of the history of drawing in early childhood programs, then demonstrates the importance of drawing as a means of inquiry, meaning making, and communication when it is embedded into meaningful learning experiences for children and not just relegated to the art centre. The Alberta Advisory Committee for Educational Studies (AACES) and Alberta Initiatives for School Improvement funded the research project, *"Drawing as a Language in a Kindergarten Class"*.

Photo contributed by Rhonda Roesler,Calgary

Introduction

Drawing should become an integral component of programs for young children, rather than be relegated to the art centre or left as decontextualized art activities. Grounded in the work of the Reggio Emilia educators, I will argue that drawing has the potential to become a language for young children. Drawing can support their learning across all areas of the curriculum when it is included as a *way* for children to learn and not just a skill to learn. When viewed as a form of inquiry, and as a way of learning and communicating, drawing becomes a place where children can make their thinking visible, provides opportunities for intrapersonal and interpersonal communication, and thus supports children's construction of meaning.

Let us begin with a brief recapping of a few of the perspectives that have informed current practice in teaching children to draw, reminding us of how ideas play and replay out in practices over a period of time, and how we are now positioned to place drawing at the center of children's learning.

Learning to Draw: Historically Speaking

As early childhood educators we have traditionally provided drawing as part of the art centre as one component of an early childhood program. Just how we have supported children in drawing has changed over the past 200 years.

In the **1800's** Pestalozzi taught children to draw by introducing line-by-line strokes and shapes. In the **1900's** when "child art" was discovered, the instructional strategy of non-interference in children's creative expression predominated (Tarr,1989). When Parker and Temple wrote *Unified Kindergarten and First Grade Teaching* in **1925**, they still had teachers model the drawing of an object before having 4 or 5-year-olds do it themselves, *"children are helped to*

acquire skill in drawing, as in writing or in the performance of any other motor activity, by watching others perform the act" (p.237, as cited in Tarr, 1989); however, they supported older children drawing from imagination or to illustrate a story.

In the United States, Margaret Mathias (1924) published *The Beginnings of Art in the Public School* that countered the practice of modeling, by advocating the development of self-expression rather than technical skills (as cited in Tarr,1989). This trend continued until the majority of books written as guides to providing early childhood art, placed strong emphasis on materials and self-expression, and the creative potential of young children. Providing time, space and materials seemed then, to be adequate art instruction.

In the **1980s** with the rise of discipline-based art education, it seemed to be acceptable to begin to teach drawing to children again, rather than to leave their representational capabilities to "unfold". We saw the publication of books such as *Drawing with Children* (Brookes, 1986) and Johnson's *Teach Your child to Draw* (1990). These books contain remnants of Pestalozzi's drawing lessons in that they teach children to make isolated marks before moving into drawing objects.

Nancy Smith (1983) demonstrated that children could draw from observation and that their drawings would be qualitatively different than their memory drawings. There are numerous examples in *Bob Steele's book, Draw Me a Story: An Illustrated Exploration of Drawing-as-a-Language,* of young children drawing from objects that show strong characteristics of the referent object. Kolbe (2001), in *Rapunzel's Supermaket,* provides strategies for supporting young children to draw from observation.

From the perspective of art educators, Wilson, Hurwitz & Wilson (1987) argue that in K-12 art programs "*drawing should be the principle studio activity*" because more ideas can be explored and the experiences can incorporate the critical and historical components of a disciplined based art curriculum (p.30). They divide a drawing program into five components:

- observational 15%
- memory 25%
- imagination 25%
- verbal to visual 25 %
- experimental 10%

Drawing as a Language

It has long been accepted that drawing is a form of communication for young children (e.g, Steele,1998; Lownfeld & Brittain,1975). Until it became too tattered, I had a poster on my office wall from the National Art Education Association. The image was a diapered infant making marks....and its caption read something like, "Art - the first language." As Lowenfeld and Brittain state, "*A child expresses his thoughts, feelings, and interests in his drawings and paintings and shows his knowledge of his environment in his creative expression*" (p.9). Bob Steele (1998) defines language as the following:

Language is any symbol system, coded or uncoded, which facilitates articulation, expression and communication of perceptions, thoughts and feelings. Articulation refers to the mental processes as associated with language, expression refers to the shaping influences of the medium; communication is the social dimension of language (p. 19).

The idea of art as a form of communication implies a two-way process. However, I think that the idea of art as a language or form of communication for young children has often been interpreted as a one-way process, that is, communication through an adult's analysis of a child's drawings. For a classic example, we can look back to Alschuler and Hattwick's 1947 study, *Painting and Personality,* in which children's paintings were analyzed for particular color use and interpreted to give meaning to children's emotional states. More recently, Steele (1998) writes that "*children's drawings tell us what they think and feel*" (p.11) and he provides some suggestions that adults can look for in children's work: perceptual content, intellectual content, and affective content. This is from the perspective of the adult, or "other" interpreting the drawing; the outsider looking in. Of course the adult's interpretation is confirmed, strengthened or disproved when the adult engages in a conversation about the drawing *with* the child who then provides additional information as to intent and content.

Drawing as Communication

This idea of art as a language for young children has been deepened through the work of the educators of Reggio Emilia and their view that children have the right to express themselves in "100 Languages". This means that each medium (language, poetry, music, drawing, painting, clay, wire, puppetry, etc.) has the potential to become a language for children, provided the children are supported to move beyond exploratory experiences with the medium. The Reggio educators believe that children have a strong desire to make sense of the rich complexity of the world and to communicate their understanding through these potential languages (Malaguzzi, 1998). So far, this appears similar to what art educators have been saying all along: "*Art is a form of communication.*" However, the ways in which we have traditionally taken this up is a far narrower view of the potential of art as a language than the possibilities presented by Reggio educators. Drawing extensively on Vygotskian theory and the belief that learning is socially constructed through collaboration and the sharing of multiple perspectives, making ideas visible through drawing and other means of expression forms the core of the project work they undertake in their schools. Drawing is placed at the center of a com-

municative process. Children become active interpreters of their work within the social context (Malaguzzi, 1998). The use of drawing becomes a two-way communication process.

In the 1980's and 1990's researchers began to explore the cultural and social contexts of children's art making experiences (e.g., Wilson & Wilson, 1981; Swann, 1985, Thompson & Bales, 1991). Thompson & Bales described children's conversations around their drawing activities in "*Michael Doesn't Like My Dinosaurs*". At this time Vygotsky's socio-historical psychological theories were being discovered by educators in North America. Malaguzzi (1998) and Thompson (2002) provide clear and concise discussions about the influence of Vygotskian theory that children construct their understanding of the world through social interactions. These discussions can help educators see the potential of social interactions in drawing experiences.

It is clear that drawing can be a very social experience involving verbal exchanges including explanations and challenges, peer coaching or tutoring, and sharing images and ideas back and forth (Thompson & Bales, 1991; Thompson, 2002). These occur even when the drawing experience itself is designed as an individualistic one. Viewing children's drawings in this social context begins to open up the potential for drawing to be considered for all its social ramifications and to be considered as a focus for social interaction or collaborative experience.

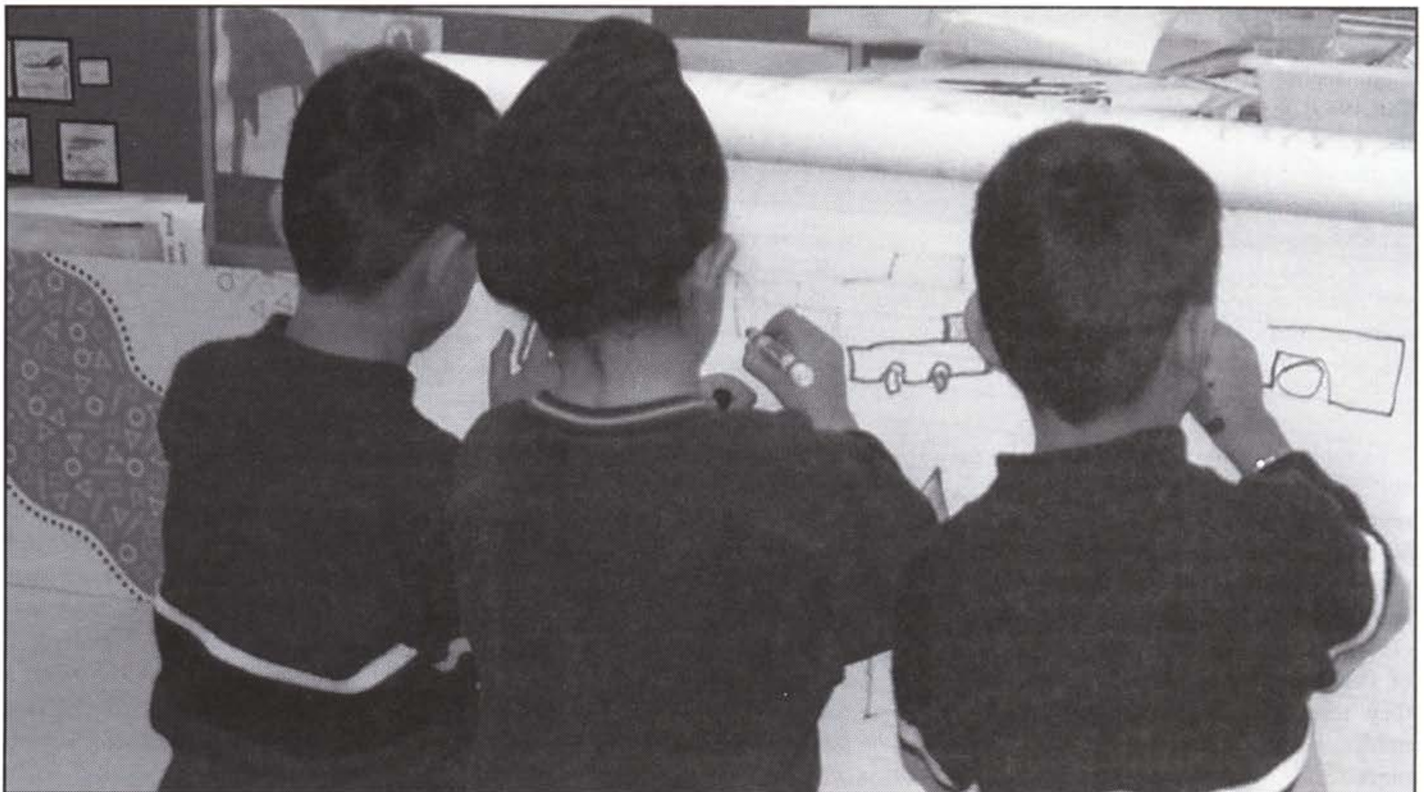

Photo contributed by Patricia Tarr, Calgary

Typically, we have focused on the individual aspects of art making - what an individual can communicate through a work of art, which has limited the potential that art-making has for communication. When drawing becomes part of social activity as it does in the Reggio schools, rather than an individualistic enterprise, its potential as a form of communication becomes immediately deeper. Malaguzzi (1998) explained the role that drawing has in Reggio schools:

Putting ideas into the form of graphic representation allows the children to understand that their actions can communicate. This is an extraordinary discovery because it helps them realize that in order to communicate, their graphic must be understandable to others. In our view, graphic representation is a tool of communication much simpler and clearer than words. (p. 92)

Drawing, in a social constructivist context can become a form of inquiry and a way to make thinking visible that serves as a means for opening up dialogic relationships with others and constructing meaning from this interaction.

In the Reggio schools, drawing is a commonly used way for children to express their thinking and theories about the world. Drawing is strongly connected to thinking, to making thinking visible by creating a drawing about the theory you hold. This is illustrated well here. . .

In the video *An Amusement Park for Birds*, two boys draw their ideas about the inner workings of the fountain in the city park on a Plexiglas easel with a slide of the fountain projected onto the paper from behind. As they draw together they discuss how the fountain works. In another segment, the viewer sees Amelia Gambetti closely questioning a boy about how the fountain works as they look at photographs of the fountain. He decides to draw his explanation in order to explain his ideas more clearly to her. Two children have a heated debate about the number of sprays needed to complete a clay model of a fountain based on one child's drawing. Each of these scenarios demonstrates a particular kind of dialogue around a drawing event. In each of these scenarios the child or children involved are challenged to think more deeply with the drawing or visual representation at the core of the discussion.

There are numerous other examples of such interchanges between children and children and adults *in Making Learning Visible: Children as Individual and Group Learners* published by Project Zero and Reggio Children (2001).

Brooks (2002) provides examples of situations where drawing served as a mediator for social negotiations around planning a project. In this case, two boys discussing the construction of a trap for light had a common reference point. Brooks writes that "*the drawing was not only acting as a mediator between new and existing ideas, it was also acting as a social mediator that facilitated a common understanding and an agreement on how to work together*" (p. 225).

Drawing to Learn

In his video "*Jed Draws His Bicycle*", George Forman (1995) asks his son to draw his bicycle from memory and to explain how the bicycle works. Jed draws his bike and then goes out to examine the real bike to clarify some of his misunderstandings. When he returns and redraws his bicycle, he becomes much clearer about the relationship of the bike's chain to the front and rear wheels and what actually makes the bike move. In this case drawing the bike and explaining his drawing to his father revealed to Jed what he did not know and helped him to reconstruct his understanding about how a bicycle works. Forman calls this process "*drawing to learn*" (1995).

Margaret Books (2002) makes a convincing case for "drawing to learn" in her thesis, *Drawing to Learn.* In one example, she proposes that, Jenn who made a series of drawings based on her observations and study of a caterpillar and chrysalis, understood the life cycle of the butterfly, not because she could draw the pictures or recite the cycle, but because it was "*through observation, drawing, redrawing and retelling of events that real understanding happened for Jenn*" (p. 140).

Brooks (2002) suggests, "when our focus is primarily on the meanings represented through drawing, we could begin to see drawing as an invaluable teaching and learning tool" (p.228).

Drawing to Learn - Learning to Draw: Where's the Balance?

Brooks (2002) felt a tension in "*how to balance the use of drawing with the skills needed to make the drawing*" (p. 186). She found that at times children did become frustrated with their inability to express their ideas through drawing or frustrated because what they had depicted was interpreted differently by other children.

Malaguzzi (1998) wrote,

The use of graphic expression comes from the need to bring clarity. There is also the fact that the child intuitively becomes aware about what this new code can produce from now on. As they go from one symbolic language to another, the children find that each transformation generates something new. This complicates the situation and advances them. As they construct their ideas, they also construct the symbols and plurality of codes. Therefore, when they draw, they are not only making a graphic intervention, but they are selecting ideas and getting rid of excessive superfluous, or misleading ones. They have to reestablish and clarify the frames or contours of the problem (p.92).

An example of this search for clarity of expression is described *in "You Can't Draw on Air": Stretches and Sketches* (Webster, Belanger & Conant, 2002) where children drew yoga stretches. In this project children faced challenges of depicting motion, sequence, and selection of essential details to communicate their ideas. They were confronted with misunderstanding when they saw a video of adults doing the poses based on the children's drawings. This created the impetus to rethink their ideas.

I believe the role of the educator is to support children's development in acquiring the skills that they need in order to express their ideas freely and fluently through Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development, or scaffolding. However, I don't see this tension as necessarily having a negative impact but as being part of the shared and negotiated process that all communicators may experience whether it be in writing or drawing. It is through those moments of disjuncture that children, given a supportive environment composed of a sensitive teacher and/or more advanced peers, may find new strategies for communicating their ideas.

Art educators have been concerned with the skills and aesthetics of drawing, for example, learning to draw. However, when drawing is considered a means by which young children can construct meaning and understanding of their world through shared experiences, the role of drawing becomes central to the learning process. Brooks (2002) suggests, "*when our focus is primarily on the meanings represented through drawing, we could begin to see drawing as an invaluable teaching and learning tool*" (p.228).

Implications for Early Childhood Curriculum

There are implications for how we might include drawing in an early childhood curriculum. . . .

• PROVIDE a range of quality drawing materials for young children, such as a variety of drawing pencils, fine-tipped drawing pens that encourage children to put in fine detail as well as the standard colored pencils, felt pens and crayons.

• RETHINK how art is incorporated into the daily life of the classroom. Teachers can encourage children to work collaboratively to use drawing to plan a project, such as a block construction of a castle or a more complex undertaking.

• ENCOURAGE children to record their observations of a natural phenomenon, to draw their theories about the world and to draw abstract concepts such as smells, sounds, tastes, or feelings rather than remain within more common drawing experiences for young children such as pictures of themselves, illustrations for stories or pictures from their imagination.

• ASK children to draw a plan in pairs or in a small group that required sharing ideas both verbally and visually. For example in a kindergarten classroom that I worked with, children drew maps of the playground and school collaboratively in small groups.

• PLACE communication at the center of an exchange of ideas whether in a one-on-one situation, small group or larger group discussion.

• Drawing must also be considered and supported through the ORGANIZATION of the physical environment as a social as well as a solitary activity. In the largely ESL kindergarten classroom where I am engaged in a small research project: *Drawing as a Language in a Kindergarten Class*, the children taught us to provide spaces in the classroom that allow them to work together on a single spontaneous drawing. In this situation the children took over the teacher's easel with chart paper and a dishpan of felt markers and they have spent time in groups of 2, 3 or 4 children drawing collectively every day. The teachers have found another place for shared writing experiences. As the children engage in their story drawings, they are increasing their communication skills in both English and visual expression.

Conclusion

Placing *drawing at the centre* means taking the act of drawing seriously; to see it as something that has educational merit beyond providing opportunities for children to color in pictures or draw as part of choice time activities. While not all children naturally gravitate to drawing, it is not the exclusive domain of a few talented individuals. In the past when children were expected to learn to draw through a natural unfolding process, they mostly became adults who have negative views of themselves as artists. To change this means incorporating many opportunities for children to express their ideas visually as part of work across the curriculum. It means being thoughtful in providing experiences that will help children increase their skills. It means thinking about drawing not just as an individualistic art form, but as an experience that is rich in potential for children's learning.

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Children's Films of La Fête[1] and Hollywood: Issues of Reality, Fantasy and National Identity

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Abstract
This article analyzes the questions of national identity and representation in the context of children's films produced by the Hollywood Studios and La Fête, Montréal. It is argued that the portrayal of children (aged 6-12) in these Canadian and Hollywood films, foregrounds a reorientation of 'reality' and 'fantasy' towards issues of national identity. The article also looks into the predicament of the Canadian film industry, which, like the national identity, is overshadowed by its hefty southern neighbour.

Background

This article presents a sociological analysis of the portrayal of children, 6-12 years of age, in Canadian and Hollywood films for children. The focus is on films produced in the 1990s by Productions La Fête, a Montréal-based film company and the major studios of Hollywood. Canada's feature film industry, like the national consciousness itself, is sharply polarized along the lines of English and French Canada. English-Canadian and Québécois cinemas have mutually influenced each other, but this is far less than the influence of Hollywood on English-Canadian cinema and of French New Wave[2] on Québécois (Beard and White, 2002: p. xviii-xix). Indeed, the English-Canadian children's films that fall under the purview of this project (*The Incredible Elephant, Air Bud* and *Touching Wild Horses* are examples) in varying proportions reveal an unmistakable mainstream Hollywood flavour, in themes as well as techniques. On the other hand, many Québécois films have a non-conformist touch that is often consciously non-Hollywood (See Table 1 for details).

Features of Hollywood	Features of French New Wave
Heroic characters	Casual, everyday characters
Camera gaze more important	Camera moves a great deal with the characters and to trace out the locale
Anthropomorphic animals, nature	Nature and human beings distinctly individuated; complementary to each other
Focus on the positive and formidable aspects of life	Focus on the serious, darker aspects of life
Tight plots, fast pace, narrative continuity	Plots are more experimental (causal connection loose; open endings; no tight continuous editing; slower pace)
Goal-oriented, single-minded protagonists	Action not always reliant on goal; Organic development more important than single-minded pursuit of the goal

Table I: Comparison of the general characteristics of Hollywood and French New Wave films, shared by English Canadian and Québécois films respectively

[1] La Fête is a film production company in Montréal that produces a series of children's films called 'Tales for All.'

[2] The term 'French New Wave' refers to films made in late 1950s and after by French directors like Godard, Chabrol, Truffaut and others. These low-budget films marked a break with tradition and introduced new criteria for cinematic excellence.

Here we'll address Québécois rather than English-Canadian films because children's film is an accepted and popular genre in Québécois cinema, while it is virtually non-existent in English-Canadian film scholarship. It is with the efforts of Rock Demers, the veteran of cinema in Québec, that children's films came to be "*one of the key specialisms of Québec cinema over the past thirty years*" (Bill Marshall, 2001). Rock Demers was the pioneer and driving force of several major initiatives in Québécois cinema, including the film magazine *Images*, the Montréal International Film Festival, Cinémathèque Québécois, Québec Film Institute, numerous film clubs, and Faroun Films, a distribution company for international films for young audiences. In 1970, with the production of *The Christmas Martian* (*Le Martien de Noël*), he launched a lifetime venture in children's cinema. He founded the Productions La Fête in 1980, which by the turn of the century produced a score of children's films, in the collection 'Tales for All' ('*contes pour tous*'), that won a global audience through film festivals and other screenings. Regrettably, English-Canadian film audiences, bound by trade agreements with the United States, get to watch few non-Hollywood films in the theatres and hence know very little of Rock Demers and his La Fête.

In a multi-cultural, multi-racial country like Canada, for instance, who does the nation belong to? What would a Canadian consider as 'homeland' - Canada or the nation of his/her cultural origin?

Many of the films in the 'Tales for All' series (See Table 2) are co-productions with various countries including Poland (*The Young Magician*, 1987), Czechoslovakia (*The Great Land of Small*, 1987), Hungary (*Bye, Bye Red Riding Hood*, 1989), Argentina (*The Summer of the Colt*, 1989), Romania (*Reach for the Sky*, 1991), India (*My Little Devil*, 1999), Iceland (*Regina*, 2002) and Austria (*Summer With the Ghosts*, 2004). The films are made alternately in French, English or a foreign language and are all subsequently dubbed in French and English to be made available throughout Canada. It is part of the agenda of La Fête to produce films that transcend national and cultural boundaries, to portray Canada as a microcosm of various cultures that are subtly related though outwardly different.

Through multiculturalism, Canada recognizes the potential of all Canadians, encouraging them to integrate into their society and take an active part in its social, cultural, economic and political affairs.

Child and Nation: Postmodern[3] Considerations

The concept of child in present-day discourses contains in itself a multiplicity of conflicting meanings, mostly in relation to the adult. Childhood as a social construct is central to the sociological approach to children - an idea suggested by Philippe Ariès in *Centuries of Childhood* (1962). Ariès contended that the concept of child did not exist in medieval societies because children were not recognized then as separate individuals who needed special care. This launched a prolonged and vigorous

...representations of childhood, in many ways, reflect the innate hopes, fears and dilemmas of the adult world itself and seek to 'construct' the child accordingly.

debate on the 'birth' and 'death' of childhood in Children's Studies. These discussions basically stem from a postmodern disbelief in 'reality' - a conviction that social relationships, identities and 'truth' are constructed and open to multiple interpretations.

Homi K. Bhabha, perceived the concept of nation as ambivalent, transitional and plural in his introduction to the pioneering work, *Nation and Narration* (1990). In a multi-cultural, multi-racial country like Canada, for instance, who does the nation belong to? What would a Canadian consider as 'homeland' - Canada or the nation of his/her cultural origin? In this light, it can be seen that nation as a concept has no real nature or scope. It is but an "imagined community," as famously defined by Benedict Anderson.

The Media's Role

The media has played a crucial and contradictory role in these deliberations - on the one hand they are a vehicle to these ongoing debates on childhood (Buckingham, 2000: 4-6) and nationhood, on the other they produce the variations in the behaviour, experience and development of children and the members of a national community. In other words, even as the media reflect the general concern and panic about these issues, they practically create many of them by providing children information and images traditionally taboo for them, and by often disseminating plural and

[3] The following argument draws from the cultural theory, Postmodernism, which proposes that contemporary life is manipulated and even constructed by dominant ideologies. In this light, the very concept of 'child' can be seen as an unreal construction by the dominant adult. In other words, we don't know who the real 'child' is, what exists is merely the adult representations of the child.

contradictory versions of cultural and political information. David Buckingham in *After the Death of Childhood: Growing Up in the Electronic Media*, 2000, argues that the position of the child in debates about childhood is "*profoundly ambiguous*" (p.3); that children are variously seen as 'threatened,' and 'threatening'. The media is teeming with information and images of abused, neglected and endangered children - victims of child abuse and infanticide, street children, child labourers and sex-workers, as well as the 'home alone' kids in metropolitan cities; while the media shock our complacent homes with news of violent, delinquent and sexually precocious child activities - drug addiction, child crime, teen pregnancy, and the collapse of discipline in schools. David Buckingham argues that adult discourses and representations of childhood, in many ways, reflect the innate hopes, fears and dilemmas of the adult world itself and seek to 'construct' the child accordingly. "*Children are defined as a particular category, with particular characteristics and limitations, both by themselves and by others [. . .] and (of course) by the media. These definitions are codified in laws and policies [. . .] within particular forms of institutional and social practice, which in turn help to produce the forms of behaviour which are seen as typically 'child-like'- and simultaneously to generate forms of resistance to them*" (pp.6-7). The child is thus a site of 'resistance' and 'contradiction' that is mirrored in its development, social position and representation in the media.

Psychoanalytic theory

Psychoanalytic theory has long been preoccupied with the decisive role of childhood in an individual's identity formation. Here I adopt two points made by Jacques Lacan (1968) to illustrate a child's relationship to his/her representations in the media. Language, according to Lacan, plays a major role in shaping the child's identity and his/her entry into the social realm. The child's understanding of her/himself is based mainly on the impressions, opinions and judgements of others, through other people's use of language in relation to her/him. Identity, thus, is an attribute of language, of culture. Lacan also highlighted the 'Imaginary' or 'Mirror' phase of a child's development. In this phase, when the infant discovers her/himself in the mirror for the first time, s/he mistakes the reflection to be another being, a coherent, superior "other" with which s/he imaginatively identifies. This imaginative ability to identify with someone else is the first step towards the formation of the Self. The 'mirror' can be the language of the child's adult family in which s/he sees her/his reflection, or it can be the media offering every child, images and models of child-like behaviour and experience. Since the media form a key influence in the formation of the contemporary child's identity, they also become the site where the contradictions and tensions of identity-formation are enacted.

The 'mirror' can be the language of the child's adult family in which s/he sees her/his reflection, or it can be the media offering every child, images and models of child-like behaviour and experience.

Likewise a Nation Develops Its Identity . . .

Any nation is arguably in a long period of childhood - struggling, like the child, to come up with a stable conception of national identity. Canada's imaging in media and film reflects as well as produces its national identity, as does the United States'. Much of the recent debate on the hegemonic[4] appeal of the United States has attacked its lucrative cultural mirror, Hollywood, as responsible for constructing and propagating internationally a rather spurious and commercially mediated image of itself as 'the democratic subject' and guardian of the world, if not the universe. A deliberation on this would obviously involve political and economic factors intertwined with the cultural image that the United States projects of itself. Canada has for decades now been engaged in an existential struggle to individuate itself as distinctly different from the powerful patriarchal presence in its south, a campaign that is partially produced by and reflected in the Canadian media.

Before a detailed analysis of the films is undertaken, it would be worthwhile to discuss briefly Baudrillard's concept of simulation that is basic to this argument. Simulation is the creation of the 'real' through technologically manipulated images that have no connection to reality. The simulated model gradually takes over our perception of reality. Human relationships, culture and life in general become dictated by the idealized models presented through the media. Disneyland, in Baudrillard's theory, is the supreme example of a simulated reality - a synthetic universe that has effectively integrated the real world. Michael Williams, in an article on Disney's California Adventure Theme Park, adopts Baudrillard's line of reasoning and asserts that "*Disneyland realistically represents fantasy*" whereas imitations like the wax museum, "*fantastically represent reality*." Borrowing this point it can be argued that Hollywood films for children 'realize fantasy,' while La Fête films 'fantasize reality.'

Themes and Techniques: An Assessment

In conventional socio-political conversations, the family has been considered the primary unit of the nation. It is also commonplace that the contemporary world has been wrought by anxiety and panic over the disintegration of the familial structure. The La Fête films, and more so their Hollywood counterparts, are preoccupied with the threat of the 'death' of the

[4] Hegemony is a popular term in cultural theory that denotes the domination of one social group by another.

family, often nostalgic and wishful about a bygone era of the nuclear family headed by a heterosexual couple. It is interesting that children's films as a genre is itself dependent on the presupposition that the traditional family is not dead - for children's films are almost always marketed as family entertainers, or Tales for All, as La Fête chose to put it.

Children portrayed in both Canadian and Hollywood films often long intensely for a family, and always get one by the end of the film. However, only 40% of the La Fête films deal with the theme of family directly. In *The Case of the Witch* it is the old woman who lacks a family, and is paranoid and grumpy because of that; the children adopt her into their group, thereby constituting her family. In *The Clean Machine* Ben does not long for a mother - his friends and dad make up for the loss; in the end everyone is re-united and Ben's 'family' is complete once again. In *My Little Devil* Joseph undergoes psychological trauma because he has lost his mother, and his father is a drunkard. But he adopts a family and doesn't seem to suffer any more. In *Regina* the little girl has to complete the family circle by finding a companion for her single mother - but it is out of a desire to go to a summer camp, not to have a father.

In 80% of the Hollywood children's films produced in the 1990s, on the other hand, separation within the family is a burning issue. In eight out of twenty films, children, or animals, have lost one or both parents to death. In six films, parents are physically separated from the children and in two films; the children are emotionally estranged from their parents.

However, of interest here is how the filmic children transcend their traumatic family situations. The Canadian children seem to realize that the affection, security and togetherness that a family offers can be found in the community they belong, and that social virtues of tolerance, compassion and honesty can constitute happiness and success. This is greatly in line with the nation's concept of multiculturalism explained thus at the official website of the Government of Canada: "*Canadian multiculturalism [. . .] ensures that all citizens can keep their identities, can take pride in their ancestry and have a sense of belonging. Acceptance gives Canadians a feeling of security and self-confidence, making them more open to, and accepting of, diverse cultures [. . .] Through multiculturalism, Canada recognizes the potential of all Canadians, encouraging them to integrate into their society and take an active part in its social, cultural, economic and political affairs* " (2002).

While Canadian ideas of culture and social well being seem to emerge from the quiet warmth of social virtues and bonding, it is the heated discourse of heroic glory and aggressive power that inform the culture of United States. The mainstream political and cultural discourses of the United States focus on the strength, courage and sacrifice of its citizens to destroy external evil, to identify with a fantastic dream of enduring success and fame. Consider, for example, this historic speech made by President George Bush at the Pentagon on 11 October 2001, one month after the tragic incident of 9/11: "*On September 11th, great sorrow came to our country. And from that sorrow has come great resolve. Today, we are a nation awakened to the evil of terrorism, and determined to destroy it. [. . .] we're not afraid. Our cause is just, and worthy of sacrifice. [. . .] Inspired by all the courage that has come before, we will meet our moment and we will prevail.*" In the true spirit of this cultivated heroism and power, and in contrast to the quiet growth and social integration of the Canadian filmic child, children in Hollywood films often take fantastic and superhuman proportions. In both the Hollywood *Angels in the Outfield* and the Canadian *The Flying Sneaker*, for instance, a fantastic angel/fairy gratifies the protagonist's desire for happiness and patronage guaranteed by the father. The Hollywood film is grounded on the fantasy that angels are real for those who believe in them, and that human beings can create miracles with the help of such superhuman powers. In the Canadian film, however, the fairy's mesmeric charm is lost once the real father is back, and the film asserts that whether fairies exist or not, they do not belong in the real world; the protagonist has to live the life of a normal, ordinary boy, who might as well have "*dreamt the whole thing*" about the fairy. The Canadian film *The Flying Sneaker* thus initially fantasizes reality only to assert the individual's realistic role in the community he belongs to, while *Angels in the Outfield* realistically represents fantasy, thus effacing the distinction between the real and the fantastic.

Now, a look at the social role of children in some of these films . . .The La Fête children in *The Case of the Witch, The Clean Machine, My Little Devil* and *The Hidden Fortress* take upon themselves familial and social responsibilities that teach them and their community lessons of affection, understanding and companionship. Melanie and Florence set out to bring long-lost happiness into an old woman's life, Ben starts a business on his own, Joseph fends for a whole starving family, and the warring children in *The Hidden Fortress* ultimately deliver two communities from mutual hatred and destruction. In spite of the grave roles they assume, these children are quite realistically portrayed, complete with their follies and weaknesses for which they have to atone in good time. Corina, the young gymnast in *Reach for the Sky,* represents the national aspiration for excellence and success. To attain these she has to exercise tremendous will power and put in a lot of effort, often breaking under the pressure and strain, regaining confidence through the support of her family, friends and coach. The film focuses upon her trials and innate strength, not so much of the glorious spectacle of success itself. *Summer with the Ghosts*, a 2004 production of La Fête, as professed by the

script-writer Nadja Seelich herself, is based on the theme of tolerance - "*the possibility of co-existing with people who are different than oneself. The children don't ask the ghosts to be 'human,' [much in the same way as Canada professedly does not ask its immigrants to be 'white Canadian'], they accept the ghosts for what they are, so long as the ghosts don't interfere with their own values.*"

Hollywood films, unlike La Fête productions, generally present idealized images of the protagonists - romantic heroes in the archetypal battle between Good and Evil. In the Disney film *Angels in the Outfield* the unfortunate orphans fulfill their dreams quite easily even after practically cheating in a baseball game; in *Baby's Day Out* a clever infant punishes the evil-doers like his elder brother does in *Home Alone*; in *Fly Away Home* and *Flipper* the protagonists are engaged a momentous effort to 'save nature;' in *Jumanji* the children, through a game only they can play, can destroy or save a society; the perfect little girl Matilda acquires magic powers to punish an incredibly cruel principal and help an ideal teacher - all superhuman feats that none but a Hollywood hero can fulfill, true to the nation's fantastic image of itself in film, politics, economics and other walks of life.

It could be contended that in the images of the American children as potent with immeasurable courage and power to deliver the world from evil, the embedded subtext of the conflict in the American consciousness comes to the fore. It seems that the United States, in reality, is struggling under the conflicting images of political and economic power and the threat of a not-so-bright future as indicated by numerous setbacks starting perhaps with the Vietnam War and reaching its anti-climax in the 9/11 issues and the ongoing war with Iraq. To add to this, America has for some decades now been crumbling under social problems like the break-up of the traditional family, and emotionally disturbed children and teenagers. In 1986, Kathy Merlock Jackson commented on the Hollywood films of the 1950s that "*in response to the tensions of living in a nuclear world, people seemed to be internalizing more and more into family and children as a means of grasping for stability*" (p.103). Though the real and filmic situations have undergone colossal changes since the 1950s, I would assert that Hollywood films still hold on desperately to the family and the future generations for redemption. These filmic portrayals of children reflect America's concept of itself as 'The World' in an eternal and heroic crusade against the perpetrators of so-called 'evil' - a mission they have taken upon themselves since the Second World War.

Canada, on the other hand, has been engaged in another struggle to stabilize social relations and values under the influx of multi-racial and multi-cultural exposures. Canada is in an ongoing effort to identify itself as different from its powerful southern neighbour. The Canadian films seek to foreground this difference - to establish its multicultural policy as that of the mosaic rather than the American melting pot, advocating tolerance rather than assimilation.

...Hollywood films, as well as the toys, video games, clothes, cosmetics, and numerous other commodities that co-exist with them in the mega-material culture of the West are sold along with their ideological trappings to unsuspecting children in the United States, Canada and elsewhere in the world.

Canada's anxieties are not so much about external aggression and dissension as about the profundities of social instability and an individual's positioning in society; its concerns and resolves often pertain solely to the immediate social milieu and personal crises of the protagonists, while Hollywood films proudly dwell on the individual hero set against the society, or the planet, or nature, or even the universe at large.

This tone of romantic idealism and extended humanism of Hollywood films forms part of the larger American enterprise of creating an illusory or simulated future for a new hybrid species of the child and the adult, that would contain the indelible impressions of a childhood that perhaps never was, as well as the wisdom and phenomenal power to tear down evil that impedes success and glory. Such a project invests in the child - the future - that bears the weight of these conflicting expectations and is the site of resistance to it as well. I would say that this new hybrid citizen is represented and internalized by Robin Williams, an adult high-profile actor with the 'eternal child' image. He is Jack, the child-adult, who has the technological prowess of Flubber that can in time conquer the world, he is Alan Parrish, the middle-aged man who regains his long lost childhood, having escaped from the weird game Jumanji, and fought primitive creatures like a gallant warrior.

Complementary to the Hollywood hero's glorious, romantic humanism, one perceives in these films an overriding presence and primacy of the human individual and race. Human character, emotions and destiny determine the majority of mainstream Hollywood plots and there is an unmistakable focus on the human body as the seat of power. Ghosts, as in *Casper*, the animals in *Flipper*, *Free Willy*, *Lassie* or *Homeward Bound*, or even non-living objects like Weebo, the little flying gizmo in *Flubber*, are all in varying degrees anthropomorphic, and their humanness is underscored when it generates sentiments and humour. The

perfect prototype of this anthropomorphic machine is perhaps the Terminator in *Terminator 2: The Judgement Day*, played famously by Schwarzenegger, which in spite of its R-rating, has possibly been viewed by most children and teenagers in Canada, the United States and the world over. As the leather-clad android from the future learns to love, laugh and cry, the technologically manipulated child viewers too arguably get a lesson in 'real' human emotions.

The technological invasion of the human race that is in varying degrees the subject of numerous Hollywood films including *Terminator 2* can be read as a late capitalist phenomenon which also bears directly on America's image as a superpower. In the late capitalist post-modern world, nation, culture, gender, aesthetic production and even the essence of the human race are engulfed by commodity production. It has been tirelessly argued that Hollywood films, as well as the toys, video games, clothes, cosmetics, and numerous other commodities that coexist with them in the mega-material culture of the West are sold along with their ideological trappings to unsuspecting children in the United States, Canada and elsewhere in the world, "*corrupting their paradise*," as Annette Kuhn put it. *Home Alone*, for instance, has been censured by Ian Wojcik-Andrews in this manner: "*Home Alone is less a film and more an advertisement for capitalism. The film is merely a vehicle for delivering images of desirable commodities to viewers young and old. [. . .] The setting, the characters, and the plot: These are simply ways of visibly transforming to the young consumer the anarchy that is capitalism into the democracy that is capitalism. Home Alone is an expression of the acceptable face of capitalism*" (p. 129). Thus the film industry, the general market, national economics and politics are all intertwined in an inextricable maze of culture, as Frederic Jameson had established in his 1991 work "Postmodernism and the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism": "the dissolution of an autonomous sphere of culture is rather to be imagined in terms of an explosion: a prodigious expansion of culture throughout the social realm, to the point at which everything in our social life - from economic value and state power to practices and to the very structure of the psyche itself - can be said to have become 'cultural' in some original and yet un-theorized sense. This proposition is, however, substantively quite consistent with the previous diagnosis of a society of the image or the simulacrum and a transformation of the 'real' into so many pseudo-events."

It is not surprising that the films of La Fête differ drastically, and deliberately perhaps, from the late capitalist ideology of Hollywood. *The Clean Machine* in fact acknowledges that in the competitive capitalist world of the 1990s "*nobody gets rich dreaming and scamming. Now it is hard work.*" The kids set to work to start a business of their own and learn the basic lessons of management, marketing and bookkeeping, but the focus is always on the qualitative

The La Fête children very often devise their own toys, play gear and even clothes, they build their own fortresses or offices...

aspects of business as an art that is to be learnt like any other. The La Fête children very often devise their own toys, play gear and even clothes, they build their own fortresses or offices, as in *The Hidden Fortress, The Clean Machine,* and *Dancing on the Moon;* there are no multinational corporations that supply, as Harry the crook puts it in *Home Alone*, "*top-flight goods, stereos, VCRs, marketable securities, toys, fine jewelry and a possible cash horde.*" La Fête projects an image of Canada that is positively developed and urban, but at the same time sentimentally and genuinely attached to its natural resources, social relationships and the little joys, excitements, frustrations and dilemmas of life.

To summarize, it is affirmed that the films of La Fête analyzed here are firmly rooted in the reality of Canada as a nation - fostering multicultural social bonding, aspiring to fulfill the national dream to succeed through persistent hard work (like that of the beaver), and acknowledging the actual problems, desires and capabilities of Canadian children and adult citizens. Hollywood films on the other hand constitute the simulated "reality show" that is America, where the real is conspicuous by its absence, and everything is integrated into a synthetic, make-believe world of spectacle or fantasy. The Hollywood films thus realize fantasy, while the Canadian films fantasize reality.

The Ongoing Struggle

Like the Canadian child and nation, the Canadian film industry is also perhaps in a state of childhood, struggling to grow up and be independent. At the end of a discussion concluding that national identity is strongly bonded to a nation's imaging of itself, it is disturbing to know that between 1910 and the late 1950s, Hollywood companies made more than 500 feature films with Canadian settings and characters, which is about ten times the number of feature films that Canadians made about themselves ('About Canada'). As early as 1951 the Massey Report had warned of an "*American invasion by film, radio and periodicals*" *that threatened to "stifle rather than stimulate our own creative efforts." In its review of the feature film industry, the Massey Report concluded that, "Hollywood refashions us in its own image.*" (Canada at the Movies). Since the Massey Report, the Canadian government has come forward commendably to encourage and support media production in Canada. However,

due to the enormous financial pressures and the unmistakable primacy of major Hollywood studios, Canadian children still have very little access to images and ideas that offer reflection and commentary on Canadian life.

The question remains, what might parents and early childhood professionals do with regard to this issue? Acknowledging the presence of a Canadian cinema for children is of course the first step. It isn't really difficult to get these films - many are available in public libraries, many are screened in Children's Film Festivals such as at SPROCKETS in Toronto, Ontario. I have provided some viewing possibilities in Table 2. Once the "Canadian" has been gleaned from the overarching "American" category, the films can be used in local film groups, schools and at home to generate awareness and conversations on what, how and why these films seek to represent. Such deliberations will certainly add up to a clearer sense of Canada's national character and identity, and provide our children with a different mirror to look into.

TITLE	LENGTH	ORIGINAL VERSION	RELEASE DATE
The Christmas Martian	63 min.	French	1970
The Dog Who Stopped The War	88 min.	French	1984
The Peanut Butter Solution	90 min.	English	1985
Bach & Broccoli	96 min.	French	1986
The Young Magician	99 min.	Polish/English	1987
The Great Land Of Small	91min.	English	1987
Tadpole And The Whale	92 min.	French	1988
Tommy Tricker And The Stamp Traveller	101 min.	English	1988
Summer Of The Colt	96 min.	Spanish/French	1989
Bye Bye Red Riding Hood	94 min.	Hungarian/English	1989
The Case Of The Witch Who Wasn't	95 min.	French	1990
Vincent & Me	100 min.	English	1990
Reach For The Sky	94 min.	Romanian/English	1991
The Clean Machine	90 min.	French	1992
The Flying Sneaker	95 min.	Czech	1993
The Return Of Tommy Tricker	97 min.	English	1994
Dancing On The Moon	87 min.	English	1998
My Little Devil	85 min.	Gujarati	1999
The Hidden Fortress	95 min.	English	2001
Regina	95 min.	Icelandic/English	2002
Summer With The Ghosts	85 min.	English	2004

Table 2: The Complete 'Tales for All' Collection

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Invitation: A Social Literacy To Initiate And Develop Play

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Abstract
This article is based on a four month research project conducted to study a variety of social literacies that a group of children displayed to initiate, sustain, and protect their social play and gain access to ongoing play events in a senior kindergarten classroom [a lab school in Canada]. The investigation included audio-taping and videotaping of children engaged in social interactions, mainly play. The author explores children's "invitation" as a crucial social move in constructing and developing play. Data analysis demonstrates that these children developed a wide range of social literacies to verbally or nonverbally invite their peers into cooperative and construct play; each invitation being direct or indirect. The author hopes to bring into the daily work of early childhood educators, the awareness that play is a socially complex and dynamic context, which provides children with opportunities to develop social competencies and skills. Second, children's creation, expansion, and protection of their social relations require support and respect.

Introduction

We can sometimes be misled about children's social skills when we assume children's play is easily initiated, developed, and sustained. However, children construct a variety of social moves to get their play started. For example, they need to reflect on their environment, to modify it based on their needs and their play plot or script, to develop some rules, to invite peers to join, to negotiate roles with them, to devise problem-solving strategies, and to collaborate in order to keep the play going. These are just some examples of social literacies that enable children to initiate and develop play. Ways of initiating and developing play were two arenas of children's behaviors that absorbed my attention during a research project to observe children's play in a kindergarten class at a local community college laboratory setting for early childhood education.[1]

play is not obligatory but is freely chosen by the player who is actively, rather than passively, engaged.

My initial observations indicate that play is built on those daily experiences of children that integrate a variety of social literacies, such as planning to set the scene, inviting, negotiating the roles, collaborating, problem solving, and so on. Among these social literacies, inviting peers to play is a crucial social move in constructing and developing play. At first glance, invitation may seem easy to accomplish: a child asks, *"Do you play with me?"* However, children need to use more complicated forms of language to encourage their peers to join them in play. I observed that these children do not solely place verbal language in the foreground of their communication. Instead, they use all modalities of communication, such as gesture, intonation, non-verbal cues, and so on to achieve their interactive goals. Using illustrations of how children invite their peers to initiate and develop play through social moves, I argue that these behaviours are forms of social literacy.

Social Literacy as a Form of Social Semiotic System

What constitutes a social literacy? Any literacy requires a medium within which to think and act: in this case the medium is children's play. We see social literacy in play as sets of interweaving social systems (for expectations of how self and others will act and what they care about) in a given context. Play gives children opportunities to practice socially literate behaviours in settings subject to their own evaluation. In this sense, play requires literate behaviour in the social semiotic sense, as a capacity to read - that is, they interpret - the meaning of signs.

The moves that children make when inviting peers to construct their play show more complex, integrated development than is caught by the notion of social skills; a notion that I find simplistic when examining the data found in the present study. Yet there is little that is simple or formulaic when we closely observe the many moves that children coordinate into complex patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting. The term "social literacy" is used here rather than social skill, because the data will show, that

it takes systems of complex, integrated understanding and resourcefulness to be a creative and effective social player. A competent player is required to process advanced social and communication literacies that include credibility, ability to

[1] This article is based on the unpublished M.Ed. thesis "Children's Play and Social Literacies" by Farveh Ghafouri, supervised by Carol Anne Wien, Faculty of Education, York University.

interpret verbal and non-verbal messages, creativity and inventiveness in negotiating and developing effective moves to initiate play. (Ghafouri,Wien, 2003)

This philosophical and social linguistic approach to literacy and complex forms of representation in our contemporary culture led me to discuss social literacy as a part of social semiotics (e.g., Kress, 1997; Street, 1998). For instance, Ghafouri and Wien discussed that,

The term semiotic system refers to a system of signs and symbols from which people read or interpret meaning. Literacy is now a term applied to many aspects that need to be considered to successfully function in society. An example is the wide range of icons and signs with combinations of symbols, boundaries, pictures, words, texts, images, and the like, that has to be understood to effectively communicate in our contemporary society.(Ghafouri and Wien)

Also argued by Street, "*We are no longer talking about language in its rather traditional notion of grammar, lexicon and semantics; rather we are now talking about a wide range of semiotic systems that cut across reading, writing, and speech*" (p.9). In this view, written language is more than a set of alphabets and concepts of literacy go far beyond the ability to read and write those alphabets.

Inspired by these theories, "social literacies" is defined here as social capabilities and social understandings of children that function both to sustain and to circumscribe social interactions and relations. Social competence, or children's knowledge about social structures and about grammars of social rules, develops throughout childhood. Children's social knowledge underpins social literacies that give rise to strategies that enable children to successfully structure their social interactions and effectively interact in their social world. In other words, literacy is viewed here, as a social and cultural process that represents ways to establish, maintain, or change social relationships and social activities.

Young Children's Play

Play, as Sutton-Smith (1995) reminds us, is complex because it is never "*just play*," but rather layers of tendencies that create an unplanned, momentary reality for players. Play is children's primary means of engaging in the world, and it provides children with a situation through which they can explore the world as it is or the world as they imagine it. For the purpose of the present article, we can look at Garvey's (1977/82) criteria to define play of young children. She suggested five characteristics to define play, "*(1) play is pleasurable, enjoyable, (2) play has no extrinsic goals, (3) play is spontaneous and voluntary, (4) play involves some active engagement on the part of the player, and finally (5) play has certain systematic relations to what is not play*" (pp. 4-5). The first feature suggests that play is positively valued by the player, while the second feature means its motivations are intrinsic and serve no other objectives. The third and fourth features indicate that play is not obligatory but is freely chosen by the player who is actively, rather than passively, engaged. The last quality refers to the representative aspect of play, that in play, things stand for another things. For example, as Vygotsky (1978) "pointed out a book with dark cover can stand for a wood", and so on.

Vygotsky's (1966,1976,1978) perspectives on play are also helpful to understand social literacy and its relationship to play. Vygotsky is a social constructivist who believed that children interpret, organize, and coordinate information from the environment and in the process construct knowledge. He (1978) emphasized the idea that every function in social development occurs first at the social level and then becomes acquired by the individual. Social play is reciprocal. It involves mutuality in social interaction and, as Reynolds and Jones (1997) stated, "Master players are good negotiators with other children" (p. 73). As "master players," children require mastery of social moves. Social play is the mode that allows children to practice various social literacies, such as taking initiative, solving problems, negotiating social relationships, taking turns, and collaboration.

Research Setting

The research setting was a full-day kindergarten classroom in a laboratory school, part of an early childhood education program in a community college. The physical environment included three adjoining rooms: a room for dramatic play, a room for quiet activities, and a main room that offered a block area, art center, and science center. The teacher appreciated and encouraged children's play and formal direct teaching was mainly limited to fifteen to thirty minutes work each morning. The kindergarten class had one teacher and twelve students, six boys and six girls, who participated in this study. The children ranged in age from 4.8 – 5.10 years at the beginning of data collection. In addition to English, two of the children could speak Farsi and four of them could speak Chinese.

Data Collection

Data collection took three forms, field notes primarily as a tolerated observer, audio-taped conversations during play, and videotaped play. I visited the classroom mainly between 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. two to three times a week over a period of four months. The collected data consisted of six ninety-minute audiotapes, a two-hour videotape, and an average of three to four pages of typed field notes per visit. We concentrated on play episodes that emerged from child-initiated activities and took field notes on the ways they were initiated, by whom, and what occurred as the play began and ended. Accuracy of data was aided by having data in three forms – transcripts of taped recordings, videotapes of play, and extensive field notes. Having two or three data sources for the same episode permitted effective triangulation, thus supporting the internal validity of the

study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). The standard guidelines regarding ethical policies were followed and all precautions were taken to assure the anonymity of children. All participants are referred to here by pseudonym only.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was initiated at the beginning of the study. Typing the field notes and adding author's interpretations and further questions within two or three days of each visit helped to recover as much data as possible and led to an understanding of where more data was needed. Transcription of the audiotapes started in the middle of data collection, which enabled me to search through data for regularities, patterns, and topics to develop categories. In this part of data analysis, a file was created for each research question and the transcription of the related play episodes was placed under each question. As the research progressed, patterns enabled the development of ten categories under each research question with several examples from play episodes. Reclassifying and polishing these categories helped to reduce the number to five. Later, best examples to illustrate each category were chosen to address the research questions. In this article, focus is placed on one of the questions that emerged during the study: "*how children invite their peers to play*". One question raised during the research project was: "*how do children collaboratively initiate and construct their play?*" I believe that a variety of social literacies are involved in initiating and orchestrating play. The following play episodes illustrate that children's play is embedded in social contexts and often involve their use of language and interpretive abilities. A frequent pattern for preschool children involves their developing control of language, discourse skills, and what is referred to here as "*social literacies*" (social knowledge and communicative demands) to initiate and construct their play.

Part of initiating successful play, is to invite peers to construct and develop play. In this section, we'll explore the social literacies that children develop to invite play and address the following questions through play episodes examples: How do children issue their invitation? How do children embed meaning in their invitation? How do children interpret each other's invitation? Children issue their invitation either verbally or nonverbally; each invitation being direct or indirect. **The following play episodes will clarify the definition of direct and indirect verbal and nonverbal invitation:**

The first example illustrates a direct verbal invitation from a four-minute videotaped episode.

Debra is setting a small table in the Dramatic Play room. She puts three plates on the table and then puts one cup beside each plate. Sue enters the room and sits at the table watching Debra. Debra picks up a jug and pretends pouring into cups. She gets to the plate in front of Sue, looks at her, and asks in a soft voice, "What do you want to drink?" Sue replies, "I want juice." They start role-playing.

In this episode, Debra is setting the environment to get her play started. Although she is first alone in the room, she sets the table for three. She might be encouraging and indirectly inviting her peers to join her play. Or, she might be considering herself role-playing for three people. Seeing Debra's setting the table, Sue enters the room and sits at the table where Debra is initiating her play. On the one hand, putting herself close to Debra, Sue shows her interest in Debra's play. Placing three plates at the table, Debra has also may have shown her interest in having more playmates. So, Debra verbally and directly invites Sue and even initiates herself a role as a "host" by asking, "*What do you want for drink?* " Responding to Sue's approaching her and looking at what she is doing, Debra employs a proper social literacy and gently and politely uses verbal language to invite Sue to her play. Sue accepts her invitation by replying appropriately to the role that Debra suggests, "I want juice." Debra is successful in her social move to develop her play with Sue.

The second play episode demonstrates how one boy verbally but indirectly invites his peer to play with him.

Sitting in the block center, Ken is using wood blocks to make a tower. Holding a toy car, John approaches him, walks around his tower watching how he is piling the blocks, and finally sits beside him on the carpet. Ken keeps stacking the blocks to make the tower higher and higher. John picks up some blocks, makes a slope with them, slides his car down it, and says with excitement, "Watch this! Watch this! Hey, Ken, watch this!" Ken looks at him sliding his car, and replies, "Cool!" Then, Ken moves closer to John's slope, picks up a toy car, puts it on the slope, and rolls it down. The car rolls down fast and John and Ken both laugh. John picks up two more blocks and stacks them to make the slope higher. Ken starts helping him by using the blocks from his tower.

John's encircling the block center implies his interest in interacting with Ken. Holding a toy car, John probably suggests play with cars. However, Ken is engaged in making a tower and disregards John's presence. Producing behaviour in line with Ken's play, John picks up some blocks, makes a slope, and slides his car down the slope. By this move, John uses both the blocks, while Ken seems more interested in his toy car. Next, he verbally calls for Ken's attention and indirectly invites him to see and consider his play, "*Watch this! Watch this! Hey, Ken, watch this!*" John is successful in attracting Ken's attention and Ken looks at him playing and cheers him by saying, "*Cool!*" Next, Ken sits closer to John, picks up a car, and starts following his play: sliding a car down a slope. They both seem excited to see the cars rolling down. John continues his play by making the structure of the slope more

complex. Using the blocks from his tower to help John, Ken illustrates that he is not interested in making a tower anymore but he is willing to play with John. John's thoughtful use of social literacy enables him to accomplish his goal in finding a playmate to initiate a play with toy cars.

Verbal language is not the only way for generating social action. Socio-cognitive competence of children includes extra-linguistic competencies. I first became interested in children's extra-linguistic literacies because of a child's whistle. One day, Sue was putting make-up on Gloria and Mary was helping her in the Dramatic Play Room. Debra came to the door of the room and started whistling. Sue frowned at her, but Mary put the make-up down, left the room, and followed Debra into the Main Room. I wondered, was it a familiar signal between them? Did Debra intend to invite Mary or was her first intention to interrupt their play? Staying attentive was important to learn more about the nonverbal social literacies that children construct to invite their peers.

The following two episodes examine nonverbal indirect invitation.

Sue, Gloria and Mary are playing with two hamsters. Holding a few dinosaurs, Debra enters the room and sits near them. She looks at the girls and stares at Mary. Sue leaves the room to bring a tissue to help clean the pet area; Mary follows her and Debra follows them to the Main Room without saying anything. Within a few seconds Mary returns while Debra is following her. Mary sits down to clean the carpet and Debra, still holding the dinosaurs, remains standing near the door. Mary looks up at her and says in an emphatic tone, "I need to do some jobs." Debra looks at her and then leaves the room. Sue comes back holding a spray bottle in her hand. They start wiping up the carpet. After a few seconds, Debra returns again, puts her dinosaurs on the floor, and sits near Mary. Mary looks at her and says, "Not now. I just need to do some work. You know, after this it's okay. I have to take care of them." Debra leaves the room without saying anything.

They negotiated a place for themselves between their imagined worlds and real worlds.

Holding dinosaurs in her hand, Debra does not seem very interested in playing with pets that day. Nonetheless, she needs a playmate to construct her play, perhaps with dinosaurs. Therefore, she enters the Quiet Room where all the girls are. Looking at them, Debra chooses Mary: Her staring at Mary, I believe, constitutes an indirect invitation. Later, when Mary leaves the room, Debra follows her. Following Mary could be another gesture that Debra has employed to express her interest in playing with Mary. Again these *starings* and *followings* are gestures for indirectly inviting Mary to play. They are nonverbal, because Debra does not employ any verbal language, and indirect because Debra does not say that she wants to play. She simply stares at Mary or follows her. Mary seems to understand Debra's signals and responds to her when they both return to the room after a few seconds. She verbally rejects Debra's invitation by saying that she has some jobs to do. Although Debra leaves the room, she returns within seconds, sits near Mary and puts her dinosaurs down. Mary rejects her invitation once again by emphasizing her responsibility for taking care of the pets. This time Debra seems to be discouraged from constructing a play with Mary and leaves the room. Debra fails to develop her play with Mary in this example, although she has employed thoughtful social moves. My understanding is that Mary is more interested in playing with the pets; or perhaps she feels responsibility for taking care of them while the teacher is cleaning their cages.

Here is the second example of nonverbal indirect invitation.

Debra and Gloria are playing with dinosaurs on a wooden sledge near the door of their classroom in the hallway. Debra, followed by Gloria, has already attempted to enter Mary and Sue's play but she failed. A few minutes after rejecting Debra's attempt, Sue comes out of the classroom, passes Gloria, and gently touches her hair. Gloria looks up at her and follows her with her eyes. Sue is also watching her while running sideways. Mary follows Sue. Gloria hesitates but stands up and follows Sue and Mary, who are now playing with a guinea pig in the hallway.

When Sue touches Gloria's hair, she indicates that it is Debra that Sue does not want to play with, not her, and Gloria can join them now. Gloria looks at her to make sure she got her indirect invitation right, hesitates for a second, and then follows her to join their play.

Discussion

The analysis of the above play episodes, attempts to illustrate that inviting peers to play involves social moves for developing and establishing play. It demands children's creativity, innovations, symbolic thinking, linguistic and extra-linguistic negotiation, and many more. Referring back to the earlier argument about social literacies, I believe that these social behaviors are forms of social literacies that have at least two essential literacy requirements: a medium and a system of representations.

First, we observed play to be a medium where children think, communicate, and act. Developing the medium of play is dependent on a variety of social literacies. The data illustrate how in play, children communicate through gesture and expression and through choice of objects and moves. Within this medium, children employ verbal and nonverbal language to invite their peers to develop play. They employ exclusive language codes to negotiate social relationships and collaborate to fully include participants.

Secondly, the data illustrates how the language of play consisted of a complex system of representations. Play represents children's understanding and view of their social worlds. We observed how staring, following, using a whistle and so on represent children's desire to develop the joint action of play. For us, as outside observers, play illustrates children's perspective of their place within the microworlds of social play.

Implications

Play provides a rich medium within which children can explore and develop social competencies. In play, children are free to construct their own social microworlds, each with its own boundaries. The question now is what does it mean for teachers, educators, parents, or any one who works with and for children? The findings of this study **first** imply the importance of the social environment on children's life in school. These children negotiated social relationships within their own peer culture. They negotiated a place for themselves between their imagined worlds and real worlds. In a sense, they created a bridge from a personal place to a shared place, which in this study was the peer world. It means the teachers of young children might consider creating and promoting social dialogues and social moves; listening to the depth of cultural talk that is happening between children.

This approach to peer culture leads to the **second implication** of the present study for those working for and with children. The findings should encourage us to listen more closely to all forms of text creation (or literacy) in children's worlds, whether they are spoken, drawn, written, or acted, as in play. Consider play as a complex form of social work being acted out by the children and helping them to develop social literacies. Furthermore, the play episodes portrayed here, demonstrate that although play seems a natural behavior of children, initiating and developing play are often challenging social moves. To initiate play, children use all modalities of communication, such as gesture and intonation as well as integration of a variety of social literacies, such as planning and negotiating. Play is a socially complex and dynamic process: it is the product of an ongoing negotiation between the players. Important learning experiences can occur during children's spontaneous social play with their peers. Children's play needs to be encouraged, appreciated, and supported.

To sum up, observing children's play is a means of learning more about them as developing human beings. Play fosters many aspects of child development, which includes both, social and linguistic development (Dyson, 1988; Heath, 1983; Vygotsky, 1978). Play, with its rich opportunities for social interaction and its intrinsic rewards, is an especially potent context for fostering positive dispositions toward social literacies (e.g., Roskos & Christie, 2000). Play is a way of learning and making sense of things based on what children already know (e.g., Garvey, 1977/1982; Reynolds & Jones, 1997). Perhaps, this is the reason children feel comfortable during play. Continued research of this nature, might enhance our knowledge of play as a socially complex and dynamic context to support the development of social competencies and communicative skills of children.

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Six Short Reasons Why Pedagogy Matters in Schools

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Absract

What do primary teachers say to administrators or colleagues who expect a linear approach to standardized curriculum - when these teachers wish to honour the values of developmental appropriateness, child-centredness, and the democracy of community decision-making? This article highlights six pedagogies of early childhood education and reasons why they matter in JK through Grade Three. These pedagogies are: group work, because habits of mind for collaboration are necessary for adult life; multiple technologies of learning (drawing, dancing, building, etc.) because multiple literacies are required in adult life; attentiveness to children's happiness, because children otherwise grow tired of "learning"; inquiry and design, because they tap the creative impulse in each of us; images of children as protagonists of learning because such images contribute to stronger, more stable adults; and the cultivation of affect as deep attachment to the world, because attachment leads to responsible citizens.

Introduction

Melita, a first-year teacher of grade one, with a specialization in early childhood education, was startled when her principal asked her why she was offering her children an activity-based, child-centred afternoon on Fridays. He wondered why she wasn't continuing with the standardized curriculum? Wasn't she wasting the children's time? (Kit, 2002)

Primary teachers (K-3) who have strong backgrounds in early childhood education (ECE) struggle with how to teach standardized curriculum (Jones, Evans & Rencken, 2001; Katz & Chard, 2000; Wien, 2004).While policy spheres have imposed increasing quantities of "expectations" or "outcomes" that young children are to master, teachers see children who cannot be required to learn to read at age five when developmental rates vary (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997) or children who cannot grasp the difference between a.m. and p.m. in Grade I (Wien, 2004). Yet teachers know children will have less difficulty with abstract symbolic learning in junior grades. Such teachers often wish to offer children learner-centred activities, more relaxed and meaningful hands-on experiences, opportunities for a full range of play, art, and social experiences, but feel increasingly strained by pressure to keep moving through the curriculum train (Allen, 2001; Wien & Dudley-Marling, 2001).

Basic skills are fragments that matter greatly, but only in the service of something bigger to which they contribute. The bigger things cannot be done without them, but basic skills without bigger goals are meaningless.

How do inexperienced teachers in particular convince older, more authoritative principals or colleagues that their richly stimulating environments and lively classes offer children the sort of sound education in basic skills that society now requires - but also so much more than mere basic skills? How do ECE teachers convince principals, colleagues and parents that offering more than basic skills is a necessity for adequate development of a citizenry that tolerates diversity well, and includes issues of justice, freedom, responsibility, and human rights in its political life? And what about issues of friendship, attachment, identity, community, and the cultivation of affect? Basic skills are fragments that matter greatly, but only in the service of something bigger to which they contribute. The bigger things cannot be done without them, but basic skills without bigger goals are meaningless.

Early childhood teachers may have difficulty offering compelling arguments to administrators and colleagues of older grades as to why inquiry-based, integrated curriculum with highly active children engaged in meaningful hands-on work is preferable to quiet children sitting in rows with their worksheets, supposedly learning exactly what the teacher teaches. Melita was unnerved by her principal's challenge and unable, in the moment, to articulate to him why it mattered to offer a framework that included some choice, some play in small groups, children planning for themselves and opportunities to think and feel using multiple sensory modes. He convinced her to reduce the activity-

based afternoon to a half-hour of activities and Melita felt sad and guilty that her values and beliefs were overridden by this linear approach to curriculum.

Pedagogy is ways of teaching, ways of setting up learning. This article articulates, for any of us who find ourselves in Melita's situation, six pedagogies of early childhood education and why they contribute to schooling.

The six include:

1. Group work, for the habits of mind for collaboration are required in adult life, we could call it social literacy, and do not develop without awareness and practice.

2. Multiple technologies (beyond worksheets) and experience connecting multiple ways of knowing,because they are required in daily functioning in contemporary life.

3. Teacher attentiveness to children's happiness, because without positive energy, children do not want to learn.

4. Inquiry and design as a means to be full participants in society and to contribute to the local culture, because they tap the creative impulse in each of us.

5. Teacher images of children as protagonists of learning, because this image leads to stronger, more stable adults.

6. The cultivation of affect as deep attachment to the world, because attachment leads to responsibility as citizens.

Discussion

Group Work: The Development of Habits of Mind for Collaboration

When working in small learning groups, projects, or self-initiated play, children learn to see the perspectives of others, in addition to their own (Piaget, 1962; Rogoff, 1990). Having ideas is important in group work - so is permitting others to have ideas and being willing to listen to them. Knowing when to offer an idea and when to listen to others is an important skill in group dynamics (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1998). The give and take — the reciprocity or mutual exchange of group work, requires that children be able to offer leadership but also to relinquish that leadership and follow another's idea (Ghafouri, 2002). They offer ideas but also have to be able to agree that someone else's idea is better than their own. Such decision-making requires the development of discernment in evaluating the ongoing process of an activity. These sophisticated skills in communicative competence do not easily develop when we work alone. Yet what adult work of any responsibility does not require extensive time sitting on committees or working in teams with others? If society requires decent committee members for adult work, then learning how to contribute to the life of group work is a necessary basic skill in childhood.

Such social literacy is learned first and foremost in children's play, that is, activity under the control of children. Vygotsky (1976) argued years ago that play is the foundation of human will, because in play children first regulated their own actions in the interests of keeping to a role: in other words, play is the child's first experience of disciplining the self. For example, restricting all one's actions to only those appropriate for the mommy or the daddy in play. He also argued that while play isn't the most frequent kind of activity in young children, it was the leading edge of their development. They show more maturity when initiating in play. Ghafouri's data (2002) on social literacy in children's play shows two girls playing at baton twirling and we see "Gloria" comply for over half an hour with the leadership of "Sue" because she wants to be with her: "Sue" invents more and more tricks in order to keep "teaching" "Gloria" and sustain the relationship. Unscripted social relations are the bedrock of social communication and adult society depends on healthy communication among its participants.

Multiple Technologies and Experience Connecting Multiple Ways of Knowing

The term "technology" comes from the Greek "technos" and means "ways of doing things". A pencil and paper, wool and spinning wheel, clay and a kiln, wire and pliers - all are different technologies for getting something done and for representing knowledge about the world. When children learn competence in many "languages of learning" (to borrow the phrase of the Reggio educators) or multiple modes for representing their knowledge and experience, they develop facility not simply in the specific mode of representation they use, such as painting, dancing, writing, or fibre work, but also flexibility in approaching multiple modes.

Developmentally, working in multiple sensory modes in the early years of school is valuable because children build their own systems of connection in mind from meaningful, experience-based activity. In addition, working in multiple sensory modes is important because development in one domain has an impact on development in other domains (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Thus a child who is stumped in learning to read might, in addition to the full range of instructional teachings, be permitted considerable time in non-linguistic modes (such as making 3-dimensional constructions, sewing, woodworking, imaginative play). Rather than do more of what he cannot do, changing the mode of representing knowledge can offer sets of connections mentally that can then interact in richer ways with those other sets that cannot seem to learn to read.

Secondly, comfort in using multiple technologies or ways of doing things is a requirement of adult contemporary life. To reduce modes of living to the merely linguistic or mathematical, as in the

workbooks and worksheets that traditional linear school processes so frequently emphasize, is to limit children's reach and understanding at a time when requirements for those qualities have intensified.

Elena Giacopina, pedagogista in Reggio Emilia, offered an interesting definition of development during the Canadian study tour in 2002: "*We think of development as keeping all the child's experiences in connection.*"[1] In North American contexts, I suspect we do not yet know the benefits that accrue from keeping the conceptual and affective content in connection, and altering the mode of representation of that content. In Reggio, we saw a group of children drawing the toy horse that one of them brought to school, each child from the perspective of their own position around the table, then transforming that perspective into a three-dimensional image in wire. I don't know if anyone is working seriously with the ideas of keeping children's "experiences in connection" in North America, but an entirely new field of investigation might open out from asking this question: what happens (for children, for development, for teachers) when, rather than follow fragmented time schedules, we attempt to keep children's "experiences in connection"?

Teacher Attentiveness to Children's Happiness

Thirdly, programs that offer developmentally appropriate practice, through play-based, inquiry-based, child-centred, or fully integrated curriculum in which children make meaningful choices, plan, revisit, generate, problem solve, and act spontaneously, have the consequence that the participating children are generally happy. Happiness is evident when children sing spontaneously, laugh, greet visitors with gusto, are engaged frequently in meaningful activity, and share their worlds with shining eyes. They bubble over with enthusiasm and energy. No teacher of young children thinks the happiness of children is unimportant. Yet, policy makers of standardized curriculum desire results - the high test scores that are the current measure of "productivity" of the young. Why is happiness more important than a test score in children under eight?

Katz & Chard (2000) in their masterful second chapter offering a rationale for project approaches, note the importance in children's development of *the dynamic dimension*. They argue that the dynamic dimension has three interrelated aspects – changes over time, delayed impact, and cumulative effects of experience. Change over time refers to the interaction of physiological maturation with experience. Delayed impact concerns the way the effects of experience may not be apparent for some time. Several researchers suspect long term effects from inauspicious early experiences of too-academic an approach in the early years as a likely source of the academic "burn-out" frequently noted around grade 4, with children who hate school and have lost motivation for its steady stream of required tasks and testing (Katz & Chard, 2000). Katz and Chard make the point that the fact that children *can* do something, such as engage in worksheets at age five, does not mean they *should* do it.

... an entirely new field of investigation might open out from asking this question: what happens (for children, for development, for teachers) when, rather than follow fragmented time schedules, we attempt to keep children's "experiences in connection"?

Cumulative effects concern the way a minor negative experience, such as viewing poor quality television shows or being asked to learn something one doesn't understand, may not matter if they happen occasionally, but if these experiences are repeated sufficiently, they may become harmful to development. Katz and Chard (2002) argue that the cumulative effect of being asked to behave as though something is understood when it is not (or only poorly grasped) "*can - in the long term - undermine their confidence in their own intellectual competence*" (p.24). One of the consequences of lack of confidence is withdrawal, or refusal to participate, since participation appears to bring no gain. If a child cannot participate, he or she does not feel a sense of belonging to the community, and alienation and many other reactions that can lead to hostility beginning to develop. The development of alienation in its young is dangerous to any society.

Inquiry and Design as a Means to be Full Participants in Society

Knowledge can be curriculum-driven or inquiry-driven. It can also be directed outside the self or inside the self. Curriculum-driven knowledge descends from the teacher as content to be mastered: the mind is focussed on the teacher's agenda like a dog on a leash. Inquiry-driven knowledge arises from the learner as questions to be investigated. The mind is focussed on its own interesting connections, like a dog free to explore an interesting landscape. Since the mind/brain develops from making its own connections as it builds meaning in interaction with the environment, children's capacity to generate their own questions - which provide networks of possible connections – is possibly the most profound vehicle for constructing mind (Caine & Caine, 1994; Shore, 1997; Sylwester, 1995). Generating questions offers networks of possible connections, not the single connections frequently the focus of worksheets and direct instruction. Yet what is most profound in creating our own questions is the generation of feeling, because attachment - that feeling of intense motivation - floods the questions. We are intimately

[1] Quote used with permission of Reggio Children, with the understanding that this is my interpretation of what was said.

interested and engaged with the questions that we generate ourselves. The fuel of motivation carries thinking and investigating through many processes of learning, like wind through a landscape. The effort is a pleasure rather than a tracking of the will.

Generating questions is also a creative activity that strengthens the predisposition to question: it is thinking off the script of the traditional culture of learning. Generating questions and investigating potential solutions permits learners to construct their own systems of relations – which may or may not be accurate - but building a theory, whether real or fantastical, is one of the surest ways of becoming interested in reality. Learning to hypothesize in inquiry is also a solid way to learn the difference between an opinion offered without evidence (a hypothesis accepted as truth) and a factually-based statement grounded in evidence. To say the leaves fall off trees in autumn because the days are shorter and colder is accepted opinion. To say they fall because cells in the tree close off the leaf stem, so that there is no longer an exchange of starches and nourishment between leaf and tree, is a statement of a different order of reality, a statement of a system of relations about the tree's response to shorter, colder days. In inquiry, children learn the difference between an interesting idea, a hypothesis or theory that might be checked out, and whether there is evidence in nature for such a view, whether it is fact or interpretation. Many adults have difficulty grasping the difference between what they have in mind (their beliefs and values) and the complex facts of the lived world, thinking that what they *think* is the way the world is (Bateson, 1979; Bowers & Flinders, 1990). Thus the precision of inquiry assists sophisticated thinking.

Being able to design something new in the world is a creative act. To learn to generate bridges, fountains, recipes for cake, is to make a plan and see if it can be carried through from mind into the three-dimensions of daily life. It is to learn to participate as a contributor, not simply as one who complies, or as one who critiques, but as a co-producer of culture.

Teacher Images of Children as Protagonists of Learning

The work of the educators of Reggio Emilia has offered us a new language for describing some cherished values in early childhood education in North America. The ECE field has long promoted the necessity of permitting children to be active agents in their own learning (Duckworth, 1996; Hendrick & Chandler, 1996; Kamii & DeVries, 1996.) To be a protagonist is to be the central actor in one's own story, to take action in making things happen in that story. Yet the Reggio educators go beyond the sense of children as central actors in their own school lives and encourage participation as citizens of a culture (Cadwell, 2003; Guidici, Rinaldi, & Krechevsky, 2001). For five year olds to be invited, with their atelierista, Vea Vecchi (2002), to engage in the artistic endeavour of designing a permanent drop curtain for a respected local theatre in Reggio Emilia is for children to engage in contributing to their society in ways far beyond what North Americans imagine as possible.

Yet there are powerful reasons why encouraging 4-7 year-old children to be active planners, designers, and protagonists of their own education is of significance to development. It is not simply a matter of equal choices of pedagogy, not simply a choice between active pedagogies that permit children to plan, initiate, design, theorize, and investigate their world, and traditional pedagogies such as worksheets, drills for rote memory, teacher instruction and passive concentration on the teacher's agenda in the service of a content-driven curriculum.

Research in neuroscience has demonstrated that in 4-7 year olds, the areas of the brain undergoing most rapid development are the areas of the frontal cortices responsible for planning (Thompson et al., 2000). Damasio (1994) has shown compellingly how individuals with damaged prefrontal cortices (the area in the forehead above the "shelf" of the eyeballs) cannot function in daily social life. They can speak and move normally, think well enough to score well on IQ and personality tests, but they cannot get through a day normally. They cannot plan or organize how to use time and space, cannot prioritize events, make decisions about what to do, or sift through systems of values to make appropriate judgments about their actions. Damasio (1994) gives the example of a patient asked to choose between two appointment times who then spent half an hour rationalizing first one time then the other until the medical team, knowing his condition, decided for him. As I understand it, these prefrontal cortices (damaged in Damasio's patient) are the areas of the brain developing most rapidly in 4-7 year olds.

> If we have a strong evidentiary warrant in science for knowing that the human brain is relatively undeveloped at birth and develops exceptionally rapidly in the first six years of life (McCain & Mustard, 1999; Shore 1997) and . . .
>
> We also know unequivocally (as we do) that the human brain develops in interaction with its external environment and . .
>
> We add to this knowledge the understanding that compelling evidence via imaging techniques indicates the area of the brain undergoing most rapid development in 4-7 year olds is the planning area, then . . .
>
> What sense could it possibly make to put children in contexts where they are unable to plan, make choices or decisions, or engage in self-initiated activity?

We might rather worry that children, 4-7 years of age who are forced to follow prescriptive education programs – sitting and "paying attention", filling out worksheets for long periods of time, and following the teachers' rules and requirements – will be less able to develop the capacities and interconnections in mind that children who do engage in planning, playing, inquiry and design develop. The compelling results of the Perry High/Scope longitudinal research study on Head Start participants from the 1960's confirms the importance of active pedagogies for development (Kirp, 2004).

Children living in low-income areas, at risk for many social problems, were treated, in the experimental group to which they were randomly assigned, as active learners who were invited to choose, to plan, to design, to ask, to reflect on their activities. After initial gains in IQ, school results were desultory, until their late teens, when the "sleeper" effect of increased stability and competence emerged: the experimental group suffered less delinquency, less jail time, stayed in school longer, stayed at jobs longer. These results have held through their early adulthood, until now at age 40, they have proven to be more stable and contributing citizens able to raise their own families successfully (Kirp, 2004). Ultimately, we should be able to tell administrators we suspect development may be hindered by restrictive pedagogies, and there are compelling arguments for following what we suspect to be a less harmful approach.

The Cultivation of Affect: Deep Attachment and Responsibility Toward the World

Katz and Chard (2000) have long noted, in their work on the project approach, the tendency of projects to allow development in four domains of functioning - knowledge, skills, dispositions, and feelings (or affective states). They identify three feelings or affective states as important during project work - acceptance, comfort, and competence. Acceptance, or a sense of belonging to a community, has long been noted as a key aspect of stable development, from the influence of Maslow (through his notion of a hierarchy of needs) and other psychoanalysts such as Erikson (1963) or Rogers (1969) (through his notion of "prizing" the other) to more recent acknowledgments in books about pedagogy for early childhood education (Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1992; Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1998; Hendrick & Chandler, 1996; Hohmann & Weikart, 2002,).

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The notion of comfort, or psychological safety – that basic needs will be met, and there is no need to feel one has to protect oneself – has a long tradition in early childhood, with roots in notions of play and freedom of activity and considerable presence throughout the literature on developmentally appropriate practice (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997).

Notions of a sense of competence and confidence - what for a long time was called "self-esteem" - are based in realistic understandings of what one can and cannot do in the world. Competence has to do with one's sense of success in the world, with willingness to take risks, to permit oneself occasional failure, but within a stable sense of usual success. Projects, of course, let the children set the level of challenge, and so their success/competence at chosen tasks is probable, even when those tasks are difficult, for intrinsic motivation fuels interest, propels the task through to completion.

Building on Katz and Chard's argument, I suggest a deeply relevant affective state in addition to those they have noted. This is a state shown to us profoundly by the work of the educators of Reggio Emilia. This affective state is *deep attachment to something that matters*. "*To know something is to love something*," said Rinaldi (1997) during a Reggio study tour. Her argument is that knowledge is not in fact knowledge without appreciative attachment. Perhaps it is information, but not yet knowledge. This sense of deep attachment - to others and to some aspect of the world - is very evident in the skilled paintings, clay and wire sculpture, and installations done by children in Reggio schools. It is a way of knowing that goes beyond what we think of as normal achievement: it arises out of the Reggio way of working and living. Malaguzzi referred to this way of knowing as "*a little pocket of extra intelligence*" (Gambetti in Cadwell, 2003).
I think it is similar, in part, to the deep attachment to the world, the sense of wonder, that ecologists notice develops in children when they have access to wild places (Nabham & Trimble, 1994).

Katz and Chard (2000) recognize the dynamic developmental principles of change, delayed impact, and cumulative effects, pointing out that current experiences can have "sleeper" effects that do not surface for many years but have powerful impact on development. The results of the Perry High/Scope longitudinal research bear out the notion of powerful sleeper effects in development. I argue that the feeling that something matters is fundamentally important, and that only that learning that reaches levels of deep feeling will be adequately remembered. Since humans are *designed to forget* (Norretranders, 1998) the teaching of skills as information is relatively useless, unless those skills are connected to larger purposes with meaning to children.

The six reasons to offer a questioning administrator or colleague are all related to complex, interactive aspects of development. To develop skills for collaborative work as a citizen, children require

opportunities to interact spontaneously in their own organizational frameworks such as play, projects, and small learning groups. To grasp multiple ways of knowing they require comfort in using many different kinds of technologies in many different sensory modes. To grow up well they require contexts in which they can be happy, for positive energy in childhood leads to positive energy in adulthood. So does the reverse. To inquire into the world as it is, to design for that world requires creative capacities that children are capable of in early childhood. To plan - as a protagonist of one's own learning - allows the areas of brain/mind under development at 4-7 years-of-age to be exercised and disciplined by children. To focus on deep feeling attachment and responsibility toward the world allows children to bring their full human capacities into their education, so that all their love and excitement about being present in the world is brought into engagement with their culture's desires for their learning. Where is the principal who does not want a larger sense of life and living for his or her children? And experience tells us that when the curriculum is carefully embedded within these broader pedagogies, principals will also be pleased with the test scores (Wien, 2004).

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Understanding Selective Mutism: A Guide for Teachers and Parents to Improve Knowledge and Increase Appropriate Identification, Referral, and Intervention

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Abstract

Many professionals who currently work in primary education settings indicate an increase in the numbers of children who do not speak at school. Selective Mutism is a rare disorder that is more prevalent in schools than they originally believed. Unfortunately, Selective Mutism is often misunderstood by both teachers and parents. This article describes the characteristics and causes of the disorder; as well, it addresses common misconceptions. With better knowledge on the subject, primary teachers and parents are better able to identify possible cases and initiate appropriate referrals and interventions.

Introduction

While there is no objective data regarding the prevalence of Selective Mutism in Canada, the experience and reports of many primary educators in the past few years suggests that the number of children with this condition that they have contact with has increased. More educators in the primary grades are reporting that they have had a child who does not speak in school or in their classroom, and that the failure to speak was more than an initial adjustment to formal schooling or shyness in the child. For these children who do not speak, their silence is often long lasting and can extend across an entire school year. In many cases, it is educators who are first aware of these difficulties, as these children typically speak at home to their parents.

Selective Mutism is a term that many educators and parents have heard over the years. For most, they have a general idea that it involves a lack of speech on the part of a child. While having this basic understanding, few have received the type of information that would allow them to understand the causes of Selective Mutism, the impact on social and academic functioning within the school, as well as the importance of early identification and intervention. In fact, E. Steven Dummit (n.d.), a physician and advisory board member of the Selective Mutism Foundation believes that misconceptions regarding the disorder are widespread.

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In my course of experience evaluating and treating children with Selective Mutism, both in research and clinical practice, the following concepts have evolved in my thinking as the answers to questions that I have been asked, both by the families of my patients and by professionals. In talking with parents and teachers, as well as in assessment of children, I have found that misconceptions are widespread about what Selective Mutism is and how children develop this problem. These misconceptions are prevalent even in professional educators, physicians and mental health providers. I believe they reflect both confusion in the professional community and a general misunderstanding of the problem in our culture. (Dummit 2004)

Further to this, it is important that teachers and educators receive accurate information about Selective Mutism so they are more knowledgeable and have a deeper understanding of issues related to identification, referral, and classroom behavioural management and interventions. Parents of children with Selective Mutism must also have accurate knowledge and understanding about the disorder so that they can play a key role and be an active participant in the assessment as well as participate in interventions designed to address their child's silence. In essence, both educators and parents need access to the best information available. This article will provide key information regarding selection mutism, focusing on issues of causation, identification, referral, and intervention to lead educators and parents to a better understanding and reduce some of the common misconceptions.

What is Selective Mutism?

Many children who enter school start off with a period in which they do not speak to either their peers or school staff and appear to be overwhelmed, anxious, or shy. For many of these children, their unwillingness to speak, quickly remediates in a few weeks with no direct intervention. For these children, their brief unwillingness to talk was often the result of common issues such as adjusting to the new school setting, difficulties separating from their parents, initial difficulties adjusting to new routines and surroundings, fears about attending school, or anxiety around interacting with new peers (Giddan, Ross, Sechler, & Becker, 1997). The majority of these children speak in the first 8 to 12 weeks of school, after their initial silence. Once speaking in the school setting, they then continue to make positive growth in this area and to increasingly speak with peers and adults.

For a select number of students, however, their selective silence continues for much longer periods and can extend across the entire school year without some form of direct intervention. These children are often diagnosed as having an anxiety-based disorder known as Selective Mutism. According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder (American Psychiatric Association, 2000), **Selective Mutism is a childhood disorder that is characterized by the persistent failure to speak in at least one specific social situation, despite the ability to speak in other situations.** For a diagnosis of Selective Mutism to be made, the pattern of behaviour must interfere with the child's achievement or social communication and functioning for at least one month and not be otherwise accounted for by a Communication Disorder, Pervasive Developmental Disorder, Schizophrenia, or other Psychotic Disorder.

The key feature of Selective Mutism is the failure to speak in certain settings outside of the home. It is important to recognize that this behaviour is not due to a lack of knowledge of, or comfort with the spoken language required in social situations. Children with Selective Mutism are able to speak and engage in conversations at home with family members (Kristensen, 2001). It is in social settings outside of the home that they present as shy and anxious and are unwilling to speak to peers, adults, and often their own family members with whom they will speak with at home. Parents of these children often report for example that they will not speak at large family gatherings in which they are not overly familiar with all of the relatives in attendance.

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In social situations outside of the home, children with Selective Mutism tend to actively avoid social interactions, especially those who have a high expectation or probability that they will be required to speak. Within the primary classroom, these situations may include circle time, show and tell, classroom discussions, as well as activities that involve physical actions and singing. In these situations, children with Selective Mutism often show signs of blushing, avoid eye contact, and are noticeably fidgety or rigid. When others attempt to communicate with them, or they initiate communication with others, it usually takes the form of gestures, nods, and other nonverbal behaviours to make their needs known and allow some level of communications with others (Ford, Sladeczek, Carlson, & Kratochwill, 1998). When possible, children with Selective Mutism typically attempt to avoid any activities where there is the possibility or expectation of speaking in the social setting. Even when they require assistance or need to ask for permission to go to the washroom, they often remain silent. The avoidance of speaking to ask for permission to go to the bathroom can often lead to accidents within the school setting or when the child is outside of the home. As a result of active avoidance of situations in which they are expected to talk, attempts to make or force the child with Selective Mutism to speak may result in tantrums or irritability. These children may also display extreme timidity and withdrawal when moves to approach them or touch them are made by others. Research has also indicated that children with Selective Mutism may present with more internalizing problems such as depressed mood, clinginess, fearfulness, and being overly sensitive, or with more externalizing problems such as stubborn, disobedient, controlling, demanding, negative, oppositional, sulky, and aggressive (Kristensen, 2001).

Prevalence of Selective Mutism

Early research into the prevalence of Selective Mutism suggested that the disorder was rare. Recent studies, however, suggest the prevalence of the disorder, while still rare, is higher than originally believed. Brown and Lloyd (1975), in the United Kingdom, reported a prevalence rate of 0.69 % when they surveyed teachers of 5-year-old children eight weeks into the school year. Upon follow up at 8 months, only 0.08% of the sample remained mute in school. The author suggested a rate of less then 0.10%. In this study, teachers were not required to make a diagnosis but were asked to submit children who met criteria provided to them by the researchers. Based on these submissions, teachers completed a questionnaire that the researchers used to determine which children would appear to meet the criteria for Elective Mutism. Elective Mutism was the term originally used to describe the disorder with a set of criteria very much like that used today for Selective Mutism. The age of the study, along with methodological issues make the prevalence rate reported somewhat suspect.

A recent study by Bergman, Piacentini, and McCracken (2002) examined the rate of Selective Mutism in a school-based sample. Teachers in kindergarten, first, and second grades were asked to complete rating scales on the children in their classroom, as well as to identify pupils they suspected of Selective Mutism. A prevalence figure of 0.71% was reported for Selective Mutism in their sample. According to the authors, the results suggest that Selective Mutism is more common than originally believed and represents a significant form of emotional disorder in children based on the degree to which it impacts on their functioning in the settings in which they are mute. The Selective Mutism Foundation (2005), also indicates,

> *Some published literature suggests that Selective Mutism is rare, and found in less then 1 percent of child guidance, clinical, and school social casework referrals. However, based on the overwhelming response to the Foundation, we suspect that it is far more prevalent than originally assumed. Some publications suggest a slightly higher percentage of females experience Selective Mutism than males. However, due to unreported, undiagnosed and misdiagnosed cases, the ratio is unknown.*

The Bergman, Piacentini, and McCracken (2002) study also indicated that Selective Mutism is persistent over the course of a school year in the majority of children identified with the disorder. As a result, they recommended that efforts to identify and treat Selective Mutism in children should be increased, and that teachers play a key role in this process. Interestingly, it is also one of the few childhood disorders that are more common in girls than in boys (Krysanski, 2003), although research does not indicate why this is the case. While the prevalence rates may be low, it is encountered everyday in ordinary schools and teachers need to be aware of it and be ready to respond appropriately, especially with regard to early referral and intervention (Baldwin & Cline, 1991).

Causes of Selective Mutism

The cause of Selective Mutism has been an area of debate for some time. To date, theories about the cause of Selective Mutism have primarily focused on the environment and behaviour modification, trauma, family dynamics, and anxiety. Other theories have been presented, such as Freudian-based psychodynamic formulations of Selective Mutism; however, these theories have little support in the literature. As a result, the focus in this section will be on the behavioural perspective and the anxiety-based models of Selective Mutism.

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Behavioural Perspective

From a behavioural perspective Selective Mutism is viewed as being a result of the child's interaction with their environment. The selective silence is felt to be a learned behaviour and a way of manipulating or controlling the environment by the child (Porjes, 1992). The child's use of selective speech is controlling and oppositional in nature, and maintains control over their environment. In terms of environmental issues, the etiology of Selective Mutism has also been linked with the experience of stressful or traumatic events prior to the initiation of the behaviour. Steinhausen and Juzi (1996) reported that in a sample of children with Selective Mutism, 31% had experienced some form of stressful life event prior to the onset. Other studies (Cunningham et al., 2004; Dummit et al., 1997) have not reported finding differences in stressful or traumatic events in children with Selective Mutism in comparison to control children.

Regardless of the etiology of Selective Mutism, many researchers suggest that over time, the disorder is difficult to treat as children with Selective Mutism are often negatively reinforced for their behaviour. This negative reinforcement occurs when the child's silence results in the withdrawal of repeated requests for them to speak. For example, when the teacher repeatedly asks the child to speak and the child repeatedly does not respond, the teacher removes the demand for speech and the behaviour is then negatively reinforced. It is important to remember that negative reinforcement results in an increase of the behaviour, which leads to the removal of negative or adverse stimuli (i.e., the request to talk). Further, from a behavioural perspective, over time children with Selective Mutism are often reinforced for their use of nonverbal forms of communication. Hence, the longer the Selective Mutism exists in the child, the more likely it is reinforced and more difficult to extinguish (Krysanski, 2003).

Anxiety Perspective

At the current time, the majority of Selective Mutism research literature has focused on anxiety and Selective Mutism as a variant of an anxiety disorder (Anstendig, 1999; Kristensen & Torgersen, 2001). From this perspective, children with Selective Mutism do not speak in many social situations as they are "frozen" with fear, much as children with social phobia experience fear and are extremely anxious in social situations (Yeganeh et al., 2003). Within the anxiety framework, Selective Mutism is consistent with key factors of temperament and behavioural inhibition, and family characteristics. From the literature on temperament, children with Selective Mutism are reported to display the temperamental predisposition of anxiety-based disorders such as being constitu-

tionally shy, which acts as a contributing symptom of withholding speech (Steinhausen & Juzi, 1996). The behaviours and symptoms of children with Selective Mutism also resemble those of behavioural inhibition, a temperamental style that is characterized by extreme avoidance of novelty and is linked to anxiety disorders (Biederman et al., 1990). This temperamental style is consistent with the child's inactivity and inhibition of speech. Viewed from the temperament perspective, the child's lack of speech represents a response to the feelings of anxiety they experience when they are expected to speak. As the lack of speech is a defense response that decreases the anxiety, it becomes a successful and habitual response from the child. Hence, Selective Mutism can be viewed as a language-based form of behavioural inhibition, that is a result of anxiety and functions as a defensive against feelings of anxiety rather than a conscious attempt to control the environment (Anstendig, 1999). Black and Uhde (1995) further suggest that Selective Mutism represents the most severe end of the spectrum of childhood speech inhibition and social anxiety.

Also, providing support for Selective Mutism falling under the anxiety disorder's umbrella is the response of children with the disorder to psychopharmacological interventions. Most interventions have used drugs that have been effective in treating adult social phobia. These include medications that are of the family of serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRI's), such as fluvoxamine and fluoxetine. For example, Dummit et al. (1996) treated 21 children with Selective Mutism with fluoxetine (Prozac) and reported that 76% showed diminished signs of anxiety and increased their speech in public settings, including the school. In a similar study, Black and Uhde (1994) in a 12-week trial of medication reported that those taking the medication in comparison to a control group who were not, showed significant improvement on ratings of mustism and anxiety, but were still judged to be symptomatic at the end of the study.

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Family patterns of anxiety are also consistent with Selective Mutism in children. Research has indicated that anxiety disorders are more prevalent in families of children with Selective Mutism, indicating a possible genetic link (Kristensen & Torgerson, 2001). The parents of children with Selective Mutism have also been reported to have personality traits reflecting social anxiety. This anxiety may represent a family phenomenon that may be transferred by either genetic or environmental factors, or both. Further, there are indications that children with Selective Mutism are more likely to come from families who are not well connected with the school community (McHolm & Vanier, 2004). This include situations in which these children and their families live in a different neighborhood than their classmates.

There are also some indications that cultural issues may also play a role in Selective Mutism, although this area remains controversial. Research has indicated that there is a higher than expected prevalence of his disorger among immigrant children (McHolm & Vanier, 2004). In this regard, it is felt that children who are adjusting to a new culture or a different language are reluctant to speak in social situations in which they are not comfortable. In contrast, others suggest that cultural issues such as recent immigration and bilingualism should be noted, as children who are uncomfortable with a new language may be reluctant to use it outside of familiar settings. In their view, however, cultural issues may impact on speech, but that this is not necessarily Selective Mutism, especially if the disorder is viewed from an anxiety-based perspective (A.D.A.M., 2004).

Overall, there continues to be debate as to the etiology of this disorder in children. The most current literature and theorizing has focused on the role of anxiety in Selective Mutism and has placed the disorder within the anxiety disorders spectrum. Research has indicated that biological factors, such as the child's temperament and familial patterns of anxiety-based personality characteristics, may be genetic in nature or a combination of genetics and environment, and are likely involved in increased vulnerability to the disorder, as well as its development in children. Current research does not support that that Selective Mutism is the result of the use of coercive or permissive parenting styles or poor parental management strategies and skills. Further, there is a lack of support for the notion that it is the result of family dysfunction. School professionals working with the families of these children should be extremely careful to avoid placing blame on parents, as current research clearly indicates that parents do not cause the disorder through their actions or family environment.

Current Information for Teachers and Parents

Having current and up-to-date information is important for teachers and parents so that they are able to understand Selective Mutism and reduce misconceptions regarding this childhood disorder. The following section will provide current information about the disorder and address the most common misconceptions that educators and parents may have regarding the disorder.

Early Identification, Referral and Assessment are Very Important:

Childhood Selective Mutism is a serious condition that is often first noticed within the school setting by educators within the primary grades. It typically emerges in the preschool years (Steinhausen & Juzi, 1996), and often is first noticed in children at the Junior or Senior Kindergarten level (Giddan, Ross, Sechler, & Becker, 1997). As many children with this disorder do speak at home, classroom teachers play an important role in its identification, because the parents may not be the first to recognize the problem. Interestingly, many parents report that they are told by both educators and physicians not to worry about their lack of speech and anxiety as "*they will outgrow it*" (Dummit, n.d.). (see Sarah's Case Study) While many shy children will undoubtedly outgrow this initial silence, it is not normal for a child to remain silent in the classroom indefinitely. The consensus among many professionals is that if the silence lasts beyond the first few weeks of entering school, that it tends to persist and will require attention. In this regard, classroom teachers are extremely important in making the appropriate referral for assessment, participating in the assessment procedures, and participating in interventions designed to assist the child within the classroom.

Children with Selective Mutism are most often referred for treatment between the ages of 6 to 11, with a mean age of 9 years (Krohn, Weckstein, & Wright, 1992). The referral and diagnosis of Selective Mutism during this time span often represents a significant delay in referral. This delay is often the result of educators and parents feeling that the child is shy and will grow out of their selective silence as they adjust to the school. As the disorder tends to persist over time and be more resistant to treatment as time progresses (Labbe & Williamson, 1984), early identification, referral, and intervention are extremely important to prevent the development of secondary problems with socialization and learning (Wright, Miller, Cook, & Littmann, 1985). Teachers educated on the subject play a vital role in both early identification and intervention. The importance of early recognition is vital and cannot be understated. Teachers who are knowledgeable are able to intervene earlier and are key in reversing the current practice in many school settings of watching, waiting, and hoping that these children will grow out of their shyness and selective silence (Bergman, Piacentini, & McCraken, 2002).

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It is important for the educators to speak to parents about their concerns regarding a child's selective silence in the school:

When a classroom teacher has a child who has not spoken in the classroom for many weeks, the teachers should discuss with parents these observable behaviours and relate how these behaviours impact the child's functioning in the school setting. They may also recommend the initiation of a referral to professionals within the school, or to outside individuals or agencies. While classroom teachers do not make formal diagnoses of Selective Mutism, they are an important source of information regarding the children's behaviour during the school day. In the process of diagnosis, the classroom teacher often plays an important role in the gathering of information regarding the child's functioning. As noted, appropriate referral to other school personnel or professionals outside of the school setting is of great importance. Once a referral has been activated, the classroom teacher will be a key source of information about the child's social functioning and behaviour, academic development and skills, as well as their overall strengths and weaknesses within the school setting. In this regard, teachers are key in providing information regarding the pattern of symptoms, and especially the situations and contexts in which the child is selectively silent. The classroom teacher is also likely to provide information regarding associated behaviours or problems that may contribute or interact with the child's failure to speak. Information about the child's speech and language skills and comprehension of language are important pieces of information that the teacher can provide. Finally, the teacher can provide information on environmental influences within the classroom that may hold relevance for assessment and intervention.

The selective silence is the result of anxiety, and not the result of defiance and control on the part of the child with Selective Mutism:

For many teachers or adults, the refusal of these children to speak results in a significant and intense anger with the child (Baldwin & Cline, 1991). The refusal to speak to teachers, peers, or other individuals, is often interpreted by teachers and other adults as the child being outright defiant, controlling, or manipulative. In those teaching or working with these children, these feelings often stem from the knowledge that the child does speak in other environments or situations. With this knowledge, the unwillingness of these children to respond to requests for speech is interpreted, in general, as a form of oppositional behaviour. This is a common misconception regarding Selective Mutism. In fact, in previous editions of the Diagnostic and Statisical Manual of

Mental Disorders (DSM), it was originally referred to as Elective Mutism (Dummit,n.d.). The use of the term Elective Mutism reflected the idea that these children made conscious decisions to not talk, and the decision not to speak was about control over others and their environment.

While this interpretation is common, it is important that teachers who work with these children know that their selective silence does not represent oppositional defiance or manipulative behaviour. Currently, Selective Mutism is conceptualized as a disorder of anxiety. It is the child's significant level of anxiety that is believed to inhibit their speech, not oppositional behaviour or manipulation as we commonly consider these concepts. The selective silence that was previously considered to be controlling, is now viewed as the avoidance of anxiety-provoking and distressing situations that is the result of social fear and anxiety (Dummit,n.d.). These children do display difficulties with social cooperation, responsibility, and control when rated by parents and teachers, these behaviours are less severe than those found in Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, or Conduct Disorder. Further, this research indicates that children with Selective Mutism display oppositional behaviours more at home, while they present as more inhibited at school (Cunningham et al., 2004). It is key for teachers to recognize that the child's selective silence or avoidance is not typically control or manipulative based, rather it is symptomatic of shyness or anxiety and of their wish to avoid social situations which are fearful to them (Kristensen, 2000).

How Does Selective Mutism impact academic and social functioning?

A growing body of research indicates that this disorder can negatively impact on the development of academic and social skills. These children are often shy and inhibited and the Selective Mutism reduces opportunities for social interactions for these children, thus reducing the growth and development of their social skills (Giddan, Ross, Sechler, & Becker, 1997). Children with Selective Mutism, have been reported to be rejected by peers, as well as to be the victim of bullies more often than other children (Kumpulainen, Rasanen, Raaska, & Somppi, 1998). In a recent study using a Canadian sample of children, both parents and teachers reported that these children have deficits in verbally mediated social behaviours (Cunningham, McHolm, Boyle, & Patel, 2004). The results indicated that children with Selective Mutism were less likely to join groups, introduce themselves, start conversation, or invite friends to their homes. These deficits increase the likelihood that children with Selective Mutism will have further problems with peer social interactions because they lack the necessary practice and refinement of these skills. In contrast to previous research, Cunningham et al. (2004), found that the children were not victimized or bullied more by peers. They suggest that a combination of child characteristics and social mechanisms may protect children with Selective Mutism from victimization by peers. These include children presenting as more assertive then submissive, less disruptive, and as likely to be enrolled in sports, recreational activities, and after school playtimes with peers, which build friendship. Overall, however, research indicates that there are social deficits in children with Selective Mutism that may increase the risk of future social-based problems. It is very important, however, for teachers to be aware that children with Selective Mutism are not unsociable. In fact, research suggests that children with selective mutism very much wish to engage in interactions with others, but are resistant to do so due to issues of anxiety (Anstendig, 1999).

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Research to date on the impact of the disorder, on academic skill development has yielded more conflicting results. In a study of grade two children identified as selectively mute, Kumpulainen et al. (1998), reported that approximately 1/3 of these children were performing below grade level. This study, however, lacked both a control group and objective academic measures, making interpretation of the data difficult (Cunningham et al., 2004). Bergman et al. (2002) also reported that in comparison to control children, teachers rated children with Selective Mutism as deficient in academic and overall functioning. They suggest that the presence of academic impairment is secondary to the lack of verbal interactions in group settings. As verbal skills are one of the primary strategies used in elementary settings to assess children's knowledge and understanding of basic concepts, their silence reduces both the ability to assess them, as well as the ability to provide them with fundamental corrective feedback which could improve their academic functioning. Dummit et al. (1997) reported that 11% of children with Selective Mutism had speech, language, or learning disabilities in their sample of 50 children. In contrast to these findings, Cunningham et al. (2004) report that the math and reading scores of children with Selective Mutism did not differ from controls. Teachers in their study did tend to rate reading skills lower in children with Selective Mutism,

however, more objective academic measures did not find a difference between the Selective Mutism and control groups. No group differences were reported for mathematics and general classroom performance. Cunningham et al. (2004) suggest that children with Selective Mutism may be protected from academic difficulties and failures for a number of reasons. These reasons include appropriate attention to instructions, following directions, managing transitions, finishing assignments on time, producing correct work, and waiting for help. Such abilities allow the child to succeed within the classroom without speaking.

Children with Selective Mutism do not come from dysfunctional homes or have parents with poor parenting skills:

As a result of the influence of Freudian-based psychodynamic and family systems theories, many individuals believe that Selective Mutism is linked to parenting style and family dysfunction. The selective silence of the child is often thought to be formed, modified, and maintained through unhealthy parenting and family dynamics and structures (Anstendig, 1999). From this perspective, the selective silence is often felt to be a learned behaviour that has been reinforced by the parents and the current environment (Porjes, 1992). Selective Mutism has also been linked to stressful life events, and studies have reported these children often experience a stressful event prior to onset (Steinhausen & Juzi, 1996). Finally, family studies of children with Selective Mutism suggest that parental internalizing disorders often correlate with the disorder and act as a predictor of the outcome for these children (Kristensen & Torgerson, 2001; Kolvin & Fundudis, 1981). In exploring family issues, Cunningham et al. (2004) reported finding no differences in the marital status, economic resources, or support networks of families of children with Selective Mutism versus a control group. The study also reported that while parents reported some disciplinary difficulties with their child, they did not report differences in the use of coercive or permissive parenting strategies in comparison to control parents. No differences in family dysfunction or parental depression were reported.

Early Interventions are key, and parents and educators, together play very key roles in interventions for children with Selective Mutism.

Since the child spends a portion of each day in the classroom and is most likely to be silent in this setting, in-class management programs are an extremely important part of a comprehensive intervention. To date, behavioural interventions have received the most attention in the treatment of Selective Mutism and have been reported to be the most successful within school settings. The behavioural approach includes many different behaviour-based strategies such as the use of:

- Reinforcement
- stimulus fading
- token procedures
- shaping and prompting
- contingency management
- self-modeling
- escape-avoidance techniques and response initiation procedures (Anstendig, 1998).

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The focus of behaviour interventions is on the symptoms and how they are maintained by the child's environment.

School-based classroom interventions require cooperation from parents, teachers, school administrators, and often school support staff, such as school psychologists and social workers, in order to develop and implement an effective treatment program (Krysanski, 2003). To this end, one important element of working with the children within the school setting is the development of a "Management Team". This team must be able to work together to both develop and implement an intervention designed to increase the child's speech within the school. Such a team is important to design, implement, and review progress of the child, resolving problems and planning future steps of the intervention.

The role of parents is of great importance on the management team noted above, as well as in any direct intervention within the school. As most students with Selective Mutism do not speak to peers and teachers within the school, we must turn to and involve individuals with whom these children speak to outside of school. In determining these individuals, often the parents, we need to consider the development of "Conversational Visits", in which these individuals speak with the children within the school, typically starting in a quiet peer and teacher free area. This step is often important as it initiates speech by the child within the school setting. It is important that the procedure is explained to children with Selective Mutism in a rational way so that they do not view it as a way to force speech. Explanations that emphasize educational goals are often best (e.g., at school to practice reading, build math skills).

Over time the goal of "Conversational Visits" is to move the conversation closer to the classroom, to peers, and to classroom activities with hopes children with Selective Mutism will continue to speak. This step is often referred to as fading, and is viewed as a process through which the speaking behaviour in one location (e.g., speaking to a parent in the library) is gradually transferred to a location in which it did not previously occur (e.g., speaking to parents in the classroom where peers may hear them). The hope is that the comfortable feelings of speaking with a parent for example are gradually transferred to school-based situations that previously elicited anxiety. The transfer or fading must be completed in very gradual steps. Over time, the goal is to transfer speech from different activities, to different locations, as well as to different people.

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Interventions for children also require an appropriate reward system to assist in motivating children to speak and overcome their fears. Reward systems must be well planned so that they encourage these children to move to the next step on the hierarchy of anxiety. They may include a formal token program, negotiable reward contracts, and naturally occurring reinforces such as activities or materials based on an if-then statement regarding speech.

It is also important to focus on increasing the in-school conversational opportunities with peers for children with Selective Mutism. Increased conversations are more likely when seating arrangements, group activities, and other strategies to increase interactions with others are explored. Focusing on these can increase the speed at which children speak with others in the classroom. Many opportunities exist such as seating these children next to a peer they speak with at their home or with children they are more comfortable with. Interestingly seating these children away from the teacher also increase conversations with peers. In-group activities, pairing the student with children they are comfortable with, interact nonverbally, or speak with, can increase speech.

Finally, when working with these children, it is very important that educators and parents be cognizant of one very important general point. **When working with and designing an intervention for these children, it is extremely important to avoid responses or interventions that increase the child's anxiety and pressure them to speak**. Any attempts to pressure the child to speak, only increase anxiety in the child and serve to increase the child's anxiety within the classroom. Further, when the pressure used to make the child speak fails, the adult's removal of the demand further reinforces the avoidant behaviour. Teachers and parents must ensure that they do not attempt to force the child to speak or threaten the student with punitive consequences as such actions will also increase the child's anxiety within the school setting. For more general guidelines and intervention strategies for both educators and parents, see tables 1 and 2, at the end of this article, adapted from the Sandra Coiffman-Yohros (2004).

Final Thoughts

Many teachers will experience teaching a child with Selective Mutism at some point during their career, especially if they teach in a primary setting. The parents of these children are also required to deal with their child's lack of speech within the school setting, as well as in other settings besides the school. Currently, there are many misunderstandings about this disorder. These include misunderstandings about the behaviour symptoms and profile, the underlying causes, beliefs that the disorder is one of control or manipulation on the part of the child, as well as the length of time that should be given to allow the child to "grow out" of the behaviours. It is extremely important that both teachers and parents have accurate and correct knowledge on the subject, so that they are able to recognize the signs and make a quick referral for assessment and intervention. The need for timely identification and referral is extremely important as the disorder is more difficult and resistant to treatment the later it is identified. Importantly, teachers and parents with knowledge are less likely to wait an extended period of time before voicing their concern about a child's lack of speech within the classroom, or in other environments. They are more likely to consult with other school professionals or child-based services and initiate a referral for assessment. It is very important that both teachers and parents are knowledgeable that a child presenting with this pattern of behaviour is not oppositional or manipulative, but is extremely anxious about speaking with others in public settings. Both teachers and parents have important roles in the assessment and the development and initiation of interventions plans developed for the child. The children truly need the cooperation of parents, teachers, school administrators, and other school professionals who have the accurate and appropriate knowledge regarding the disorder to identify the pattern of behaviour, initiate appropriate referrals, and implement suitable interventions.

Table 1. School Interventions for Educators

In working with children with Selective Mutism, all members of the school must work in a coordinated manner and provide a comprehensive intervention. General considerations for educators include:

- Ensure that all staff members involved with the child or could be involved with the child within the school are aware that the child has Selective Mutism.
- Provide all staff with information so that they have an understanding of the disorder and some ideas on how to interact with the child.
- Observe the child in the school setting closely; identify the situations that cause the most anxiety in the child. Think of ways to reduce anxiety in these situations
- Provide opportunities in the classroom and school for the child to engage in activities that do not require spoken language (e.g., silent reading, board games, crafts or art activities, etc)
- Set up a buddy system for the child and use the buddy system to assist the child to participate in small group activities or to act as a source of communication regarding the need to use the washroom or to convey medical needs. The best person is often a peer that the child will talk to in or out of school
- Find other ways that the child can communicate with others and with teachers. These may include symbols, gestures, cards, email, writing, taping themselves at home giving an oral presentation and then playing it at school.
- Include the child in teams and group activities
- Keep the classroom schedule as consistent as possible and alert the child in advance of upcoming changes in routine or classroom activities.
- Keep the child in the same small group with the peers that they appear most comfortable with.
- Provide plenty of reinforcement and praise for any attempt to use verbal communication.
- Develop a reinforcement system that rewards use of verbal communication.

Adapted from: Sandra Coiffman-Yohros (2004). Helping a Child with Selective Mutism, Selective Mutism Foundation.

Table 2. Home Interventions for Parents

Parents are a key component of interventions with children with Selective Mutism. General considerations for parents include:

- Accept your child for who they are and accept their Selective Mutism.
- Do not use threats of punishment to get the child to speak at school, it only makes them more anxious about school.
- Discuss with the child that you believe there is help and they will be able to overcome their difficulties speaking at school.
- Engage in activities with your children that build self-esteem and empowerment.
- Provide lots of opportunities for extra-curricular activities.
- Organize and provide opportunities for after-school play-dates with peers in your home. Invite one or two peers to your house for the child to play with in free play situations. You need to take the time to import peers to provide ongoing social play experiences
- As the child starts to speak with these peers, take them to a park or other social setting to assist in generalizing their communication to places outside of the home.
- When taking the child to social settings outside of the home (i.e., birthday parties, school plays) arrive early and give the child time to explore and get comfortable with the setting. Do not push them to speak or to interact with others.
- Teach the child relaxation techniques, positive imagery, and other coping techniques. Set aside a period to practice these every evening.
- Get them involved in physical activities around the home and build these activities into the routine to reduce stress.
- Role-play situations that are anxiety provoking at home where they are comfortable. Discuss and role play possible solutions to concerns they have that result in their feelings of anxiety.
- Provide plenty of praise and social rewards for communication.
- Provide plenty of praise and social rewards for engaging in activities with others and try to reduce rewards for isolation and withdrawal from others (do remember that each of us do need some "self" time away from others).
- Take the time to observe your child and get to know what makes them most anxious and what situations they tend to cope better with. The more that you know your child, the better you will be able to judge when to push them, and when to let it go. This is the hardest thing to learn as a parent.

Adapted from: Sandra Coiffman-Yohros (2004). Helping a Child with Selective Mutism, Selective Mutism Foundation.

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Keeping Up With Boy-Friendly Reading Practices In Canada

Laura Sokal

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Abstract

Boys' reading performance is in need of attention. Although some boys begin school well prepared, others start school with the attitude that reading - a foundational skill for school success - is a feminine activity. Research suggests that early reading experiences are important in the formation of children's attitudes toward reading. Practical suggestions for fostering positive reading attitudes are offered in this article, based on the research funded by *the University of Winnipeg, the Winnipeg Inner-city Research Alliance, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.*

Introduction

A few years ago, I wrote articles (Sokal 2000, 2001) for the *Canadian Association for Young Children* and the *Canadian Child Care Federation* asking early childhood educators to consider whether their practices, particularly their literacy practices with young children, were sexist. Since that time, several well-publicized books have been published about the "boy problem" in schools (see Hoff Sommers and Pollack for examples). The basic argument within these books is that we, as a society, teach boys that "being a boy" means restricting oneself to a very narrow gender role. The stereotypic male gender role - being active, brave, independent, risk-taking, and above all not feminine - is initiated and maintained within the culture in which we raise our children: after all, *boys will be boys.* Ironically, when children begin school they soon realize that this stereotype is not the makings of a successful student. Our current schools - some say they are feminized - value teamwork, communication, inter-dependence, and in some cases quiet compliance. What's a boy to do?

The important issue here is that children must be allowed a choice in their reading materials.

One of the main concerns that I have expressed in my writing and explored within my research program is the idea that boys view reading as feminine. Citing the prevalence of female reading models (moms, early childhood educators, elementary teachers, librarians), I have wondered whether some boys avoid reading because they are worried they will be viewed as a "sissy". Coupled with the fact that the types of books often chosen by females do not cater to some boys' interests, it is easy to see why our current national and international studies are providing evidence that boys' reading performance is in crisis.

So, just how bad is it? Well, every few years an international study is conducted that compares the science, math and reading performance of children in 32 different countries including Canada (Statistics Canada, 2002). The latest results illustrate that there were small, if any, gender differences in math and science performance within the participating countries. However, in every single participating county, boys scored significantly lower than girls in reading. Other studies have shown that boys not only lag in their reading performance but they also demonstrate more negative attitudes toward reading, and that negative attitudes to reading are correlated with negative attitudes toward school (Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Eccles, Wigfield, Harold, & Blumenfeld, 1993; Labercane, & Shapiro, 1986; McKenna, Ellsworth, & Kear 1995; Solsken, 1993). These negative attitudes toward school translate into a 40% higher dropout rate for Canadian boys than for Canadian girls (Bowlby & McMullen, 2000) – see: http://www.statcan.ca/english/IPS/Data/81-591-XIE.htm

At the university where I teach as well as at most universities throughout Canada, approximately 60% of our current students are female. Taken together, these studies point to the importance of helping boys to understand that reading is an essential skill not only for succeeding in school, but also for future education and employment.

Further Research Tells Us ...

My earlier articles described several suggestions for helping boys gain the full benefits of early childhood experiences, particularly in the area of literacy. Based on my recent findings with Herb Katz, as well as others, this article will add to these earlier recommendations. In a recent study of grade two Canadian boys, we (Katz & Sokal, 2003) found that 24% of the boys thought of reading as a "girls' activity". We tried to change these attitudes by having both male and female research assistants read a variety of genres of texts to the children. We found that boys who experienced high interest texts read by a male model actually changed their views and no longer viewed reading as feminine. Interestingly, no such change took place when a male model read the typical schoolbooks usually found in classrooms to the children. A different positive effect occurred when a female model read high interest texts: the boys demonstrated more positive attitudes toward school in general. There was no such effect when a female model read typical texts to the boys. These findings substantiate the need for male reading models and, more importantly, high interest texts. Research (Worthy, Moorman & Turner,1999) shows that many boys find scary stories, magazines, comic books, informational texts and manuals, and science books about natural phenomena such as earthquakes and insects most interesting. Our research supports these preferences but also showed that some boys preferred other types of texts.

The important issue here is that children must be allowed a choice in their reading materials. Not all children choose along gender-stereotyped lines, and a variety of texts need to be provided in order for children to choose based on their own preferences. Choice is an important factor in school motivation, particularly for at-risk children (Au, 1997; Au, Scheu, Kawakami, & Herman, 1990), and providing a variety of genres will ensure that all boys and girls have the opportunity to read books that they find interesting.

Teaching Children to Read

Although the sex of the reading model was an important factor in changing children's feminized views of reading when children listened to books read by male and female reading models, this factor was not important when children were actually taught to read. In another project

By reading stories that elicit laughter and silliness, we encourage children to be more engaged with the text and to take more active roles. Given that some boys enjoy higher activity, reading Captain Underpants, for example, before scheduled drama, outdoor or free play times would make the active, boisterous portrayal of the story much more welcome.

(Sokal, Katz, Sych-Yereniuk, Chochinov-Harder, Adkins, Grills, Stewart, Priddle, 2004), we used high interest texts to teach second grade boys to read. In this study, we were interested in whether the sex of the reading teacher made a difference to children's attitudes toward reading or their reading achievement gains. Each child worked individually with either male or female research assistants for one hour per week over a 22-week period. At the end of the project, the average gain in reading performance was 1.2 grades. Interestingly, there were no differences in the attitudes toward reading or the reading achievement gains between those children taught by a male and those taught by a female. This is very encouraging news, since most children are taught to read by a female (Basow, 1992; Delamont, 1990). It is also important to note that all children in this project were given choices in the reading materials used in the reading sessions.

Timing and Activity Level

Another issue affecting children's reading attitudes is activity level. Particularly in child care settings, reading is often a sedentary activity that takes place during 'down times' when we are trying to calm the children: typically, story time often occurs before nap in child care centers. Having tried to settle groups of boisterous children, the last thing I would want to introduce at that time would be the reading of *Captain Underpants*! Perhaps reading need not be restricted to such times. By reading stories that elicit laughter and silliness, we encourage children to be more engaged with the text and to take more active roles. Given that some boys enjoy higher activity, reading *Captain Underpants,* for example, before scheduled drama, outdoor or free play times would make the active, boisterous portrayal of the story much more welcome.

Strategic Placement of Books

Another way to incorporate text in your centre is to place non-narrative books in your science or computer centres. Some research (Gamble & Hunter, 2000) shows that boys like to read so that they can do things - they gather the information through print only to support their activity. Having reference books and manuals near these centres would allow boys to quickly access the information they need to complete a task, while at the same time fostering their value of print. Some carefully chosen questions from early childhood educators would go a long way in helping the children to recognize that the information they need can be found within the covers of a nearby book or on a website.

Computers-Based Texts?

A final issue is currently being investigated. My earlier research indicated that many young Canadian children view

computers as masculine (Sokal, 2002). Our current project will explore whether using computer-based texts affects boys' reading performance or attitudes toward reading. Perhaps we can change some boys' view of reading as a feminine activity, if we can link it to a high interest activity that they view as masculine.

Conclusion

The suggestions offered here are supported in the research literature. I offer them with one caution, however. While many would agree that the male gender role is much more narrowly defined than the female gender role, I do not mean to suggest that all of our efforts should be aimed at catering to this narrow definition. Rather, these ideas are offered as supplements to anti-bias curricula that may already exist in many early childhood education settings. Furthermore, I offer them with sound evidence that, when boys participate in activities viewed as feminine they are being punished by their peer group, (Millard, 1997; Sandnabba & Ahlberg, 1999; Zucker, Wilson-Smith, Kurita, & Stern, 1995) ... and with the conviction that reading is an essential skill for success (Hoffert & Sandberg, 2001). If some boys are resistant to participate in reading because they view it as feminine, we need to find ways to alter that view. *If the mountain won't come to Mohammed, let's bring Mohammed to the mountain.*

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The Waldorf Experience: A Parents' Perspective

Deirdre Leighton

Deirdre Leighton has her Certificate in 'Early Childhood Care and Education' from Mount Royal College, Calgary; planning to graduate with a Diploma and Alberta Government Level 3 Certification in 2006. She has operated the Walsh Family Day-Home in Calgary for the past 18 years after moving from the City of Nanaimo, B.C., where she was a Children's Program Co-ordinator. Deirdre enjoys spending time with her husband and children while being an active volunteer in her community. She is a member of CAYC Alberta and their newly appointed provincial director.

Introduction

As early as Grade 1, I knew my eldest daughter Kailagh was having difficulties in the public school system. Concerned, I spoke with her teacher wondering what could be done. She assured me that Grade 1 was a difficult year of transition and that Kailagh would catch on, she just needed time. By Grade 3 the problems had escalated so that she was falling behind and subsequently loosing her self-esteem. I fought with the school to have her held back, they insisted she would soon catch on, and suggested that I find a tutor. Along came Grade 7 and we needed desperately to do something different. I arranged for a school psychological assessment. Surprisingly this informed me that my daughter had a slight learning disability; she found it extremely difficult to transfer her ideas and thoughts from her short-term memory into her long-term memory. I was directed to try 'Ritalin' to help her stay focused. Because I was not about to place a child on a drug I knew little about; I once again hired tutors while looking for alternative learning methods.

It was during my personal search for alternative educational styles that I realized I had lost sight of my daughter's skills in areas other than that of her education. And these skills were dazzling; she could play the piano, the cello, upright base, and recorder in addition to having astonishing artistic talents for art and design. She saw things for the beauty they held and was a gentle and non-judgemental soul. I had been so focused on the failures during this time, I forgot to recognize her talents. A light bulb came on; she was not thriving in the public system because it was not meeting her educational needs! I began to investigate the teachings of Rudolf Steiner and immediately realized these teachings were for her. I withdrew her from the public system and registered her into the privately based Calgary Waldorf School. And our journey of alternative learning began…

"When children relate what they learn to their own experience, they are interested and fully engaged, and what they learn becomes their own. Waldorf Schools are designed to foster this kind of learning"
Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA).

Waldorf : The Philosophy

First developed by Rudolf Steiner in 1919, the Waldorf Philosophy emerged with an emphasis on a focus of learning, through a child's 'learning experiences', and the development of the 'whole child[1]'. Steiner believed as each child grows and develops they move through many stages of life, learning by building each experience onto and into the next to develop self-awareness, self-recognition, self-definition and self-esteem.

"Steiner was convinced the human soul developed by unfolding in three stages: The first (through about age 6) is identified with the *will*; [Steiner believed during this stage, that children learn best through physical activity and play] the second (from approximately ages 7 through 14) with the *feelings;* [when children learn through feeling and imagination and the arts speak deeply to them], and the third (ages 15 and up) with *thinking* ; [when students are expected to begin developing their intellectual abilities]" (Ruenzel, 1995).

Thus the philosophy of *Hands; willing or doing, the Heart; feeling, and the Head; thinking* - became the value and beliefs to the Waldorfian movement.

The Child's Experiences in Learning

Waldorf Preschool and Kinderhaus rooms are similarly arranged with beautiful hand-crafted toys and a display of art works which would astound any individual. Natural fabrics and natural lighting put forward tranquillity, peace, and serenity, just a few of the emotions one feels upon entering the room. There is no hustle, bustle or rushing. You are greeted

[1] Whole Child: Theory that supports recognizing the separate and interrelated aspects of the individual, including the domains of the physical, cognitive, language, emotional, and social development. Gestwicki, Bertrand, 1999.

by the mentors (Waldorf teachers) and welcomed into a world of fantasy, make believe, and story telling. A tree house and loft in the corner offer quiet thought spaces, private reading area, and quiet play space. The communal area beneath with a table and chairs and a child size kitchen is designed for the social interactions. Children are equipped with materials allowing them to participate in the practical tasks of bread making, table setting, dish-washing and cleaning up at the end of each day. Every child is fully involved in the planning and organization of their play environment – while the mentors are observing and guiding behaviour only when necessary. Human relationships are enriched and important attachments are formed as the mentors (Waldorf teachers) and children engage in these simple activities with great joy and enthusiasm.

To the Waldorf child, learning is brought about through the use of their experiences in the arts, storytelling, rhythmic work, and music; all important aspects of their daily routines. The elementary and junior-high classrooms are colourful and decorated with the works of the children. Mentors look for ways to help encourage and engage each child to better understand how to learn through the use of all their senses; thus believed to achieve a deeper and more meaningful personal learning experience. The children are coached rather than instructed, on how to understand the *how and why* of learning (inquiry and emergent learning) through experimentation and action; with a final outcome of children becoming inspired through recognition of how to utilize their full range of abilities on a developmentally appropriate stage (similar to Howard Gardner's – Multiple Intelligence Theory).

Celebrations are a large component of the Waldorf School tradition as they play an important role in developing a *family dedicated community* as the schools' families are brought together. It is through the celebrations of - seasons, Spring with Mayday and Maypole Dances, Summer Solstice, Fall Harvest, the coming of Winter (Saint Nicolas), that rhythm is taught and encouraged.

"*Rhythm and human life cannot be separated. Plants, animals and human beings all reveal rhythmical qualities in form, movement and growth patterns. Humankind moves through life embraced by great, rhythmical "tides" - the cosmic pulling of the planets, nature's rhythms of day, night and seasons and the biological rhythm of heart and lungs.*"
(Thompson, 1995)

And so through the rhythms of life, the child learns of concepts of cognitive development while at the same time learning to celebrate the diversity each child's sense of individuality and uniqueness. These gifts, each and every child brings with them enriching their Waldorf experience. The children in turn are bestowed with a sense of respect and well-being not only for all individuals but also for the environment around them.

How Waldorf Works

Children in Waldorf schools gain knowledge through their daily experiences of *life*. Rudolf Steiner states "*teaching could never be boring if it was related directly to life*". Thus students in the first and second grade learn 'handy-work' such as how to knit and sew; a practice believed to later enhance their reading skills through hand-eye coordination and strengthening the eyes muscles all required for literacy development through learning to read. The children are also using this practical experience to develop their fine motor skills. In the later grades children are clapping hands and stamping feet in synergetic rhythm; as they memorize their multiplication tables. Other classes you will find often out of doors – tossing a ball back and forth reciting poetry connecting nature to learning and the child to the environment.

"*Waldorf pedagogy education cater(s) to and nurture(s) a child physically, emotionally and mentally*"
(Boston, 2003).

Children start their early school years developing a trust and attachment to their first year mentor. Over the next seven years, they build a bond that is unattainable in any other school system. The mentors are trained and responsible for presenting all subject matter creatively, in order to stir the feelings and imagination of the children in order for the experience to become part of them (the whole child). Thus each year as the Waldorf child graduates from one class to the next so does the mentor hence the Waldorf child will keep the same mentor throughout the primary years; a process referred to by the Waldorf Community as "looping[2]".

Looping is valued as a positive mentor-child learning outcome. Each mentor becomes deeply involved with each child's individual learning process, understanding his/her weaknesses and achievements - ultimately enriching their path of cognitive development. Yet looping does not come without challenges for Waldorf mentors. Within the "looping" each mentor must, in addition to understanding the child, learn to relate to them at different ages and stages of development; whilst at the same time being able to recognize that their personalities and characteristics can change dramatically over the course of a single summer. Ultimately the benefits out weigh the challenges as both the student and the mentor are "*provided with a sense of continuity and of community which is often missing in the general public (society) today*" (Boston, 2003).

[2] Looping: where the instructor graduates with the students and returns back to the beginning to nurture a new set of students (AWSNA).

A Typical Preschool/ Kinderhaus Day
Below are examples of a typical day at each of the class levels. Activities are taught through repetition with a focus on the different rhythms (seasons) of the year.

Arrival and greeting with morning song.
Circle time, lighting of candle and verse.
Music, poetry, story telling, conversation and 'show and tell' (natural and hand-made items only).
Discuss daily activities: Project time
Monday - colouring
Tuesday - beeswax
Wednesday - painting
Thursday - eurythmy[3]
Friday - clay or baking
Outside Play
Snack
Creative play, drama, free play
Clean up
Story time or
Puppet theatre
Rest
Good-bye Circle: "Guardian Angel that I love, look at me from above."
Patsy McCloskey: Carmen Givens, Waldorf School

A Typical Lower School Year
Primary Grades 1-3
Pictorial introduction to the alphabet, writing, reading, spelling, poetry and drama.
Numeration and mathematical process.
Folk and fairy tales, fables, legends, Old Testament stories.
Nature stories, house building and gardening.

Middle Grades 4-6
Writing, reading, spelling, grammar, poetry and drama.
Norse myths, history and stories of ancient civilizations.
Review of the four mathematical processes, fractions, percentages and geometry.
Local and world geography, comparative zoology, botany and elementary physics.

Upper Grade 7
Creative writing, reading, spelling, grammar, poetry and drama.
Medieval history, Renaissance, world exploration, Australian history and biography.
Geography, physics, basic chemistry, astronomy, geology and physiology.
Special subjects
Music: singing, recorder, string instruments, wind, brass and percussion instruments
Handwork: knitting, crochet, and sewing, cross-stitch, basic weaving, toy making and woodworking.
Art: wet-on-wet water colour painting, form drawing, beeswax, clay modelling and perspective drawing.
Movement: eurythmy, group games.

Why It Worked for Us
The following quotation exemplified to me the importance of meeting a child's educational needs, thus changing my perspective of alternative education; an education style not offered in the public or Catholic education systems here in Calgary.

"If Mothers could replace fear for certainty, children would have a much easier path before them!"
Ghamin (AWSNA)

Waldorf Schools work hard at creating a community in all levels of their education. They firmly understand the importance of interacting with children to provide learning opportunities. They allow the child to take the lead using life and its' experiences to guide instruction and model behaviours - thus giving the children a vast knowledge base about places, things, and people in addition to constructing life long relationships and positive behaviour outcomes. The children are encouraged to find their own path of learning and to develop styles that work for them - gently being guided by those who are learning and growing along with them. It is through the dedication of each member of the Waldorf Community that they strive to understand each child on an individual basis encouraging their (the child's) growth on a very personal level.

Kailagh was able to overcome her learning disability because of the small class size, the one on one mentor support; along with the Waldorf understanding that: *if one child does not understand the concepts being taught, others may not as well.* Thus, no class moved on to new materials being taught until everyone was clear on the current materials. In addition Kailagh was able to use her earlier musical experiences to build self-confidence in the school's music program. With guidance from that mentor she learned to play the drums and rhythm instruments as well.

We, my daughter and I have now outgrown our Waldorf School in Calgary. The children graduated from Class 9 and dispersed to various schools within the city. I had thought of following the Waldorf path and boarding out my daughter in Duncan, Vancouver Island. B.C., so she could finish her schooling in a system that worked well for us. Eventually a choice was made to stay here and try an Independent Arts Highschool; Alternative High. My daughter Kailagh, grew, blossomed and mastered her own educational set backs, I believe, because of the nurturing she received in this Waldorf Community. In closing I share her thoughts, which reflect the experience she has gained and the knowledge we both walk away with.

> *"As a Waldorf student I found the Waldorf School system helped me to realize how to study and work independently. It guided me to self-directed learning. Waldorf has helped me see a way of learning through the arts, to observe the elements of grey instead of just black and white. 'It is an education for creative thinking'*

[3] Eurythmy: the interpretation in harmonious bodily movements of the rhythm of musical compositions; used to teach musical understanding (AWSNA).

(quote from my mentor). I found throughout my Waldorf experience, the instructors to be extremely supportive, always there to assist me." Kailagh Walsh (2004).

Our highest endeavour must be to develop free human beings who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives.
Rudolf Steiner

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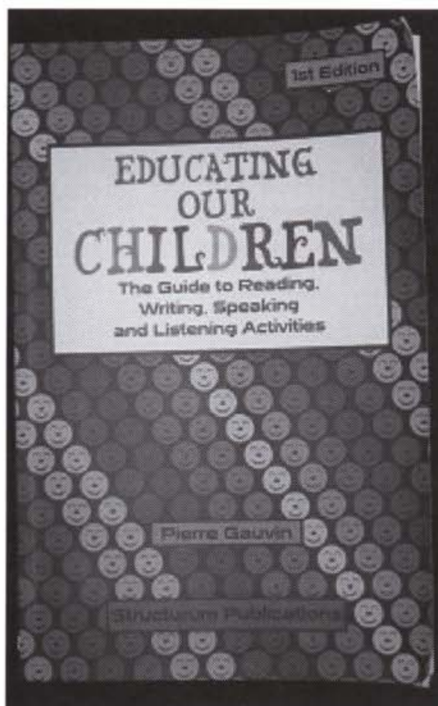
Educating Our Children: The Guide to Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening Activities

By Pierre Gauvin

Reviewed by Leigh Hathaway

Leigh Hathaway is a Literacy Specialist with the Sarnia Lambton Ontario Early Years Centre. She has been in the childcare profession for 18 years. Leigh regularly promotes reading, writing and listening activities in her literacy and numeracy workshops.



Pierre Gauvin's book *Educating Our Children The Guide to Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening Activities* has over 200 ideas for educators to use. According to Gauvin, the book was written to respond to the "*adults desire to stimulate their children with interesting and challenging educational activities*". He goes into detail in the introduction to explain the book, the activities and his choice of terminology. The term *educator* is used to describe any person who is working with the *learner*, which is the term that Gauvin uses for a student, child, youth, etc. The section titles in this book are as follows:

The term educator is used to describe any person who is working with the learner

Introduction

Chapter 1 Spelling Activities
Chapter 2 Reading Activities
Chapter 3 Writing Activities
Chapter 4 Speaking Activities
Chapter 5 Listening Activities
Chapter 6 Overall Activities

Quick Picture Index

The first five of these chapters cover the different areas of Spelling, Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, while the sixth chapter has overall activities that combine these skills. The book's layout makes it easy to find activities. There is a handy quick picture-index at the back of the book for easy reference. Two activities in these chapters that I particularly liked were *Telephone Letter and Number Codes* on page 60 and *Words from a Longer Word* on page 66. Both go a long way towards inviting the child into the learning activity.

There are activities of interest to all styles of learners. For the **auditory learner**, there is *Reading Along With an Audiotape* on page eighty-five. *Label These Objects* on page seventy-nine, is just one example of an activity for the **visual learner**. To get the kinesthetic learner moving, they can do some *Body Spelling* as described on page fifteen.

Gauvin states that the book is for use at home and in the classroom, I personally found that most of the activities are geared towards a school setting. The book's Introduction is suited to higher level readers. With 206 activities in this guide, the reader is sure to find an activity that would guide their children's reading, writing, speaking and listening skills.

Publisher:
Structurum Publications Corp., 2004
ISBN # 0-9733849-1-3

First Steps: A Primer On The Geographies Of Children And Youth

By John H. McKendrick
Reviewed by Pat Dickinson

Pat Dickinson, Ed.D., is recently retired as a Curriculum Consultant with the Halton District School Board in Ontario. She is currently teaching Language Arts in Brock University's Faculty of Education. Dr. Dickinson is the senior author of Pearson Education's recently published, *Math Makes Sense Kindergarten Program*, and is a writer/trainer with the Ontario Ministry of Education's Early Mathematics Strategy.

This brief 28 page 'primer' is a short introductory book on a qualitative approach to academic research that first emerged in the 1980's and 90's. The editor indicates that this brief glimpse into children's realities is intended to introduce readers to the *field of children's geographies* and to whet their appetite for more.

The notion of children's geographies suggests that children are being observed through a type of double vision, which combines the fields of sociology and geography, along with some old and new views of children and youth. The intent seems to be to gain greater understanding through the study of children in place, space and the environment. The reviewers, all scholars who have embraced this concept, were asked to review a 'personal favourite' in the field of children's geographies. The reviewed works include contributions from many fields; for example, psychoanalysis, anthropology, poetry and landscape architecture.

A number of the reviewers used this opportunity to revisit and reconsider classics from the past, some as dated as Seebohm Rowntree's *Study of Town Life* in 1902, and a collection of humorous poems by Hilaire Belloc published in 1939. The latter has its roots in children's poetry books published in the 1890s. Other works reviewed in this volume were published in the1990s and beyond; for example, Cindi Katz's look at children in rural Sudan and New York which illustrates how global processes cause systematic disruption of childhood. The effect of global changes (public spending cuts in New York, over-dependency on an agricultural development project in the Sudan) prevent girls in both settings from receiving the knowledge and skills necessary for their adult futures (*Textures of global changes: eroding ecologies of children in New York and Sudan*, in *Childhood:* **A Global Journal of Child Research**, 2:103-110).

An insight into the motivation for this approach to geographical research was illuminated by one of the reviews, Fiona Smith on Sophie Bowlby. Smith commented that she spent three years in university taught entirely by men. When she looked back on her degree in geography she realized that there were no women human geographers in the department, and no emphasis on women or children in any of the courses she took. She was naturally attracted, therefore, to the article which she chose for selection in this primer, Bowlby's article on *Women, work and the family: control and restraints*, published in **Geography**, 75 (1): 17-26 in 1990. This omission of children from previous descriptions of place and space is a common motivation for many of the scholars who are included in this collection of reviews.

One review, Kim England on Isabel Dyck, focuses on women and children in Canada (Coquitlam, British Columbia). Dyck replaces the common portrayal of suburban women as passive victims of their environment with a view of mothers who take an active role in shaping their social environment. 'Over the fence' and 'street relationships' with neighbours are important ways to share information and evaluate the norms of child-rearing in order to work out what factors exemplify a 'good mother'. *Space, time and renegotiating motherhood: an exploration of domestic workplace* in **Society and Space**, 8: 459-483,1990.

This primer achieved its intended purpose for me. It introduced me to a field of academic research that did work up, rather than quench, a thirst for the geographies of young people. This commitment to in-depth studies of groups that have been largely ignored by mainstream psychology, sociology, history and geography, suggests that there is much to be learned by taking a step back to get a fresh look at the realities of children and families. Readers of Canadian Children will find comfortable territory here. Our professional practice is based upon non-judgmental, sense making observations of children and families. These brief glimpses into children's places, spaces and environment help to extend and validate what it is that we do.

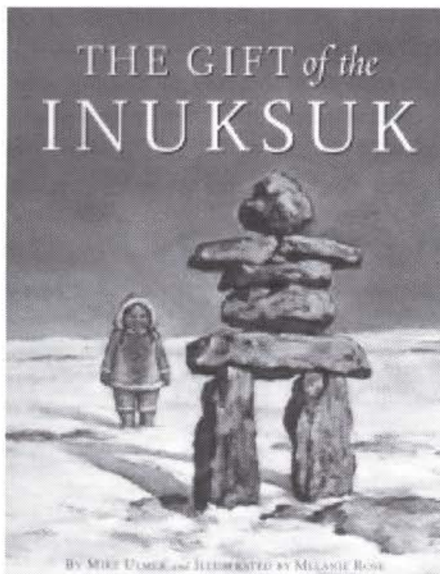
(2004)London: Limited Life Working Party on Children , Youth and Families of the Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers.

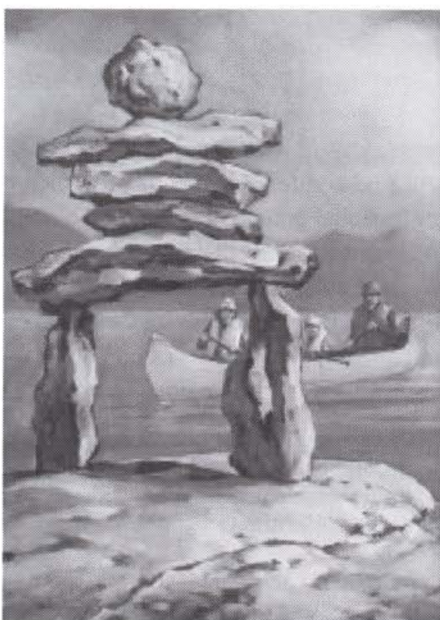
Barr Printers (Glenrothes) Ltd.
ISBN 0-902447-23-8 (pbk)

The Gift of the Inuksuk

by Mike Ulmer, illustrated by Melanie Rose
Reviewed by Emily Fortney Blunt

Emily Fortney Blunt and her husband are expecting their first child and adding books to the nursery shelves at an alarming rate. She holds a Bachelor of Music Therapy degree and is completing a Modern Languages degree in Italian. Emily's experiences include that of music director, soloist and voice teacher in Ontario and Nova Scotia, guiding both adults and children, and most recently the creation of Songwood Studios - her new handcrafted soap company. She anticipates living life as a singing, teaching, soap-making mom.





I think most Canadians would say they are familiar with the Inuksuk; familiar, at least, with its surprisingly stable construction of rocks in human form. In recent years, the CBC has provided us with a brief history of the Inuksuk in their Canadian Heritage commercials and many a garden in a Canadian neighbourhood is adorned with an Inuksuk or two (I now know that groupings of them are called Inuksuit). On frequent road trips between Ontario and Nova Scotia I was often kept company by an Inuksuk placed on a lonely precipice silently encouraging me that I was not alone on my journey.

Mike Ulmer's most recent book *The Gift of the Inuksuk* closely explores the meaning of the Inuksuk while telling the story of a young Inuit girl, Ukaliq and her family. For readers young and old, a beautiful and sensitive description of life in the North has been portrayed. For families who are used to turning on a switch and having light effortlessly fill their homes, it might be surprising to learn that Ukaliq's family gathers cotton grass and whale blubber to provide light for their house made of snow. The ideas of conservation and gratitude and the message that no one walks alone in life are three elements of Inuit life gently repeated throughout the book.

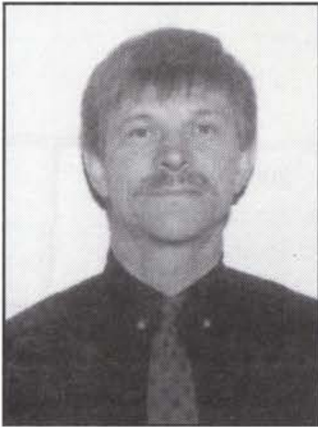
Aside from making a great read at story or bedtime, *The Gift of the Inuksuk* provides a great stepping-stone from which to explore Inuit life. For young readers/listeners, parents or teachers could supply or assist in gathering the stones (older children could find their own) to try building a classroom or garden Inuksuk. Mike Ulmer makes brief mention of throat singing and this distinct musical tradition could be explored in contrast to the music we listen to today by finding audio examples on the Internet and by attempting the sounds personally. If a live resource exists in your community, an invitation to the classroom might make a perfect interactive learning experience.

Melanie Rose's illustrations paint the northern landscape as more than an unending snowy terrain. Though the changes are understated, the reader can see colourful variations in the night sky and on the caribou as they make their passage through Ukaliq's Inuksuit that were used to guide her father home. Through Melanie Rose's illustrations the subtleties of the northern seasons could also be discovered through conversation and drawing.

Perhaps the only thing I might add to the book is a pronunciation guide for the Inuit words that were used. Standing in line at our local bookstore while Mike Ulmer was there for a signing, I heard lively discussions about correct pronunciations. Of course, the curious reader, teacher or parent might use this to develop their own understanding of the Inuit (Inuktitut) language or see it as an opportunity to explore a language worthy of preservation.

Though the translation of Inuksuk means, *in the image of man*, it is apparent that they are made in the image of all people...and from them the message is clear - you are not alone.

Publisher: Sleeping Bear Press 2004
ISBN: 158536214x



Dr. Wayne Eastman

PUBLICATIONS CHAIRPERSON

"Despite differences in culture, language, and economics, children of the world share a common need: early childhood experiences that enhance their growth and development"

"Despite differences in culture, language, and economics, children of the world share a common need: early childhood experiences that enhance their growth and development"(World Forum Foundation, 2005). The preceding statement epitomizes the desire to provide children with quality education where ever they live in the global community. Exemplary programs for young children exist around the world. This spring in May, 2005, Canada will have an opportunity to share its contributions to the field of early childhood education. For the first time in its history, the World Forum on Early Care and Education will be hosted by a Canadian city. Early childhood leaders and practitioners from over 80 nations will gather in Montreal, Quebec from May 17th - 20th to discuss the delivery of quality services to young children.

The Canadian Association for Young Children will be an integral component of this sixth World Forum. As an alliance member of the World Forum on Early Care and Education, CAYC will play a role in the Montreal extravaganza. Furthermore, this spring 2005 issue of our Journal, Canadian Children, will be included in each delegates' registration package. Hence, our world class refereed Journal will be dispersed globally.

There will be a myriad of sessions offered during the 2005 World Forum. One such presentation is entitled '*Nourishing the Brain: The Relationship Between Food and The Neurodevelopment of Young Children.*' The intention of this paper is to give an overview of the relationship between nutrition and the brain development of children. As well the paper will outline implications for parents and early childhood educators as they endeavor to understand how nutrition influences brain functions. Optimal nutritional health is needed for the functions of the central nervous system, more specifically the brain. For readers who can't attend the World Forum and would like to know more about this paper, contact me at: wayne.eastman@can.nl.ca

The international flavour of the World Forum is also evident in earlier publications of the Journal. Canadian Children has published a number of articles from authors of various countries. For example, the Fall, 2004 issue of Canadian Children contained an article entitled: "*A Comparative Study of Children's Fears and Fear Displays in Canada and Australia: What are They Afraid of and How Do They Show It?*" To view the index of past issues, 1993 - 2004, visit our web site at: www.cayc.ca .At the same website one can find the locations of Canadian libraries and resource centres that carry back issues of Canadian Children.

~ CELEBRATING OUR PROFESSION ~

THE FRIENDS OF CHILDREN AWARD

Recipients to date include. . .

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Dr. Jennifer Hardacre (ON)
Dr. Frances Haug (SK)
Dr. Leora Cordis (SK)
Dorothy Sharp (Nfld & Labrador)
Dr. Mona Farrell (QC)

1998
Elnor Thompson (NS)
Wally Weng-Gerrity (QC)

1999
Judy Steiner (QC)
Elsie Perkins (SK),
Susan Fraser (BC)
Jenny Chapman (BC)
Barbara Coloroso (QC)
Robert Munsch (ON)

2000
Gayle Robertson (MB)
Vicki Warner (AB)

2002
June Meyer (BC)
Lynda Philips (BC)
Larry Railton (BC)
Cathleen Smith (BC)

2003
Kathryn McNaughton (SK)

2004
Wayne Eastman
(Nfld & Labrador)

2005
Judy Wainwright (AB)

Friends of Children Award Guidelines

The CAYC "Friends of Children Award" was established to give CAYC a way of recognizing outstanding contributions, by individuals or groups, to the well-being of young children. If you know someone you would like to nominate for this award, please use the procedure and criteria below:

PROCEDURE

- The submission for nomination(s) must come through a member of the board and be seconded by a member of the board. Board members can receive recommendations for nominations from other persons or groups.
- The nominator will be responsible to obtain approval from the nominee before submitting the name of the nominee with relative background or biographical information.
- The nomination(s) will come forward at a board or executive meeting from the board member assigned responsibility for the award.
- This board member or an executive member will present the nomination and speak to it.
- The nomination will be passed by the board and/or executive with a consensus decision.
- The award will be presented promptly and in person when possible.
- Publicity of the award and the recipient(s) will appear in the journal, Canadian Children, and other publications where possible.
- Number of awards per year will vary.

CRITERIA

This may be:

- An individual or group, regardless of age.
- Has a history of commitment to the CAYC mission statement and/or aims.
- Has shown an outstanding scholarly, advocate innovative and/or practical contribution to the well-being of young children.
- CAYC membership not mandatory but encouraged.
- Canadian citizenship not mandatory.

Friends of Children Award 2005

Judy Wainwright

Judy Wainwright, B.H.Ec., B.Ed., M.A. has been a member of the CAYC since the early 1970's. Being one of the founding CAYC members, Judy made long dedicated trips from Canada to Detroit, Michigan in order to pick up and hand deliver the first CAYC Journals to colleagues and friends at Merrill Palmer Institute.

Judy is an active Early Childhood Advocate and has been so for more then 35 years; starting her career as an instructor in a demonstration nursery school at the University of Manitoba. Here, she earned her degree in home economics and a degree in education, specializing in child development and preschool education; later graduating from Detroit with a Masters of Arts degree in Human Relations.

Judy Wainwright is an extremely dedicated CAYC advocate instilling the importance of play and diversity for children at the National level across Canada; serving as a member of the 1978 Winnipeg CAYC Conference steering committee and on the National Conference in 1991, in Vancouver, 2001 in Calgary, and elected President to CAYC in the fall of 2000. Judy has brought to the CAYC a wealth of expertise from her many years of experience along with her vast knowledge of the Reggio Emilia Approach to Early Childhood.

For the past 20 years Judy has lived in the Calgary area and devoted her time to educating her beliefs of the importance of an umbrella group such as the CAYC along with raising a family and working within the community on many advisory committees. Currently Judy is an instructor at the Mount Royal College. It is an honour to celebrate this fine woman for her outstanding work with the Canadian Association for Young Children and the community of Early Childhood Educators in Calgary Alberta. Congratulations, Judy on the receipt of this prestigious Friends of Children Award.

Judy Wainwright (left), meeting with CAYC Colleagues

CAYC Member Profile

Deborah Evans

Deborah Evans, the Publisher of CAYC Alberta Newsletter, is an extraordinary individual. Deb has been with CAYC for many years and because of her insight and vast knowledge in the early childhood field she is a phenomenal asset to the Alberta team.

Deb grew up in British Columbia, in the Vancouver area, and at an early age discovered through the encouragement of her father that the development of a "whole child" is very important. Her father let her experience life to its fullest and entertained this young girl's relentless desire to bring home exciting trophies of discovery, i.e. Tadpoles and Reptiles, as well he believed in the magic of fantasy play. Deb discloses, *"Dad never refused me! I created forest homes fit for fairies, adorned my world with magic and enchantment, and toted home yet another special surprise to show my Dad."* Being one of three children in a single parent family Deb did have her ups and downs and at 17 years of age headed out on her own to explore the world. She arrived in Calgary two years later.

In 1985 Deb married and soon after came along her two children; Matthew in 1987 and Ellysa in 1989. Deb devoted her days and nights to her family, giving up work as a sales representative to become a stay-at-home-mom. It was natural for Deb to follow her children so when they started school Deb decided to keep the dedication going and began volunteering at her daughter's preschool. Deb believes this experience ultimately *"inspired me to pursue a career in Early Childhood Care and Education."* She enjoyed working with the children and their families so much that she decided after many years of being out of school that she would head back. In 2000 Deb graduated from Mount Royal College with her Early Childhood Care and Education Certificate with Honours with Distinction. To Deb this chapter of her life brought her full circle realizing the importance of family and *"the potentials in life that are possible when we step 'outside the box' with open arms and heart. College gave me chance to know a part of me that I never knew existed, a confident participant in the delivery of quality care and education for young children."*

She has continued volunteering through schools and community associations. She found that it opened many doors for her and later, after landing a much wanted job that met with all her interests and expectations, she began volunteering with the Calgary Preschool Teachers Association. Working with CPTA inspired her even more: *" it was that gift of sharing – networking – education that sealed my love for working with preschoolers."*

"Children today are missing out on the best parts of life - what life is really about... living in concrete worlds, dressed with plastic this and plastic that, living days on adult-time schedules! How fair is that? "

Deborah joined CAYC to further her education and to become more informed about the field of Early Childhood Care and Education. Deb felt like a child in a candy store the first time she received her CAYC Journal and was able to read it at her leisure, not in a class or the library. The doors continued to open and Deb continued to grow and develop in the field. When she attended her first CAYC National Annual General Meeting held in Calgary 2001 she met Linda Sutherby who became a great inspiration and resource to her. Deb was now hooked and joined the Alberta team becoming the Publisher for the CAYC Alberta Newsletter which was created to unite areas of the Province bringing CAYC members closer; creating connections. Deb exercised a special interest in seeing initiatives through to increase public awareness such as National Child Day and Early Childhood Professionals Day.

Deb has not lost the sense of importance of professional growth and development as she is still working hard volunteering, especially with CAYC. She has developed two on-line forums to educate and communicate with others demonstrating her zest for sharing. As she looks back over the past 12 plus years of volunteering she states; *"In my opinion sharing is a far better gift to society than a Diploma on the wall. That is not to say that professional development is any less, I hold a high regard for education, it is just that there is so much more out there to learn from that can provide just as many benefits to walks of life than hanging a diploma on a wall. Volunteering is one undeniably important factor of what society needs more of both on a community level and a personal level."*

Thank you Deb for all your passion, enthusiasm, and hard work for the field of Early Childhood Care and Education.

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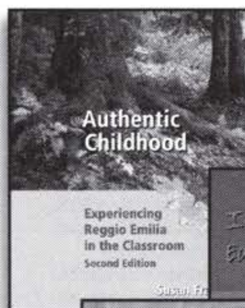

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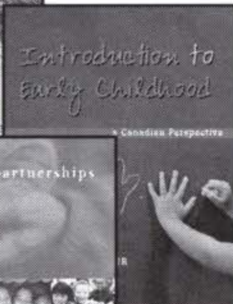

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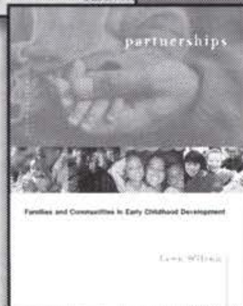

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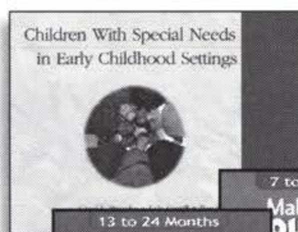

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A centre bringing excellence in education and programming for parents and children. We extend a warm invitation to two upcoming initiatives:

Exploring the Reggio Emilia Approach to Education: (An On-line Credit Course) being offered May 13-August 19, 2005. For more information contact: *P. Voegelin at 519-542-7751, ext. 3558 or email Mabel Higgins at mabel.higgins@lambton.on.ca*

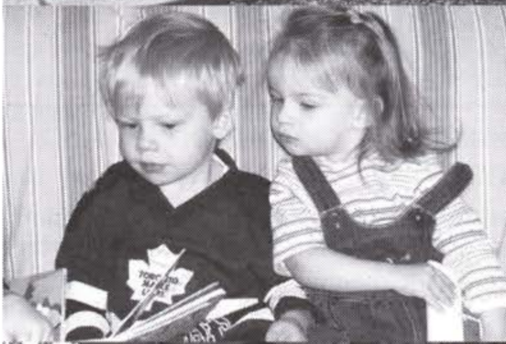
Moving the Reggio Conversation Along: A seminar roundtable series with Mabel Higgins in 2005/2006. Three Saturdays are set aside in October, April and June to continue the Reggio conversations. Come and explore the guiding principles of Reggio and how each of our own communities impact on children and families. *Contact Janice Dillon at 519-542-6100 for more information.*

Early Childhood Education Program (1967)

Graduates of this two-year field experience program are qualified to work in inclusive programs for children. This includes infants, toddlers, preschool and school age programs.

Our program boasts a video lab which allows students live observations of children in our lab school. This opportunity provides unlimited access to learning about curriculum strategies and planning, as well as adult/child interactions.

Lambton College offers post-diploma programs in Infant-Toddler and Resource Teacher training. We also offer an online study course and ongoing workshops in the Reggio Emilia approach. On faculty, we have a certified High/Scope trainer, who provides customized workshops and consultation. *For more information contact Dawna Wojkowski at 519-542-7751, ext. 3368 or by email at c430@lambton.on.ca*



Early Childhood Education Centre (1972)

The Early Childhood Education Centre is a community-based child care centre with a well respected reputation for providing high quality child care to the Sarnia/Lambton community since 1972.

We are a training facility for students enrolled in Lambton College's Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program. ECE students are involved in our program on a regular basis, helping our staff provide a fun and stimulating environment for the children.

We provide an inclusive program that supports all children with diverse needs, including infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. College Camp is offered to school age children during March Break and the summer months. *For more information contact Karen Harper at 519-541-2405 or email at ece@lambton.on.ca*

Ontario Early Years Centre Sarnia-Lambton (2003)

The Ontario Early Years Centre (OEYC) is a family drop-in program that provides a learning environment in which children and parents can interact and learn from each other. Programs are free and are available to accommodate all families in our community. We offer parent/caregiver workshops, resource materials and opportunities to meet with community professionals.

Our knowledgeable Early Childhood Educators plan innovative programs for hands-on experiences to help families reach their full potential. Lambton College is the only college in Ontario chosen as a lead agency for an OEYC and offers an excellent field placement opportunity for our ECE students. *For more information contact Lynn Cook at 519-542-6100 or email at c678@lambton.on.ca*

Early Childhood Education Programs and Services

ece@lambton.on.ca | www.lambton.on.ca

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