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**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, child studies 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 well-being.

**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 well-being.

**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 (6th Edition) of the American Psychological Association. Articles should be sent as an email attachment to the email address below. 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 editors will acknowledge receipt and will review all solicited and unsolicited manuscripts received. The final publication decision rests with the editor, and will be communicated within three months.

**DEADLINES:**
Submission Deadlines are as follows:
FALL Issue: July 2
SPRING Issue: January 2

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**Please send all publication correspondence for consideration to:**
Co-Editors, Laurie Kocher & Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw
CANADIAN CHILDREN JOURNAL
cdnchildren@gmail.com

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**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 à 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’enfant, ainsi qu’aux enseignants et 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 en oeuvre de programmes d’études, de méthodes d’enseignement en salle de classe et de techniques utilisées pour assurer le bien-être des 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 (6ième édition) de l’American Psychological Association. Les articles devront être attachés à un courrier électronique et envoyés au rédacteur en chef. Les auteurs devront obtenir le permis de reproduction des photographies avant de les faire parvenir au rédacteur. Il est recommandé d’inclure une brève note 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.

**RÉVISION, ACCEPTATION, ET PUBLICATION :**
Le rédacteur en chef accusera réception et tiendra compte de tous les manuscrits reçus, qu’ils aient été sollicités ou non. La décision de publier est sous la responsabilité du rédacteur en chef et sera communiquée à l’auteur dans un délai de trois mois.

**ÉCHÉANCIER :**
Publication d’automne : 2 juillet
Publication du printemps : 2 janvier
We are very excited to present you another issue of Canadian Children—the third one since our appointment as editors. The contributions in this issue are wide ranging, but there seems to be an emergent theme as well. Both the Invitational article and the papers in the Child Study section bring renewed challenges and questions to issues of pedagogy, policy, and research. Some of the questions that resonate for us include: How might pedagogical documentation emerge as a research act? How might we engage critically with policy documents? What forms of art practices might be possible? How might we open fluid and critical spaces for dialogue among educators? Whose voices do we entertain and whose voices do we silence through research?

The professional resources in this issue balance each other out. We include a review of a provocative academic text by bell hooks (we highly recommend that you check it out!) and of a review of a helpful and informative book for families.

We hope you enjoy this issue as much as we enjoyed putting it together.

We also want to draw your attention to the call for papers for the next Fall Issue. Guest co-editors Martha Gabriel and Marilyn Chapman will deliver the next issue to you.

They welcome articles on the theme of ‘transitions’. More information is included in the call for proposals at the end of this issue.

For those of you interested in submitting a manuscript to Canadian Children, please note the change in the due dates: Fall Issue: July 2, Spring Issue: January 2.

Once again, we would like to thank our dear colleague and friend Dr. Sylvia Kind for the cover image. The hard work of reviewers often goes unnoticed. Therefore we want to ensure that we acknowledge with immense gratitude the work that they have done behind the scenes. Our wonderful regular reviewers make the publication of Canadian Children possible. Guest reviewers have also provided much needed support. Our sincere gratitude goes to Luigi Iannacci, Rachel Heydon, Rachel Langford, Marianne McTavish, Margot Filipenko, and Margaret MacDonald for taking on this task.

Veronica and Laurie
Pedagogical Narrations’ Potentiality as a Methodology for Child Studies Research

B. Denise Hodgins

B. Denise Hodgins has an M.Ed. degree in ECE and is currently a doctoral student and Sessional Instructor in the School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria. Denise has worked with children, youth and families in a variety of capacities in the human service sector since 1989, including as a school-age childcare provider, an early childhood educator and a program director. Her research interests include: father involvement in parenting; the role that gender plays in the (re)construction of parenting practices; and the implication that postfoundational theories and methodologies have for research and practice.

Abstract

This article offers an extension to the use of pedagogical narrations by considering it as a methodology for postfoundational child studies research. The author contends that pedagogical narrations have evolved into a methodological approach that is able to attend to the complexity and plurality of childhood. The article begins with a brief review of the evolution of child studies and some of the legacies of modernism that continue to impact childhood research today. This is followed by an overview of how the process of pedagogical narrations has served to resist particular modernist assumptions. It concludes with an exploration of how this process holds the potential to blur the boundaries between such dichotomous binaries as child/adult, theory/practice and matter/discourse and open up spaces and dialogue for an ethical approach to childhood research.

For more than forty years, the municipal schools for children up to six years of age in Reggio Emilia, Italy have developed a “unique body of theory and practice about working with young children and their families” (Dahlberg & Moss, 2006, p. 2). Their pedagogical approach has been extremely influential around the world, particularly in Europe and North America, including the expansion of the concept and use of documentation as a pedagogical tool. With inspiration from the practices of Reggio Emilia, many early childhood educators/researchers continue to explore this tool, which has come to be known as pedagogical documentation (Ministry of Education, 2008).

Berger (2010) describes pedagogical narration as “a process by which educational experiences in early childhood settings are narrated and made visible in the public realm, thus becoming subject to political thought and dialogue” (p. 58). In this paper, I use the term pedagogical narrations which was created in British Columbia, the geopolitical context of my practice/research, to refer to pedagogical documentation. Berger (2010) describes pedagogical narration as “a process by which educational experiences in early childhood settings are narrated and made visible in the public realm, thus becoming subject to political thought and dialogue” (p. 58).

Currently the process of pedagogical documentation and, in British Columbia, pedagogical narrations is most commonly used as a pedagogical tool to strengthen early childhood practice. For example, pedagogical practice has been explored through this process in terms of: childhood assessment (MacDonald, 2007); parental involvement (Kocher, Cabaj, Chapman, Chapman, Ryujin & Wooding, 2010); critically reflective practice (MacDonald & Sánchez, 2010; Thompson, 2010); and curriculum development (Pacini-Ketchabaw & Nxumalo, 2010). While most commonly used as a methodological tool to strengthen practice, it has also been used as a research method to collect empirical material within childhood studies. For example, McLellan (2010) does so in her study about primary-aged children’s mathematical thinking, as does Hultman (2009) in her research about children’s mathematical subjectivities, and Pence and Pacini-Ketchabaw (2008) in their investigation of the notion of “quality” in early childhood education.

The purpose of this article is to build on the important theorizing about and engagement with the process of pedagogical documentation that has been done by others (e.g., Dahlberg & Moss, 2005; Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2007; Moss & Petrie, 2002; Rinaldi, 2006), and in particular the evolution of this process within early childhood research/practice as described by Lenz Taguchi (2010, 2011) and Olsson (2009), and as pedagogical narrations by Berger (2010) and Pacini-
Ketchabaw (2010). It is my intention to offer an extension to this process that is used as a pedagogical tool to strengthen practice and a research method in early childhood studies by exploring the potentiality of pedagogical narrations as a methodology for child studies research. It is my contention that the process of pedagogical narrations can be conceptualized and practiced as a methodology in and of itself, a methodology that is conducive to calls for a social science more able to attend to complexity, multiplicities, and plurality. To begin, I will briefly review the evolution of child studies and some of the legacies of modernism that continue to impact childhood research today. I will follow this with a brief overview of how the process of pedagogical narrations has evolved from practices that have served to resist particular modernist assumptions. I then conclude with an exploration of how this process holds the potential to blur the lines of distinction between such dichotomous binaries as child/adult, theory/practice and matter/discourse and to open up spaces and dialogue for ethical approaches to childhood research.

**Modernity, Dualisms, Single Stories**

By the nineteenth century in Western societies (i.e., Europe, the UK, the United States and Canada), the demand for scientific legitimacy which had evolved from the Enlightenment now dominated in all fields, shifting perspectives from the religious, philosophical and intuitive to the secular, rational and positivist (Cannella, 1997, p. 7). Through the nineteenth century, "science, as the tool of reason and progress fostered and harnessed by the modern state, put into practice enlightenment philosophies of protection and care of citizens, the realization of which presupposed greater monitoring and control" (Burman, 2008, p. 25). The development of childhood research, which has overlapped with the development of the different forms of psychology, occurs within this modernist science and the state’s use of it in the regulation of its citizens (Burman, 2008; Cannella, 1997; Prout, 2005). By the end of the nineteenth century child study societies had emerged in Europe and the US, with research centers specifically designed to study child development (Burman, 2008; Cannella, 1997).

Through modernist science, it was believed that the child can be known objectively and the child’s observed natural characteristics, their biologically directed development, can be interpreted as universal. One of the assumptions and legacies of the child study movement is the notion that through science, “child truth” is discoverable (Cannella, 1997, p. 33).

The positivist view of science that has grounded modernization has taken the child, created by the church, and psychologized and biologized that child. The universal condition of childhood can be described, interpreted, and influenced. The individual is tested, examined, and appropriate experiences prescribed. (Cannella, 1997, p. 30)

Another legacy of the child study movement is the modernist conceptualization of childhood as a distinct period, drawing from Rousseau (see Dahlberg et al., 2007), which was constructed in opposition to adulthood (Burman, 2008; Cannella, 1997; Prout, 2005), as well as the belief that “there is a normal core of development unfolding according to biological principles” (Burman, 2008, p. 17). As the primitive Other to the fully developed adult (man), children were seen as a “pure” specimen, not yet spoiled, available for study to better understand adults (Burman, 2008). Connected to the conceptualization of childhood as a distinct period, where development unfolds according to biological principles, is the image of the child as a blank slate, Locke’s Tabula Rasa view (see Dahlberg et al., 2007). In this image, the child is believed to be a passive recipient of experience (Burman, 2008; Moss & Petrie, 2002) and a reproducer of (socially and culturally sanctioned) knowledge, identity and culture (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2007). The child is potential waiting to happen and any adult investment in children and childhood is about preparing children for the future. While cognitive psychology of the 1970s may have shifted (challenged) the view of the child from one of blank slate to one of competent constructor, the interpretive framework by which child development is described remains “structured around features of the adult whom the [child] will become, rather than what the [child] is or does now” (Burman, 2008, p. 43). Moss and Petrie (2002) name this as the futuristic view of childhood, where the child is seen as a redemptive vehicle. Prout (2000) writes, “In a world seen as increasingly shifting, complex and uncertain, children, precisely because they are seen as especially unfinished, appear as a good target for controlling the future” (p. 61). This futuristic conceptualization positions the “child as [a] labour market supply factor” (Dahlberg et al., 2007, p. 46) and inevitably impacts the direction of research with children, education, social policies and funding of services (Moss & Petrie, 2002).

Within the scientism of modernity, reality is conceptualized as componental and therefore can be pulled apart, studied separately and then reassembled (Hatch & Barclay-McLaughlin, 2006). Compartmentalization helps to set up many dualistic binaries: adult/child, being/becoming, knowing/being, mind/body, object/subject, and social/non-social (see Burman, 2008; Cannella, 1997; Lenz Taguchi, 2010; Mac Naughton, 2005; Prout, 2005). This componental view is exemplified in developmental theories that categorize children’s development by stages, or age-graded intervals, which are further divided into cognitive, physical and emotional dimensions (Burman, 2008). Dahlberg et al. (2007) argue that this compartmentalization reduces the study of complex, interrelated processes to single categories. Within early childhood
studies, most approaches to research have done little to rectify their facilitation of these dualistic relationships. Fuelled by either developmental psychology’s usual privileging of biology or the sociology of the child’s usual privileging of culture/discourse, most childhood research approaches are uncomfortably stuck with how to understand what Prout (2005) refers to as “childhood’s hybrid character” (p. 63). His observation is that “what seems to be required are ways of speaking about childhood that can handle the hybridity of childhood, that can tolerate its ambiguity without lapsing very quickly into the “purification” that dichotomies demand” (p. 64). At the core of Prout’s (2005) argument for an interdisciplinary study of childhood is his “conviction that childhood is not best studied within a framework built from and/or implicitly assuming a set of oppositional dichotomies” (p. 2).

Childhood research has primarily been driven by “quantitative approaches with roots in developmental and behavioural psychology” (Hatch, 1995, p. xi). Today, psychology continues to be “the dominant academic discipline concerned with childhood” (Prout, 2005, p. 50). As such, developmentalism, with all of its legacies from modernism, influences all disciplines concerned with childhood, but most significantly early childhood and education research and practice (Cannella, 1997; Dahlberg et al., 2007; Mac Naughton, 2005; Moss & Petrie, 2002; Prout, 2005). While there is a growing body of research and theoretical positions that challenge these conceptualizations of childhood and (particular) modernist approaches to research, developmentalism remains the dominant discourse within the spectrum of childhood research today. It is, in the words of Adichie (2009), a single story: “The single story creates stereotypes. And the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story” (13:15-13:28).

Re-Imagining Child Studies Research

Dahlberg et al. (2007) suggest that the pedagogical work in Reggio Emilia has “anticipate[d] various themes of postmodernity” (p. 60). For example, their philosophies and practices have challenged the modernist image of the child by conceptualizing children as active citizens who construct their world in relationship with others (see Rinaldi, 2006).

This has also challenged the dualistic split between children and adults; educators, children and parents are viewed as co-constructors of knowledge. Within this conceptualization, the dominant view of knowledge construction as a linear development that happens within individuals in predictive and progressive stages is also challenged. Instead, knowledge is conceptualized as that which is constructed in a non-linear fashion, in relationship with others through dialogue. Shifting conceptualizations such as these have led to the development of innovative pedagogical practices, including their pedagogical practice of documentation (the evolution of which has led to the process of pedagogical narrations).

Dahlberg et al. (2007) draw on Reggio Emilia’s image of the child as an active citizen and co-construct and suggest that this child is “living a postmodern childhood” (p. 54), which entails “have[ing] to adjust to a high degree of complexity and diversity, as well as to continuous changes” (p. 54). They argue that these “postmodern conditions” call for new ways of understanding (e.g., knowledge, children, practice, etc.) and demand the creation of spaces and a pedagogical approach where new possibilities can be explored. They elaborate that what is needed is a pedagogical practice (like their description of the pedagogical practice in Reggio Emilia) that welcomes the “postmodern idea of complexity and contradiction” and “recognize[s] the great opportunities that arise from recognizing difference, plurality, otherness and unpredictability” (p. 60). I contend that the same is required of childhood research in such spaces. Just as Dahlberg and Moss (2005) put forth their view of early childhood education as an ethical and political space as a possibility for ECCE practice, rather than the possibility, I consider pedagogical narrations a (not the) qualitative research methodology that can address challenges associated with modernist assumptions about science, knowledge and childhood and can attend to “more sustained, engagements with the opaque complexity of lives and things” (MacLure, 2010, p. 4). Dahlberg and Moss (2010) describe the process as this:

The idea is simple – making practice visible or material, thence subject to research, dialogue, reflection and interpretation (meaning-making). But its application, doing documentation, is anything but simple, as are its consequences. For it acknowledges and welcomes subjectivity, diversity of position and multiple perspectives: in short, it values plurality. (p. xiii)

Moss and Petrie (2002) extend the view of pedagogy to be an approach to working with children in children’s spaces (which they recognize as more than just the physical spaces for children, but
social, cultural and discursive spaces as well), and the “pedagogue as a worker able to use this approach” (p. 10). In so doing, Moss and Petrie (2002) take pedagogical narrations out of the early childhood classroom and extend its use to all institutions working with children, whereby “the pedagogical practice of childre...nformations are tools to establish “individual children’s developmental progress and where little or no collaborative discussion of the content takes place while the documentation is constructed” (MacDonald & Sánchez, 2010, p. 26). Inevitably this approach reduces children’s diversities as they are assessed through prescribed learning outcomes based on universalized notions of development. The purpose of both research and pedagogical practice thus becomes focused on establishing supports that will enable individual children to achieve their next level of development (Lenz Taguchi, 2010).

Within this traditional approach to documenting, children’s construction of knowledge is seen as a form of linear progression, much like the metaphor of the growing tree (Dahlberg & Moss, 2006; Mac Naughton, 2004). This modernist conceptualization of knowledge is challenged by Reggio Emilia founder Loris Malaguzzi’s image of “knowledge as a ‘tangle of spaghetti’” (as cited by Dahlberg & Moss, 2006, p. 7); looping, wrapping, curving, messy. This conception of documentation is made visible and subject to institutions working with children, thereby “the pedagogical practice of childre...nformations are tools to establish “individual children’s developmental progress and where little or no collaborative discussion of the content takes place while the documentation is constructed” (MacDonald & Sánchez, 2010, p. 26). Inevitably this approach reduces children’s diversities as they are assessed through prescribed learning outcomes based on universalized notions of development. The purpose of both research and pedagogical practice thus becomes focused on establishing supports that will enable individual children to achieve their next level of development (Lenz Taguchi, 2010).

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[It] is a process by which educational experiences in early childhood settings are narrated and made visible in the public realm, thus becoming subject to public critical thought and dialogue. These narrations provoke us to think anew and to resist normalized and habitual conceptions of childhood, education, learning, and assessment. In so doing, they open the political space for discussions of possible meanings of these constructs. (p. 58)

Pedagogical narrations are not about “nailing down the story of the already obvious” (Olsson, 2009, p. 113) or the means to a single neutral picture of what children can do (Dahlberg et al., 2007). Pedagogical narrations are a way to “[look] for that which escapes already determined definitions and positions and engage in collective experimentations with children and teachers in making more space for lines of flight” (Olsson, 2009, p. 179). As a listener and “collective experimenter” (p. 180), the researcher/practitioner who is engaged with pedagogical narrations must be prepared to “latch on” and “experiment with” the ongoing event, as well as be “prepared for not knowing and for unexpected surprises” (p. 181, italics added). This is not, however, an “anything goes” approach to research. As Olsson (2009) and Lenz Taguchi (2010) both explain, preparation and planning are of upmost importance. “We need to plan very thoroughly and imagine possibilities of challenging intra-actions that might take
place. We plan also in order to be able to diverge from our plan” (Lenz Taguchi, 2009, p. 61, italics in the original).

This preparedness for experimentation and unknowing resembles Lather’s (2007) postfoundational considerations of what it means for a researcher to approach research with a willingness to be lost, to not know, and calls for researchers to openly engage in efforts to disrupt/disturb/dismantle the known (Lenz Taguchi, 2010, 2011; Naughton, 2005; Moss & Petrie, 2002; Olsson, 2009, 2010). As Olsson (2009) observes, “this is a messy place to be in” (p. 180), and one that is very different than a methodological approach that aims to predict, control, supervise or evaluate according to any predefined standards (p. 181). Postfoundational perspectives resist a reductionist approach and push “toward a reconfigured social science, a ‘less comfortable social science’ . . . one that tries to be ‘accountable to complexity’” (St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000, p. 4). This is the place that pedagogical narrations operate from: a methodological approach that is congruent with efforts to “remake social science in ways better equipped to deal with mess” (Law, 2005, p. 2). As Prout (2011) asserts, “this, it hardly needs saying, is much more analytically challenging . . . but it might promote an ontological [how we understand being in the world] hesitation from which the interdisciplinary goal of childhood studies might benefit” (p. 9). For Law (2005) the “task is to imagine methods when they no longer seek the definite, the repeatable, the more or less stable. When they no longer assume that this is what they are after” (p. 6). Law (2005) continues to say that, further than others into certain parts of social reality; and the expectations of generality that are wrapped up in what is often called ‘universalism’. But, first of all we need to unmake our desire and expectation for security. (p. 9)

Child-adult

Pedagogical narrations operate from conceptualizations of the child that resist universal constructions, ones that typically isolate the child from his or her world, including adults. As Berger (2010) notes, “through the practice of collective narration, the educator becomes a collaborator with the child and others to generate knowledge in the world” (p. 68). Children (and for that matter, all matter, human and non-human) cannot be considered outside of relationship but in relationship with (Dahlberg et al., 2007). For Olsson (2009), within the collective and unpredictable experimentation that occurs through pedagogical narrations, “everything and everybody is seen as a relational field” (p. 179). Carlina Rinaldi (2006) describes “being careful not to identify children with adults, but to recognize them both as a part of humanity” (p. 188). The conceptualization of the child that is promoted through Reggio Emilia schools is one that is rich, rather than needy: agentic, though not in a humanist free-will kind of a way; with a voice, albeit an interpreted one; and related to adulthood, but not hierarchically (Moss & Petrie, 2002).

This is not a homogeneous construction of childhood but one that recognizes the multiple, interacting constructions related to social class, age, gender, and ethnicity (Moss & Petrie, 2002). This is also not a futuristic conceptualization of childhood that is interested in the child today primarily because of the adult she will become tomorrow. As Lenz Taguchi (2010) writes about the experience of pedagogues in both Reggio Emilia and Reggio Emilia-inspired schools in Sweden, “there is no border between what the child is right now and what it continuously becomes” (p. 39). In fact, as Prout (2011) argues, “both children and adults should be seen through a multiplicity of becomings in which all are incomplete and dependent” (p. 8).

Theory-practice

Through the practice of pedagogical narrations, the lines of distinction between child and adult are blurred in part because of the emphasis on being in relationship with. This position also problematizes the distinction between educators and researchers, theory and practice. Pedagogical narrations create opportunities for dialogue among a community of learners (Ministry of Education, 2008; Rinaldi, 2006). This dialogic approach to knowledge generation is one of collaboration (Berger, 2010; Rinaldi, 2006), and pedagogues/researchers are not above or outside the process (Lenz Taguchi, 2010; Olsson, 2009; Rinaldi, 2006). In Olsson’s (2009) consideration of the role of the researcher, she draws on written correspondence between Foucault and Deleuze in which Foucault argues that the academic should no longer "position him or herself outside or above practice" (as cited by Olsson, 2009, p. 103). Deleuze responds to Foucault’s point as one that teaches a "fundamental lesson . . . [about] the indignity of speaking for others" (as cited by Olsson, 2009, p. 103). With Deleuze’s phrase, “the indignity of speaking for others”, Olsson (2009) argues that "within such a statement there is no longer room for giving voice, or making people aware of their own ignorance. It is a matter of working together to produce new constructions of what we are all part of" (p. 103). Pedagogical narrations offer opportunities for a community of learners to work together, to engage in collective experimentation (Olsson, 2009), where the boundaries between research and education, researcher and educator, theory and practice begin to blur.

Berger (2010) argues that Arendt’s position “to see storytelling as resistance
makes a significant contribution to viewing pedagogical narration as a site for challenging and resisting the emphasis in early childhood education on . . . theory over practice” (p. 68). Drawing on the work of Lenz Taguchi (2007), Berger (2010) describes pedagogical narrations, as a process of textualizing practice, where practice and theory are both inevitably written into existence. Theory and practice are considered embedded in each other (Rinaldi, 2006). This approach challenges two dominant lines of thinking about theory and practice in education: (a) that theory is that which is applied to make practice better; and (b) that the tacit knowledge, or truth, of practice cannot be captured by theory (Lenz Taguchi, 2010). “What both of these notions fail to acknowledge is that practice is already and simultaneously theoretical and material, and that theory is totally dependent on experiences and fantasies of lived material practices” (p. 21). As Lenz Taguchi (2010) and Olsson (2009) both demonstrate through their research, theory and practice are simultaneously being spoken and performed into existence. Pedagogical narrations make visible this material-discursive phenomena (Lenz Taguchi, 2010) and “[make] visible the necessity for vigorous relationships between thinking and action” (Berger, 2010, p. 66).

Material-discursive

The dichotomous distinction between materiality and discourse also begins to blur within this conceptualization of theory and practice. Drawing on Barad’s (2007) agential materialism theory and her understanding of the intra-relatedness of the material and the discursive, Lenz Taguchi (2009, 2010, 2011) considers pedagogical practice as a “dense material-discursive mixture of events that are folded upon each other” (Lenz Taguchi, 2010, p. 22). Through pedagogical narrations, these material-discursive events are “textualized” and therefore made accessible for (re)consideration (Lenz Taguchi, 2010). Lenz Taguchi (2010) describes this process with an example of a student teacher’s experience with pedagogical narrations.

What was in the written notes and photographs constituted material limits to what could be understood, and interacted with the discourses available to the student-teacher. The meanings constructed in the discussion based on the documentation made the student-teacher direct her further investigations with the children. (p. 38)

Drawing on Barad’s (2007) conceptualization of an “apparatus”, Lenz Taguchi (2010) considers pedagogical narrations as a “material-discursive apparatus” (p. 63) that needs “to be understood as a performative agent in itself and as such also a ‘methodological’ tool for learning and change” (Lenz Taguchi, 2010, p. 10). Considering materiality within pedagogical narrations, specifically matter as an intra-active agent, takes the pedagogical practice of documentation that originated from Reggio Emilia further than its presentation of matter as important, but nonetheless a passive tool to be used actively by people (Lenz Taguchi, 2010). This is integral to shifting the biological/social binary so prominent in (early childhood) education and research, and the tendency to “reduce[e] our world to a social world, consisting only of humans and neglecting all other non-human forces that are at play” (Hultman & Lenz Taguchi, 2010, p. 526). Considering all the forces at play, what Hultman and Lenz Taguchi (2010) refer to as a relational materialist approach, changes how researchers participate with pedagogical narrations, where “we as researchers . . . might see and understand our research data differently” (p. 534).

In educational research, it might, for example, increase our attentiveness to children’s strong relations to the things, artefacts and spaces in pre-schools and schools that are often overlooked in favour of the social interpersonal relations. Importantly, we are not referring to anattentiveness that seeks to fully understand, organise or capture theessence of these material-discursive intraactivities. This is impossible. Rather, this is an attentiveness that might give us the possibilities to be affectively engaged with and moved by that which seems to enchant and move the children. (Hultman & Lenz Taguchi, 2010, p. 540)

Ethico-onto-epistemological inquiry

Thinking with Barad (2007), early childhood scholars (Hultman, 2008, 2009; Hultman & Lenz Taguchi, 2010; Lenz Taguchi, 2010, 2011) call for an “attentiveness to things” as they engage in a practice with pedagogical narrations which shifts not only the material-discursive relationship, but also the relationship between ontology (being) and epistemology (knowing). Barad (2007) conceptualizes the inseparability of being and knowing as onto-epistemology. As she explains, “we don’t obtain knowledge by standing outside the world; we know because we are of the world” (p. 185, italics in the original). The separation of knowing from being is derivative of a metaphysics that recognized the human and nonhuman, matter and discourse, mind and body, subject and object as inherently different (Barad, 2007). What Barad (2007) contends is that we need an onto-epistemological approach to explore “how specific intra-actions matter” (p. 185). Further, she argues, we need something like an ethico-onto-epistemology – an appreciation of the intertwining of ethic, knowing, and being – since each intra-action matters, since the possibilities for what the world may become call out in the pause that precedes each breath before a moment come into being and the world is remade again, because the becoming of the world is a deeply ethical matter. (p. 185)

Guba and Lincoln (2005) comment that “axiology has been ‘defined out of’ scientific inquiry for no larger a reason than
that it also concerns ‘religion’ and suggest that recognizing axiology (ethics) as part of the philosophical dimensions of research paradigms “would, in our opinion, begin to help us see the embeddedness of ethics within, not external to, paradigms” (p. 200). Barad’s (2007) ethico-onto-epistemology visually and philosophically brings this embeddedness to the fore. I believe that pedagogical narrations are an effective avenue to an ethico-onto-epistemological inquiry. As Dahlberg and Moss (2005) write,

We could say that pedagogical documentation is a tool both for ethics—understood as the sphere of the undecidable—and for the political—understood as the search, through negotiation and compromise, for what is acceptable and for the negotiation of provisional agreements. . . . We could also say that pedagogical documentation with meaning making [pedagogical narrations] is a form of evaluation that constitutes a practice of what Rose terms ‘ethico-politics’. This . . . strives to avoid closure by opening up the evaluation of forms of life and self-conduct to the difficult and interminable business of debate and contestation. (p. 158)

**Concluding Considerations**

Calls for opening up ways to attend to the complexity and plurality of childhood have come from various sources in early childhood education (e.g., Burman, 2008; Cannella, 1997; Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2007; Moss & Petrie, 2002) and research (e.g., MacLure et al. 2010; MacNaughton, 2004, 2005; Prout, 2005, 2011). These calls for attending to complexity in early childhood studies and practice mirror the calls from within the social sciences in general for theories and methods better able to attend to complexity (e.g., Lather, 2007; Law, 2005; MacLure, 2010; Mol & Law, 2002a; St. Pierre, 1997, 2008). I have suggested that pedagogical narrations have evolved into a methodological approach that is conducive to this attentiveness to complexity, multiplicity and plurality. I have also suggested that the process of pedagogical narrations has evolved into a methodology, in and of itself, for childhood research situated within a postfoundational framework. Common qualitative approaches to childhood research, which can be practices in a myriad of forms, include ethnography, case study and action research (Hatch, 2007), but in my estimation, pedagogical narrations do not neatly fit into one of these forms. St. Pierre and Pillow (2000) contend that postfoundationalism, troubling the known, has produced new epistemologies (ways of knowing), ontologies (ways of being) and methodologies (philosophies of method) and, I believe, the evolution of pedagogical narrations, and what I see as the emergence of it as a methodology, is an example of this.

Categorizing can be a limitation, particularly trying to squeeze something into an already established category, but the act of (re)naming forces us to (re)consider what exactly we mean by such identifiers. (Re)naming can “act as a form of resistance to the norm, the universal and the taken for granted” (Berger, 2010, p. 69) and act as a “production of a counter discourse” (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, as cited by Berger, 2010, p. 69). By stepping away from naming pedagogical narrations as modes of research (such as action research or ethnography, both academically legitimate though not contestable-genres of research) and instead naming it as a methodology in its own right, what acts of resistance or counter discourses might be produced? Further, does the (re)naming of the process itself, as pedagogical narrations, act as a marker of its ongoing evolution?

Pedagogical narrations are not about determining the story or a consensus of one answer but they are what Mol and Law (2002b) call, “stories about what happens to complexities in practices. Or to multiply, they are stories about what happens to complexities in practices” (p. 6). Making stories public opens them up to opportunities for dialogue and contestation (Berger, 2010), one way to resist the domination of single stories (Adichie, 2009) and myths. Pedagogical narrations hold the potential to be a version of Haraway’s (1991) cyborg stories, which “have the task of recording communication and intelligence to subvert command and control” (p. 176). As Haraway (1991) suggests, “this is not just literary deconstruction, but liminal transformation” (p. 178), opening “possibilities for different worlds that might, perhaps, not be so cruel to so many people” (St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000, p. 1). Pedagogical narrations are not about working to “get it right” for, as St. Pierre and Pillow (2000) aptly point out, “we have never gotten it right” (p. 4). But as Olsson (2009) suggests, “encounters between these practices marked by collective, intense and unpredictable experimentation might be capable of letting new things be born” (Olsson, 2009, p. 104). As a methodological approach that values plurality and recognizes that everyone and everything is in relationship with, pedagogical narrations hold tremendous potential to open up spaces for both ethics and the political in childhood research, acting as an apparatus in the disruption of constraining discourses, the illumination of material-discursive phenomena, the generation of new knowledges, and the transformation of practices.

**References**


British Columbia's Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide: A Critical Race Analysis

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Abstract

In September 2011, all elementary schools in British Columbia, Canada began providing a full school day of kindergarten to its children. Prior to this, the majority of children experienced kindergarten in a half day format, while the province provided a full day to children from “certain populations” of ethnicity, language, and ability. Supporters of the change process that a full day of kindergarten can be beneficial for all children, which will subsequently benefit the province in general. This paper aims to gain insight into how the contemporary discourses in early childhood education in relation to full day kindergarten influence the racialized experiences of British Columbia’s young children of colour. A textual analysis was conducted on the Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide (2010) from the lens of Critical Race Theory. The guide's ambiguous use of the concept of “culture” is highlighted.

British Columbia’s (BC) kindergartens are changing from a system where most five-year-olds in the province participated in a half day of kindergarten program, while a full day program was provided for “certain populations” (Aboriginal children, English as a Second Language learners, and children with particular special needs) (Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide, 2010). As of September 2011, however, every elementary school in BC is providing a full school day kindergarten program available to “all” children. Those in support of the change praise its potential to benefit “all” children and strengthen BC as a whole (UBC Media Advisor, August 11, 2010), while teachers are encouraged to appreciate the newfound “gift of time” (Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide, 2010). In order to facilitate the program change, the provincial government enlisted a committee (“including teachers, school district staff, researchers, and Ministry staff”) (Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide, 2010, p. 48) in the creation of the Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide (2010) for the use of school administrators, kindergarten teachers, and the interested public. With the shift from a full day kindergarten for “certain populations” to one for “all” children, I believe that a critique of the racial positioning of kindergarten children is especially poignant. By deconstructing the guide, I hope to centralize discourses of race and expose discourses that remove race in order to propose spaces for authentic dialogue about racism in early childhood education.

As an early childhood educator from Ontario, my understanding of British Columbian practices and scholarship in the field is inescapably interpreted in relationship to those of my home province. Furthermore, my practical experiences have centralized on pre-kindergarten settings – particularly child care centres and preschools, thus distancing me from the nuances of kindergarten classrooms. However, by working with children in pre-kindergarten settings, I have witnessed the ways in which dominant discourses in early childhood education can racially marginalize young children; it is to these children that I owe the inspiration for this paper. These experiences also led me to my current graduate studies in the Early Childhood Education program at the University of British Columbia, through which I have had the opportunity to gain an insider’s perspective on the creation of early childhood knowledge, including the Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide (2010). In this academic engagement, I have noticed a monolithic body of knowledge in early childhood education that serves as a great barrier to new and subversive ways of thinking about the field. From a Critical Race Theory (CRT) perspective, the majority of early childhood education scholarship prescribes to liberal concepts of social change; it solidifies a structure that precludes opportunities for the broad reconceptualization of a system that serves to reinforce subordination of people of colour (Janmohamed, 2005).

The early childhood education field in BC has increasingly abandoned positivist principles of Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) in favour of new sociocultural models – the most popular of these being the Reggio Emilia project (Pacini-Ketchabaw, Kocher, Berger, Isaac, & Mort, 2007). At the centre of Reggio Emilia and sociocultural theory is the integration of culture,
specifically through culturally-meaningful experiences and culturally-determined developmental goals (Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., 2007). These sociocultural early childhood practices of the city of Reggio Emilia, Italy have presented “Reggio” as a “buzzword” in its own right and the idyllic framework for the field (Johnson, 1999; Wright, 2000). The Institute of Early Childhood Education and Research (IECER) at the University of British Columbia also embraces the Reggio philosophy. However, while Reggio Emilia understands culture as defined and created fluidly through collaboration by children, families, and teachers (Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., 2007), the Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide (2010) seems to appropriate the Reggio centrality of “culture” under liberal definitions. In this paper, I contend that the ambiguous use of “culture” in BC’s Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide (2010) is instrumental in reinforcing racial subordination through the liberal structures of racial binary and meritocracy.

Critical Race Theory and Me

To engage in this task, I will be utilizing a Critical Race Theory (CRT) lens to examine the Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide (2010). At the centre of a CRT critique is the assertion that racism is endemic in society, to the point that it is considered normal and expected, leaving it “difficult to cure or address” (Delgado, 2001, p. 7). Meanwhile, racism goes unnoticed by most White people, who participate in a racist society (Ladson-Billings, 2009; Taylor, 2009) while benefiting materially and psychically; as a result, “large segments of society have little incentive to eradicate it” (Delgado, 2001, p. 7). Paired with this is a critique of liberal society, whose false claims to objectivity, meritocracy, and colour-blindness ultimately lead to the benefit of White people, under the guise of working for social change. As Ladson-Billings (2009) explains, “racism requires sweep-ing changes, but liberalism has no mechanism for such change” (p. 22). Meanwhile, this system also contributes to the ways in which society produces categories of race, which are exposed by CRT scholars as “not objective, inherit, or fixed” (Delgado, 2001, p. 8), and manipulates them to its own convenience.

Another unique aspect of CRT critique is highlighting the personal narratives of marginalized people, whose stories of racism counter the dominant “objective” liberalist discourses (Taylor, 2009; Delgado, 2001). Taylor (2009) points out that, along with narratives, CRT emphasizes the importance of identifying the historical context that entangles with the contemporary experiences of people of colour. This aspect of CRT holds an “uneasy tension” with CRT’s simultaneous emphasis of anti-essentialism, which acknowledges that “no person has a single, easily stated, unitary identity” (Delgado, 2001, p. 9). However, Delgado (2001) maintains that “because of their different histories and experiences with oppression, black, Indian, Asian, and Latino/a writers and thinkers may be able to communicate to their white counterparts matters that the whites are unlikely to know” (p. 9). It is this particular tenet of CRT that challenges my engagement in this project.

At this point, I argue that it is necessary to position myself within the task of analysing the Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide (2010) from a CRT perspective, especially because my status as a White person complicates my use of this framework. I am a White, able-bodied, heterosexual female in my early twenties, and come from a middle-class English-speaking family of Polish Catholic heritage (and a long line of blond-haired/blue-eyed/slim ancestors – a trend that seemingly skipped me). For my entire life, I have had the privilege of automatic inclusion within dominant understandings of “normal,” an open range of opportunities, and never experienced racialization or racism. Having lived my entire life in a suburban neighbourhood on the Hamilton Mountain in Ontario, my childhood experiences with racialized minorities were entirely tokenistic. As a young person (my parents would vehemently argue I was completely non-prejudiced) I tried desperately to prove that I was a friend to people of colour – a “good White person” (Hayes & Juárez, 2009, p. 738). Hayes and Juárez (2009) point out that doing so draws from a “benevolent” perspective that allowed me to stand against explicit forms of racism and position myself as apart from “those other racist, bad Whites” (p. 738) while holding onto a “patronizing sense of superiority” (p. 738). Meanwhile, for the racial and ethnic groups with whom I had no encounter, I remained completely ignorant to their lives. Despite the proximity of my childhood home to Six Nations of the Grand River, my first introduction to Indigenous cultures did not occur until my early teenage years. These privileged beliefs and blinding experiences have been consistently challenged by a sociology-based undergraduate education and furthered by my current engagement in graduate school, but nonetheless bear impact on my examination of systematic racialization.

For this reason, my participation in CRT analysis is questionable, especially because it is impossible for me to provide a narrative that in any way runs counter to the White norm. I also run a great risk of reinforcing the racially marginalized position of the young people for whom I attempt to speak by enforcing my meaning making onto their experiences. Additionally, not only does this White privilege offer me legitimated academic authority, but also precludes any totalizing understanding of the experiences of racialized people. This position is reiterated by Bergerson (2005), who explains that “central arguments of CRT inform how I think about race, however, because I am a white person seeing the world from a privileged per-
spective, I cannot use CRT as a method for ‘understanding’ the experiences of people of colour” (p. 59). Meanwhile, she also emphasizes the importance of White scholars’ involvement in Critical Race Theory scholarship, arguing that “the fight for social justice lies not only in the hands of people of colour” (p. 61). Therefore, by engaging a CRT lens, I may be able to “join in the effort to shift the norms for what are considered legitimate epistemologies” (Bergerson, 2005, p. 60) in early childhood education. Brandon (2003) believes this is especially important because of a current emphasis on deficit thinking within classrooms. He argues that “dismantling deficit thinking will require white teacher educators and white teachers to do much more than just recognize or respect diversity” (p. 30). Thus, my engagement with a CRT lens on a text such as the Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide (2010) is an effort to trouble the accepted epistemologies in early childhood education that maintain the oppression of young children of colour.

**Textual Analysis**

This project engaged CRT towards a textual analysis of the Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide (2010) in order to expose its underlying meanings and assumptions about race and children of colour in BC. In its most basic definition, textual analysis allows a researcher to “make an educated guess” about a text’s meanings and interpretations (McKee, 2003, p. 1). For a critical project such as mine, a text and its meaning can be read for its “effects on power relations” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 9) by “examining texts for evidence of overt and latent oppression, stereotyping, and discrimination” (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2006, p. 3). To do this, Punch (2005) emphasizes an examination of the “social production of the document” (p. 226) as well as the “social organization of the document” (p. 227) with a specific focus on questions such as “Who writes them? Who reads them? For what purposes? […] What is recorded? What is omitted? What does the writer seem to take for granted about the reader(s)? What do readers need to know in order to make sense of them?” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p. 173, cited in Punch, 2005, p. 227). In addition, of course, I conduct an examination of the “deeper meanings” (p. 227) within the text, and especially as they support the interests of dominant society (Punch, 2005).

Drawing on Fairclough’s (2003) “assumption that language is an irreducible part of social life” and therefore “that social analysis and research always has to take account of language” (p. 2), a textual analysis must especially consider the implicit meanings of the language used in the Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide (2010). However, doing so often lacks explicit procedures without engaging on a more technically linguistic level, as with Fairclough (2003). By focusing specifically on critical discourse analysis, Ifverson (2003) outlines some facets of Foucauldian discourse analysis, suggesting that researchers examine how:

- a discourse turns something into an object that can be classified, explained, acted upon, institutionalized, etc., […] may be identified by a specific terminology, as is found in scientific discourses, […] combines various concepts, […] and creates an organization of positions, and specifically subject positions… (pp. 64-65, emphasis original)

Mac Naughton (2005) draws on these concepts from Foucault as well as Derridian deconstruction. Deconstruction, used in this way, traces meaning and its creation of differences through language, towards developing a “Meaning Map” as a concrete process for analysing texts. To engage in this process, Mac Naughton’s four-step process encourages the following:

1. Seek multiple meanings by asking, ‘How many meanings can you find for this word?’
2. Seek meaning traces by asking, ‘How are the meanings we give linked to other words?’ ‘To where can we trace the origins of these meanings?’
3. Seek the limits to meaning by asking, ‘What are the assertions, assumptions, contradictions and irrationalities within your understandings and practices?’ and, ‘How do meanings limit what you consider possible for yourself and others?’
4. Seek the power effects of meaning by asking, ‘Who benefits from the meanings?’ and, ‘What meanings/voices are silenced, suppressed or marginalised?’ (p. 103).

This process – in combination with central tenets of CRT – guided the textual analysis of the Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide (2010) towards deconstructing how it racially organizes its subjects to the benefit of dominant society. Meanwhile, it is important to note that “no approach tells us the ‘truth’ about a culture” (McKee, 2003, p. 2), and that the textual interpretation within this project can only represent one consideration of the text.

**“Culture”**

Many different ideas of “culture” can be found within the Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide (2010), representing and blurring ideas of context and race. Within Reggio Emilia, the ideal use of “culture” is intended to reflect the contextual understanding of the concept. Edwards (2006) emphasizes that “culture” should not refer to geography, diversity, or multiculturalism in sociocultural theory. She suggests that the ideal use of the concept understands that each child experiences “culture” in a unique and fluid way based on the context in which she or he lives. Similar to this, Ronen (2004) points out that a
child’s cultural enjoyment and attribution should be decided by the child, where an adult’s role is to support this experience rather than determine it. This practice is hinted at in the guide, especially in its repeated assertion that children come to kindergarten with unique cultural experiences, as well as their ability to construct culture within the classroom. The guide makes this clear immediately, such as in the following quote that opens Section 2: Characteristics of Kindergarten Children: “Like all children, those of Kindergarten age are unique individuals with diverse linguistic, cultural, and experiential backgrounds, and different strengths, talents, abilities, and interests” (p. 8). However, providing this academically determined ideal encounters great challenges in its multiple understandings by early childhood educators. Most teachers who encounter sociocultural theory remain fixated on a racialized understanding of “culture” (Edwards, 2006), which is also apparent in the understanding of “culture” (Edwards, 2006), which implies that a child’s racial experiences do not occur in the present and so children in kindergarten can only work to equalize the effects from the historical racisms that have now been overcome.

The Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide (2010) makes multiple suggestions about implementing “culture” that create different racialized positions of “certain populations” with cultural “needs”

The use of an umbrella understanding of “culture” in reference to racial diversity has multiple implications for the experiences of racialized children in BC’s kindergarten program. Grover (2007) argues that ideas of multiculturalism produce a “ghostly centre” of the White “normal” society, whose elusiveness evades critique and destruction. This allows BC’s kindergarten system an illusion of social child while maintaining White supremacy and eliminating a focus on race. Additionally, it serves to “reinforce a color-blind paradigm that teaches students to ignore racial differences” (Abrams & Moio, 2009, p. 250) allowing structural inequalities around racial positions to remain ignored (Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2007). Furthermore, colour-blind discourses of diversity restrict the understanding of the disadvantaged influences of race and racism as a “thing of the past” (Pacini-Ketchabaw, White, & Armstrong de Almeida, 2006). This is exemplified in the Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide’s (2010) reference to the child’s “own and others’ cultural heritage” (p. 32), which implies that a child’s racial experiences do not occur in the present and so children in kindergarten can only work to equalize the effects from the historical racisms that have now been overcome.

Racial Binary

These ambiguous uses of “culture” throughout BC’s Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide (2010) are instrumental in positioning racialized children in different forms of subordination to the White majority. The “certain populations” identified as having cultural needs – Aboriginal and ESL children – are simultaneously racialized and diluted with the racially-charged use of “culture.” Creating these categories is a contentious issue; while CRT identifies “race” as a social construct, it argues that understanding its social and political reality mandates a claim to racial categories (Haney Lopez, 1995). However, the guide seems to identify only certain racialized groups, which is usually done for a purpose (Delgado, 2001): to pay some lip service to their struggles while more dominantly positioning them as deficient (Grover, 2007). Doing this reifies the dominant position of a White-centric system of normalizing White children and supporting their ascension (Delgado, 2001). Identifying “problems” through racialization imposes a compartmentalization onto children, fielding them into certain inclusion groups (Grover, 2007), which are not only understood as “mediating variables” affecting otherwise “normal” development but also “collapse and erase complexity and heterogeneity within, across, and amongst these groups” (Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., 2006, p. 103). This cultural essentialization and “Othering” of Aboriginal and ESL (English Second Language) children creates implicitly deficit understandings of the racialized children attending kindergarten in BC.

The Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide (2010) makes multiple sugges-
tions about implementing “culture” that create different racialized positions of “certain populations” with cultural “needs.” In the case of students learning English as their second language, the guide explains their needs: “many students are unfamiliar with the English makes multiple suggestions about implementing “culture” that create different racialized positions of “certain populations” with cultural “needs.” In the case of students learning English as their second language, the guide explains their needs: “many students are unfamiliar with the English alphabet and with Canadian traditions, history, culture, education systems, and lifestyles. ESL services therefore focus both on teaching English and providing an orientation to the cultures of BC” (p. 3).

In this explanation, the guide emphasizes assimilation and renders them as invisible as possible under the umbrella of “culture.” Meanwhile, Aboriginal children are framed in a very different way. Specific goals for supporting the Aboriginal kindergarten population involve practices through which “[l]earning about Indigenous culture and history at an age-appropriate level in Kindergarten gives Aboriginal children a richer understanding of their province and community, and provides them with a sense of place and belonging in their school” (Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide, p. 2). Under these goals, “Aboriginal culture” becomes a tangible, static, learnable entity, which is used towards the implicit liberal ideals of assimilation and active Canadian citizenship held for Aboriginal populations (Brayboy, 2006). Through this practice, Aboriginal children are positioned as hyper-visible, through which they are “at once an ‘other’ and yet entirely knowable and visible” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 70, emphasis added). In order to preserve the hyper-visible Aboriginal child and the invisible “foreigner,” the Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide (2010) creates a racial binary that is not exclusive to the education of kindergarten children.

CRT and its extensions, such as LatCrit – an extension that centralizes the unique forms of marginalization experienced by members of the Latino/a community in the United States – have identified and critiqued a Black/White binary in the United States. This binary creates the Black person as the most intriguing yet most undesirable non-White from whom all others must distance themselves (Espinoza & Harris, 1997). I argue that this is how the Aboriginal child is positioned within the Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide (2010). First of all, with the last Indian Residential School closing only 14 years ago (CBC Archives, 2009), their increased public acknowledgement is centralizing Canada’s history of systematic colonization of Indigenous nations in understanding Canada’s history of racism (Harding, 2005). Additionally, the guide’s explanation that “all schools are located on traditional Aboriginal territory” (p. 23) reflects an emphasis on the ways in which Canadian culture has been built on White exploitation of Indigenous people and inspires liberal policy to pay reparative lip service to this history. Doing so positions the Aboriginal population as the most central and visible victim of racism in Canada. Meanwhile, Aboriginal people have also become one of the greatest perceived threats to White privilege, especially via media coverage of land disputes (Harding, 2005). For these reasons, the Aboriginal population has been situated for labelling as the quintessential “Other” race in Canada.

“Aboriginal culture” is romanticized by early childhood scholars who indicate that “[t]he Reggio Emilia experience confirms First Nations/Aboriginal understandings of the importance of looking within families, communities and cultures to find our own visions for young children” (Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., 2007, p. 9). By likening Aboriginal traditions to the rampantly popular Reggio Emilia framework, scholars are transparently appreciating and appropriating certain aspects of Indigenous cultures towards their own agenda in the field. Thus, Indigenous culture has become almost as “Disneyified” as Johnson (1999) considers Reggio Emilia, and thus romanticized with a significantly weaker focus on authenticity. The Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide (2010) capitalizes on this romanticization of the Aboriginal population of Canada towards satisfying current trends of integrating culture into early childhood practice. I argue that the Aboriginal child has thus become the ultimate and feared deficiency through this process of rendering her or him hyper-visible. As the first “certain population” we learn about (p. 2), Aboriginal children are immediately positioned as the greatest source of moral panic with the greatest cultural needs, which is reiterated throughout the guide.

The guide presents a discourse of personally meaningful cultural integration as integral to the “success” of kindergarten children – an independently problematic idea that will be discussed later in this article – and isolates “certain populations” with cultural needs. From this discourse, it might be assumed that a greater emphasis on cultural integration may indicate a population more strongly considered “at risk.” With this understanding, the Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide (2010) uses examples of cultural integration to keep Aboriginal children in a highlighted position of most “needy” and thus more fearfully deficient. Supplemented with examples, the guide provides not only a theoretical perspective but also a practical handbook for kindergarten teachers. In terms of integrating cultural materials, activities, and understandings, every single example exploits the romanticism of Aboriginal culture and suggests that they have the greatest “need.” For example, the guide suggests “teachers can provide opportunities for students to hear Aboriginal stories about the environment, traditions and, and history” (p. 32),
as well as providing families with “notices about community events (e.g., Aboriginal community events) that may be of interest to children and their families” (p. 46).

There is an attempt to do this sensitively, by suggesting the consultation of communities, Elders, and pointing out that “every BC school district has an Aboriginal Education coordinator who can provide information about Aboriginal protocols” (p. 31). However, the implications maintain an “Imaginary Indian” (Francis, 1992) who is tokenized as an intriguing spectacle and kept at a good distance from the White norm. Examples such as the above suggest a static, dominant understanding of what “culture” is. However, in explaining perspectives of TribalCrit – the extension of CRT that aims to put the experiences of Indigenous peoples at the centre of its critique – Brayboy (2006) emphasizes that “culture is simultaneously fluid or dynamic, and fixed or stable […] culture shifts and flows with changes in contexts, situations, people, and purposes” (p. 436). Thus, for many Indigenous populations, culture is not something that can be “learned” or displayed in a learning centre, as is suggested for the “cultural exploration area with hands-on and visual materials that teach about local Aboriginal peoples” (p. 34). Using it as such is a disservice to authentic cultural practices and the people they profess to represent. This disservice contradicts the professed goals of the guide’s integration of Aboriginal culture and emphasizes its liberal agenda of racialization and deficit positioning.

While the creation of an Aboriginal/White binary within the Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide (2010) serves to strongly disadvantage and disenfranchise Aboriginal children, it also accomplishes the erasure of all other racialized children in BC’s kindergartens. While Espinoza and Harris (1997) posit that the Black/White binary is exclusionary partly because of its analysis of colour as the main factor in racism, an idea that does not apply to all racialized minorities, the Aboriginal/White binary in the guide emphasizes a cultural appropriation that is not present for other children. The guide’s regular reiteration of examples of Aboriginal culture imply that these are important because of their connectedness with Canada and its history, especially in emphasizing all schools as located on Aboriginal territories. While this makes an important (albeit weak) recognition of Canada’s colonial history, its overemphasis suggests an appropriation of Aboriginal culture as an extension of Canadian culture. Meanwhile, all other minorities are thus excluded from what is considered “Canada,” become positioned as “foreign,” and are erased culturally and racially.

As previously mentioned, the only other “certain population” with cultural “needs” that is identified alongside Aboriginal children is the group of children learning English as a Second Language (ESL). With a cultural discourse aiming towards assimilation, the Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide (2010) emphasizes teaching them “Canadian traditions, history, culture, education systems and lifestyles […] providing an orientation to the cultures of British Columbia” (p. 3), accompanied by a photograph of a little girl likely meant to represent BC’s large Chinese population. In the first place, this description of ESL “needs” in kindergarten reiterates a stereotype of the Chinese foreigner in a province with an actual Chinese population of about 500,000 people (StatsCan, 2006). This automatically identifies linguistic minority children as “foreign” to Canada and its culture, and positions them as socially, culturally, and linguistically deficient and White, “naturally” Canadian, children as “normal.” Here, the many uses of the word “culture” aims to support a liberal fallacy of multiculturalism while ensuring that Canadian cultural goals overtake those of racialized children. Mitchell (2003) exposes the problematic nature of multiculturalism, identifying it as a concept used to unify a diverse group towards the creation of “national citizens able and willing to work through difference for the nation” (p. 392). Thus, by recognizing difference under the ambiguous umbrella of “culture,” the Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide (2010) hopes to control this difference for the purpose of liberal schooling.

While the Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide (2010) acknowledges the, at least, “cultured” position of children learning ESL, the Aboriginal/White binary within it eliminates all space for racialized children who are not newcomers to Canada and/or English. These children are not afforded a culture (or race) aside from the overarching, disregarded discourse of individualized culture. In this case, the guide implies that teachers are expected to be colour-blind, which creates an atmosphere of White-washed disadvantage for children who experience the realities of racialization (Pacini-Ketchabaw & Schecter, 2002). Not identified as having specific cultural “needs,” these children are grouped into the non-specifying referent to “all” children and are expected to benefit more or less equally from a full day kindergarten program as White children. This precipitates the fallible early childhood education fallacy of a future meritocracy that relies on the “catching up” of children in the kindergarten year.

Meritocracy

The Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide (2010) professes that a child’s early years are foundational for “lifelong learning and success in school and beyond” (p. 3), indicating that kindergarten children are in a critical period that must be taken advantage of for the sake of their futures. Through this section, I argue that this framing of kindergarten provides foundation for a liberal system that claims status as a meritocracy: a system that emphasizes a fallacy of equating internal factors with success (Mitchell, 2003). Accepted throughout
the education system,

[t]his race-neutral perspective purports to see deficiency as an individual phenomenon. Thus, instruction is conceived as a generic set of teaching skills that should work for all students. When these strategies or skills fail to achieve desired results, the students, not the techniques, are found to be lacking. (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 30)

This ideology successfully erases the effects of White privilege on the real racial disadvantage that people of colour experience in educational and economic spheres, and thus reinforces them (Taylor, 2009). With its ambiguous use of “culture,” the Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide (2010) seemingly frames kindergarten to function, in part, as a “bridge” for young children into a meritocratic system.

Kindergartens seem to play a unique role in creating the veneer of a meritocracy by recognizing young children as entering these programs with unequal levels of opportunity. This is quite evident in the guide’s assertion that “not all children have the same opportunities to develop their potential” (p. 1). However, by reflecting the powerful discourse of children as developing, the Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide (2010) purports to equalize this opportunity by helping certain children “catch up.” In addition to hoping for the ambiguous and White-washed “happiness in adulthood” (p. 16), the guide aims to “help each child achieve grade level proficiencies across all areas of the curriculum: academic, social-emotional, and physical learning and development” (p. 26). However, this standard reflects the ideals of the dominant voice of developmental psychology (Elliot, 2010), which delineates “features of white middle class US society” as universal and normal (Burban, 1994, p. 51). As such, those who must “catch up” are structurally disadvantaged, but framed as “victims” of inadequate parents and therefore the very children who full day kindergarten programs are positioned to save. For example, with its colour-blind lens, the Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide (2010) indicates that “children from upper income families [are] a group likely to have accumulated the most skills prior to school entry” (p. 25).

I argue that the framing of kindergarten provides foundation for a liberal system that claims status as a meritocracy: a system that emphasizes a fallacy of equating internal factors with success

(Mitchell, 2003).

While this explanation does not attribute the implied educational disadvantage of a lower income to internal factors of the child, it is the parents – rather than society – that remain the scapegoat through rationalizations that poor parents are unable to offer the same sorts of experiences that are available to parents with more money.

Current early childhood research from the University of British Columbia mirrors this, stating that “low-income parents are less likely to become involved in their child’s education than middle and upper-class parents” (Ford & Amaral, 2006, p. 10) and even that “parents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are at risk for becoming the least involved in their child’s education” (Ford & Amaral, 2006, p. 9, emphasis added). Edgerton, Peters, and Roberts (2008) continue along this line, emphasizing that it is important to engage children in poverty through early childhood programs because their parents cannot properly prepare them, which leads to unequal education. Furthermore, by professing that a child’s early years are foundational for “lifelong learning and success in school and beyond” (p. 3), the guide positions kindergarten children – especially those at a disadvantage – as the subjects of moral panic, in a critical period that must be taken advantage of for the sake of their futures. Not only does this panic over the education of children in poverty take the blame off of society and onto the parents, but also White-washes the racialized aspects of this “problem.” This satisfies a liberal mandate of colour-blindness while positioning the education system and its switch to full day kindergarten as the heroic “equalizer” of kindergarten children in British Columbia.

Under the problematic goal of tolerance – exposed earlier as insufficient by Ronen (2004) – the Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide (2010) emphasizes the diversity of children that kindergarten teachers will be encountering in their programs. Underlying these assertions, such as “whatever culture, language, aptitudes, skills, and interests children bring to kindergarten, it is the school’s role to support all children’s learning and development” (p. 26), is a deletion of race and a problematization of difference. The hidden message within this implies that these differences are problems that kindergarten teachers must endeavour in order to “fix” the problem of difference, including (or especially) the problem of race. This “race problem” has been imbedded in the practice of kindergarten since the early 20th century, during which it was used in attempts to “fix” the supposed deficiencies of Black people, and reduce their future membership in gangs, as well as “turn non-English speaking immigrants into Americans” (Prentice, 2009, p. 175). Furthermore, despite the guide’s emphasis that “[e]arly learners are also unique in their movement along the developmental continuum and teaching practices must be responsive to this wide variation” (p. 8), Pacini-Ketchabaw and Schecter (2002) found that the majority of practicing teachers in their study prescribe to an
deficits, with or without diversity training. In both the teachers in this study and the Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide (2010), differences - including “culturally” based ones – are accepted as influencing the skills, abilities, and temperaments of five-year-old children, but are considered “problems” still to be “solved” in order to facilitate a future meritocracy.

Therefore, the switch from full day kindergarten for “certain populations” to an emphasis on a full day kindergarten that “benefits all British Columbia children” (p. 3, emphasis added), represents a liberal commitment to “equal opportunity” for learning and success. This succeeds in erasing the ways in which these opportunities are impacted by race and racism, instead framing them as part of an idealized liberal meritocracy. Pacini-Ketchabaw (2007) points out that the discourse of “all children” [...] assumes colorblindness” (p. 105) and is used in early childhood policies in attempts to bleach out racial differences. This form of culture is mirrored in Grover’s (2007) argument against segregational programs. He argues that the integration of cultural minority groups (with or without integration of their cultures) teaches tolerance, which enables equal opportunity. Unfortunately, liberal forms of “equal opportunity” lead only to a false belief in meritocracy (Perkins, Nelm, & Smyth, 2004) and so ignore the systemic factors that influence academic success.

A 125-year-old system, kindergartens began as a reform tool of the progressive movement intended to “save” poor and immigrant children, identified as the “last resort of society to help build the next generation” (Cuban, 1992, p. 168). Clearly, this view has not undergone much evolution, as the Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide (2010) proclaims “effective programs available to all children improve the well-being of society by reducing inequalities, particularly in health and education” (p. 6). However, when combined with the current early childhood discourses of culture-based practices, the influence of race is simultaneously there and not there; teachers are to recognize it, extract value from it, and then erase it in a system in which colour-blind uses of “culture” have taken the place of race. The liberal value that teachers are to extract from their racial understandings of children come from the Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide’s (2010) appropriation of the children’s “cultures,” as it emphasizes that “environments [that] reflect the children’s communities and cultures [...] help to stimulate both learning and a sense of belonging” (p. 40). Thus, the point of implementing cultural programming is to improve learning outcomes through a commitment to the education system, both of which strongly support dedication to a future meritocracy.

Extracting this value is especially poignant in the guide’s appropriation of integrating forms of Aboriginal culture and eliminating the differences of ESL students. The former replicates societal practices where the “allocation of resources continues to support academic, bureaucratic, and media expertise to define and address problems and solutions for Aboriginal peoples who continue to be excluded in large measure from control of the process” (Battiste, Bell, Findlay, Findlay, & Henderson, 2005, p. 11, emphasis added). Identifying Aboriginal children as a particularly needy group, the guide attempts to “solve” their particular needs by use of their own forms of “culture.” At the same time, children learning English as a Second language are “fixed” by immersing them in “Canadian” culture while bleaching their racialization. Thus, the children identified as having cultural “needs” are posed to be “caught up” to the White norm by the end of the kindergarten year, at which point they may be included in the liberal ideology of meritocracy. Pacini-Ketchabaw and Schecter (2002) recognize that this discourse of needing to “catch up” certain children situates kindergarten teachers towards disadvantaging children from minority groups of race, ethnicity, and language. However, dominant early childhood education discourse still aims to improve outcomes for “culturally diverse children” (Pteriorowski, 2009). Thus, kindergarten practice still holds the assumption that schooling exists partly to “help ‘disadvantaged’ students whose race and class background has left them lacking necessary knowledge, social skills, ability and cultural capital” (Yosso, 2005, p. 70) towards academic goals of the majority and successful integration into the future meritocracy.

Conclusion
In light of these critiques, what can be said about practical uses of the Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide (2010) in facilitating BC’s structural changes in its kindergarten program? More than anything they inspire more questions. Further understanding is needed of how liberal discourses of deficit, meritocracy, and colour-blindness can be removed from the classrooms of even the youngest children, who are often overlooked in discussions of anti-oppressive education. Additionally, how do these discourses from within the guide manifest in actual kindergarten classrooms? How, if at all, is the guide influencing the ways in which kindergarten teachers plan their classroom environments? While policies hold powerful impact in real lives, they do not tell the entire story. Are children resisting the discourses of their deficiencies and contributing to their classroom environments in unexpected ways? To explore this, narratives of kindergarten children of colour would be valuable in challenging the “objective” racist discourses imbedded in the Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide (2010). What might be the most telling exploration is the varied understandings of “culture” that are finding their ways into actual kindergarten classrooms. Hopefully, work towards authentic ideas of culture as well as a recognition of the reality of racialization in young children’s lives will help inform practice that creates a kindergarten environment that truly recognizes the value in its children.

References


Art Making as a Political and Ethical Practice

Vanessa Clark

Abstract
This paper is an effort to explore arts in early childhood education and care. Drawing on the author’s master’s thesis, autoethnography is engaged to open up discussions of the politics and ethics of arts practice. This paper presents some common ways that art making is approached in the classroom and suggests some ways to disrupt these approaches. In conclusion, a useful tool is suggested to support this process of disruption.

Paintbrushes are strewn on the wooden floor beneath the child's body. A black bowl holding red paint and a white bowl holding yellow paint dot the ground around her. Mila crouches over her knees in front of a sheet of plexiglas, her feet spread to support the weight and angle of her body. The length and width of a red paintbrush suggest how Mila’s hand might connect to wrap around it. Mila shifts her body so her arm can stretch to lift the paintbrush. Her fingers wrap around the short red brush and support it. The wooden end connects with the plexiglas and machines a tapping sound. Another paintbrush evokes a response from Mila’s body. She bends over her knees and shifts her legs so her other arm can extend to let her hand meet the paintbrush. Her hand is offered to support the smooth, black, wooden body. She pulls the brush up close to her chest and embraces it, while her other arm helps the red brush to connect with the plexiglas once again: tap, tap, tap.

As educators, we may approach Mila’s body in certain ways. We may come to see Mila as acting on the materials she uses. We might suggest, since she uses the wrong end of her paintbrush, that she does not yet know how to paint. We may conclude that she is not able to engage in the prescribed art project in the same way as the older children. We might approach Mila as a toddler in the sensory motor stage.

In this article, I offer provocations for approaching Mila differently. I explore some common ways that early childhood educators approach art making in the classroom and suggest some ways to rethink these approaches. This article draws on my master’s thesis, presenting ideas and contents therein. In this paper’s first section, The Politics of Art Making, I explore how art making with a predetermined goal becomes enacted within the space of art, how the ways educators think structure what children can do, and how art is seen as representational. In the second section, Rethinking Art Making, I explore an alternative theory/practice and how it might help to rethink the space of art.

The lens through which I view art in my research and practice is one in which matter has its own force (Bennett, 2010). From this perspective, when an artist engages in a creative process, the materials and environment make themselves intelligible to her through their own unique qualities, movements, and reverberations. Bennett (2010) contends that because we have the power to affect other bodies, such as paint, for example, or a paintbrush, we also cannot escape being affected by these bodies. Artist, materials, ideas, and the environment continually come together, connect, and break apart. We can never know in advance how the artist, ideas, materials, and environment will come together and connect.

The Politics of Art Making
I believe it is important to open up the discussion of art making as a political space so that we, as educators, can see that what we do with children is not a neutral activity. Every space in the classroom, including the space of art, is worthy of attention and discussion. The three topics I discuss below—‘neoliberal art making’, ‘art making as clean/mess’, and ‘art represents what the child is thinking’—are typical issues I have come across in my practice. I offer them here to open a discussion about the politics of art in the classroom.

Neoliberal Art Making
A neoliberal approach—that is, one that desires “end-products and ... the technologies that will produce those end-products” (Davies & Gannon, 2009, p. 3)—can be found in the practice of art in ECEC: Typically, the goal of art making in the early childhood setting is to produce an art object that can be hung on the wall to show to the child’s family. In this mode, early childhood educators suggest a specific project for the children to do: “Today we are going to make Christmas decorations” or “Today we are going to make a collage.” The example below demonstrates how neoliberal structures art making in many early childhood centres.
What does this artwork set in motion?

Collage is a typical art activity in the centres in which I worked. One day in particular, the children were given sparkles, buttons, bits of paper, and glue to paste onto a CD. The children had a clear goal for their work. Children decorated their own CD, and the CD was mounted on the wall to show parents what their children had been doing over the day. When I spoke to the teacher who did this project with the children, I noticed she was proud that some of the children had decorated more than one CD. Over the next few days I wondered, “What does this artwork set in motion?”

One day as the children were playing contentedly, the teachers and I stood in front of the artwork talking about it. One teacher expressed that she really liked this particular project. We admired the arrangements of the sparkles, buttons, and pieces of paper on the CDs. Another teacher pointed to a particular CD that was her favourite. I noticed that she liked how it was organized.

This activity is a way of making art as a mass production, where each child engages with materials in a factory style to produce pieces that are mounted on the wall. The educators engage in comparing the pieces of art against standards of order and organization. These standards are measurable and can be ticked off on the programming guides; the art activity fits neatly within the time frames of an organized and scheduled day (Pratt, 2009; Tarr, 1995).

When the goal is to produce an art object, the process of making the art becomes lost. A neoliberal approach to art has implications for how we conceptualize creativity and diversity, as I illustrate in the next example.

Artwork with a goal: Overlooking creativity and diversity

It is dark outside and the windows are fogged up. I hear the wind thrashing through the trees outside. A teacher, the children, and I are all sitting around the art table. The teacher holds up three linked red and green chains. Today, we are making Christmas decorations for our room. The teacher and I hand out some saucers, glue, and glue sticks to the children. A child screeches and moans. Another child contests, and a fight ensues over a saucer with glue. With a bellowing voice, the teacher directs the children to share and indicates how they should go about doing so. Then she explains how the art project should be done. The children are directed, with a brief demonstration using an example piece, to place some glue on the ends of these strips. She shows them how to bend the strip and press the ends together. She overlaps the edges and presses them with her fingers. Then she hands each child a red strip and a green one. She and I stand and watch the children with their task. I see how each child answers the voices of the glue and the paper in a different way. Some push their glue stick hard into the glue, and the glue answers back by globbing onto the stick. These children then wrestle the glue, trying to balance the glob on the stick and smearing it across the paper again and again. Others barely push their stick into the glue, and the glue responds by gently caressing the tip of the stick. The teacher grumbles; she is upset with a child for taking too much glue. I wonder what political, cultural, and economic norms and structures are giving her response. I am silent as I feel the tension growing as the children proceed. I notice how calm my body is in response to the children’s intra-actions with the materials, and how agitated the teacher is becoming. A smile creeps onto my face as I look from child to child. I notice a creation in front of each child that is different from the goal the teacher set out. I say in a light voice, “Look, everyone has done something different. Sari’s strips could be a basket, or wait, it could be a hat.” I put her basket on my head. “Look at Brandon’s creation.” I say. I see how excited Brandon is with what he made. He has named them “fings.” Jo’s are connected on one side only. She holds hers up to show everyone and suggests that she has made a butterfly. I look to the teacher and notice her staring at the table. She is upset; she does not know how to put the children’s pieces together to make a chain. She does not want to put the ones she made with the ones the children made. As the children move on through the room, the teacher stays behind to take apart each creation the children made and rebuild them into a neat and tidy chain for Christmas decoration.

Within the neoliberal art curriculum that governs early childhood practice, cultural, social, and political norms come to inscribe the creative activities of children. The art project described above is inscribed with the stereotypical consumer-religious Christmas, where we reiterate traditional decoration for the centre using the colours red and green. When educators take a neoliberal approach to the practice of art making, the relationship between educator and child becomes that of enforcing the “correct” goal-driven behaviours upon the child (Davies & Gannon, 2009; Tarr, 1995).

Art Making as Clean/Mess

A common occurrence in the classroom is to read and respond to the children’s explorations with materials by promoting cleanliness and avoiding mess. Examples of concerns that might be provoked by such a focus are “taking too much glue,” “getting paint on clothes,” “getting crayon on the table,” or “mixing the play dough colours.” The next example demonstrates how the binary of clean/mess comes to matter within the art space.
Disrupting an artistic process: 
Structuring power

Varied patterns of yellow paint are smeared on the paper-covered table. The patterns may be read as intentional and mounted on the wall, but to me they are markings from an event that just took place. Brushes lay strewn around the table, chairs, and floor. I sit stiffly in my chair as I watch the last child with the brushes. I notice my body become more and more uncomfortable as the tension mounts in the room. The paintbrush is cradled in Sarah’s right hand and is moving slowly on her left arm. Her arms are suspended in the air, and she is silent. I look to the other teacher in the room and notice her face becoming red. She moves to another spot in the room where she does not have to see Sarah. The tension in my body melts away as I become engrossed in what Sarah is doing. I think to myself, “I have never seen anything like this before.” I begin to lose myself in the moment. Sarah’s arms and hands are suspended in the thickness of space. Breath is slow and heavy in my chest. The smell of tempera paint lingers in the air. Supporting the paintbrush in her hand, Sarah’s right arm is raised, and the bristles from the paintbrush move back and forth slowly across the skin of her left arm. The paintbrush is then guided toward her mouth and is embraced by her teeth and lips. Paint creeps from the paintbrush held in her mouth onto her right arm. With the right arm receiving the paint, the call of a second paintbrush is answered. Sarah’s right arm picks up this paintbrush and allows the bristles to move across her left arm. The paintbrush held in her mouth continues to move across her right arm. A circular connection is formed between two arms, a hand, two paintbrushes, and a mouth. A surge of energy pulses up from my legs through my core and to my arms. A small thought slips into my head: “I have found joy in the fragility of losing (my)self in the intra-actions with (an)other.” The beauty and intensity of this moment moves me. All of a sudden, our focus is broken by a loud, angry voice. The teacher wants Sarah to stop. I look at Sarah and notice a faint smile on her face as she takes the brush from her mouth. My stomach is in knots, and I feel my face become hot and red. I taste bitter and find it hard to swallow. My chest aches, and it is hard to breathe. I am reminded that the children are not supposed to put things in their mouths and that it is best if their clothes are not covered in paint. This might cause the children’s parent(s) to complain. I go over to Sarah and say to her, “I am so sorry, but we need to stop now.” I feel my eyes well with tears, and I start to understand how disruptions can become violent. I hear a voice scream in my head, “How can we get educators to open their practice?” I feel my acts of disruption being met with the structuring power of policy and a fear of difference. As I clean the table, I wonder how I can disrupt this powerful structure and view it from another angle.

In the above example, the child was directed to stop painting her body. Her clothing was getting dirty. Also, she had put a paintbrush in her mouth; the centre’s policy is to discourage such behaviour because children may spread sickness this way. How we think about art and how art should be done influences how we respond to the artwork of children. Thinking that art should be clean and orderly structures how we respond to the children and the materials and limits what the children can do (Tarr, 1995).

Art Represents What the Child Is Thinking

The idea that materials are passive, that the child acts on the materials to represent already formed ideas with the materials, is common in the practice of ECEC. When we look at a child’s work, such as a drawing, we might ask the child, “What were you intending to say?” or “What is it?” This understanding of art privileges the rational senses. The meaning is seen to be in the object. In this sense, art is representative (Kind, 2010; O’Sullivan, 2006; Tarr, 1990, 1995). When we take the view that children’s artwork expresses already formed ideas, we risk overlooking what else the artwork could be. For example, when children explore paint with their hands, we might look at this as a meeting. The child might be experiencing the texture, colour, and consistency of the paint. This meeting might evoke a variety of responses and questions from the child, and these would not necessarily be verbal but might be expressed by the child’s movements with the paint and other materials. Here, the child is not necessarily expressing already formed ideas, but thinking with paint (Mazzei, 2010).

Rethinking Art Making

As a childcare provider, I have come to question why we privilege the identity “artist” as one for adults. Why do we not recognize children as artists? How might our practice of art in the classroom change if we took children seriously as artists?

On November 27, 2010, I went to hear Laiwan. An artist for many years, she showcases her art in various galleries, including the Vancouver Art Gallery. I went to hear her speak about a piece she had created with bus tickets she had collected. With the tickets, she wrote a poem that was laminated as several large hanging objects. She explained that she collected the tickets more than 20 years ago, and that it took her about ten years to collect them. When she collected the tickets, she did not know she would make them into an art piece; she just really liked them (Laiwan, personal communication, November 27, 2010). When Laiwan said this, it reminded me of the children at the centres in which I work—how the children often collect particular items, such as buttons from the art shelf, and stash them in their pockets. I remember a moment I had with a child at a three-to-five centre when Thia showed me the rocks she had meticulously collected outside and kept in her pocket. As I looked at the rocks I noticed how each one was special, either clear, entirely white, or cream coloured.
Thia held some of these tiny rocks in her small hands close to her face as she marvelled at them with wide eyes. She wanted to take the rocks home and put them into her treasure chest. I gave her the space to put the rocks into her bag to take home. Later, hearing Laiwan speak about her artistic process with the bus tickets made me happy that I had given Thia the space to take the rocks home.

This moment challenges the boundaries of art and may disrupt the structure of neoliberal art making. Materials might be collected from the art shelf or outside, based on a felt connection and as part of the artistic process. Art making may not involve a goal. As early childhood educators, we might expand our view of art making by asking questions, such as: Where can art take place? Does it always happen at the art table? What can art involve? Instead of the artwork representing ideas that are already formed, ideas might emerge during the artistic process from connections with the materials and the environment.

The Voice of Materials

Sylvia Kind (2010), an artist and teacher of early childhood educators, asks: What if we took the view that materials and the non-human world have a voice? How might such a view enrich and maybe help our practice with children become worldly? Below I present an example from my practice where I attempt to engage the voices of materials for political action.

Assembling-politics

It smells like the first rain on dry earth. We are all huddled under the roof outside around a large, thick piece of paper. I feel the cold cement on my legs as I watch the crayons move their way from child to child. First, the crayons connect with the children’s hands and the paper. This I suspected, and I watch how the crayons lie on their sides and make thick marks with the paper. Then my attention is broken. A crayon finds my hand. I look into Damita’s eyes, as if she is acting on the crayon and defining the crayon’s destiny. The crayon tickles my hand, and a surge of energy pulses through my body. My face lights up and I roll my head back. “That tickles, Damita.” I look deep into her eyes, and we smile at each other as the crayon tickles my hand. Suddenly, the crayon marks my coat. I look down to see a red strike on my sleeve. I say, “Not on my coat, please.” Then a green crayon comes close to my coat and marks it. I say, “I just asked you not to draw on my coat, please. I need to stand up now. When you did that, it showed me that I can’t trust you right now.” I stand paralysed. I am quiet as I look at the red and green marks on my grey coat. I wonder what political, cultural, and economic norms are structuring my intra-actions with this child, the crayons, and my coat. This grey piece of fabric and the way we treat it is inscribed with consumerism. It suggests an image of class and gender norms. This coat cost me money, and it needs to be clean and well kept to hold its social value. I bring in trust as a way to excuse my love affair with my coat, as though trust is a question to be addressed in this situation. But trust is not the issue at stake. The issue is the challenge Damita has made to my love for clothes.

Over the next few days, I don’t find time to clean my coat. Now and then, I look down at the red and green marks on my sleeve. I feel Damita with me and wonder about the force of a crayon. If only for a moment, the marks make me stutter. I am puzzled by these red and green marks that I have grown to care about. The crayons have marked more than my coat; they have marked me.

After a few days of sitting with my red and green marks, I respond to Damita’s actions again. It is morning, and I find Damita next to the shed. I kneel down in front of her. I have no idea what I am going to say. My chest feels warm, and I feel my heart beat deeply. I look into Damita’s eyes and say, “Remember this red mark?” I point to my sleeve. “Remember when we were drawing over there?” I see her frown and turn her head down, as if she is ashamed of herself. I continue, “Whenever I look at this mark, I think of you and that red crayon, and how you both touched and moved me.” She smiles and wraps her arms around me, and then quickly runs off. I smile as I think about what was just disrupted. I could worry that she might now think it is acceptable to draw on a teacher’s coat. I could take my response as reinforcing bad behaviour. Instead, I think to myself, “How can we allow ourselves to be affected and become transformed by our intra-actions with children?”

Art making can challenge economic, cultural, and social norms and ideologies. It is a political and ethical practice that can be transformative (Pratt, 2009).

Art as a Process

What if, instead of focusing on the products of children’s artistic activity, we looked at art making as a process (Tarr, 1990)? We might notice how the child pushes the paintbrush into the paint and how the paint speaks back by globbing onto the bristles. We might notice children exploring by using their bodies as a canvas, feeling how the paint and bristles move over their skin. The collisions of different materials, such as paint, paintbrush, clay, fabric, and stone with the child’s body activate different potential explorations and movements. The body engages with the materials and the materials engage with the body (Kind, 2010; Lenz Taguchi, 2010; O’Sullivan, 2006). This lens that I have roughly sketched is how I view an immanent relational materialist theoretical framework. Through this lens, art as a process can involve “encounters and negotiations” (Kind, 2010, p. 125). Thinking, in this view, is a material embodied practice (Sullivan, 2008). In the following example from my practice, we might see the embodiment of materials.
What does yellow do?

I am rummaging through the closet with not much luck. I am trying to find materials for the children. I finally take the pencils and paper. I spread them out over the table. I invite the children over and watch them meet the materials. I watch as they move the pencils around and respond to the colours. This provokes me to pick up the yellow pencil and ask Sasha, “What does yellow do?” Sasha looks at me and smiles. He takes a deep breath and begins to bob up and down and blow air and sounds out his mouth. I nod and say, “Oh, that’s what yellow does.” Sasha nods, and I give him the yellow pencil. With wide eyes, he begins to make yellow circles on the paper. We spend some time with yellow, and then I hold out the green pencil and ask, “What does green do?” Sasha hops from foot to foot and waves his arms around while making sharp sounds with his breath.

Art can be an embodied process that engages all senses (Cole & McIntyre, 2004). The example above illuminates the effect of the non-human world on the body. Not only are the yellow circles an act of creation (Tarr, 1990), Sasha’s movements and sounds of doing yellow might be seen as performative. Artists’ work can include such actions as performance art and happenings. These types of artwork do not necessarily involve a traditional art object. With these artistic gestures, the artist’s body may become part of the artwork. So when a child explores where paint might go, and the paint travels onto the child’s body, we might pause and wonder how this child might be responding to the conversation of artists. To respond to children’s arts explorations in this way means that we become the audience.

“What does yellow do?” Sasha looks at me and smiles. He takes a deep breath and begins to bob up and down and blow air and sounds out his mouth. I nod and say, “Oh, that’s what yellow does.” Sasha nods, and I give him the yellow pencil. With wide eyes, he begins to make yellow circles on the paper. We spend some time with yellow, and then I hold out the green pencil and ask, “What does green do?” Sasha hops from foot to foot and waves his arms around while making sharp sounds with his breath.

Experiencing with Art Provocations

As I began to focus on the process of art making in my practice, I decided to set up art explorations differently. Inspired by the work of artist Sylvia Kind (2010), I might choose new materials for the children to explore, such as charcoal, chalk, tissue paper, clay, cardboard, sand, cloth, wool, yarn, plexiglas, and pastels, to name just a few. I might set them up on a table, the floor, outside, or inside going outside and in various ways. I might place long strips of paper on the floor and set tempera paint in bowls on the paper. I might arrange mirrors on a table and provide paper and crayons for the children to use (Pacini-Ketchabaw with Nxumalo, 2010). I might set up clay on a drop cloth spread upon the floor along with other objects, such as stones, and invite the children to explore the materials. In these explorations, we can never know in advance what will happen. The hope is to experiment with the children, and to move with them (Lenz Taguchi, 2010). If I think that the way the children and materials are engaging another might be “unsafe,” I ask if there are any ways I might introduce something into the situation to alter what is happening. This might be something as simple as a new idea, question, or material. For example, the paint is getting underneath the children’s feet; they are excited about “feet painting” but I am worried they might slip. Then, how about introducing paper by placing it on the floor, taping down the edges, and allowing the children to explore their new discovery? It might also be helpful to critically reflect on this idea of safety and unpack this term within arts practice. Many “safety” issues come to regulate the bodies within arts exploration, as in the example above where Sarah was asked to take the paintbrush from her mouth. Safety, in this instance, is connected to a fear of sickness, which we might critically address.

Pedagogical Documentation: A Useful Tool

In my quest to enrich my practice with young children, I have found pedagogical documentation (Olsson, 2009; Lenz Taguchi, 2010; Pacini-Ketchabaw with Nxumalo, 2010) to be a useful tool for learning and growth. This is a method of documenting what the children are doing, to make their learning visible. Early childhood educators may take pictures, document conversations, and keep the work that children produce; later they can look at these items together (Lenz Taguchi, 2010). The process can help educators to become aware of what political, cultural, and economic norms might be present within art making in the classroom. It might also show any goals set out by the educators, and what norms these goals might suggest. Further, this process might make visible the relationship between children, materials, and educators. How are the educators’ goals affecting what the children and materials can do? Are concerns about disorder or mess governing the movements of the educators, children, and materials? How is the children’s artwork being perceived? The documentation does not represent what learning occurred; it allows for discussion between staff and children to question, expand, and build upon the learning—and perhaps to make new learning experiences (Lenz Taguchi, 2010).
She pulls the brush up close to her chest and embraces it, while her other arm helps the red brush to connect with the plexiglas once again: tap, tap, tap.

To aid my process of rethinking art making, I use pedagogical documentation while children are engaging with art. I might experiment by setting up an art provocation and then asking questions: What are the children doing? What are the materials doing? How are the children exploring the materials and the materials exploring the children? What questions are the children and materials asking? Attending to the documentation of what the children are doing might help make the process of art making visible and illuminate how the children, materials, ideas, and environment are connecting. By experimenting with art provocations, I am not suggesting that we stop evaluating the art making for political, cultural, and economic structures. These influences are always present within art making, and pedagogical documentation might serve as a tool for evaluation. The task becomes to continue to experiment and evaluate in order to transform these norms.

Conclusion
Let’s revisit the moment we encountered in the introduction. Does anything stand out in reading this moment again?

Paintbrushes are strewn on the wooden floor beneath the child’s body. A black bowl holding red paint and a white bowl holding yellow paint dot the ground around her. Mila crouches over her knees in front of a sheet of plexiglas, her feet spread to support the weight and angle of her body. The length and width of a red paintbrush suggest how Mila’s hand might connect to wrap around it. Mila shifts her body so her arm can stretch to lift the paintbrush. The wooden end connects with the plexiglas and machines a tapping sound. Another paintbrush evokes a response from Mila’s body. She bends over her knees and shifts her legs so her other arm can extend to let her hand meet the paintbrush. Her hand is offered to support the smooth, black, wooden body. She pulls the brush up close to her chest and embraces it, while her other arm helps the red brush to connect with the plexiglas once again: tap, tap, tap.

Upon a second reading, we may approach Mila in a different way. We might notice how Mila affects the paintbrushes and the paintbrushes affect her. We may also extend our gaze to the plexiglas and the wooden floor, and how each provides a surface for the bodies to move upon. Here we might notice the effect of the non-human world on Mila’s body. The floor pushes against Mila as gravity pulls her down, her body balancing with the floor and the paintbrushes as they all move in relation. The plexiglas provides a surface for the paintbrush as the bodies engage in machining the sounds: tap, tap, tap. Instead of thinking that Mila does not know how to paint properly, we might notice how she has discovered with the paintbrush a sound. And, instead of the artwork representing what Mila is thinking, we might see Mila as thinking with the paintbrush and plexiglas. It might be less important now how old Mila is, or whether we view her as being in the sensory motor stage. Instead we might wonder what questions and problems the intra-actions among these bodies express.

Disrupting our typical view of children’s art making has thus become a political and ethical action.

References


On Opening Spaces for Conversation: The Book Club

Antje Bitterberg

Antje Bitterberg received her diploma in Early Childhood Education from Langara College in 2002. She graduated, with distinction, in the first graduating class of the new Early Childhood Care and Education Bachelor Degree Program at Capilano University in 2010. Currently she is enrolled in a two year International Masters Degree in Early Childhood Education and Care offered in cooperation with Oslo University (Norway), Dublin Institute of Technology (Ireland), and University of Malta (Malta). For the past nine years she has been an infant/toddler educator in Vancouver, BC. She is recipient of the Prime Minister’s Award for Excellence in Early Childhood Education.

Abstract
This is the story of four educators who engaged in conversations inspired by readings of Releasing the Imagination by Maxine Greene (1995). The Book Club was a research project carried out in the Spring of 2011 at a child care in Vancouver, British Columbia. This project is a response to the question, ‘What if curriculum was a conversation?’ Taking the risk of exploring this question together with my coworkers was invigorating and allowed us to begin to imagine new possibilities for who we are as educators and who we want to be.

On Opening Spaces for Conversation
It all started with taking a risk
When I first started thinking about organizing a Book Club and having conversations with my coworkers, I was worried that they wouldn’t be interested. Fortunately, they were open to participate in my proposed project and agreed to meet once a week for four months. Maybe I should have warned them that it wasn’t going to be easy. But I didn’t. I did let them know that there would be no passing and failing and it would just be what it is, without assumptions of what it should look like.

As a team of four early childhood educators working with toddlers, aged 18 months to 3 years, at a child care in Vancouver, we have worked together for over eight years. Having so much shared history makes working together much easier since we know what to expect when we come to work every day. However, I started to question whether this familiarity would prevent us from looking beyond our well-established routine. This was not to suggest that our routine was bad, I just wanted to remind us to be cautious when we start taking our routine for granted.

Over time, our weekly meetings became a ritual for us and talking about education together was a time we looked forward to.

Our intention was to read a chapter each week of Maxine Greene’s (1995) Releasing the Imagination. We wanted to keep the focus on the conversations and not worry about following a rigid schedule. I clearly remember our first meeting. My coworkers were brave and honestly admitted that reading the first chapter was challenging for them, yet we found the courage to continue even when we were faced by difficulty. What if we didn’t understand everything we were reading? Did it matter if we didn’t understand everything? Over time, our weekly meetings became a ritual for us and talking about education together was a time we looked forward to. This continues to be the most exhilarating process I can imagine. In Madeleine Grumet’s (1990) words, “[t]he ceremony of interpretation that accompanies narratives of educational experience is purposeful, directed and democratic” (para. 21).

Inviting a stranger
It is through the eyes of a stranger that one can see familiar surroundings anew. To help us look at our routine with fresh eyes, I believed it was essential to bring a stranger into our child care centre, someone to disrupt our thinking. After reading Maxine Greene’s (1995) Releasing the Imagination I knew that she was that someone. We asked the following questions: ‘What would Maxine say?’ and ‘How can reading Releasing the Imagination breathe life into our program?’ Releasing the Imagination had been very influential to me during my two years as an undergraduate student.

Once we open ourselves to look at the world through different lenses or narratives, we can interpret events from different perspectives.

As a professor of philosophy and education, Maxine Greene focuses on “contemporary philosophies of education and social thought, aesthetics and the teaching of the arts, literature as art, and multiculturalism” (Greene, 1995, p. ix). She writes that being exposed to literature can create “alternative ways of being in and thinking about the world” (Greene, 1995, p. 90). Once we open ourselves to look at the world through different lenses or narratives, we can interpret events from different perspectives. Thus, read-
Early on in our meetings, I shared the children’s book *Aunt Chip and the Great Triple Dam Affair* by Patricia Polacco (1996) with my coworkers as a provocation to think about the influence of literature in our lives. The story is set in a time in which people have become illiterate, and have even forgotten what books are for. They use books as doorstops and chairs, while the stories inside have become hidden to them. With everyone at home watching TV, their town appears desolate with few signs of life until one child learns how to read with the help of the old librarian. Learning to read, of course, is contagious and soon the town becomes literate and filled with life once again. This story has deeply affected me. What if we didn’t know how to read? What if we forgot about stories? Patricia Polacco illustrates the gruesome outcome of whatever exists...of something radical—of closure and regulation rather than imagination of new modes of human possibility and styles of will, and the confrontation by imagination of the necessity of whatever exists...of something radically better that is worth fighting for” (p. 176).

What if curriculum was a conversation?
Maxine Greene’s idea of incompleteness resonated with us. We considered this in the context of education and reasoned that learning can’t be completed. For instance, once you believe you have achieved excellence and stop learning, you stop being excellent. In Greene’s words “[i]f ever I’ve arrived, I’m dead” (as cited in Ayers, 1997, p. 9).

She proposed that education could be dynamic instead of static, changing and evolving to suit the needs and passions of the students. We believed this concept of incompleteness reclaims some of what is now lost from education. What if we could see our curriculum as being incomplete and always in the making? To do so, I posed the question, “What if curriculum was a conversation?” We began to see how much of today’s curriculum is planned in advance, long before ever meeting the students. I shared a quote by David Jardine (1992) who spoke to our concerns:

Understanding will not have to be educated; knowledge will simply have to be reproduced in children, information will simply have to be handed over. But in this reproduction, in this handing over, children will have nothing to say, and what we have to say will have already been said. In fact, their *being* children will simply be a result of the accident of birth: becoming an adult will be a technical repairing of the accident of natality. (p. 126)

Hannah Arendt (1954) says that education “belongs among the most elementary and necessary activities of human society, which never remains as it is but continuously renews itself through birth, through the arrival of new human beings” (p. 7). Jardine and Arendt both describe the impossibility of having predetermined goals for students we have yet to meet. Education is incomplete; it is ever changing based on who we encounter.

We began to influence our teaching by opening up our narratives to interpretation.

Opening spaces for conversation
Monthly staff meetings aside, prior to the inception of our Book Club, there was no structure in place to support us in being critical of our work. Setting aside ample time for discussions is challenging. Glenda Mac Naughton (2005) emphasizes how “the everyday conditions of professional learning in much of the early childhood field starve early childhood educators of the nutrients that support them to proactively, enthusiastically, and knowingly draw on leading edge theories” (p. 190). The Book Club meetings were scheduled for when the children nap in the early afternoon, the only time of day we could all be in the same room without much distraction. However, to make this possible my coworkers still needed to rearrange their lunch breaks while I needed to volunteer my time. All of us agreed to read the book at home.

As we began the Book Club we were interested in looking at texts that govern us as educators. Gunilla Dahlberg and Peter Moss (2005) state that these texts include:

policy documents, research reports, curricula, standards, guidance on best practice, and so on. This growing mountain of official or expert paper becomes a prime means of governing preschool practitioners, laying down norms to which they must conform and contributing to a dominant discourse that smothers contestability and advances conformity. At the same time it crowds out other types of reading which might provide other perspectives. Reading thus becomes a means of closure and regulation rather than opening up to new possibilities and emancipation. (p. 169)

*Releasing the Imagination* created many openings for us to think about our own personal stories and what informs them, who we are as teachers, and what education means to us.
In the midst of these imposing documents we started reading *Releasing the Imagination* (Greene, 1995) together, a different kind of text that opens up new possibilities to interpret one’s life. Releasing the Imagination created many openings for us to think about our own personal stories and what informs them, who we are as teachers, and what education means to us. We were able to consider other perspectives. We started to disrupt our thinking around our child care centre’s official texts and we reviewed them critically. For example, when we first started working together we had a predetermined policy that stated that if parents arrive after 10:00 a.m. more than three times, we would deny care for the child that day. It is policies such as this one that I have personally struggled with over the years. The Book Club opened a space for us to have conversations and we were able to look at this policy again. We had many questions and considered various perspectives. Why would a family be late? Who defines ‘late’? Does it actually matter if they arrive after 10:00 a.m.? What are the possible consequences for the family when we deny care? As teachers, how are we implicated in the decision to deny care?

*And when we least expected it…*

While the minutes and hours always seemed to be slipping away, we consciously made time to have conversations, week after week. It was hard for us to talk about the book and not get distracted with our daily routine. The Book Club disrupted our routine immensely. It invited us to take time to think, to talk, to meet, and to listen. Yet, time is scarce and it would have been all too easy to drop the weekly meetings; other responsibilities would flood the space we tried so hard to build. So we made time: we read on our lunch breaks, on the bus, and on the weekend in the park while our own children played with their friends. As our meetings were scheduled for nap-time, we always wanted to make the impossible happen and hoped that all the toddlers would fall asleep. Sometimes it worked, sometimes it didn’t. Sometimes we had sleepy children in our laps, listening to us engage with Maxine Greene (a lovely and powerful image), and sometimes one of us listened from afar while changing a diaper. Time was precious for us.

*Releasing the Imagination* (Greene, 1995) wasn’t an easy read. It was challenging. At times, we didn’t understand the language and, more importantly, we didn’t share the wealth of literature that Maxine Greene readily refers to. So we shifted back to things we knew and were familiar with, such as the programming for the day and what has been capturing the children’s interests. As the weeks went by we found more and more connections between *Releasing the Imagination* and our personal narratives. We soon realized that we didn’t have to understand every word. We picked out parts that were meaningful to us as individuals and the group. It was thrilling to find quotes that spoke to us, quotes that enabled us to relate our personal narratives to a bigger narrative. We read out loud to share quotes with the group, and slowly it became a little easier for us to focus. Over time, we started to take more risks and discussed the parts that we didn’t easily understand.

The impact the Book Club has had on each of us has been profound. The words of William Ayers (1997), after he had taken a course with Maxine Greene in graduate school, remind me of the days before our weekly conversations: “Frankly, I was going for a credential (a lovely and powerful image), and I would move on, untreated. I expected no particular challenge, no substantial nurturance, no serious demand” (p. 9). During the weeks of the Book Club something changed. My coworkers started thinking about our conversations when they weren’t at work, found quotes in other books, and started to interpret things that, before, would have gone unnoticed. They saw many perspectives where, perhaps, there was only one a few weeks before.

After a few months we started to make connections that mirror the connections that Maxine Greene (1995) introduces us to when she refers to countless works of literature that inform her life. We brought in articles and books that reminded us of a topic we talked about. On various occasions we pulled out a copy of *Releasing the Imagination* after having put it away for the day, because we had found another quote to talk about or another connection we had not thought of before. With every weekly meeting such moments became just a little more frequent.

Before we started, one coworker was worried that the project would not be successful. I wanted to move away from binary thoughts such as success and failure, where one idea only exists in contrast to the other. Instead, I wanted to create an accurate description of what was. Our experiences in the Book Club were complex, and while I first read this book during my studies (where assignments can carry the weight of a pass or fail), here we were able to focus just on the conversations.

*To be continued…*

Reading *Releasing the Imagination* (Greene, 1995) has been contagious, just like as reading became contagious in the story of Aunt Chip (Polacco, 1996). My coworkers recently participated in a workshop where they felt compelled to talk about our project to other educators. The act of inviting the other workshop participants to think about our conversations is a powerful image for me. The Book Club story becomes a public story. It’s not just ours alone anymore. We created the opportunity to get together as educators, and friends, and created a positive atmosphere to have profound conversations about education. This created a space in early childhood education.
where new and different perspectives could emerge: “And perhaps, if that world is lived by those who experience friendship with one another…more and more people will find pleasure in looking differently at the shared world, varying perspectives while feeling their own ultimate understanding enlarged” (Greene, 1995, p. 69). The time available to us to engage in conversations now never seems to be enough. Though sometimes we are speechless, we never run out of things to talk about. We are filled with a sense of possibility.

When I try to recall the origin of this project, I realize that it is difficult, maybe impossible, to trace its roots. This project has no clear beginning, only a number of events that brought me to where I am today - or better, that brought us to where we are today. Though the meetings will stop one day, the traces of our conversations will be everywhere. At this point, the Book Club has taken on a life of its own and it is impossible to measure its impact on us and on others. The Book Club was my dream of Utopia. I conclude with a thought from Maxine Greene:

[I]t has to begin where people know each others’ names. But it can reach beyond, toward an enlarging public space where more and more common interests are articulated. It can radiate to inform the ‘conversation’ and empower individuals to open themselves to what they are making in common. Once they are open, once they are informed, once they are engaged in speech and action from their many vantage points, they may be able to identify a better state of things - and go on to transform. Sometimes, I believe it is our only hope. (p. 59)

References


Inflammatory bowel disease and its effects on children in school

Having a chronic health condition affects children’s everyday lives and, perhaps most importantly, it may interfere with their schooling (Bousvaros et al., 2006). Inflammatory Bowel Disease is a prime example of such a chronic illness among school children.

...children with IBD perceive that they are being alienated from school because of their chronic illness. Not only do they experience a sense of alienation, but they express a sense of powerlessness in their inability to claim their rights to full participation and fair treatment in inclusive educational settings.

This illness encompasses two main diseases, namely: Crohn’s Disease and Ulcerative Colitis. Both diseases are characterized by chronic recurrent inflammation of intestinal tissue, evolving periods of relapse and remission. It is usually associated with symptoms that can include: fever, fatigue, decreased appetite, arthritis, perianal disease, stunted growth and delayed puberty. Although these two diseases may appear to have similar symptoms, they differ in the physical location in which each occurs. For example, Crohn’s disease can affect any part of the gastrointestinal tract, from the mouth to the anus, while ulcerated colitis affects only the inner layer (mucosa) of the colon. Also, Crohn’s disease has patches of inflammation occurring between healthy tissue and the diseased area. However, in ulcerated colitis, inflammation can begin from the rectum and extends proximally and continuously over variable length of the colon (Baumgart & Carding, 2007; Baumgart & Sandborn, 2007).

Currently, there is no known cure for this disease, but surgery is used to help in managing it. The surgical procedure involves the removal of the colon (colostomy). This medical procedure essentially results in partially curing ulcerated colitis, but inflammation and extra intestinal symptoms can still occur after the surgery. Although Langholz, Munkholm, Krasilnikoff and Binder (1997) suggest that more than a third of the population with childhood-onset of IBD will require surgery to manage the disease; surgical intervention is not the first choice of treatment usually recommended. Surgery is reserved for when all other medical options fail. The preferred treatment focuses on controlling the inflammation with steroidal medication. As such, children who are affected with the disease may have to take many medications several times each day. According to Baumpart...
and Carding (2007), the medications for this illness usually have negative side effects that may range from cosmetic effect (e.g., acne) to more severe effects (e.g., weight gain, bone suppression of the immune system, high blood pressure, cataracts, diabetes, pancreatitis and increased risk of cancer).

Moody, Eaden, and Mayberry (1999) posit that, though recent medical and surgical advances have remarkably improved the clinical outcome of chronically ill children, IBD still significantly impacts negatively on the quality of life, educational experience, and career prospects on affected children. In the area of education, researchers emphasize the many challenges that the children face while they are in school. Some of these challenges include being denied their requests to make frequent visits to the bathroom during class (Casati, Toner, de Rooy, Drossman, & Mauder, 2000); side effects of medication such as facial swelling, acne, hair growth and psychosocial adjustments (Mackner, Sisson, & Crandall, 2004); and absenteeism and underachievement in school (Fergusson, Sedgwisk, & Drummond, 1994; Mayberry, Probert, Srivastava et. al., 1992).

These unwanted factors that beset the school life of children with IBD have often left them with feelings of insecurity and low self-esteem. Frequently, psychological inadequate feelings are exacerbated when the request to go to the bathroom as the need occurs, or to decline from participating in certain activities when feeling unwell, are ignored or unacknowledged by their teachers (Gordon, 2004; Nicholas, Otley, Smith, Avolio et. al., 2006). These researchers argue that children with chronic illnesses are seen as being “different” when they are in school. As a result, they are treated differently from the others who are deemed “normal.” For example, Ryan (2006, 2002), and Dei, James-Wilson, and Zine (2002) suggest that this type of mistreatment is not uncommon as those defined as “different” are often unable to gain access to the privileges available to the majority populous. According to Ryan (2006), “inclusion’s alter ego is exclusion. They are intimately related. When people are not included, they are excluded” (p. 19). It has been suggested that exclusion is a vehicle of encouragement to low self-esteem, and low self-esteem has been one of the factors that characterizes this population.

It appears then, that children with IBD perceive that they are being alienated from school because of their chronic illness. Not only do they experience a sense of alienation, but they express a sense of powerlessness in their inability to claim their rights to full participation and fair treatment in inclusive educational settings. As children with special needs in school, they are frustrated when they are unable to have their needs met at a satisfactory level. Consequently, they have established strategies of coping in school, both for their survival and enhancement of school life.

Method

Qualitative methods have become more frequently used in recent years to permit holistic descriptions of people’s experiences (Luckner & Velaski, 2004; Ross & Lyon, 2007; Zaidman-Zait, 2007). Qualitative approaches are best suited for this project because it is designed to understand social phenomena from the participants’ perspectives. Therefore, this study is exploratory rather than experimental, as its purpose was to illuminate experiences (social phenomena) from the point of view of the participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). In so doing, each participant determines his or her own meanings and constructions, offering flexibility when studying individuals and diverse perspectives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Rodwell, 1998). Therefore, the intent of the research was not to pool and generalize results from a large population of children with IBD, or to test specific hypotheses, but to raise possible questions for further study.

In this research, qualitative case studies using one-on-one semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight elementary school children (6.5-11 years of age). The aim of the study was to find out the strategies that these children use to cope with the daily rigors of school routine. Specifically, the goal was to use narrative design in allowing children with IBD to tell their stories in their own words about their school experiences. In this way, their own voices could truly be heard. There is a growing body of literature advocating the use of narrative inquiry when conducting research with children (Engel, 1999, 2005; Lancaster, 2003; Maybin, 2006). Children’s narratives are valued for the insight they offer into the experiences of their world (Engel, 2005). Jean Piaget (1954) demonstrated that children not only had thoughts and experiences worth knowing, but that these thoughts and experiences were different from those of adults. Therefore, in this study, children’s narratives are of great importance.

Participants

Eight English-speaking children with IBD from different socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicities, and cultures were involved in this study. Six of the children had Crohn’s disease, and two had ulcerative colitis. Seven of the eight children attended an educational institution while one child was home schooled. Of the seven who attended school, three were enrolled in private schools while the other four attended public schools. The sample was limited in terms of gender; there were seven boys and one girl. (See Table 1: Family Demographics).

Procedures

A Montreal hospital’s department of Gastroenterology provided me with a list of 195 paediatric patients that were being...
followed by the IBD clinic. From this large pool of potential participants, only twelve patients (ten boys and two girls) met age and language criteria for the study. The end result was a sample of seven boys and one girl who consented to participate.

In order to schedule interviews, participating families were telephoned and asked to arrive on a day in which they already had an IBD appointment scheduled at the hospital. The interviews for this research were conducted in one of the clinic's examination rooms in the hospital. However, it was inconvenient for some of the participating families to attend the clinic at the hospital, so their interviews were conducted in their homes. During the home visits a quiet area or room (usually the living room) in the participants' home was used for the interviewing purpose.

Limited demographic data was collected on all participants. A patient data form for each child was created to record his or her age, gender, level of education, duration of symptoms/diagnosis, medications and type of disease – Crohn’s Disease or Ulcerative Colitis.

**Interviewing Children**

In this study, each child represented an individual case or problem under investigation. A case study is a problem to be examined. The examination of this problem reveals an in-depth understanding of the case or bounded system under study (Creswell, 2002). Each case was investigated through an interviewing process.

The interviews followed a semi structured format with questions that arose from a conversation (Creswell, 2002). An "elite" type of discussion-interview was used since the children were the experts about their disease and their school experiences. An interview guide composed of 10 open-ended questions was created. The interviews were audio taped and then transcribed verbatim. At the end of the interviewing process, the researcher was able to collect in-depth information regarding various topics.

**Data Analysis**

The study provided a forum for children with IBD to talk about their illness and their experiences in school. Each child’s transcript was divided into units by coding words, phrases or comments that could stand alone. Through inductive analysis, units were grouped with other units that shared parallel topics or concepts. These were then grouped to form preliminary categories. A constant comparative method was used to determine if a unit was similar or different to others. These groupings were then placed into categories based on shared topics.

This resulted in the emergence of the following four IBD coping categories: Self, Parent(s), School, and Friends. Within these categories, subcategories were created by comparing similarities and differences of the units. All themes and categories are outlined in Table 2.

**Findings**

The eight children who participated in the study had some things in common. For example, they all liked school or their learning environment. They were all able to name specific classes or courses that they enjoyed in school or at home. In addition, all the children were physically active–often participating in sports in during physical education classes, during recess, and after school activities. Lastly, all the children had friends with whom they interact in and out of school.

**IBD Coping Categories**

After talking and listening to these children, it became clear that there were three areas (subcategories) in which they assumed responsibility for looking within themselves for solutions to their special needs in school.

**Category 1 - Self**

**Deciding what to tell friends and peers regarding IBD**

The parents in all cases assumed responsibility for alerting and informing school personnel about their children's illnesses and the accompanying symptoms. However, in the children's daily school routine it was them who assumed the responsibility to tell their friends about their illness. In this way, they each chose the method with which they were most comfortable with to explain their short or prolonged absences and/or the reasons they had to take particular medications at lunch time. In general, the children with IBD chose to disclose very little information about their illness often relying simply that they had missed school because they were not feeling well or because they were sick. Only Anne and David were forthcoming in talking about their illness with others. They explained that they had Crohn’s disease and were frequently absent because they had to have blood tests done, or had to be hospitalized for treatment purposes.

**Monitoring one's health and medications**

As young as they were, the children demonstrated a wealth of knowledge about their bodies and the illness they suffered. This fact became evident when all eight children shared their stories of surgeries, trials of various medications and the myriad side effects that often accompanied their prescriptions. They were able to vividly describe the IBD symptoms they suffered.

Although the children were unable to name their prescribed medications, they were all able to describe various flavours and forms (liquid or pill), as well as tell frequency and times at which they needed to take them. As for David, he had recently been taken off all medications.
and was able to recount why this had occurred. He described the terrible stomach cramps and aggravated IBD symptoms he had endured that forced his Gastroenterology team to discontinue all medications for a trial period.

Having information about their medication use is extremely important and in Anne’s case, being knowledgeable about her medications and being able to administer them by herself gave her a sense of independence when going away to Girl Guide camp in the summer.

Information about their bodies and health is also crucial to keeping them safe and helps to minimize possible flare-ups (recurrence of symptoms after a period of good health). As George explained, “I like bacon and sausages, but I’m not allowed to have it.” David shared that he was allowed to eat most foods except popcorn, but that, “it’s all right because I don’t like it anyways.” Tom complained that it wasn’t fair that he couldn’t eat candies or any of the other foods that his brother and sisters ate. Despite his feelings of difference and knowing that he has to eat gluten free spaghetti and his mother’s homemade candies made of pure organic honey, Tom was very conscious that, should he eat like his brother and sisters, the repercussions would be disastrous. He could experience anything from anal swelling forming pus and sores to frequent bathroom use and recurrent bloody diarrhoea as well as cramping stomach pain.

**Changing the school environment to accommodate students with special needs**

One of the most insightful findings came from David’s information about his initiatives to make his school environment a better place for him. He had recently been elected class ambassador to form a committee whose mandate it was to create and enforce changes to their school. He explained that the first areas that were transformed were the bathrooms. A massive transformation had taken place as the committee created posters with slogans to encourage their peers to help in maintaining the bathrooms clean.

As the story unfolded, it became evident that this major bathroom clean-up was of great importance to David because much of his school time was spent in there. Being elected the class ambassador, he was empowered to effect change, not only for his benefit, but for his classmates as well. David was an exception, as most of the children with IBD in this study relied mainly on a parent or school official to assist them in creating any needed changes that would aid in alleviating their IBD symptoms when they are in school.

**Category 2 -Parent(s)**

Children with IBD appeared to rely heavily on the intimate relationships that they have with their parents. The connection seemed vital to their ability to cope with their illness. Unlike the previous category of ‘self’, here, the strategy that the children used involved looking outside of themselves to their parents to aid them in getting their needs met within their school environment. This was, in part, due to the fact that when the children voiced their concerns, they went unheard by their teachers. For example, George’s homeroom teacher was constantly stamping his school agenda with ‘frowning faces.’ His teacher reported frequently that he was lazy and did not participate enough in class activities. George tried to explain to his teacher that he was indeed trying his best; yet, the negative attention from his teacher continued. This was making George quite unhappy, so he brought his agenda to his mother’s attention. His mother wrote to the school principal and met with his teacher. She explained that due to George’s illness there would be periods when his medications and/or symptoms would make him feel tired or fatigued, and that his behaviour was not a reflection of his apparent disinterest, nor lack of desire to participate in class. But, had George’s mother not intervened, the situation might have remained unresolved, much to the detriment of the child. Hence, George would have remained unhappy and misunderstood by his homeroom teacher.

The encounters with these children and their parents (whether it was in their homes or at the hospital) allowed the researcher to observe the interaction between parents and children. The interaction revealed an abundance of love and open communication existing between the children and their parents. Despite their young age, the children dialogued frequently with their parents so, the parents were fully aware of any difficulties that their children were encountering in school. In this way, all parents were able to be very proactive in advocating for the rights their children in school.

**Updating parents regarding teachers' behaviour and school concerns**

The children with IBD would often report their school concerns to their parents. For example, Tom’s mother actively advocated for changes within her son’s public French immersion class. However, she lamented that she was often left dissatisfied with the results. She explained that every morning she would kiss Tom good-bye and send him off to school with a positive attitude only to have him return home a changed child. At the end of a school day, he appeared to be miserable and have very low self-esteem. Tom often explained that it was punishment because he was behind in assignments due to unavoidable absences from school. Also, his teachers would not permit him to go to the bathroom as frequently as he needed to, which left him having accidents in his pants. Upon receiving this kind of feedback from her child, Tom’s mother decided to educate all four of her children at home. This example illustrates the importance children with IBD place
on relaying information regarding the treatment they receive from school staff.

**Updating parents regarding bodily concerns**

This theme appeared several times in the transcripts and was echoed frequently by all the children who participated in the study. The children disclosed discussions they had had with their parents whenever they felt unwell. These talks and frequent dialogues between children and their parents revolved around the children’s bodily concerns or outcomes of their medications. These talks led parents to arrive at decisions in terms of what actions they should take to address each child’s concerns. It seemed imperative to these children that their parents be made aware of any IBD symptoms they might have been experiencing while they were in school. Children relied greatly on providing their parents with current information regarding how they were feeling so that all necessary arrangements could be made speedily and expeditiously. Some of the arrangements included: granting permission to stay home from school, making follow-up hospital appointments, asking teachers for free passes to the bathroom, asking physicians to alter prescriptions, alerting school staff of any side effects their child might experience during the school day due to medications.

In an interview with George, he shared that he had difficulty seeing the blackboard and had asked his teacher if he could possibly change seats and sit nearer to her desk. This change would place him closer to the blackboard. George’s frequent requests were ignored and so he talked to his parents about his problem. His parents, in turn, met with his teacher to discuss the issue. Although George’s teacher was still unwilling to relocate him, she did agree eventually. Had George not approached his parents, it is highly unlikely that any change would have occurred. A complication of IBD is ‘uveitis’ (redness and discomfort of the eyes) which might have been the reason for his difficulties with his vision and his wanting to sit closer to the blackboard.

**Category 3 - School**

In this study, the school environment was examined solely from the children’s perspectives. The children were able to provide many insightful examples of the different methods that they used to cope with their various IBD symptoms while participating in their daily school activities. The coping strategies mentioned most frequently are presented as follows:

**Establishing or knowing their support system when IBD symptoms present themselves**

In some cases, the parents instructed their children how to proceed when they were feeling ill in school. A typical set of instructions given were to first alert their teacher who in turn would grant them permission to either see the school nurse or visit the principal’s office. The principal, in turn, would allow them to call their parents. However, some children were more proactive and would provide their parents with their own system on how to proceed should they not feel well in school. For example, eleven year olds Anne and Scott played a large role in establishing their own support systems at school and relaying the procedure to parents.

**Alerting teachers when feeling unwell**

For all the participants in this study, teachers were usually the first person they contacted when feeling unwell in school. The children spoke of the different approaches that the teachers would take when they were informed of their state. The approaches seemed to vary depending on: the relationship that the teacher had established with the child, the role the teacher played (e.g., a gym teacher versus a homeroom teacher), the teacher’s personality, the amount of knowledge or information the teacher had about the child’s illness, and the length of time the teacher had known and interacted with the child.

According to seven of the children, they usually had at least one teacher that knew them from Kindergarten. In these instances, the children tended to perceive their teachers as being more empathetic since they had previous knowledge and experience of the child and their chronic illness. Coping was often easier for these children as they were usually permitted to leave the classroom when needed and teachers were more willing to help in organizing their missed assignments.

Unfortunately, four of the children had teachers who were neither empathetic nor sympathetic in accommodating their special needs. For example, teachers’ responses to them ranged from ignoring their bathroom requests to yelling and punishing them. Punishments varied widely: giving stickers and stamps with frowning faces on their assignments, poor participation on their report cards, noting that they were lazy and unwilling to participate, being made to sit in a corner, or ignoring certain requests like changing seating locations. I must also emphasize that these behaviours continued despite parental influence and attempts at educating and informing the same teachers about their children’s illness.

**Arrange homework with friends, family or school staff**

Usually, being unwell for lengthy periods of time, as well as having a myriad of hospital appointments, resulted in multiple school absences. In this heterogeneous group of children, some were able to keep abreast of their assignments, while others were struggling and some even falling behind. The reasons for academic success versus failure stretched beyond IBD itself. There were often factors involved that were unrelated to the illness, such as speech impediments and learning disabilities. The IBD factors that influenced a lag in the child’s school
success usually had to do with the gravity and duration of their symptoms. The worse their IBD symptoms were, the more likely that the child would be hospitalized for longer periods and miss multiple days of school. It is important to stress, however, that school attendance often did not equal school failure. At least five of the eight children (Anne, Scott, Paul, Chris, David) were performing at their appropriate grade level or higher.

The question then became: could children with IBD cope despite their school absenteeism? It appears then, that the answer would be a resounding “yes!” Children with IBD would often engage the help of classmates, friends, siblings, parents or school staff who would either take the assignments to their home or to the hospital. Once again, some children assumed responsibility for their homework arrangements while other children relied on others (parents, friends, siblings or teachers) to help. Paul, for example, had to be hospitalized for almost two weeks and he was fortunate enough to have his assignments hand delivered to him at the hospital by his homeroom teacher. Unfortunately, this story was not a typical one.

Obtaining a school pass for ‘free access’ to bathroom facilities

Interestingly, about half of the children with IBD interviewed had received permission from their teachers to exit the classroom whenever they deemed it necessary. This access was called ‘a free pass.’ With the ‘free pass’ the child did not have to draw unnecessary attention to himself/herself, and did not have to remain in the classroom while in pain. This also helped to minimize ‘accidents’ that often occurred when the waiting time between the urge to use the bathroom and permission granted to leave the classroom was too long.

Category 4 - Friends

A resource for homework and play (socialization)

All eight children spoke often of their relationship with their friends. Some noted that they had many friends, while others named only a few. Their friends were reliable and dependent as they always made themselves available for play time. This was important to these children for, despite their illness, they were all active and energetic children who enjoyed playing sports at recess and in gym classes, as well as engaging in extra-curricular activities in and outside of school with the same friends. It was not uncommon to find that they interacted with the same set of friends in and outside of school.

When these children are with their friends, they have fun. This togetherness with other children also provides them with the opportunity to be distracted for a while from their illness. Friends were also a helpful resource when it came to providing missed assignments. Usually, it was a friend who would take the sick child’s homework when he/she was absent from school. Friends also served as a link in keeping the children abreast of the current school news that they may have missed during their absence from school. The eight children spoke fondly and enthusiastically about their friends, leading the researcher to conclude that friends are an important component of the children’s way of coping.

Discussion

Finding balance

Canadian elementary schools accommodate a diverse population of students, and, for the most part, teachers seem to be sensitive to their various needs. Although some teachers mean well, their actions at times worsen the situation for some children with IBD. For example, Ann tearfully retold the story of an encounter she had with her gym teacher one day at school: Anne had been playing with the other children in her gym class when one of her classmates hit her quite forcefully with a ball. In pain, she began to cry. At that point her teacher stopped the class and told the class that they needed to be “careful” with Anne because of her illness. Anne shared with me that this was an upsetting experience because she was singled out and made to feel different. She articulated that being hit hard with a ball would have hurt and made her cry whether she had IBD or not.

The opposite scenario may also be true in that granting certain privileges to a child with IBD may lead to the child taking advantage of the given freedoms. For example, Chris informed me that he had been given a ‘free pass’ to exit the classroom and use the bathroom facilities whenever he felt the need. However, this has become a problematic situation as Chris had begun to arrange meetings with his friends and classmates in the bathroom. Chris had started to use his free bathroom privileges as a time to socialize.

A school’s physical layout is also of crucial importance to a child with IBD. More specifically, the distance of the nearest bathroom in relation to their classrooms is of prime importance to these children. Having to walk great distances or having to climb a number of stairs to get to the bathroom can prove disastrous, resulting in accidents. In designing school structures, bathroom facilities should be constructed close to prime locations such as classrooms, cafeterias, and gyms.

A school’s objective should be to strive to create a school structure that is balanced. Still, as these examples have demonstrated, it is not a simple task to establish a balance that will always satisfy all parties concerned.

Conclusion

The research findings from this study show that some coping strategies were used more frequently than others and some strategies required the children’s initiatives, whereas other techniques required parents to play a more
vital advocacy role. It appeared that, in general, the seven elementary school aged children with IBD have learned that the way to cope most of the time in school is just to remain in their environment and suffer through pain and discomfort. They usually choose to suffer until the symptoms subsided. At that point they would continue their activity, proceed to the next activity, or decide to return home for care.

What has been missing from the literature is a systematic description of coping processes that children with IBD use. The schema offered in this paper is a step towards studying children's coping processes. Studying children's coping processes has long been considered a crucial task for professionals concerned with children's health and development.

If we are to continue to have school systems that purport to support inclusive education, we need to ensure that we understand that children with chronic illnesses may require additional help and attention from schools. Meeting their special and particular needs is essential to helping these children to cope and thrive.

References


## Table 1

### IBD Participant Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Age (years)</th>
<th>Twin</th>
<th>Grade level</th>
<th>Type of school</th>
<th>Parent with IBD</th>
<th>Location of interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>East Indian</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>English Public</td>
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<td>Anne</td>
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<td>David</td>
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<td>Jewish</td>
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<td>Chris</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Jewish</td>
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<td>Private Jewish</td>
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<td>Tom</td>
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<tr>
<td>George</td>
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<td>Greek</td>
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<td>None</td>
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<td>Private Greek</td>
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<td>Home</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scott</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
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<td>None</td>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>English Public</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Hospital</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### Study Themes and Categories Summarized

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A) Category -Self</strong></td>
<td><strong>Subcategory:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Deciding what to tell friends and peers regarding IBD</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Monitoring one’s health and medications</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Changing the school environment to accommodate IBD needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C) Category-School</strong></td>
<td><strong>Subcategory:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Establishing or knowing their support system when IBD symptoms present themselves</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Alerting teachers when not feeling well</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>B) Category-Parent(s)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Subcategory:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Updating parents regarding teachers' behaviour(s) and any school concerns</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Informing parents about any bodily concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D) Category-Friends</strong></td>
<td><strong>Subcategory:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Arrange homework with friends, family or school staff</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Obtaining a school pass granting free access to bathroom facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>A resource for homework and play (socialization)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Are you looking for an innovative, fun way to incorporate physical activity into your elementary classroom? In January 2011, an Integral Yoga session was offered to primary age students as a component of the British Columbia’s Ministry of Education Daily Physical Activity (DPA) initiative. The DPA initiative implements 30 minutes of daily physical activity for students up to Grade 9. Yoga was chosen as a daily physical activity because of the overwhelming research indicating that it can help develop flexibility, strength, endurance, agility, balance, coordination and cardiovascular health (Birdee, Legedza, & Philips, 2007; Khalsa, 2007; Moliver, 2011; Tran, Holly, Lashbrook, & Amsterdam, 2001). Specifically, Integral Yoga, is a Hatha Yoga practice that incorporates a holistic approach to physical activity by focusing on overall mind-emotional-body-spiritual union through pranayama (breath-control exercises), asana (physical yoga), and chanda (meditation).

In order to determine the impact of the Integral Yoga sessions, journals were handed out to the students and they responded to a daily set of four reflective questions. At the end of the week, a semi-structured interview with the teacher and a group discussion with the students were done to corroborate the journal responses and observations. The Yoga for Kids program by Imaginazium LCC was used to determine the flow of poses. This award winning Yoga Kit for Kids is both a game and a teaching tool that combines fun, fitness and imagination. Bright, 5” x 7” cards feature photographs of children in 30 easy yoga poses. The cards are illustrated with the object or animal the pose is named after. Kids can imitate the illustrated photographs on the cards to pretend to be Dogs, Lions, and Heroes. To help novice Yoginis, on the reverse side of the card is a cartoon and a short rhyming poem describing how to move into the pose (Yoga Kit for Kids). Modifications were made to ensure the yoga poses were developmentally appropriate for the group of children. Sanskrit names were not used and since many poses were given an animal name, often an animal sound would accompany the pose. Nineteen students took part in the Integral Yoga program with 11 of those being male and 8 female. They responded to the questions below.

**Question # 1. What poses did you like the best and why?**
 Responses showed that students enjoyed doing most of the poses including the balancing poses. For example, Lexie wrote the following:

> On Tuesday at school when it was yoga I learned something cool and it was called the tree pose and I liked it was fun it will help me with my school work.

However, some poses were more challenging. Most students had difficulty with the Peacock (sitting with legs outstretched), the balancing pose Tree (standing with one leg bent on foot or calf), Table (getting their spines aligned), and the Forward Bends (allowing their fingers to touch their mat). Overall, most students responded that their favourite pose was Candle (introductory pose with focus on breath).

**Question # 2. How do you feel after the Yoga sessions? Explain why you feel this way.**
 Generally, students indicated that they felt good, comfortable, relaxed, and happy during the practice but as the week progressed there were noticeable changes in the responses. Two students indicated that the practice was not beneficial. David wrote: my bak hrts every day of the week. Devon stated that he was tired every day of the week.

**Question # 3. Do you like doing Yoga in the classroom with your friends?**
 The majority of students indicated that they liked doing yoga with their friends.

**Question # 4. Do you think that Yoga helps you with your school work?**
 Students were divided in response to this question. Some thought that it helped and others did not. No reasons were given to explain why this practice helped or did not help with school work.
wok. And it was fun to do Yoga.

Ben: No!!!!!!! I dont think so

Helen: No decus my lags hft. (”no because my legs hurt”)

Yogic conclusions

We were able to identify the Yoga poses that grade one students liked as well as the problematic poses. Even though there were some directional issues with left and right, students were comfortable with the Integral Yoga practice and attempted all poses, even the ones that were challenging. When they could not find the full expression of the asanas (poses), they reacted with laughter and interacted positively with classmates. In terms of experiences, approximately 75% of students indicated that they felt good, comfortable or happy with their Integral Yoga practice. Approximately 25% indicated they felt bad or tired. Towards the end of the week, some students did identify elements of discomfort such as sore back or tiredness.

Teacher responses

Due to the fact that there was a recess right after the mid-morning Yoga sessions, the teacher found it hard to observe a change in classroom behaviour and in classroom experiences. However, she did notice a difference in students’ interactions with one another, particularly during group work. During the week, students were more patient and courteous with one another. She intends to use the Candle pose as a way of bringing silence back to the class and to incorporate the breathing exercises into the daily classroom to calm students during transitions. On a final note, she indicated that the Integral Yoga sessions do fit into the mandates of the DPA. Though she considers Integral Yoga to be an alternative practice, it is an activity that had a positive impact on interpersonal relationship between the students, and between the teacher and the classroom experience and culture.

Yogic Action Plan

In keeping with the concept of sustainable practice, the school decided to buy Yoga mats and to incorporate Yoga as a DPA within the school curriculum. During the course of an Integral Yoga session, it is possible to introduce the poses and to help the students make connections to how the yoga practice affects their educational and their personal experiences. For example, regular class can begin by setting an intention for strength and calmness throughout the day. The Candle pose can also be used as a classroom management strategy to help students maintain focus. Finally, since the yoga instructor was certified, exploring options for sustaining yoga practices within primary school classrooms remains an important component of the DPA program. A program like the Yoga for Kids by Imaginazium LLC can provide classroom teachers with the necessary parameters to maintain a sustainable Yoga program for elementary students.

References


Teaching Critical Thinking: Practical Wisdom

b. hooks

Reviewed by Ingrid Anderson

Ingrid Anderson has over 25 years experience as a child care professional and is currently working on an Ed.D. focussing on ECE educators as empowered learners.

In her latest book, *Critical Thinking*, bell hooks* takes education professionals on a journey to reflect on the dialogue between teaching and learning through the lenses of critical theory and postcolonial approaches. Thirty-three short essays—which can be read together or as individual reflections—help readers to reflect on underlying assumptions that exist in educational environments.

The essays are dialogues that revolve around hooks’ central theme: thinking critically of bias in education. The teaching conversations between self and others and self and one’s own inner voice are highlighted.

bell hooks starts her book with the “how, what, when, where and why” of critical thinking. Chapters 2-5 look at how democratic education must be “born anew” for each generation of learners: building on democratic approaches for learner-educator co-leading opportunities; the existing biases that inform ways of teaching and knowing; and how, as educators, we need to address post-colonial deconstruction of current teaching practices. In Chapter 6, we are asked to examine the personal stories that we bring into our practice as educators. Personal stories, as bell hooks states, offer opportunities for deep listening that, in turn, creates a sense of community of learning and deepens our ways on knowing.

Co-written with Ron Scapp, Chapter 7 opens with the “give and take of friendship” as a tool for critical thinking. Expanding on this theme, Chapters 8-10 focus on the democratic nature of conversation and its purpose as a vehicle to engage learners. These chapters use stories to explore our ways of knowing by connecting our shared experiences. The stories we share bring meaning to our teaching and offer us both insight into our own practice and the practice of others. Encouraging the use of imagination is the focus of Chapter 11 as it looks at using out-of-the-box thinking to move beyond dominant paradigms. Engaging our imaginations in new and different ways supports the critical examination of race, oppression and the dominant culture. Imagination can be considered a fuel of change.

Chapters 12-15 look at the emotions that come from strong educator-learner relationships, acknowledging that genuine learning, like love, is mutual. The chapters continue with the value of humor as a tool to relax and go deeper into our thinking; reflections on crying as a tool for teaching and learning; and, acknowledgement that fear of conflict often acts as barrier, keeping us from discussion and its democratic values.

Chapters 16 and 17 focus on the outcomes of accepting dominant paradigms based on assumptions about feminist or racial identities. Continuing the conversation, Chapter 18 considers diversity in the classroom by critically examining the beliefs that are espoused in the materials presented. In Chapters 19-21 the emphasis is on teaching, reflecting on the relationship between authority and respect in the leader-learner relationship, and the impact of dialogue as a self-esteem building tool to aid the development of independent thinkers. Chapter 22 closes with conversation on how these connections are made more tangible in the materials—real books—rather than e-materials found on computers, e-readers and such. The act of holding a book, turning pages and lingering on a passage invites imagination, hooks contends, in ways that computers cannot.

Chapters 23 and 24 connect to critical theory. Critical theory is a broad approach to challenging the assumptions of established knowledge by re-examining how values, beliefs and norms come to shape our view of the world. hooks uses critical theory as a lens to expand consciousness. She suggests a variety of media including, surprisingly, children’s books that can develop this process. Chapter 25 seeks to shed light on the mysterious moments in teaching where everything is “in flow,” that feeling where an individual is actively immersed in their work. This concept, hooks elaborates, can be found in our spiritual selves, when the mind is quieted— it creates new and meaning-
ful learning. The author’s own mind-body-consciousness reflections are the focus of Chapters 26-30: Looking at the dynamics represented by the physical body in creating classroom energy to enact teaching as an act of love for the learner are markers for the self-love, self-value and empowerment that are needed in the learning process. Looking at how those processes come to play in the author’s own self-identity and how that ties into the erotic energy that fuels our own interconnectedness is a theme in this chapter.

“The more I teach, the more I learn that teaching is a prophetic vocation. It demands of us allegiance to integrity of vision and belief in the face of those who would either seek to silence, censor, or discredit our words” (p. 181). The craft of “teaching as bold telling of the truth” pulls together the themes of the book in Chapters 31 and 32. It is a reminder to look at what is significant in the art and craft of teaching—to identify what really matters. As the book closes with a discussion of the importance of mindful awareness, hooks offers her final words of wisdom. Everyone, everyday has opportunities to engage in critical thinking. There is no magic formula. Thinking critically embraces an open, learning mind. Ideas inspire and transform thinking. Active engagement in learning reinforces the concept that ideas are not stagnant. hooks calls this practical wisdom.

Why read bell hooks? As an educator on a journey of self-reflection, I sought a book that would challenge my assumptions. As a learner, the dialogues that I hold with myself are some of the most difficult to moderate. I found that the prompts offered by the short essays offered a starting place for a self-dialogue. bell hooks’ strength as a writer is to challenge our memes—ideas that we hold that have a life of their own—asking us to hold them up to the light. This book is a catalyst for working on and starting to shift our own internal dialogues. The ideas and images that she provides can be provocative and uncomfortable. The book can wander, losing the reader when essays fail to thread together. The author’s own internal dialogue on issues outside of education distract from her timely message about thinking critically of bias in the education field. Regardless of those weaknesses, if you are seeking to challenge your own assumptions— to think critically—then this book will scaffold that process.

bell hooks’ experiences in working with adult learners offer powerful lessons for our practice as educators, mentors and learners. This book asks us, as teacher-learner-humans, to be intentional in our thinking. That act of reflection is a vehicle to understand and make sense of the work we do daily. Professional growth without self-awareness is difficult. bell hooks’ book is a vital read for educators seeking new lenses for personal growth.

*bell hooks prefers to use lower case letters for her name.*
The book “Look at me --- I’m learning everyday, Tips for Parents” is a helpful read for everyone who works and lives with young children. Through pictures and learning stories of ordinary moments in the lives of children and their parents, it provides helpful information about Social Emotional Development. Written by Laura Doan, Margaret Patten and Cindy Piwowar, faculty members in the Early Childhood Education Diploma Program at Thompson Rivers University, the book addresses four key components of social emotional development: Attachment, Communication, Play and Challenging Behaviour. Each area contains three learning stories which allow the reader to more fully understand normal behaviour in infants, toddlers and preschool age children.

The book contains an explanation of each focus area and explains what parents can do to foster and support these areas. Through photos and stories of daily moments in the lives of young children as they engage with peers and parents and the section titled, “What’s Happening Here”, adults are shown theory in the daily encounters. In the “Tips” section, adults are given ways to foster stronger social emotional development in their child. The section about Play gives an explanation of what play allows children to learn. I particularly liked the phrase, “Play takes time.” In each of the stories that follows, examples of play at the infant, toddler and preschool ages are documented and explained. The example given for infant play helps adults understand the importance of reading non verbal behaviour and interpreting it as well as providing challenges for infants that allow them to develop independence and confidence. The example documents the adult placing a rattle close to the infant and observing as the infant works to reach it and then explores it with his mouth. Helpful tips such as: “Babies need lots of opportunities to play on the floor” give parents a deeper understanding of the importance of supplying such times for their infants. The learning story about the toddler age shows two young children using water and paint brushes to paint fences and sheds outside. It notes that it is quite developmentally appropriate for this age of child to engage in parallel play. I appreciated the example of that magical activity of painting with water, something many adults may have forgotten in this age of expensive toys and equipment. The learning story for the preschool age shows another inexpensive material, a large box, being used by a three and a five year old and how the timely introduction of a flashlight by dad allows for extended play and concept development.

The section on Challenging Behaviours should comfort all adults as it explains that biting, crying and having fears, such as of the dark, are normal behaviours as children learn to express their feelings.

Each story illustrates common occurrences in daily living with young children and provides a positive model of how to deal with them that allows adults to understand the behaviours and their part in helping children grow into healthy, competent, communicative individuals. The last three pages outline behaviours in each of the three targeted age groups that indicate when it might be appropriate to be seeking help from a professional source and helpful books and websites related to development.

I was pleased to see Social Emotional developmental given a prominent place in this book. The sentence on the first page that states, “Research shows that the key for a healthy life and school success begins with a strong foundation in social and emotional development” will hopefully help parents understand that flash cards and early computer training is not the path to success. I also appreciated that the format of the booklet with its use of photos and learning stories models the pedagogical narrations which the BC Early Learning Framework invites educators to use. Written for parents, it has value for educators on several levels.

Books can be ordered through Cindy Piwowar, Thompson Rivers University, ECE program coordinator, Kamloops, B.C. Phone: 250-371-5664. Email: cpiwowar@tru.ca. Cost is $20 per book.
The Necessity to Think ‘Big’ about Education...

Education is (always) in crisis?!

In April 2012, Vancouver, B.C. hosted the conference of the American Educational Research Association (AERA). At this conference, thousands of educational researchers from diverse parts of the world gather to share, discuss, and provoke each other with new ideas and possibilities for thinking and ‘doing’ education and educational research. Regardless which of the conference sessions one attends, what powerfully surfaces in such occasions of radical dialogue about what matters in education is the inescapable return to the ‘big questions’: What is education for? Who is the subject of education? What constitutes educational relationships? In what ways is education entangled with notions of democracy, power, agency, identity, and ethics?

If you are beginning to feel dizzy by the magnitude of these questions, rest assured, you are not alone. Because these questions are so difficult we typically do our best to acknowledge their importance and then we quickly put them aside to be thought about and discussed another time. Yet, there is another sentiment that pervades during such big conferences about education: a sentiment that carries with it a sense of urgency and a need for action. And this sentiment is that education is in crisis.

Education seems to be prone to being in a state of perpetual crisis. On the one hand, education continually fails the expectations of policymakers, and on the other hand, education fails to respond to critical assertions and innovative suggestions made by researchers and scholars. Education is clearly one of the most difficult cultural projects undertaken by human civilization. However, is viewing education as difficult (or in crisis) a reason to escape from its ethical and political responsibilities? Should it be a motivation to mold education into a technical and controllable endeavor (for example, by creating more curricula, more tests, and more ways for measuring education ‘success’)? What is education to do? Or perhaps we should ask, can education be ‘out’ of crisis?

Why education is (so) difficult?

Britzman (2003), in a chapter titled Difficult Education, opens with the following statement: “Something about education makes us nervous” (p. 1). But why is that so? She focuses her attention on the delicate ‘issue’ of self-other relations in education. Britzman points to the “educational temptation” to model an ideal for another person and to create a person after one’s own image (p. 6). Something difficult occurs in helping relationships. She says, “We apt to forget our differences” and lose the respect of the other’s Otherness (p. 6). Fenwick (2008) suggests that “the central point of educational responsibility has been principally fixed upon building (and disciplining) particular kinds of subjects” (p. 103). We can infer at this point that one of the reasons that education is (so) difficult is the omnipresent threat we encounter as educators to ‘erase’ the other and make the other the same as oneself.

There are other causes that make education difficult. Fenwick (2008) eloquently captures why education ‘makes us nervous’ when she posits that, “Education begs the question of what constitutes a desirable future” (p. 110) - a question that is practically unanswerable. Hence, while we tend to think of education as a defense against ignorance and not-knowing, the educational project is always geared towards the future, and as such, it is difficult because it entails risk and uncertainty. It is impossible to guarantee the “goodness” of education to come regardless of how good our intentions, our efforts, and our methods are. What the interpretations of our educational efforts might be, once they become events in the world with others, is an unknown.

Why early childhood education is (even more) difficult

The roots of modern education, Biesta (2006) explains, are tied to the event by which education became intertwined with the project of Enlightenment and the philosophy of Immanuel Kant. Kant’s philosophy influenced education via his conception of what it means to be a human being. For Kant, man only becomes man - that is a rational, autonomous being - through education (Kant, 1982, in Biesta, 2006). From this angle, education has been understood as a process that helps persons develop their rational potential so that they can become autonomous, self-directing individuals. While Biesta makes it clear that he has nothing against rationality per se, he intelligently points out the potential problematic of an education that has answered the question of who is a human being before the education process has begun. The issue with essentialising the human being is that it posits a norm of
what it means to be human, and norms inevitably become exclusive to those who are not, or unable to, live up to this norm. Young children, in particular, are excluded since they are viewed as not yet rational-autonomous, and thus are always thought of from a deficit point of view and are in danger of being reduced to those who are perceived as most urgently in need of ‘molding.’ Even developmental theories, which have been touted as responsive to children’s unique educational needs, have positioned children as ‘under-developed’ beings situated on a trajectory of (gradually) becoming autonomous and independent adults (Cannella, 2000). As Cannella (2000) explains:

Younger human beings...have been, since the emergence of an Enlightenment/Modernist focus on science, viewed a distinctly different from those who are older. They are the ultimate ‘Other’ than the adult-those who must have their decisions made for them because they are not yet mature-those who must gain knowledge that has been legitimized by those whose ways of being in the world can be uncovered through the experimental and observational methods of science...(p.36)

Education as a crisis and a promise (difficult but necessary)

Rather than deflating the notion that education is difficult, I would like to propose that we entertain the idea that education is a necessary part of the human condition and that it is necessary to think about education as something that is initiated at the moment of birth (see also Britzman, 2003). To think about education as necessary, Britzman (2003) invokes the philosopher Hannah Arendt’s conception of natality. For Arendt (1998), natality was a metaphor for human capacity for renewal. She posited that through speech and actions we are constantly born into the world with the potentiality to initiate and begin something new. But it is the actual birth of a new child that reflects most poignantly why education is necessary. When a new life comes into a world occupied by others, it needs both protection (care) and an introduction to this world (knowledge of culture, history, and tradition). Thus, the fact of natality ushers responsibility and obligation (Britzman, 2003). Yet the baby also introduces him or herself as a unique and unprecedented human being, with a desire to know and to re-create the world. This aspect of natality signifies a promise for a future and renewal, as well as the responsibility of the child to the world. Hence, the paradoxical nature of educational relationships is composed of a dynamic of push and pull between the old and the new and between dependency and autonomy. Despite the unavoidable aspect of human acculturation, the condition of natality entails the infinite capacity to initiate, to create something new through speech and action. Nonetheless, the appearance of something new creates a crisis (is this ‘The crisis of education?’) since it threatens our existing categories of knowledge and understanding, it shatters our complacency (Arendt, 1998). For Arendt this crisis is ordinary and necessary. It is the structuring tension that exists between the educator’s need to create the conditions to learn about the past, culture, and tradition, while ‘preserving’ the condition of natality, sustaining creative spaces for ‘newness’ to appear.

We can now conclude that education is a necessary part of the human condition. However, rather than letting the difficulty of education (the fear of colonising the other) stop responsibility (Fenwick, 2008), the educator must do something to fulfill this responsibility and to act purposefully (Biesta, 2006). Education cannot deny its difficulties. It cannot involve an absolute splitting of good and bad in terms that disregard human complexity (Britzman, 2003), but it can evoke the call of the ethical which obligates us to educate in a way that leaves the question of who the child is open to surprise.

References

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 wish to nominate an individual or group for this award, please use the criteria and procedure below.

CRITERIA

The Friends of Children Award may be presented to an individual or group, regardless of age, who:

• Has a history of commitment to the CAYC mission statement and or aims.
• Has shown an outstanding scholarly, advocacy, innovative or practical contribution to the well-being of young children.
• May or may not be of Canadian citizenship.
• May or may not hold CAYC membership although it is encouraged.

PROCEDURE

• A nomination must be made by a member of the Board of Directors and be seconded by a member of the Board of Directors. Board members can, however, receive recommendations for nominations from individual CAYC members or from other organizations.
• Nominations will be brought forward at a Board of Directors or National Executive meeting by the board or executive member assigned responsibility for the award. This board or executive member will present and speak to the nomination.
• The nomination will be voted upon and passed by the Board of Directors 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.
• The number of awards per year will vary.

Call for Contributions

Special Issue on Transitions in the Field of the Early Years in Canada for Canadian Children, Fall, 2012
Guest Editors: Martha Gabriel (UPEI) and Marilyn Chapman (UBC)

The landscape of the early years in Canada is undergoing major transformative changes. Government departments, early learning centres, university researchers, early childhood educators, parents, kindergarten teachers, policy makers and other stakeholders are implementing/experiencing major shifts in programs and services for young children and their families across the country.

We invite you to consider submitting a manuscript for the themed Issue on Transitions to Special Issue Guest Editors by July 15, 2012, following the manuscript guidelines set by the journal. If accepted for publication, final papers will be due by August 15, 2012. Publication date of the themed issue is Fall, 2012.

Potential themes include:
• Critiques of Early Years policies and practice
• The role of parents in children’s transitions
• Conceptions of curriculum, in particular, early learning curricula
• The impact of transitions in kindergarten environments (for example, from the community to the public system; from part time to full time; and so on.)

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.

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As part of the submission process, authors submitting a manuscript to Canadian Children are required to check off their submission’s compliance with all of the following items, and submissions may be returned to authors who do not adhere to these guidelines.

1. Written manuscripts should be in English or French. The word limit is 5000 not including references. Text should be
double-spaced in a font such as Times New Roman, size 12.


3. The submission file is in Microsoft Word or RTF file format. Any supplemental files are in Microsoft Word, RTF, jpeg, gif, or Excel format. PDFs are NOT acceptable.

4. Supply complete contact information for all authors on the title page: Name, affiliation, complete street address, e-mail address, fax, phone numbers (the more, the better). Clearly indicate the first-named author or the co-author who will be handling the correspondence and clearing galleys with the editors and associate editors. Indicate if funding from a particular source supported the project.

5. All manuscripts should include an abstract of 100—150 words.

6. The complete title of the article and the name of the author(s) should be typed only on the first sheet to ensure anonymity in the review process. Subsequent pages should have no author names, but may carry a short title at the top. Information in text or references that would identify the author should be deleted from the manuscript including both text citations and the reference list. These may be reinserted in the final draft.

7. Author Identification. The author's name should be removed from the document's Properties, which in Microsoft Word is found in the File menu.

8. Notes and references. Notes should be typed as normal text at the end of the text section of the manuscript rather than as part of the footnote or endnote feature of a computer program and should be numbered consecutively throughout the article. A reference list contains only references that are cited in the text. Its accuracy and completeness are the responsibility of the author(s). Personal communications (letters, memos, telephone conversations) are cited in the text after the name with as exact a date as possible. (NB. Personal communications are not cited in the reference list.)

9. Tables, Figures, Illustrations. The purpose of tables and figures is to present data to the reader in a clear and unambiguous manner. The author should not describe the data in the text in such detail that illustration or text is redundant. All graphics and photographs must be sent in jpeg or gif format.

10. Once an article has been accepted, all tables, figures, illustrations and audio/video files should be e-mailed to the assigned editor along with the manuscript and an author bio of no more than 100 words.

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