CANADIAN CHILDREN

JOURNAL OF THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

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The Canadian Association for Young Children

2002

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L'Association Canadienne Pour Les Jeunes Enfants

THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

WHAT IS THE CAYC

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

MISSION STATEMENT

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

THE AIMS OF THE CAYC

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

IMPLEMENTING THE AIMS OF THE CAYC

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

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND MEMBERSHIP

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

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

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

Please direct all subscription and membership correspondance to:

CAYC
612 W, 23rd Street
North Vancouver, BC V7M 2C3
CANADA

ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE POUR LES JEUNES ENFANTS

QU'EST CE QUE L'ACJE

L'Association canadienne pour les jeunes enfants, issue du Council for Childhood Education, a reçu sa charte fédérale en 1974, C'est l'unique association nationale voulée exclusivement au bien-être des enfants depuis la naissance jusqu'à l'âge de neuf ans, dans leurs foyer, les garderies et a l'école primaire. Les membres de l'ACJE-des parents, des enseignants, des employés de garderie, des administrateurs, des étudiants sont toutes des personned intéressées à partager leurs idées en participant à des activités concernant le bien-être et l'education des jeunes enfants.

SA MISSION

L'ACJE existe pour faire entendre une voix canadienne sur les questions d'importance concernant la qualité de vie de tous les jeunes enfants et de leur familles.

SES BUTS

1. Jouer un rôle dans la direction et les qualités des décisions et des programmes relatifs au développement des jeunes enfants.
2. Créer un forum pour les membres de la communauté de la petite enfance afin de susciter une collaboration active dans l'élaboration de programmes appropriés au développment des jeunes enfants.
3. Encourager et offrir des possibilitiés de perfectionnement professionel aux personnes chargées du bien-être et de l'éducation des jeunes enfants.
4. Promouvoir des occasions pour une meilleur coordination et collaboration entre toutes les personnes responsables des jeunes enfants.
5. Reconnâitre les contributions de caractère exceptionnel faites au profit des jeunes enfants.

MISE EN OEUVRE DES BUTS DE L'ACJE

1. **Le congrès national:**
   Il constitue le grand événement de l'ACJE. On y entend des communications prononcées par des sommités internationales dans le domaine de l'enfance et on y participe à des ateliers et à des discussions ainsi qu'à diverses manifestations, des visites d'écoles et d'autres activités.
2. **Les événements provinciaux et locaux:**
   Nos membres sont invités à mettre sur pied des conférences, des séminaires ou des congrès à l'échelon local ou régional.
3. **Le journal:**
   Publications multidisciplinaire de premier ordre, le journal pâraitre deux fois l'an. Il regroupe des articles traitant de questions d'education et de formation des jeunes enfants et des écrits d'experts bien connus sur le plan national et international. La rubrique Inside CAYC vous tient au courant des activités de l'Association.

Les cotisations doivent être réglées au moment de l'adhésion et renouvelées chaque année. Pour vous prévaloir de botre droit de vote, vous devez régler votre cotisation au moins 60 jours avant l'Assemblée générale annuelle.

ABONNEMENT ET COTISATION DE MEMBRE

Les membres de l'ACJE reçoivent le bulletin de liaison et bénéficent de tarifs particuliers pour participer au congrès national et aux événements régionaux:

40$ par année, 25$ pour les etudiants, 75$ pour les associations

Addressez toute votre correspondance a:

ACJE
612 W 23rd Street
North Vancouver. BC V7M 2C3
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Cover photos and photos throughout the journal courtesy of North American Children and their teachers and families...

GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

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

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

CONTENT:

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

FORM, LENGTH AND STYLE:

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

ACCEPTANCE AND PUBLICATION:

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

DEADLINES:

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

GUIDE A L'INTENTION DES AUTEURS

Canadian Children est la revue de L'association pour les jeunes enfants (ACJE) la seule association vouée exclusivement au bien-être des enfants du préscolaire et de l'ecole primaire au Canada. Elle parâit deux fois l'an et regroupe des articles, comptes rendus de livres et annonces professionnelles.

Canadian Children est une publication multidisciplinaire traitant du dévelopment de l'enfant et de l'éducation de la petite enfance. Les auteurs du Canada et d'ailleurs sont invités à soumettre des articles et des comptes rendus de livres mettant en évidence la varieté et l'entendue de la recherche et des approches en education de la petite enfance et en formation de l'enfant.

CONTENU:

Les articles visent un public de parents, de professionsels dans le domaine de l'éducation, de l'enfant et des services a l'enfance, ainsi que les enseignants et les chercheurs. En général chaque numero comprend de multiples thèmes et le rédacteur en chef s'efforcera d'inclure à la fois des articles protant sur la recherche ainsi que d'autres de nature pratique traitant des programmes, des curriculums, des approches en salle de classe ou de la formation de l'enfant.

FORMAT, LONGEUR ET STYLE:

LES ARTICLES peuvent être de longeur variée et doivent etre rédigés dans un style accessible à tous les lecteurs. La présentation doit être conforme aux normes du **Publication Manual** (3e edition) de L'American Psychological Association. Les articles devront être en Microsoft Word ou Word Perfect, (format IBM PC) et attaché a un courier électronique au redacteur en chef à l'adresse indiquée ci-dessous. Les trois (3) copies doivent être dactilographiées à double expace. S'il y a lieu, les auteurs devront fournir toutes photographies accompagnant les articles tirées en noir et blanc sur papier glacé, tous les tableaux, figures ou illustrations avec leurs légendes, et nous les envoyer chacun sur une feuille séparée. Ils devront obtenir le permis de reproduction des photographies avant de les faire parvenir au rédacteur. Veuillez inclure une brève notice biographique incluant les noms au complet, titres, affilitions professionnelles et autres informations pertinentes telles que les noms des assistants, des supports financiers, des subventions. It est entendu que les auteurs ne soumettront leurs articles qu'a une seule revue à la fois.

REVISION, ACCEPTATION ET PUBLICATION:

Le rédacteur en chef accusera réception et considérara tous les manuscrits recus, qu'ils aient été solicités on non, et soumettra les textes qu'il aura retenus à au moins trois lecteurs externes au comité de rédaction. La decision finale quant a la publication est sous la responsabilité de rédacteur en chef et sera communiqué dans un délai de trois mois. Les manuscrit refusé seront retournés seulement si une enveloppe adressée et timbrée est encluse.

Faire parvenir les articles soit à l'adresse electronique soit à l'adress postale suivantes :

L'échéancier pour la soumission les articles se lit comme suit :
Publiction d'automne: 1er août
Publication du printemps : 1er février

Please send all publication correspondence for consideration to:

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Preferably email as an attachment to: **ece@mnsi.net**

MABEL. F. HIGGINS
EDITOR

"There appears to be growing interest in reflection and dialogue, rather than a strict adherence to the status quo".

CAYC ACJE

FROM THE EDITOR

My journal editing was interrupted today by news of the Queen Mum's death. Immediately, thoughts moved to my 103 year old grandmother. I phoned her to commiserate the passing of this 'lady'.("kif-inti?", how are you?) I shared my admiration for nana, who, having endured WWII bombings in Malta, and widowhood in mid-life, managed to raise ten children...one of them, my mother. I sometimes wonder how these two women perceive or value my work in the field of early childhood education. I suppose I should just ask. My speculation on their response is that they would perceive my work to have great value, but no more than their own vocation of raising the children. They took their commitment [mothering] very seriously. I understand, that alongside my own education, their mothering-way impacted the care of my own children. Outside my [ece] profession, there is a very special group in society who care for the children, largely undocumented.

This issue of Canadian Children documents the importance of this group, family. Our profession has always acknowledged family as the place where significant relationships develop. There one develops roots, and in due course wings to carry them to greater destinations. Today there appears to be an effort to deepen the relationship between school and home. Some of our contributors give pause to consider the role of parents in our work with the young child. The Teen Mother, and the impact that mentoring may have on her child's development is illustrated through a literature review search. Another article engages us in the pedagogical conversations of Asian families. Yet another argues that we can be better equipped to respond to the fears of children when child, parent and teacher collaborate.

The articles then shift to student and beginning-teachers. They describe the work that our profession must assume if we are to impact current pedagogy and policy. In these accounts, there appears to be growing interest in reflection and dialogue, rather than a strict adherence to the status quo. You will read about teacher preparation in both college and university environments and be introduced to Corrine, a beginning kindergarten teacher who evolves through Ministry demands... towards a responsive program for her children. The authors of the Invitational, give us a 'window' on their Reggio-inspired teacher-education. As we peek through this window, we notice that September 11th has impacted their journey. While this story of teacher-education is still in process, they are hopeful that it begins to offer a "*dictionary of experiences*" for our continued conversations.

Appreciation is extended to the authors and the review team who have responded to every request, often at a moment's notice. Your contributions elevate the profession as we strive for excellence in teacher preparation courses and strengthen our ties with Canadian families. Finally, I humbly recognize the two women that I mentioned earlier, whose dedication to their children brought me to this place.

Gratitude to Early Childhood Educator, **Carrie Webber** for her assistance with the journal and to **Deborah Cunningham** for her attentiveness and special assistance with graphic details.

In our previous issue of Canadian Children, errors appeared in the article, Literacy Boxes in a Pre-Kindergarten Classroom: Exploring Parent-Child Involvement. Although our editorial team strives for excellence, we acknowledge and regret that errors have and will occur from time to time.

Making Learning Visible: Adults as Individual and Group Learners

Brenda Fyfe and Carlina Rinaldi

Dr. Brenda Fyfe is Professor of Education and Director of the Kornblum Institute for Teaching Excellence at Webster University in St. Louis, Missouri. In 1989 she made her first visit to Reggio Emilia, Italy to explore its renowned early education programs. Since that time she has been instrumental in bringing the Hundred Languages of Children Exhibit to St. Louis twice, established and co-directed a professional development project for educators in St. Louis, and authored and co-authored several journal articles and chapters of books related to the integration of Reggio principles and practices in American schools.

Dr. Carlina Rinaldi was the Pedagogical Director of the internationally acclaimed early childhood programs of Reggio Emilia, Italy for over 30 years. She also held the position of Director of Reggio Children, before retiring from the system. She is now Executive Consultant to Reggio Children and a Professor at the University of Modena and Reggio Italy, in the faculty of Science in Early Education. Dr. Rinaldi also shares her expertise as a regular consultant to international corporations such as LEGO, SONY, IKEA, and Alessi. *Dr. Rinaldi's visiting professorship at Webster University was made possible through support from the E. Desmond Lee International Scholar endowment and the Beatrice and David Kornblum Institute for Teaching Excellence.*

Introduction

This is a story and part of a case study of the individual and group learning of 18 graduate students and their "loving instructors." The context is a graduate course co-taught by Carlina Rinaldi and Brenda Fyfe at Webster University in St. Louis, Missouri during the fall semester of 2001. The story is written by Brenda, but is authored by Carlina as well. An intense collaboration through an entire semester has enabled our voices to merge. We share this significant moment in our professional lives and personal experience.

In this article we will discuss 1) the strategies that we used to support our hypotheses about the development of individual and group learning, 2) the values that consciously guided our actions and reflections with the students, 3) documentation processes that were used in our research, and 4) some initial reflections on our findings. We are still in the process of analyzing the documentation collected and will present a more detailed report in future publications.

The Story Begins

It is Tuesday, September 4, 2001 and Carlina Rinaldi has arrived in St. Louis from Reggio Emilia. It is a day of celebration for faculty, administration and students from Webster University and friends from The St. Louis – Reggio Collaborative. Carlina had agreed to become Webster University's first "E. Desmond Lee International Visiting Professor." She and I had planned for this day and the coming four months. Carlina would spend the semester teaching at the university, consulting in schools, speaking at conferences, and lecturing to community groups. We had many projects and possibilities in front of us, but one took priority. It was a graduate course that we had agreed to co-teach, using a book that was hot off the press from Reggio Children and Project Zero, *Making Learning Visible: Children as Individual and Group Learners (2001).* We wanted to explore this research report with our graduate students, but we also wanted to apply the research questions and methodology to our group of adult learners. We aspired to live the concept of "school as a place of culture." Carlina had written about this in a chapter of *Making Learning Visible.* She had described school as "a place where a personal and collective culture is developed that influences the social, political, and values context and, in turn, is influenced by this context in a relationship of deep and authentic reciprocity." We wondered, if, in a 16-week period, two instructors and 18 graduate students could create such a culture, "where values are explored and made visible, conscious, and sharable." Little did we know that within a week after Carlina's arrival in the U.S. the entire world would be shaken to the core in terms of values; that all of us would be searching for ways to build a new culture, a world culture where terrorism could be erased.

"We wondered, if, in a 16-week period, two instructors and 18 graduate students could create such a culture, "where values are explored and made visible, conscious, and sharable."

The story continues; the study develops.

In the months of planning prior to Carlina's arrival we had many conversations to share ideas and formulate questions about our graduate course. We began by developing hypotheses for student learning but also questions for our own learning, our research on adults as individual and group learners.

We hypothesized that students would:

- evaluate the roles of adults and children in learning groups
- develop an in-depth understanding of how documentation of children's learning processes could make learning visible and shape the learning that takes place
- explore how members of learning groups are engaged in the emotional and aesthetic as well as the intellectual dimensions of learning
- examine and discuss how the focus of learning in learning groups extends beyond the learning of individuals to create a collective body of knowledge
- determine possible implications of the Reggio Children/Project Zero study for early education in U.S. contexts

We wanted to explore and research how a group of adults could become a learning group. The questions for our research were the same as those which guided the individual and group learning research project documented in the book, *Making Learning Visible: Children as Individual and Group Learners (2001)*:

- To what extent can a relational group really be a learning group?
- To what extent is individual learning reinforced and enhanced or, on the contrary, stifled and inhibited, in a learning group?
- Does group learning actually exist?
- Can a group construct its own way of learning?
- To what extent can documentation foster new ways of learning?
- What is the relationship between documentation and assessment?

Due to a prior obligation for completing her summer university teaching for the University of Modena and Reggio in Italy, Carlina arrived two weeks after the start of Webster's fall semester. We agreed that the first few weeks of class were critical in terms of building community, so we decided to use Carlina's absence as an authentic need to carefully articulate and document with students the profile of learners in the class. All of the students already knew when they came to the first class meeting that Carlina would not arrive for two weeks. They agreed that it made sense for us to carefully document our get-acquainted introductions to share with her via email. I asked the students to brainstorm and then prioritize the most significant and relevant kinds of information that Carlina might want or need. I also suggested that we think about what we needed to know about each other in order to become an effective learning group. After a good bit of discussion we developed consensus about 6 essential categories of information. They included 1) work experience, 2) background or questions regarding the concept of documentation, 3) preferred learning style(s), 4) challenges experienced with regard to observation and documentation, 5) something personal, 6) aspirations for learning in this course. I took notes on my laptop and asked students to help as a back up. I told the class that I would send a copy of my notes by email to each of them for additional comment or correction before sending the document by email to Carlina.

This simple first step served many purposes for our newly formed learning group.

- It allowed us to experience the process and value of documentation.
- It enabled Carlina to learn about the class, to hear their voices, and not lose time in getting acquainted.
- It could and would serve as a record to be studied by students now and throughout our time together, to reflect on ourselves as a relational group.
- It was an experience that asked the adult learners to think about significant information that might support the building of relationships and community.
- It gave identity and subjectivity to each person in the class, supporting the individual voices, but within a common frame. This common frame enabled us to look at our potential intersubjectivity.
- The documentation could be read as individual profiles, but could also be studied to understand our profile as a group of learners.
- It gave value to the similarities and differences among us.
- It revealed questions and challenges on the minds of students.

At the first class meeting I also shared a skeleton of the course, rather than a detailed syllabus, which included the hypotheses for learning that Carlina and I had developed. We outlined what we anticipated the class would study during the first two weeks prior to Carlina's arrival, and I asked the group if they thought these plans made sense or should be changed or modified, especially in light of the varied backgrounds just presented in the self-introductions. Carlina and I wanted our students to know from the onset that they would share responsibility for their own learning and the learning of others in the class. Through the introductions students had already articulated what they, as individuals,

hoped to learn. Now we were negotiating agreement about what we would strive to learn as a group.

One non-negotiable source of our learning would be the book, *Making Learning Visible,* but additional readings could be determined to meet the needs of the group or individuals. We spent time in class sharing opinions about publications that we recommended for each other. Carlina and I had projected and organized for many possible learning experiences but in the spirit of progettazione we wanted to be open to the ideas and proposals of our students. Already at the first night of class, but also throughout the course, Carlina and I would co-construct and negotiate agreements with students about the development of the course with regard to the organization of time together and apart; the flow of readings and experiences; individual and group learning options; choice of focus for documentation studies; and the organizational and aesthetic qualities of the learning environment – including field trips and enhancements to our classroom at Webster.

Supporting Intersubjectivity

The get-acquainted process and documentation of it, were the first steps in helping us to communicate and give value to each other's subjectivity. The next step was to move toward the development of intersubjectivity. In an introductory chapter for *Making Learning Visible*, Carlina put forth some of the values that have structured the Reggio experience.

> *"the relationship between subjectivity and intersubjectivity is fundamental not only on the cognitive (and psychopedagogical) level, but above all on the political and cultural level. The relationship between the individual and others, between Self and Other, is a key issue for our futures. To choose whether our individual construction is independent from others or exists with others and through others, means resolving not only the traditional pedagogical-psychological debate, but also the one regarding different images of the human being and humanity."* (p. 40)

We wanted to provoke our students to look at their intersubjectivity as a group of learners.We hypothesized that with careful scaffolding our students could realize the interdependency that is fundamental to group learning and the creation of culture. Carlina and I agreed that at the second class session I would present each student with a hard copy of the final draft of documented self-introductions. I asked the students to study the individual profiles to see if we could develop a group profile. It was an exercise to support the development of intersubjectivity, but it also brought us into the cycle of documentation, discourse and design (see Forman and Fyfe, 1998). The written *documentation* of our individual profiles gave us a visible platform for a thoughtful discussion, our *discourse,* about our profile as a group. Through this discussion we searched for connections and examined our differences in order to think about what we could learn from each other. We determined the resources, knowledge and skills that each of us could share. These understandings would contribute to our ability to determine how to proceed in our joint study, our *design* for learning together through the semester.

The rest of our class time during the first weeks prior to Carlina's arrival was spent sharing our understandings of the principles and practices of observation and documentation and discussing the first few chapters of *Making Learning Visible.* Documentation of our dialogue and debate was recorded and sent to Carlina, as well as to the students, via email so that she could be prepared to join the conversation with us in the coming week.

At most classes we shared responsibility for recording key concepts and ideas expressed in our discussions. Sometimes students would record these on a white board in front of the class. I would take additional notes on my laptop and later incorporate the group notes and any others that individual students might share with me after class or through email. In the first weeks these were sent to the class (for editing) via email and then emailed to Carlina. Once Carlina arrived, she suggested that we continue this pattern of weekly documentation for the group. She saw it as a useful archive of our group memory, a reminder of our collective thoughts and insights, a way to make our group learning process visible and transparent. It also oriented our students to a regular pattern of ongoing communication between classes through email. Since we were applying the concept of progettazione in which we were open to revision and modification of our plans for learning, it became especially critical that we had a mechanism for keeping track of our learning experiences, agreements, and projections.

Documentation as the Driving Force of a Responsive Curriculum

Carlina and I would review the class notes (our documentation) each Tuesday to look for evidence of individual and group learning, to reflect on concepts and ideas expressed, to revisit and rethink the flow and organization of our class experience. Through this continuous study we would determine whether and how to proceed with the plans we had anticipated or to modify our plans in response to the learning evidenced in class. We would try to relate our ongoing observations to the hypotheses that we had developed about student learning and also search for new insights and understandings that had not been anticipated. We were trying to emulate, but also model for our students the practices developed in the Reggio schools that make documentation the driving force of a responsive curriculum.

We were trying to emulate, but also model for our students the practices developed in the Reggio schools that make documentation the driving force of a responsive curriculum.

From the first class session students were asked to begin the process of observation and documentation, if they had not already been doing this as part of their regular teaching practice. When Carlina arrived we initiated the idea of forming small groups for the analysis of weekly documentation assignments. The collaborative study of documentation would be critical to group learning, each of us drawing upon multiple perspectives to enrich our understanding of children's learning. We hypothesized that this part of our time together each week would also support the concepts of plurality, possibility, richness, expansion, and dialogue that contribute to the creation of culture.

By weeks three and four, students were becoming familiar with each other's documentation interests. We were able to negotiate agreements about small groupings on this basis for most, but not all students. Carlina and I asked three people, a teaching team from The College School, who had much more experience and expertise with regard to observation and documentation, to disperse among groups. Jennifer Strange and Sally Hovey were taking the course for graduate credit. Louise Cadwell audited part of the course. They agreed to function as competent peers who could help to support documentation analysis within groups.

Although our texts offered great insights for students about the processes of observation and documentation, we felt that they needed another scaffold for helping them design their semester-long studies. Carlina suggested that we give them something that I had written, an article that had been published in *Canadian Children* called, "Questions for Collaboration: Lessons from Reggio Emilia" (1998). Carlina and I agreed that the questions embedded in the article could be a useful framework for students in outlining and developing their documentation study proposals.

Ninety minutes or more were set aside each class for small groups to process documentation. We recommended that each group decide how they would use their time. They could divide time equally to focus on each other's work or they could choose to address only two people's work each week, giving more time to each set of documentation. We warned them of the danger of trying to look at everyone's work each evening, yet we understood their desires to get weekly feedback on their own work. We explained that if a short period of time was devoted to each person's work, in-depth study of the learning evidenced in the material might be impossible. We also explained that a rushed schedule might undermine their ability to apply the "pedagogy of listening" that Carlina had described in *Making Learning Visible*. The pedagogy of listening requires sensitivity to the patterns that connect; an openness to be fully in the moment with children or adults who are communicating with us; time to question our certainties, to wonder and formulate questions about the observations in front of us. We worried that if students were preoccupied with presenting their own work each week, they might not be able to listen well to each other. Such listening requires an understanding and belief that we can learn from each other, that each of us will grow in our understandings of learning processes and responsive teaching through collaborative study of documentation. Indeed, this turned out to be a problem for members of some groups. We will discuss that data in a later publication.

"We also explained that a rushed schedule might undermine their ability to apply the "pedagogy of listening"

In the first few weeks of small group study we would take time afterwards to reflect with the whole group on the organizational strategies that enabled them to function efficiently (e.g. bringing copies of transcripts that were to be studied, notes added to photos to explain the intent of the documenter for taking the photo, making arrangements for the use of equipment to show documentation – video players, slide projectors, etc. We discussed the value of this type of preparation and organization when studying documentation in the school setting. We asked students to assess the methods and tools of documentation that were shared.

We probed the rationale for choosing certain tools of documentation and methods of observation. We discussed the advantages and disadvantages of various forms of documentation for particular studies.

The Aftermath of September 11

The world changed. We changed. We could not go on as we did before. Since our class was held on Monday evenings, almost a week had passed before we came together after the terrorist event. But all of us were still reeling from the aftermath. We spent the entire evening of the 17th sharing our feelings, our concerns, our questions, and our observations of the impact on children and adults. Just a week earlier we had extensive discussions about the value of difference; the value of intersubjectivity – the search for self in relation to others; the need to be open to the complex, conflictual, and unpredictable nature of human learning; the value of putting our thinking into crisis – confronting the conflict experienced when differing points of view are expressed. We discussed project based thinking, a way of thinking that is open to others, that is open to doubt and to the awareness and acceptance of error and uncertainty. Looking back, it was so much easier *then* to welcome those values, to see how they could be applied in our everyday lives.

Now we had to ask ourselves if and how we could value the different perspectives of the terrorists or the cultures from which they came. How could we possibly put ourselves in relation to people who could commit such atrocities? How could we consider being open to the thinking and feelings of suicide bombers? Would it be possible to find value in a crisis of this magnitude? Uncertainty about the future overwhelmed us. The normality of September 10th no longer exists. Carlina asked how we could build a new normality that could support or be testimony of the values that we discussed the week prior. How might documentation become a way of integrating our subjectivities? We recognized that we were lucky to be learners together at this moment. It was important before, but now it was essential that we function as a group, to think and learn together how to build and sustain community.

We recognized that we were lucky to be learners together at this moment. It was important before, but now it was essential that we function as a group, to think and learn together how to build and sustain community.

The notes from that evening of conversation became a frame for several students through the rest of the semester. They chose to focus their documentation studies for the rest of the year on the impact of 9/11. Here are some of the questions recorded from our discussion:

What are children of different ages thinking?

What facts do they have?

What have parents told them?

What exposure have they had to the media coverage?

What are teachers telling them?

What should teachers be telling them? Who decides?

What are children who have not said anything thinking?

What is not said? What is the significance of silence?

What sense are children making of the terrorist attacks?

What sense are they making of adult reactions to the events?

We knew that all of us would have to listen more carefully to the children and families. We would need to be open to a range of emotions. We could not take anything for granted. We needed to talk frequently and regularly with colleagues and parents, seek connections and negotiate agreements about how to proceed. We had to face the reality of what it is to be fragile and uncertain, to lose and not always win, to experience feelings of ambivalence, to experience and enable our children to experience the courage of fear and doubt. We needed to anticipate the transfer of fears and determine how to offer a safe environment in which children and families could express and deal with their fears.

For the next few weeks we shared at the beginning of each class, our observations, questions, resources, and experiences related to the aftermath of 9/11 and the events that followed. One group of five students and one individual within another group chose to study the effects of September 11th on children and families. Each one approached the study from a different context and point of view, but came together each week to address a shared focus of study. They brought observations and documentation to their small group and supported each other through critical analysis of their data. A detailed report of their studies will be presented in a future issue of Innovations in Early Learning.

More Strategies and Values

A full account of our reflections on the learning processes supported and documented in this study would take more pages than this article will allow. We offer, instead, a summary of a few additional strategies that we found effective in supporting student participation; shared responsibility for individual and group learning; respect and appreciation for our differences; wholeness, integrity and continuity of learning; and the aesthetic qualities of our experiences and the knowledge-building process.

- We asked students to respond to reading assignments via email between classes, sending their comments to the entire list of students; we asked them to respond to each other's reflections on the readings via email. This was done within the whole group and at times within the study groups.
- We encouraged members of study groups to communicate with each other outside of class time (email, phone, face-to-face meetings).
- We offered students a map, a short synthesis each week of what we had discussed and explored the week before. It was intended to help search for meaning and create continuity between classes.
- Carlina and I consulted with each student about her documentation study but within the small group context rather than in private conferences. This was done to reinforce the message that members of study groups were responsible for each other's learning and could learn from the study of each other's work.
- We agreed to take field trips to The College School to study environments that support observation and documentation.
- We collaborated with students to enhance our classroom environment with scent, soft music, food and drink, reorganization of tables and seating arrangements.
- Students were asked to develop individual process folios that would make their own learning visible. They might include class notes, initial proposals for documentation studies with instructor comments written in the columns, notes from weekly documentation study groups, raw data from observations (transcripts, photos, anecdotal notes, children's work, journals, etc.; early drafts of data analyses, drafts of panels or plans for presentation of documentation to parents or colleagues, copies of email exchanges, etc.).
- Final presentations were planned with the help of small group members. Students agreed to participate as discussants for members of their own group – supporting each other during presentations.
- We offered ongoing support and provocation for students to accept and give constructive criticism – to learn what we called, "confrontational courage".
- We had the good fortune to have the exhibit, The Hundred Languages of Children, in St. Louis throughout the year 2001, so we spent one evening with the exhibit to examine documentation from Reggio Emilia.
- We documented some learning experiences of small and large groups using video and digital photography.
- The College School team collaborated with us to demonstrate:
  - video analysis of everyday moments of learning in the classroom, looking and looking again (e.g. we viewed a video clip, discussed what we saw, questioned and speculated, then viewed it again and repeated the process to learn more and draw implications for teaching and learning).
  - to discuss technique of videography – letting the camera dance with the eye, yet follow an intentional pattern of observational focus.
  - to look at a "declaration of intents," the research foci of teachers for a given year or semester.
  - to examine organizational schemes for orchestrating the collaborative work of a team, who observes and documents on a daily basis.
  - to explore multiple forms of documentation (interviews, anecdotal records, photos, transcribed conversations of small groups and large groups, video, children's work using the "hundred languages".
- Frequent self assessments were requested, including a final written assignment in which students were asked to reflect on the relevance of the propositions about group learning (p. 247) in Making Learning Visible to the experience of group learning within this course.

This article presents the beginning of our case study on individual and group learning of adult students. It delineates the structure and learning strategies that were designed, evolved, co-constructed, and negotiated. We attempted to communicate how many of the values, principles and practices developed in Reggio Emilia for early childhood education were applied with a group of adult learners in the U.S. For the most part this article presents the design for the course with some discussion of the methods and tools of documentation that were used to make learning visible. We have yet to present an analysis of individual and group learning revealed in the documentation that was collected through the course and through the final process folios, written self- assessments, and presentations given by students. The next chapters of our study will be published in a future edition *of Innovations in Early Learning: the US – Reggio Exchange* and a chapter of a forthcoming book. In her final chapter of *Making Learning Visible*, Carlina reflected that the authors "compiled a sort of 'dictionary of experiences,' which helped (them) to reflect, infer, hypothesize, and understand" (p.343). Carlina and I hope that this first chapter of our story and study offers another sort of "dictionary of experiences" that might provoke readers to notice, wonder, and speculate about the elements of design and documentation that support individual and group learning in the university setting.

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The Press of Standardized Curriculum: Does a Kindergarten Teacher Instruct with Worksheets or Let Children Play?

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Since 1995 the Government of Ontario has imposed very rapid changes in Education, including the imposition of a standardized curriculum across the elementary years: the Kindergarten curriculum came into effect in 1998. Because a standardized curriculum is so counter to the philosophies of developmentally appropriate practice espoused by members of the early childhood field, I became intrigued by how early childhood teachers were coping with the newly imposed standardized curriculum. What was their stance towards it? How had it changed their teaching practice? Were they resorting to workbooks, ditto sheets and seatwork with very young children? How were they handling report cards? During 1999-2001, I worked with eight teachers to explore these questions.

This article portrays Corrine (a pseudonym), a young teacher who was in her fourth year of teaching Kindergarten during our research together and how she was negotiating competing tensions in her work. Corrine had started her teaching with a traditional academic approach, using worksheets, and shifted gradually towards more developmentally appropriate practice under the influence of an exemplary colleague. In the process, she adopted a variety of philosophical perspectives from teacher direction to supporting socio-dramatic play. Elements of constructivism were also present, and the careful documentation practices characteristic of the Reggio Emilia Approach. The year of our research was her second year of using the new ministry expectations for curriculum. Previous to her kindergarten teaching, Corrine had spent two years as a substitute and long-term occasional teacher. Her Bachelor of Education degree is at the Junior/Intermediate level (Grades 4-10), her undergraduate degree in Mathematics and Psychology, and she said, "None of my teaching [preparation] is in early childhood" (F1, 1). This article highlights, thus, a relatively inexperienced teacher, without formal early childhood background, who has altered her teaching from academic to more developmentally appropriate ways and now attempts to incorporate new curriculum expectations. In this fourth year of teaching, how has her teaching practice evolved, how does she approach the new curriculum expectations, and what tensions, worries, successes and concerns arise for her?

A View of Corrine's Kindergarten Classroom in Action

Corrine's kindergarten space was a double-sized rectangular classroom entered through huge double glass doors. It was so big, with so much in it, that it was hard to take it in. It felt like a space for two teachers and 50 children, whereas she was alone in it with about 20 children. Across from the glass doors was an exit to a bleak playground of empty asphalt, empty field beyond. Inside the door, a set of tricycles and other outdoor equipment was stored adjacent to the sandbox. The middle of the long room held tables and an arrangement of shelves with manipulatives, plasticene, art supplies, and so forth. One end of the room held the teacher's desk, a piano, and an open rug area for whole group work. Across from this carpet was the house center and an open tiled area for block play, with coat cubbies along the side wall used as part of the block storage. At the other end of the long room, far away, was a puppet theatre and water play, with snack tables beside the area of hooks and cubbies actually used for coats.

Both morning and afternoon classes appeared relatively homogenous, without high diversity during this particular year, but in fact, 12 out of 40 children had ESL backgrounds. With one or two exceptions, all children were from families associated with mainstream culture (white, middle class). I would describe Corrine as a lively, articulate teacher with spunk. It was courageous of her to invite me to attend her more difficult class, one including a number of "wild" little boys that she was having difficulty settling into productive activity.

On an afternoon in November, after returning from the library, Corrine sits with four children on the rug pursuing a retelling of "The Three Bears". Four children play at the sandbox, several girls work at the cut and paste table, and several more in the dramatic play area, and two boys are running trucks up and down the entire length of the long side of the room, making huge noises, as if it was their job to fill up the entire space with as much sound and motion as possible. We have agreed that I shall focus my observations on the 'wild boys'. Soon two other boys join in and the four are spinning cars and trucks at each other, the cars crashing, parts falling off and spilling about. Corrine is far away.

'You're not allowed to do that,' a girl sitting nearby says to them.

Large cars fly up and down the side of the room, crashing, banging into each other. It is extremely noisy, like outdoor play. Corrine is preoccupied with a small group 'miles' away, and the children do not know me. I get out some large hollow blocks and make a ramp, which the boys immediately begin to use, one boy adding blocks to make it higher. I start to make an end wall to stop the cars now flying off the ramp, and a boy quickly gets the idea and continues building the wall. As I take these actions, I am thinking about Kamii and DeVries work (1993) showing how experiences with ramps, effort, and distance provide understandings of informal physics.

'We're playing jumping cars!'

'Look out!'

'No! You can't do it that way!'

'Guys, I'm always first, I'm always first.'

Six of the 'wild boys' settle into a simple pattern of shooting their car off the ramp to see how far it will go. Wild activity still, but it has direction and a focus. Liam begins using a hand signal to stop others from shooting their car when he goes to repair the backstop, and the five boys wait in line. A good sign, I think, nice self-regulation.

Corrine added, "I also started realizing through reading about DAP, that worksheets are the least effective way for children who don't know the alphabet to learn it. I started to look for different teaching strategies."

'I'm number 10!'

'I'm number 61'

'I'm number 60!'

'I'm 10.' This is the second time he says it.

'But I'm first.'

'I'm number 4.'

'Oh, you're number 16.'

'No, I'm number 28.'

'I'm 31, 9.

'I think, Liam, I'm number 10.'

Several boys (4, 10) keep their numbers firmly, as if grasping that it identifies their car, like a race car number, while other boys' numbers slide around in exploration, and with the inference a higher number is better. Some seem to mix ordinal and cardinal functions. While the activity feels wild, I can see lots of order in it, and lots of curriculum possibilities as I observe, but I am very glad when Corrine appears on the scene. (F1, 1-2)

While this view of the classroom shows the "wild boys", who treat the classroom like a giant playground containing only them, three-quarters of the group was functioning in ways comfortable to teachers in school settings. When Corrine appeared, the boys responded quickly and enthusiastically to her request, which we will pick up later. The difficulty with the highly active children is that they make everyone else in the room invisible, and I had enormous appreciation for Corrine's stamina in staying with the group with which she was working, and in attending to the other three-quarters of the room while the activity of the "wild boys" took over the soundscape of the room, I their lone observer. In her feedback on our first draft, Corrine commented that this group of children could "easily demand most of my time and distract other children" and that this effect continued most of the year.

Corrine's initial approach to teaching Kindergarten and how it has changed

Since Corrine had no background in her teacher preparation programme for working with young children, she began her teaching of Kindergarten by looking around her to see what other such teachers were doing. She happened to see a traditional academic style using plenty of worksheets and that is how she began.

Developmental knowledge, I guess I'm getting it as I go along. I've never had any formal training in this. There aren't any resource teachers [now] who seem to know about Kindergarten and developmentally appropriate practice. [1] *And because I'm working on my own, I have no one to bounce ideas off of, so sometimes I learn things about children because I've been working with them for a few years. (1, 28)*

I started off very traditional, everybody did worksheets. I rarely had time to

[1] Since the government cutbacks following 1995 my understanding is that in this board the reduced numbers of resource teachers have been concentrated in areas of Special Education.

observe children's play because I was too busy administering worksheets. That was before the [new] curriculum, because that's how I saw everyone else doing it. (1, 31)

In addition to worksheets she adopted the traditional cultural units, such as "All About Me" and "Bears". She quickly found this approach unsatisfactory, and met an interesting colleague, known for exemplary work, who taught very differently:

I was kind of bored with worksheets. I wanted to do things more developmentally appropriately. (1, 31)

I was getting bored and I thought if I was getting bored, the children must be too. (1, 34)

As well, she realized that some children already knew the material on the worksheets:

Some kids knew the alphabet, and why should I sit them down and make them do a worksheet? (1, 34)

When she read the first draft of this account, Corrine added, "I also started realizing through reading about DAP, that worksheets are the least effective way for children who don't know the alphabet to learn it. I started to look for different teaching strategies."

Boredom, taking into account the knowledge that children brought with them to school, and a colleague who could provide links to teachers with more early childhood experience opened up other possibilities to her.

And my goal last year was to run the whole programme without doing a worksheet. I haven't done one yet this year either [November]. (1, 31-32)

Her colleague encouraged her to get off the abstract paper work, and also invited Corrine to join a professional group of teachers who could support her interests in a richer, more responsive teaching practice.

The conflict between Play and Teacher Direction

In attempting a more developmentally appropriate, responsive teaching approach, Corrine was drawn into the necessary tension of puzzling out whether to impose teacher-directed activities (in her case, using checklists as assessment), or whether to support contexts that encouraged children's play and self-initiated activity, using observational techniques for assessment. As I have noted elsewhere (Wien, 1995), this tension between play and teacher-directed activity is one that early childhood teachers live with continuously — the weight of society seeming to insist on academic instruction (Elkind, 1990) and the press of the early childhood field arguing that an academic approach is inadequate for young children. It is inappropriate for children because it does not reflect the research base on how children learn (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; Duckworth, 1996; Hendrick & Chandler, 1996; Piaget, 1971; Santrock, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978), is not congruent with recent understandings about brain development in neuroscience (Caine, 1997; Thompson et al., 2000), and is extraordinarily limited as a pedagogy for working with young children (Dyson, 1993; Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1997; Gallas, 1994; Hendrick & Chandler, 1996; Jones & Nimmo, 1995; Smilansky, 1990). In Corrine's case, ignorance fuelled by boredom and recognition of previous knowledge in children, led her to seek a more sophisticated practice. Such individual cases in early childhood reflect the broader conflict within mainstream education between contradictory frameworks for teaching practice: on the one hand, the positivist, rational view of the learner as a consumer and education as incremental, quantitative, and cumulative; and on the other hand, the view of the learner as a complex living organism interconnected with other complex systems, an active agent responding in a dynamic, organic, holistic world (Davis & Sumara, 1997; Filippini, 1997; Heshusius & Ballard, 1996).

To remove child-initiated activity with peers (as well as adults) reduces the child's opportunities to function at their leading edge of thought.

For Corrine, this struggle occurred in her uncertainty about whether to allow children to play in self-initiated activities or whether to impose teacher activities that they were required to do.

I do have activities that I impose on the children, but I also give them time for play. So I'm trying to balance the two approaches. I also have to send home a programme letter each term outlining the expectations that will be addressed and how they will be assessed. (2, 2)

She continues that one of the reasons she uses teacher-directed activities that all children must do, is the requirement that she report on how all the children have met the selected expectations. She does not find that children meet the same expectations through play. She also says she's somewhat unsure how to respond when children play – when to step in, when to extend, when to ask a question, or stay out altogether.

Corrine also commented that she had wanted to do projects with the children but didn't get to that because of her extra-classroom responsibilities. And

the provision by the board of a series of checklists on the new expectations had the initial impact of making Corrine think she must assess each expectation via the checklists, and how could she do that without giving tasks to assess? Simultaneously, she provided an ample play time in which children chose their own activities from a rich array of material. She noted that her observation skills were sharper and she had developed the habit of frequently taking photographs of children's play activities and writing running records of their conversation. The year of our research, she felt she had developed this skill of close attention and documentation of children much further, and was highly attuned to the children's play, its benefits for development, and what it demonstrated to her about the children: "I'm getting better at the daily stuff — and seeing why it's important" (2, 2). She noticed, for instance, that some of the girls who are "behind" in language areas such as recognizing letters of the alphabet or book knowledge, are nevertheless "really good ideas people" who "organize the kids" in play and show "a lot of leadership skills" (2, 10). She felt she had a better understanding of them through play: "I could see their strengths easier, whereas many teacher-directed activities have a narrow focus and sometimes show only their weaknesses." She noted that the children who cannot play well and "disrupt the other kids" are not as mature, not as comfortable in their adjustment to school as many children; "I'm worried because they can't play that well" (2, 10). She had made an interesting connection between children's play and children who function well at school tasks:

> *I have some photos of children playing doctor, firefighter, mechanic. You see, those are my high-level ones [children] who are really applying it [understandings about community helpers], and that's my documentation for that unit, those children who are going beyond the whole group discussion of the topic or the story. They're really applying it [their knowledge]. So, I thought, it's that dramatic play, that play that really tells you who will be you're A's in Grade One. (2, 7)*

This is the same argument made by Smilansky (1990) who believes a sociodramatic play approach supports children's intellectual development. Her research findings demonstrate close connections among high imagination and representation of ideas in Kindergarten, and school achievement in mathematics and reading in Grade Two. Smilansky reminds us that much of school (history, mathematics, literature,) requires an ability to imagine – other places, peoples, ideas, times not present – and it is this highly developed skill of representation that children develop in play.

Corrine also notices that the children can function at higher levels in self-initiated activity than they can when the teacher imposes the same activity:

> *[Minta] ... doesn't like doing anything that's teacher-selected. I was focussing on sorting one week and all the children were expected to complete a sorting activity with me. When it was her turn to work with me, she was reluctant and wanted to leave. Later that week, she decided to go with a group of friends and start sorting. This was significant for two reasons: she was working with the other kids – she'd been working on her own [previously] – and because she was doing an activity I wanted her to do, but on her own initiative. (1, 16-17)*

This fact too is noted by many developmental theorists (Donaldson, 1992; Duckworth, 1996; Kamii & DeVries, 1993; Vygotsky, 1978) and is a key feature of constructivist approaches to early childhood. Tasks that adults impose on young children can block children's access to their own knowledge of the world, but children's understanding visibly emerges when children choose the activity themselves in the company of peers. Vygotsky's famous phrase about play, that children walk a head taller than themselves (1978, p.102) when they play, captures the sense that the leading edge of children's intellectual functioning is present in self-initiated play. They can do more in play than outside it. This difference in capacity, depending on context, is one of the reasons those knowledgeable about early childhood insist that play and child-initiated activity be part of children's learning settings. To remove child-initiated activity with peers (as well as adults) reduces the child's opportunities to function at their leading edge of thought. Feeling pulled in conflicting directions in her teaching, yet attempting to make her teaching increasingly developmentally appropriate in a school context that has recently become standardized, how then does Corrine approach assessment in Kindergarten?

Corrine's Assessment Practices

Corrine had developed one of the most comprehensive, carefully kept and complex sets of assessment practices I have encountered in the school system. She had a huge binder with several kinds of data consistently collected. She had developed checklists of expectations for subject areas such as Mathematics, Language, Science and Technology, the Arts, and Personal and Social Studies, reflecting the Kindergarten curriculum (1998). Some sheets included specific criteria on one side and space for observations about children on the other, on such items as "curiosity and willingness to explore and experiment", "awareness of natural surroundings," "awareness of patterns in daily life," and so forth. Secondly, Corrine had a process for gathering up daily anecdotal observations during play on a sheet that she called "At a Glance", a paper with a small square for each child in which she could jot quick notes on daily activity. Weekly she cut up these squares and pasted them in a cumulative folder for each child. In addition to these check-

lists/observations sheets on expectations and the anecdotal "At a Glance" observations, she was also constructing classroom narratives using documentation techniques from teacher research – photographs, transcripts of tape recorded conversations or notes on conversations among children. From the latter materials she would choose photographs and accompanying text to put on the walls to share with the children, reflecting the children's work back to them. Such reflection permits children to think again about their work, and is a major influence of the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1997; Hendrick, 1997). She would also select some of these situations to retain in a binder in a more fully developed narrative of classroom events, accompanying the observed data with her own comments about its importance, and making connections between events and curriculum expectations.

One such narrative involved the children making a surprise party for Marilyn, who had had her birthday several weeks previously:

So on their own initiative, they went to the cut and paste center, made decorations, made a present, went to the playdough [center], made a playdough cake, and then they presented Marilyn with this. They sang Happy Birthday, they did it all. They were able to organize themselves and present that to Marilyn. (2, 3)

Corrine shows me the narrative in photos and text, the playdough cake with Popsicle stick candles, bits of playdough shaped into flames on the ends. She continues:

Then I wrote my reflection on it. 'This scenario demonstrates the children's ability to plan and organize themselves in dramatic play. They were able to use their shared experience of a birthday party to implement the sequence of events necessary to have a party – preparation, then the events. ...

And then I also noted some Kindergarten expectations that would be met:

'Sharing responsibility for planning classroom events;'

'Using pictures and sculptures to represent ideas;'

'Making preparations for performances.' (2, 3)

Corrine is taking great care here to demonstrate to the outsider the connections between classroom events and the abstract expectations in the ministry document. The intention is that the outsider will understand what these expectations mean in her program. This detailed work to make her program visible and transparent to those outside the experience illuminates through observable data how expectations are met.

Corrine put the photograph of the bridge on the wall, and found that it inspired "more bridge building and road making," pushing forward the level of block play.

A second narrative in photographs and text picks up on the "wild boys" and their "jumping cars" activity. When Corrine joined the boys' activity, she asked them to tell her what they had done, getting out the tape recorder to record their talk. She said the presence of the recorder always helped them talk one at a time. After they told her about "the jump" and wanting the cars "to go off the ramp, over the wall", one boy said, "I know, we'll make a bridge!" Corrine continued:

And I said, 'How will you do that?'

'Put the blocks under, and put them on top, and then you'll get squares.' So he had a plan in mind of what he was going to do, so that gave them another focus for the next part of their play session. And then they built the bridge, which was tall rectangular blocks, all lined up with rectangular blocks laid across the top. And it was quite long, it was an L-shape, and it went all the way over to the wall. Looking at the photographs, I commented: It really is a bridge. It's like a trestle bridge, isn't it. It's as high as their waist and the long blocks [on top] make a kind of highway where their cars can go way up in the air. (2, 4-5)

This kind of documentation is not only useful for place-holding memories about the evolution of children's activity, it is helpful to show parents during parent conferences, and outsiders who might wonder what useful things could be done in Kindergarten play. It also sparks further complex play in the children: Corrine put the photograph of the bridge on the wall, and found that it inspired "more bridge building and road making," pushing forward the level of block play. She found too that the morning class was motivated by the photograph of the afternoon class, saying, "[we] want to build that like the afternoon class" (2, 5). This serious documentation of observable phenomena in her classroom, inspired by the Reggio Emilia Approach, allowed us to discuss her children, programme, and the connections between activity and curriculum in much more depth and elaboration than was possible without this data. Corrine also found that constructing these narratives in photographs and text to document classroom life had been a pleasure, in the midst of her sense of overwhelming responsibilities that drew her attention away from the classroom.

I didn't mind spending an evening writing up stories and putting the photographs together. I enjoyed that and it also reinforced the value of play for me. (2, 7)

Actually I was happy when I finished this. ... I have something that shows how my practice has changed and what I've learned about Kindergarten. (2, 6)

Corrine's Response to Ministry Curriculum Expectations

Corrine thinks that the new Kindergarten curriculum (1998), in part, allowed her to refrain from doing some of the traditional units (like "All About Me") and focus on bigger topics: it opened up new curriculum possibilities for her.

In some ways it's [the curriculum] gotten better because I've had to focus and make it more meaningful in order to connect everything together. I have to address all areas of the curriculum — we have to talk about science [now], we have to talk about the arts. (1, 3)

She had chosen, for instance, a focus on trees in the fall, and the class had been observing changes, attending to details of trees, and sketching trees and plants. She had learned from this that Minta, for example, understood that plants and trees have a food system carrying materials from root through stems to leaves, and Corrine was astonished at what she learned about children's knowledge from the sketching and talk about trees. Thus the addition of expectations in Science and the Arts in Kindergarten directed her attention to those areas and offered new curriculum possibilities to her. The focus on trees, for example, led to a painted mural on trees and animal homes that integrated art and science in the fall, and in the spring, a parent donated a tree that they planted on Earth Day.

She noted that the new curriculum "kind of threw me at first, especially the assessment and all these checklists" (1, 32). (The checklists were materials provided by her board.) However, in her second year with the checklists, she felt that they were not meant to be taken so literally, but were intended as guides, not absolutes, and she felt freer to develop her assessment more creatively. At the same time, she believed her assessment practices were "much richer" (1, 32) than previously, both because she was observing play more carefully and because "now I'm realizing what's more important – those connections kids are making" (1, 32).

I always had a camera, but this year I'm using it more systematically. This year, I'm also playing with the tape recorder. So I'm pulling in more. I'm kind of getting better in spite of the curriculum. (1, 32)

This latter comment clearly reflects the tension Corrine feels about being pulled in conflicting directions by contrasting frameworks for practice: as she tries to work more developmentally appropriately, the checklists and linear expectations pull her towards a rationalist, machine-like way of working with young children. The continuing development of more developmentally appropriate assessment practices, using observation techniques to document and study children's activity, and simultaneously, the focus on board checklists for expectations, shows how both threads of the conflicting frameworks for practice are interwoven in the daily work of this teacher.

While the new curriculum opened up some new topics for her, she had other concerns about it. One concern was what she thought was omitted from the document but which nonetheless requires a considerable focus of attention from the teacher:

I don't think there's enough emphasis on developing friendships, relationships, and the kind[s] of play children engage in. That's not in there anymore. ... It's really not in there anymore, but it's so important. (1, 37)

While she believed that some important areas of children's lives had been omitted or under-emphasized, she felt that some of what was included as curriculum expectations was "just stupid". Corrine's notion of "just stupid" expectations both shows her developing stance towards the ministry documents and unintended limitations in the document. My present hypothesis is that the combination of 1) expectations laid out subject by subject in fragmented lists, and 2) a new emphasis on piecemeal assessment shapes teachers' responses to the documents. How does it shape their response? To be comprehensive, teachers are initially pulled into believing they must address and evaluate every single expectation singly in some way. Yet the expectations are drawn from many different levels of human functioning.

I'm not going to try to cover every expectation anymore. Some of them, I'm not even going to sit down and assess anymore. It's just stupid.

Which ones are stupid?

Not stupid, but things that I can talk about but not [have to] sit down and figure out if they know it.

Are they too general?

Well, everybody figures out what the weather is like! Everybody knows by the end of fall, you need a winter coat! You don't need the weather there [on the curriculum] to figure that out! (1, 23) ... To sit down and assess them on it because it's a curriculum bullet is stupid. (1, 24)

Such expectations, thus, are too trivial. It is as if the curriculum developers were asked to include everything a child could be expected to know by the end of Kindergarten, but nowhere is there recognition that the child arrives in school with considerable knowledge of the world and this knowledge does not have to be re-taught. Part of the teacher's job is figuring out what to teach and what not to teach, because it has already been learned. Neither does the document differentiate types of understanding, such as tacit knowledge (absorbed by the body, eg. put on more clothing when cold); or social knowledge (eg. people wear coats and boots in winter); nor distinguish physical knowledge (understanding the physical properties of objects) from intellectual knowledge (the major symbol systems such as

written language and Mathematics). Thus the expectation that children know something is different from the expectation that it be taught and assessed, and Corrine can see that difference and respond to it sensibly.

Corrine's Stance towards the Curriculum: Synthesizing classroom events and expectations

What Corrine understands at this point in time in terms of working with the ministry expectations is the necessity of constantly building up connections between her observations of children and the abstract expectations, showing what those expectations look like in classroom life. She finds that the abstract expectations, such as "planning and organizing" may be linked with a specific subject area, like Science, in the document, when she will observe it in the classroom in some other area:

> *If they're playing a lot with art materials, that's where the higher level thinking is going to come out. And another child is playing with blocks all the time – they're going to 'experiment with techniques and materials' — which is in the arts curriculum – but [they're doing it] with the blocks. (1, 35)*

She has, thus, a sense of looking for bigger, more important expectations across the curriculum, rather than isolating them in specific curriculum areas, as the document seems to suggest. Here is an example of how she views herself as a teacher having to synthesize classroom events and curriculum expectations:

> *Well, even that girl making that book on Goldilocks and the Three Bears, that's the retelling [of the story], but it's also picture-making in the arts, and drawing three bowls of different sizes is Mathematics [sequencing of size]. You have to look at it [the child's book] that way. Because of the five [curriculum] areas, it's all laid out separately in there [the document] but you [the teacher] have to make the connections. (1, 36)*

Each classroom event, thus, like a child's retelling and illustration of an old story, contains multiple expectations. It is up to the teacher first to see all the expectations involved, to know how to communicate this to others, and to know what to do next to lead the child towards further understanding.

When I visited in April, Corrine commented that her board has offered an interpretation of the ministry expectations to teachers to assist their struggle.[2] The document supports teachers in focusing not on individual expectations but on big ideas, such as the notion of uncovering, rather than covering curriculum, and of encouraging enduring understandings. Yet Corrine noted that it focuses on culminating performances and assessments rather than the emergent curriculum preferred in early childhood practice (Jones & Nimmo, 1995). However, the board apparently suggests that teachers focus on integration of curriculum: "I was just at a conference last week and teachers were saying, even if you integrate it, you probably can't cover it all, but you have no hope if you don't [integrate] (2, 6)." While Corrine thinks the documents "have some good ideas", she finds that all the specific expectations override in impact the broader, more important ones.

> *[There's] so many of them, I think you lose some of that, the big ideas. ...I think you have to look more at the overall expectations and not let yourself get bogged down with all those little specific ones. There's a better way of doing it. (2, 11)*

What is this better way, that requires integration of curriculum, and synthesizing of expectations with rich classroom events? Corrine in April told me that she is going to teach Grade One the following year: in order to "move forward" in her own thinking, she believed she needed a colleague with whom to work.

> *I think people realize they cannot cover the curriculum unless it's integrated. ...*
>
> *So how would you do that? How would you make that synthesizing work?*
>
> *Well you know what I'm going to do for Grade One? I'm going to photocopy all of the expectations in a different color for each curriculum area and I'm going to chop them up, and I'm going to see what goes with what. What connects. The colors will help me see how I can integrate expectations across the curriculum. (2, 14)*

This kind of sort is a well-used data analysis technique in qualitative research methods (Kirby & McKenna, 1989; Miles & Huberman, 1984) and a helpful process for synthesizing any mass of loose data. Corrine said, "Well it's the only way I can work with it. I should have done this for Kindergarten, but now I'm getting smarter. I'm figuring it out" (2,14). She added in her feedback that she is "figuring out how to better deal with so many expectations – by looking for the 'big ideas' and connections across subject areas. In September she said she had done the initial sort, that it was "a bit overwhelming" but that she had found some 'big ideas', such as a rationale for including a "Structures" programme in Grade One.

Concluding Remarks

Corrine both works from children towards the curriculum document and from the documents towards the children, reflecting her conflict over whether teacher-directed processes or developmentally appropriate practice should dominate her teaching. While the discussion about curriculum documents might give the impression that she works primarily from the documents to the children, this effect is contrived, I believe, by the focus of my research on how teachers in early childhood are taking up the new standardized curriculum documents. The examples of her work based in observation of the children's self-initiated activity, documented and displayed in narratives of photographs and texts, shows a capacity to listen carefully for what is going on in the activity of children, and to find ways to forge her own

2 In order to protect the confidentiality of the board, the document is not referenced or quoted from directly.

connections between meaningful events for children and the curriculum expectations that she must master in order to teach. An example of this working from children's activity to the curriculum documents occurred in the fall. Reading off some expectations to me, she said:

> *So, 'Demonstrate consideration for others by helping them;' 'Share responsibility for planning classroom events'; 'recognizes personal strengths;' 'experiments with materials." Those are in the curriculum. I'm always trying to link it [children's activity] back to the curriculum. (2, 9)*

The link this time is with a story about Joy. Accustomed to playing alone, the child one day saw white tissue paper at the cut and paste center near Halloween:

> *In previous years, I had said, 'Oh, you could make a ghost.' Well I didn't this year, I just put it [the tissue] out. And Joy came up with the idea of making ghosts. She shared it with the class. She suggested the next day, 'Can I show everybody else how to do it?' So she spent the entire play time showing everyone how to make ghosts. (1, 19)*

Much of the work of this young teacher is forged around grasping what it is that children at her specific grade level are expected to know in a lock-step system, and in making connections between the abstract, semantic description of an expectation and the 'real life' classroom events that include those expectations. The new curriculum expectations, set out in linear lists by subject area, demand highly developed abilities in teachers to synthesize and integrate curriculum on the one hand, and on the other, to differentiate and analyze the specific expectations layered into any rich classroom event.

Corrine's teaching practice continues to develop in a developmentally appropriate direction, in spite of the press of board assessment checklists of subject by subject expectations. Her approach to the ministry expectations is one of investigation, exploring "what goes with what", in order to integrate curriculum. Secondly, her approach is one of constantly forging links, working to build her own understanding of connections between events and layers of expectations. An interesting consequence of the new, more demanding and explicit curriculum, thus, is that it has paradoxically made the work of teachers such as Corrine more intellectually demanding. Its explicitness may appear to reduce uncertainty but paradoxically increases it: nonetheless, in Corrine's case, it did not prevent the professional development of a thinking teacher.

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The Reggio Emilia Approach As Seen From An Asian Perspective

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Abstract

This article considers the research conducted on the cognitive development opportunities afforded young North American Asian children within the Reggio Emilia educational approach, while reflecting on the perceptions of Asian immigrant parents towards this approach. Data for the study was gathered through observations, interviews and surveys. It highlights the effective strategies and modifications of this approach that have addressed the concerns raised by critics, among Asian parents. Specifically, it relates to the effectiveness, benefits and possibilities of this approach in fostering the cognitive development their children, despite language and ethnic differences. Results illustrate varied concerns held by immigrant Asian parents with a North American environment. As well, it revealed responses from educators who embrace the ideas learned from the educators of Reggio Emilia.

The Reggio Emilia Approach

Recent studies convey an emphasis on the value of dialogue, collaboration, and the importance of creating a community of learners and sharing of culture (Davilla & Koenig, 1998; Davis, 1999; Hendrick, 1994; Krechevsky & Stock, 2000; Liu & Chien, 1998). This led to the development of an educational approach that 'reflects a commitment to the belief that adults as well as children need opportunities for sharing, experimenting, building theory, and constructing knowledge about the world in which they work' (New, 1994).

The educational philosophy developed in Reggio Emilia during the last fifty years leads the world with its approach. Within this approach, verbal, written and visual communication and exchange of ideas have been encouraged within a progressive learning community. The educators of Reggio Emilia respect children and believe they are capable of developing skills and constructing their own knowledge with sensitive support from others. They believe that children are competent, resourceful and full of ideas and that educators must recognize and build on these (Fraser, 1999).

The Reggio educational approach professes to build on a sense of self-esteem and confidence in children, taking into consideration that the effectiveness of children's learning stems from the connectedness of, and the relationships between their interests and ideas generat-

ed from their everyday experiences, whether through hands-on experiences or vicarious learning (Jackson, 1998; Phillippi, 1998). It acknowledges that children's learning takes place in a spiral process, as they integrate their past experiences and relate them to current ideas and concrete learning experiences, developing critical thinking and reasoning skills as they work on individual activities or group projects within a negotiated curriculum (Dever & Hobbs, 1998; Fyfe & Forman, 1996; Hastings & Grusec, 1998).

In essence, children are encouraged to take ownership of their learning and express their ideas, reflecting their learning and cognitive development in 'a hundred languages' (Davilla & Koenig, 1998; Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1993; Katz & Chard, 1996). Hence, an approach that can be termed 'child initiated and teacher framed' (Forman & Fyfe, 1998; Fraser & Gestwicki, 2000), this philosophy tends to foster the development of children's ideas, innovation and creativity.

Mind-set of Asian Parents towards Children's Learning

In earlier days, 'play' in any sense - including those embraced by advocates of the Reggio Emilia approach - was not accepted as a way of learning within the pedagogy of most conservative cultures, such as in most Oriental and Indian cultures in Asia. Owing to the influence of the British educational system during the days of British colonization, in many Asian countries, *play* was viewed as a form of idle and non-productive engagement in activities (Farver, Kim & Lee, 1995; Goto, 1996, Mariano, Welteroth & Johnson, 1999). Still today, in spite of various theories that have proven its effectiveness, when *play* or 'fluidity of schedule' is mentioned, there are often frowns from parents, and dismay from grandparents (Liu & Chien, 1998; Goto, 1996).

Although Asian educators may have studied theories that 'support learning through play,' they continue to regard these with caution. As a matter of fact, the traditional Asian approach to the education and care of children had, until recent decades, consisted of training in the rules of obedience, cultivation of self-control and emotional-restraint, and submitting to the demands of the grown-ups and elders under conservative and economical learning environments (Goto, 1996). This has been especially noteworthy within the Oriental culture, under the teachings of ancient Chinese philosophers. Very much alike the traditional European way of learning, rote learning and memorization were the preferred terms in the development of cognition (Kay, 1999). The dictatorial and authoritarian ways were the accepted and respected teacher behaviours.

It is difficult for Asian parents not to segregate the role of play in the context of children's learning (Farver, Kim & Lee, 1995; Mariano, Welteroth & Johnson, 1999). It is not easy for them to understand that play encourages the development of cognitive abilities, such as critical thinking, language and creativity. It is also a cultural practice to ignore emotional needs because these would reflect a sense of weakness in a human being, especially in male children (Farver, Kim & Lee, 1995; Mariano, Welteroth & Johnson, 1999). Thus, it is not surprising to find that many Asian parents either remain unaware of, or oblivious to the fact that the omission of meaningful and child-initiated learning experiences through play and its supportive materials could curb possibilities for a wholesome individual growth.

Moreover, in Asian culture, cognitive development is seldom linked to healthy social or physical development (Eaton & Dembo, 1989; Mariano, Welteroth & Johnson, 1999). Ironically, various researchers have showed that play encourages social behaviour such as socially acceptable language and turn taking behaviours, and facilitates the development of physical growth and coordination skills in children. And very much so, play also fosters the growth of cognitive development in young children (Fromberg, 1987b).

It is to be noted that while most first generation immigrant Asian parents may remain conservative in their attitudes, it may not be the case for the second generation of Asian parents (Goto,1996). The younger generation of Asian parents who have displayed a positive attitude towards child-oriented learning opportunities may have been exposed to recent child development studies that show the intimate links from concrete learning experiences and aesthetics to critical thinking processes and cognitive development. Some of these adults could even have undergone similar hands-on learning experiences as children.

A majority of parents and educators, non-Asian and Asian alike, recognize that the early years of child development are crucial in building the solid foundations that enable them to reach milestones in learning and achievement (Krechevsky & Stock, 2000). Nevertheless, cultural and traditional influences continue to apply tremendous pressure on children to maintain a family reputation of high achievers, especially academically, within the Asian community (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

Rationale

Asian parents may have shown resistance to less structured programs because traditionally they value a more academic approach to education. They have also shown their concerns about cost and having to function in an environment that demands a high level of fluency in English for communication within the North American educational system.

Without the support of potential parents, teachers and a board comprising a large group of Asian parents, an Asian community may be reluctant to implement the Reggio educational approach. In order to examine the validity of the impression that the Reggio Emilia approach may not be well received by Asian parents, the researcher carried out an observational study, conducted interviews and a survey with parents.

This research was designed to identify effective strategies and modifications that would address the concerns raised by critics, among immigrant Asian parents, regarding the Reggio Emilia philosophy and pedagogy within the North American setting. Focusing on the *following research questions,* information was gathered from parents about their perceptions of the effectiveness, benefits and possibilities of this philosophy, despite language and ethnic differences. Hopefully, with this information, educators working with Asian communities can win support for their attempts to introduce the educational approach so enjoyed by the learning community of Reggio Emilia.

Research Questions

How are contemporary theoretical perspectives about learning addressed by early childhood educational centers trying to introduce the Reggio Emilia philosophy in their programs?

What are the modifications that are required in order to acknowledge the different cultural needs of the community?

Are there opportunities for children to engage in problem solving and scientific exploration in the Reggio Emilia approach as these are of major concern to most academically oriented cultures, such as the Asian cultures?

How are the operating costs and cost of materials and equipment met in the Reggio Emilia approach and conveyed to more economically conservative cultures, such as the Asian cultures?

Subjects

Population

The study was carried out in a preschool setting with a multicultural population, 22% of whom were Asian children. The preschool is located in a suburban area consisting mainly of middle-income families. The preschool was chosen for the observation of how the Italian, Reggio Emilia educational philosophy and pedagogical approach have been adapted to suit the needs of this North American context that consists of a substantial proportion of Asian enrolment. The subjects chosen consisted of approximately equal numbers of male and female children in four classes with a total sample size of 12 Asian children and 13 non-Asian children. The Asian subjects came from a variety of Asian ethnic groups from countries including Hong Kong, Taiwan, India, China, Japan and the Philippines. Fifty-eight percent were first generation immigrants. Seventeen percent of the subjects had fathers who were second-generation immigrants, while the mothers were first generation immigrants. Eight percent of the subjects had mothers who were second-generation immigrants and first generation immigrant fathers. The remaining 17% of the subjects had parents who were both second-generation immigrant parents. The non-Asian subjects included 77% of the families who were first or second-generation immigrants from Italy, and 23% families who had Irish or Scottish background. All, except for one, of the subjects were from a two-parent family structure with an average of 1.5 children per family. In 92% of the non-Asian families and 67% of the Asian families, both parents - including the single parent - were employed.

The three teachers have a minimum of an Early Childhood Care and Educational certificate and one of them has a Bachelor of Education degree. Two teachers share responsibility for each class. Family members make up the Board of Executives and act as decision-makers and partners in the educational environment. The teachers in Greenwood (a pseudonym) Preschool believe in providing the culturally varied children with equal opportunities for learning. Their aim is to provide experiences and opportunities in the learning environment to develop the children's full potential.

Physical Setting & Schedule

The preschool is situated in a portable - a movable container on the grounds of an elementary school. Despite its space constraints, Greenwood has developed an environment inspired by Reggio Emilia such that it serves as a third teacher with lots of opportunities for children to collaborate in small and large groups in different areas with privacy.

There is an extensive use of natural, projected and reflected lighting within the metaphoric learning philosophy of Reggio Emilia. The metaphoric emphasis on transparency and authenticity in communication and relationships is evident in its use of clear and translucent materials. The entrance to the preschool includes a glass French window that leads into the classroom. Two sides of the portable walls are covered with large glass windows to allow lots of natural lighting. There is also a shadow screen and projector for activities that involve the study of light and many mirrors to reflect light, as well as to encourage different angles in viewing activities – and interactions – from different perspectives and with different perceptions of individuals.

The different interest areas are arranged to encourage verbal discussions and interactions among children. There is an

atelier (art studio), an area for the completion of projects, and a dramatic play area, which is often transformed by the children into a wide variety of settings. For instance, the children had created a restaurant in this area prior to this research. Reflecting the metaphor of different levels in the cycle of learning, living and relationship establishment, there is an area elevated in the form of a loft converted to a message-writing center. Under the loft is an area created by the children as an office space that doubles as a secluded area with facilities for listening to cassette tapes. The remaining walls are covered with documentation of children at work, including pictorial, photographic and printed materials. The teachers document every process of the children's projects and activities. While some of these, including transcribed discussions of focused topics, are visibly displayed on the wall as part of the informative environment for revisiting, others are recorded within the children's individual developmental journals. Three-dimensional expressions of ideas in the forms of clay sculptures and projects from the previous terms are also shared within the classroom environment that reflect the children's learning valued as part of their own culture. Projects such as the snail garden and the restaurant are just some examples of children's work that, although constructed some time ago, they are still used by the children. There are also unfinished projects such as 'the bridges' arranged at the *in-process project area* of the room.

The incorporation of naturalness and authenticity in learning and relationships is manifested in its aesthetic use of natural materials. The sand table and collage table are equipped with wood pieces, sticks and stones. There are live plants on the shelves and hanging from the ceiling. As with the children's work, children's reference books, educational and collage materials are categorized and arranged in an aesthetically pleasing manner on the shelves that divide the classroom into separate areas that facilitate activities in groups.

There are two classes of 3-year-olds and two classes of 4-year-olds that attend two-hour sessions two and three days per week, respectively. The 4-year-olds' session begins with a meeting time during which the teachers introduce activities that they have negotiated with the children in previous sessions, and the materials the children have asked to work with - that have been made available for that day. This is followed by some time for sharing of ideas and items from home. The children then select to work on various activities including the continuation with the projects currently being worked on.

Projects often evolve from the interests of teachers or children, either from the meeting times or from other periods of interaction. The 3-year-olds generally collaborate in projects, but major plans, such as the design for the bridge in the 'bridge project,' seem to be initiated by the 4-year-olds, although the different groups also negotiate their ideas with one another via written letters.

Usually, the flow of each contact session ends with the teachers of each team discussing amongst themselves, their observations and reflections of the children's activity involvement and interactions during the contact session in question. Between the two classes, the educators also work on the documentation.

Family Involvement

Families are considered as partners in collaboration with the teachers in the children's education. They are informed about the need for involvement prior to registration, during pre-registration visits and orientation. Hence, they are fully aware of the assigned roles of their choice on various committees that govern the administration of the school. In addition, each family is scheduled for 'parent-duty-days' for the academic semester, including the day of their child's birthday celebration.

Parents' duties for those special days include carrying on the partnership in learning with the teachers and children, and assisting the children with routine care. The family member on duty is expected to join in circle activities and collaborate with the children as they engage in classroom activities. They are also involved in cleaning and tidying during contact sessions and for twenty-minutes of final 'touch-ups' at the end of their duty sessions.

North American parents within the Reggio Emilia pedagogy are very much involved in organizing and conducting fundraising activities to help with the purchase of major equipment for the class. By ensuring a high level of communication and collaboration with families, materials and assistance are usually provided to facilitate the children's problem solving, exploration and work. The teachers remind the children of their responsibility to inform their family members, usually the parents, about the assistance they would need. For particular projects and activities specific materials are sometimes required. At other times the children would need the assistance or presence of the parents for discussion of ideas. For instance, during the 'bridge study,' a parent was invited to demonstrate and weld the railings for the bridge that the children were building at the entrance to the classroom. In this school, family participation for documentation only consisted of photo finishing.

Research Design

The research design includes observational recordings in the form of anecdotes, running records and specimen descriptions (Irwin & Bushnell, 1980, Patton, 1990) within a reflective journal. Observations included the children's non-verbal interactions and conversations with Asian and non-Asian peers, teachers and family members, as well as photographic documentation of their work-in-process, incidental learning moments and verbal discussions. As part of the observations, the revised edition of the Early Childhood Rating Scale

(ECERS) by Harms, Clifford and Cryer (1998) was used as a means to analyze the quality of the environment and the modifications of this educational approach. Interviews with teachers included information about the licensing of the preschool, historical information, as well as questions about the quality of the preschool environment drawn from the ECERS. They were recorded and transcribed verbatim for triangulation of results.

The parents, both non-Asian and Asian, participated in semi-structured interviews. They were asked about their children's work, their own role within the pedagogy and their perceptions of the Reggio Emilia educational philosophy. A questionnaire was given to each of the parents, Asian and non-Asian, to gather information for triangulation. It included a set of questions that would elicit their perception of their children's development based on extracted information from a standardized child development checklist upon a six-option Likert-scale (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996). Parents' prioritization of their children's development and the school environment, as well as questions about the parents' current responsibilities and participation in preschool activities were also included. Open-ended questions were posed to gather a variety of opinions on the obligations of parental involvement, suggestions for improvements to the preschool program, and for parents to indicate the type and duration of activities that their children participated outside of the preschool curriculum.

Procedure

The teachers reviewed the proposal for the study and sought parental approval. Observations for the first three days of the study included data on all the children, Asian and non-Asian, involved in problem solving and exploratory activities. To reduce variability of the data in terms of age differences, the selection process concluded with ten subjects of Asian children from the two classes of 4 year-old group. However, as a precautionary measure, and to maintain the sample size in the event that some of the Asian families withdrew, thirteen Asian children were observed including one three-year old child among the four classes. During the following three weeks, the Asian children's interactions with materials and among their peers were observed in detail, especially when they engaged in problem solving and exploration of issues conducted both indoors and outdoors. Teacher responses towards the children's learning behaviours were also observed and documented (Bentzen, 1993). The teachers' verbal discussions and children's verbal interactions were recorded and transcribed. Finally, statistical calculations of the questionnaire data were based on a total sample of 12 Asian families and 15 non-Asian families. The results were presented as a percentage in the form of descriptive statistics.

Results

The information from the questionnaires proved the most interesting as it provided information about how Asian parents perceive a preschool program that incorporates the Reggio Emilia approach. This information is important because the parent's attitude towards their children's educational experience impacts their children's performance and involvement in the preschool.

Results from Parents' Questionnaires and Interviews

The following was gathered from a sample of 75% of questionnaires returned from the Asian families, 27% from non-Asian families, and interviews with the parents.

Awareness of school philosophy

Parents had the impression that the preschool provided an environment that fostered learning through play and concrete exploration of materials: an approach that is not in keeping with the traditional Asian educational approach. Forty-two percent of the Asian parents were not familiar with the approach and 17% of the parents felt that the approach enabled the teachers to be aware of individual children and that it involved a partnership of teachers and parents as a community of educational providers for the children.

Asian Parents' Positive Perceptions of the Preschool's Educational Approach

In terms of the strengths of the program, all of the Asian parents felt satisfied with the hands-on learning experiences provided for their children and the information that families were given about their children's learning. They were also pleased with the varied opportunities children were given to think and carry out different activities. They acknowledged that the teachers "appear to know each child well" and reflect their genuine concern for each child's leaning by "paying attention to each child."

Perceptions of Parent Participation on Parent Duty-Day

While most parents valued observing the teaching skills of teachers and interacting with them, they found that parent-duty-days were beneficial in letting them observe the development and social interaction of their own children. Results from the collected data showed that among the non-Asian parents, 38% of them valued observation of the children, while 62% of the non-Asian parents valued interaction with the children during parent-duty-days. These figures were contrasted with 50% of the Asian parents who prioritized observing children and 25% of the Asian parents who prioritized interaction with children, respectively, during parent-duty-days. In addition, 25% of the Asian parents indicated they preferred serving and cleaning during parent-duty-days. This result seems to suggest that most Asian parents were more comfortable as onlookers, co-helpers and silent observers within the program than as initiators of conversations with the chil-

dren. This seems to be in keeping with traditional Asian values of maintaining a distance and segregating what was considered "child-like" discussions from what they would typically regard as "adult-like" discussions.

Perceptions of Further Family Participation

Eighty-three percent of Asian parents indicated they were concerned about their own spoken English language ability, so they preferred to make contributions to the program that did not require public speaking skills. Hence, they chose to contribute materials, raise funds, clean and do maintenance. In contrast, results indicated that 60% of non-Asian parents were involved with duties that involved public speaking and co-ordination of events.

Perception of Documentation as part of the Preschool Environment

In this section, the parents were asked to prioritize the value of documentation because they were displayed as a major source of information for families about their children's learning experiences. Fifty percent of Asian families responded to the question, of which 25% listed documentation as the first of their top five priorities about the preschool environment. Of the Asian families who had not prioritized documentation, 33% construed the preschool philosophy as "not being rigid" in their educational approach and are responsive towards children's interests from the documentation seen in the children's individual portfolio or those displayed on the wall.

Perceptions of Asian Children's Participation in Activities and Verbal Discussions

In general, the 83% of Asian parents, whose children speak mainly or mostly their mother-tongue language at home, felt that Asian children were usually quiet in school. Due to their lack of verbal interaction and lack of skill in speaking English, Asian parents felt they may not benefit as much in terms of cognitive development as they might not be able to contribute to the frequent verbal discussions within the preschool program. Eight percent of the parents felt that their children did not like to be involved with hands-on activities such as finger paints, clay or materials that might soil their hands or clothes.

Perceptions of the Importance of Cognitive Abilities of Children

Data from the questionnaires and the interview showed that of the 12 Asian children, whose parents had responded to the questionnaire, all voiced some concern about cognitive development, namely, in the mathematical, critical thinking and language development of their children. Of the 15 non-Asian children, 46% of parents showed some concern with the creative thinking and language skills. The data indicated that they did not show as much concern about the mathematical skill development of the children.

This result could be explained by the fact that 42% of Asian children spoke mainly their mother-tongue with their family members, 41% spoke some English with their family members, and 17% of children spoke mainly English at home; while all of the non-Asian children spoke mostly English at home. Noteworthy was the finding that 83% of Asian parents who showed concern about the language development of their children, did not seem to be concerned only with the development of the English language, but were also concerned about maintaining their children's mother-tongue. Hence, these Asian parents provided a family environment that primarily supported the development of the mother-tongue and to a lesser degree the English language. They seemed to hope that the preschool would take a greater responsibility in developing their children's English language.

Children's Participation in Extra-curricular Enrichment Courses

Seventy-five% of Asian parents revealed their grievances that the program in Greenwood did not "teach numbers" nor provide enough opportunities for the children to "practice in workbooks" and "practice handwriting." To compensate for this need, they involved their children in purposeful activities either mainly within the family, or with enrichment programs, to facilitate the development of their children's language and mathematical skills.

Within this category, in particular, 33% of Asian children who were involved with such activities were actively enrolled in extra-curricular activities and enrichment courses, such as the Kimono (a pseudonym) School of Mathematical Learning. Most languages learned in these enrichment courses were the children's mother-tongue language, which could be Cantonese, Mandarin or Japanese, as well as reading skills in English.

Twenty-two percent of children in this category were involved in activities that developed physical skills such as obstacle courses, gym, ballet, and swimming. To some extent, the social skills of the children were also emphasized in these enrichment activities. The remaining 20% of Asian children in this category were involved with informal activities such as computer games and workbooks that developed their mathematical and English language skills in the home environment.

Twenty-five percent of Asian children who did not fall within this category were involved with activities that were led by older siblings in the family. In contrast, other than story-telling activities at home, all of the non-Asian parents did not enroll their children in activities that developed language skills or mathematical activities. However, they involved their children in activities that were geared towards physical development, namely in the motor co-ordination area. Examples of such activities were skating, soccer, swimming, ballet, karate and hockey.

Some Concerns of Asian Parents

In addition to the above findings, some of the main concerns of the Asian parents stem from their perception of the school program's lack of emphasis on their children's disciplinary and self-help skills, as well as the literacy and mathematical skills.

Ninety-two percent of the Asian parents claimed that the enrichment schools provided the children with the discipline, which they felt more appropriate in the Asian culture. They illustrated a school setting in which children were required to "sit and perform written work" as their preferred method in enforcing discipline within young children. One parent felt that the teachers "should encourage" the children to develop self-help skills, such as in serving snacks and getting themselves dressed.

Eighty-three percent of Asian parents expressed their interest in having the school introduce phonics and mathematical techniques, such as simple addition and subtraction, within the curriculum. Seventy-five percent of Asian parents stated that computer software that develops skills in these areas should be made available for the children's use.

Three Asian parents commented that the teachers should try to encourage children to participate in "different" activities, including physical activities and group games, and to provide more opportunities for "individual and group communication." These experiences, they felt, would encourage the Asian children to better "communicate their ideas."

Results from Observations and Teachers' Interviews

To address the concerns of the Asian parents, the following is a summary of the data from the observational study, as well as interviews with the teachers in Greenwood Preschool.

Asian Children's Engagement in Activities

The teachers stated that *all* of the Asian children engaged in activities, including projects during some part of the year. The teachers felt this was because the activities were based on the children's interests, and not, on generic themes as they often are, in some of the other child-care centers. The activities were open-ended so children with various levels of ability could participate in them. They were observed participating in verbal discussions sharing ideas and opinions, listening quietly, as well as in observing their peers. Observations of the Asian children's socio-dramatic play, manipulative play and art work showed they had internalized their experiences in project work. One observational record, for instance, showed that near the completion of the bridge project, one child was able to express his knowledge about the structure of bridges with the materials in the sandbox. He seemed to know that bridges are meant for crossing over pits or rivers. He made a "pit" and placed a piece of wood over the pit. He also seemed to know that bridges need railings and attached the plastic toy fences along the sides of the bridge. Such representation of ideas with various materials is typical of the kind of experience encouraged in a preschool embracing the Reggio Emilia philosophy of respecting children's multiple expression of ideas.

Verbal discussions are an important component of this approach, so the teachers made special provisions to include the Asian children in these discussions. They frequently sat close to the Asian children to minimize their feelings of intimidation and fear of speaking within a large group. The observations, however, showed that during most of the circle times, only 19% of the Asian children raised their hands to offer their opinions, if at all. When called upon to offer their opinions, they usually remained silent. Thirteen percent of the Asian children were observed to sometimes mumble their opinions at their seat, while the rest of the children would either remain silent or interacted among their other Asian friends in their mother-tongue. In contrast, most of the non-Asian children observed would normally participate in such verbal discussions.

In general, the Asian children seemed to be more comfortable interacting with the teachers on a one-on-one basis or with a partner rather than in a large group. On an individual basis, 87% of the sample of Asian children would be able to respond verbally in fluent English, the remaining

13% of the children either gave responses in their mother-tongue, frequently to an Asian parent or student teacher, or express their ideas in non-verbal gestures, such as a nod with their head.

Hence, the non-participation of Asian children in large group discussions seemed to be a manifestation of shyness and inhibitions rather than of ignorance. Sometimes, the teachers would ask a parent or student teacher to translate words or sentences. They felt that by telling the children the words in their own language, followed by the same words in English, the children would be better able to understand and remember the words.

Supporting Verbal Language and Print Literacy

Inspired by the schools of Reggio Emilia, the teachers had set up the environment to act as a third teacher. This was particularly evident in the way the classroom was prepared to foster language and literacy skills. For instance, there was a great deal of print displayed around the room. This increased the children's awareness of the alphabet and encouraged them to begin copying the letters of the alphabet and make marks on papers. One of the student teachers set up a message center on the top of the loft. It had a number line and the alphabet chart written in lower case, as well as a few frequently used words for the children's reference. The message center had paper cutters to allow the children to make their own postage stamps or decorations on their messages, with envelopes so they could send messages to one another. Puppets and flannel pieces were used to tell stories and were left for the children to play with or revisit the story-telling experience amongst themselves. The teachers also encouraged the children to tell their own stories with beginning and an ending. These stories were transcribed and read back to the children later. The value of such practice might not be perceived as beneficial to the development of early literacy, as it could be contrary to the Asian educational emphasis within a traditional structure of rote learning and memorization of symbols in writing and poetry, without much attention given to children's ideas.

Supporting Mathematical Skill Development

The environment was also designed to foster math and numerical awareness. Materials, such as measuring containers and funnels, as well as geometric shapes were always available for experiments at the science area, cooking activities, various manipulative forms of play, the water table and the sandbox. Songs and events, such as birthday celebrations, that involve counting were also introduced as part of developing the mathematical skills of the children. While the topics of addition and subtraction were not formally introduced, the children were exposed to these concepts within activities. During one of interviews with the teachers, they noted that Asian children were observed to have well-developed fine motor and math skills. The teachers, therefore, capitalized on these skills in the different areas of the program. There were rhythmic activities as games and numerical symbols at the message center for message making. Projects such as building a bridge also consisted of intricate measuring techniques that called for the manipulation of tools and recognition and reading of numbers. The analysis of shadows is another activity that requires mathematical skills of estimation and measurement. It might have been a challenge for the Asian parents to appreciate the value in the children's *incidental* learning of math skills as opposed to the more structured learning with which they were once familiar with, as children.

Supporting Peer Coaching within Social Relationships

In terms of social relationships, Asian children were found to interact with non-Asian children comfortably when it was on a one-on-one basis or in small groups of not more than three children. Observations indicated that Asian children seemed to prefer to interact with fellow Asian children with the exception of one child, who had a non-Asian child as a "buddy." Incidentally, the same child's Asian mother also maintains a cordial relationship and partnership with non-Asian parents. Evident among the majority of Asian parents was their tendency to gather among Asian parents in forming a team for voluntary work within the school which seemed to have some influence in the peer preference of the majority of Asian children. The latter were observed to form friendships with their fellow Asian friends with whom they would also speak English - except for two children who constantly spoke to each other in their mother-tongue language.

For those who chose to work aside their non-Asian friends with whom they would need to communicate in English, they appeared shy, refraining from verbally expressing their ideas, preferring to work parallel with little verbal interaction. Even where problems were solved together, these Asian children would scarcely express their ideas, instead they worked silently in carrying out their solutions. As such, there was usually very little conversation between the Asian and non-Asian children unless prompted by the parents or teachers. An exception was one Asian child, from a second-generation immigrant family, who also has a non-Asian friend with whom she interacts and relates well in English. On the contrary, the non-Asian children did not seem to exclude Asian children from conversations. They seemed to continue speaking to the Asian children even when they did not receive a verbal response.

Since relationships and communication are key principles within the Reggio Emilia educational philosophy, the teachers, in partnership with the non-Asian parents, tried hard to assist the Asian children – especially the introverted – in forming relationships and entering into discussions with all the children

within the group. In order to scaffold the children's formation of social relationships, they facilitated discussions during the children's engagement in various activities, and encouraged the children to work collaboratively by providing them opportunities to pair up when working on projects. This area, too, appeared challenging for most of the Asian children. But with the support of the teachers and non-Asian parents, they were able to broaden their social relationships among their peers and participate more confidently in discussions within this environment.

Supporting the Development of Problem Solving Skills

Participating in project work provided the children with many opportunities to learn to work collaboratively and solve problems. Teachers encouraged the children to debate or challenge one another's opinions during circle time or small group discussions to support their critical thinking and communication skills. Frequently, teachers encouraged children to help and assist each other because they felt that directions and scaffolding from peers of a similar age was more effective than from adults. This was observed, on several occasions, for example, when a teacher tried to scaffold two Asian children in helping each other solve their social conflicts.

Supporting Inner Disciplinary and Critical Thinking Skills

Information from the questionnaires and interviews showed that although the Asian parents and the teachers believed in the value of self-control and critical thinking, they differed in how these were to be achieved. The teachers believe that children need to be treated with respect and viewed as competent, resourceful, as well as given the opportunity to express themselves in positive ways. Discipline is not an issue, and children naturally develop self-regulation, empathy, consideration for others and begin to think critically about their own and others' social behaviours. The teachers see it as part of their role to support this area of the children's abilities, especially in communication and negotiation. They also believe that by planning the program to respond to the interests of the children, there is no need for "traditional disciplinary methods" that may be determined by some theorists as "strict" or "harsh" authoritarian discipline. With other factors such as incorporating a flexible schedule and environment to allow the children ample time and space to focus and concentrate on the kind of projects and activities within their interests, the teachers felt that they could achieve the same end results

Discussion

Information from the analysis of data was examined and used to address the four questions identified at the beginning of the study:

How are contemporary theoretical perspectives about learning addressed by early childhood educational centers attempting to introduce the Reggio Emilia philosophy in their programs?

Greenwood Preschool and the Reggio Emilia educational philosophy that it observes both encourage extensive parental involvement within the management of the preschool and in its program. They both acknowledge and respect the importance of including the community as an essential part of the learning environment. Parents and family members are constantly informed of the different learning experiences of the children via the displays of documentation and presentations during parent meetings. The parents and family members are welcome and encouraged to visit, at anytime, to learn more about the progress of their children. They are also given roles in decision-making, to increase their awareness of the needs take control of methods of resource allocation within the educational environment.

As a result the community creates its own testimony to the benefits of this educational approach. In fact, an interview with an Asian parent revealed that during the five parent-duty-days that had been scheduled for her, she observed the emerging maturity of her child and the growing independence of the rest of the children. Hence, there appeared to be a collective acknowledgement that the school program provides an excellent source of respectful educational environment – incorporating the acts of peer scaffolding, progressive and constructive learning, collaboration, and media to express multiple forms of intelligences – which makes the community think seriously about children's learning, developmental needs and potential.

What modifications are required in order to acknowledge the different cultural needs of the children, families and community?

The educators in Reggio Emilia have urged teachers elsewhere to be inspired by how they have created an excellent early childhood educational program and they encourage them to create their own programs that match their own community and culture (Fraser, 1999). Evolving as a community of learners with parents, teachers and children is an important process in a center inspired by Reggio Emilia. Communication is, therefore, an essential factor and it is harder to achieve this when there are so many children and adults that do not speak a common language. As such, the teachers have to be dedicated in fostering cross-cultural communication by providing support for the children's verbal interactions and communication skills.

As illustrated in the above findings, languages of different cultures are welcome in the preschool and parents and student-teachers are encouraged to act as interpreters. Besides relying on the subtle communication between the environment and the children, the teachers carry out demonstrations to ensure that all children understand what activities are available and the steps involved within certain activities, such as a

science experiment or an art activity. These demonstrations are usually conducted with sample materials and verbal instructions that allow children of different language abilities to comprehend and follow directions. In general, the teachers are passionate about including children and families as partners in the pursuit of knowledge by carrying out discussions with the children, listening to children's ideas, provoking and elevating thinking that could be further explored or expressed in multiple dimensions. This partnership is developed to facilitate activities within projects, conducting research and negotiations amongst themselves to fortify and substantiate ideas.

Are there opportunities for children to engage in problem solving and scientific exploration and to develop math and literacy skills? These are of major concern to most academically oriented cultures, such as the Asian cultures.

Data gathered in this study show that the Reggio Emilia educational approach is intellectually challenging for children. Cognitive skill development is given a high priority in the program. The teachers provide a print-rich environment that encourages the children to observe, internalize and reproduce letter and numerical symbols, as and when the children feel ready. However, much of the learning occurs incidentally as children engage in individual activities or work together on their projects. In encouraging children to take ownership of their learning, the teachers often ask the children for suggestions especially within group discussions, hence, supporting the development of their literacy skills, expression of creativity and innovation amidst the preservation of a positive self-esteem. This is exceptionally apparent at circle time when children and teachers work together to create a web or spread of ideas around an issue of the children's interests.

From the observations, 'web-making' with the children encouraged them to make associations and build on what they already knew (Fraser, 1999; Katz & Chard, 1989). Projects and activities that sprang from the web of ideas allowed the children to extend and activate their declarative, procedural and conditional knowledge, thereby, constructing their own relationships and understanding of their environment (Biggs, 1996; Steffe & Gale, 1995). By carrying out further investigations with peers, the children developed their ability to think critically (Swartz & Perkins, 1990). The teachers helped them to recognize problems, associate them with previous knowledge and seek solutions (Cox, 1997; Mayer and Wittrock, 1996). Furthermore, the teachers, in negotiating the curriculum with children, engaged in *reciprocity* as they learned from the children and the children learned from them (Fraser, 1999). The teachers were always sensitive to ways they could scaffold or support the children's learning so that the children were exposed to a wide variety of materials and encouraged to use them to represent their ideas and express their emotions. This approach helped children to perceive the meaning in the information that they were exposed to, instead of cramming and learning information by rote (Bruning, Schraw & Ronning, 1999).

Furthermore, the teachers, in negotiating the curriculum with children, engaged in reciprocity as they learned from the children and the children learned from them (Fraser, 1999).

How are the operating costs and cost of materials and equipment met in the Reggio Emilia approach and conveyed to more economically conservative cultures, such as the Asian cultures?

Administrative costs and the cost of materials seem to be less of a problem than changing the daily schedule and reorganizing space to provide the children with long periods of uninterrupted time and space to work with (Fraser, 1999). Teachers, too, need more time, as they are constantly observing and documenting children's interactions with materials and their work on projects. Furthermore, the teachers need uninterrupted time to engage children in meaningful and constructive discussions. They also spend a large amount of time gathering materials to facilitate the children's learning. Time is needed to work together in planning, preparing and displaying documentation. Not only is time an issue, but there is constantly a need for more space to work on, to display the documentation, and for the children to set up and work on projects. Many centers have found that reorganizing time and space - and hiring extra staff to help with documentation will incur some expense. In fact, the parents from this research have expressed their need to reorganize their time away from work and home duties in order to volunteer for the school. But parents and board members can be persuaded that all of these improve the quality of the education for the children. And volunteering can be participation in any specialty that parents and family members excel in. Student teachers are also a source of help with documentation.

Some of the equipment - such as light tables, overhead projectors and mirrors - necessary for a program that incorporates various learning experiences may also be expensive. However, due to extensive use of natural and recycled materials as opposed to commercially produced toys, the cost is more affordable than might be expected. Financial demands for processing documentation photographs, is another concern of schools. Greenwood has arranged for the photographs to be printed in doubles. In order to cover the photo-finishing cost, the second set sold of prints is sold.

The parents are grateful for such visible evidence of their children's intense engagement of activities that occur beyond home grounds.

Other equipment such as a scanner, computer, printer, and digital camera can be useful for documenting children's learning processes. Family members can fundraise for these more costly technological items, such an investment could drastically reduce the long-term costs for photo-finishing, and reduce the waste of materials from unwanted photos – an important lesson in instilling the value of environmental protection as part of education.

Concluding Remarks

From the data, it seems evident that, both the Asian and non-Asian parents in Greenwood Preschool appreciate the experience that their children are exposed to through the many challenges and provocations they engage in. Most of them are also pleased that their children are encouraged to "think for themselves" as "independent thinkers," and are able to develop creative and critical reasoning skills in problem solving within their projects. They also seemed satisfied with the fact that the children are given a wealth of opportunities for "experimentation and exploration." The families seemed to possess faith in the educators, believing that these educators not only have the best interests of the children at heart, but also, are aware of each child's development and learning requirements.

There were some concerns about the high level of communication demanded of children who spoke English as a second language. But many parents have come to understand, by observing during parent-duty-days, the techniques and skills of the teachers in encouraging children to be more confident in expressing their ideas and opinions in a large group. While the parents continue to play a part in providing resources and manpower, the teachers, inspired by the educational philosophy of Reggio Emilia, continually try to support children's joyful learning experiences. Through a negotiated curriculum, with ideas initiated by the children's interests, and expressed ideas, fine-tuning of projects is possible. (Fyfe & Forman, 1996).

There remains, however, a tremendous challenge for the success of implementing principles from the Reggio philosophy in a school community that has a high enrolment of first generation Asian children or those with first generation immigrant parents, and in some cases, guardians and educators. A negotiated curriculum largely depends on the perception of the child's image as being competent, resourceful and inventive. Only when all the adults involved in the program are prepared to hold this view of children, can learning result in reciprocity - that is, children learning from the adults and vice versa This underlies a negotiated curriculum. In light of this, such perspective would be highly controversial to the Asian practice with the latter's perception of the child as being a white-slate and empty-vessel to be filled, one that should only be seen and not to be heard, one that needs strict discipline and teacher-directed curriculum (Yao-Lee, 1985).

... this philosophy not only aims to "educate," but also inculcates values that discourage one from functioning as passive consumers - instead to strive as active constructivists of society.

Notwithstanding that, Asian families of second or third generation immigrants - or those that have been well-integrated within a "non-Asian" cultural perspective tend to advocate for a flexible, less structured pedagogy with an emphasis on extensive communication with the school. Most of them value their children's ideas, interests and exposure to concrete experiences and educational materials. They also acknowledge the benefits of participating in reciprocal teaching and learning experiences. They would, therefore, be more eager to support and facilitate the curriculum in partnership with the teachers and children.

In conclusion, most first generation Asian adults accustomed to a traditional Asian or Oriental educational system may feel strongly towards the need for authoritarian structure and behaviourist disciplinary methods that they perceive to be lacking within the Reggio Emilia philosophy. Yet, they would be relieved - and thankful - to know that the Reggio Emilia philosophy highly respects and supports children's multiple means of expression as a reflection, representation and abstract measurement of their varied forms of intelligences and high-level critical thinking, as well as their acute sense of self-awareness and responsibility. Moreover, bearing in mind, its pedagogical emphasis on relationships between nature and the idea of non-commercialism, this philosophy not only aims to "educate," but also inculcates values that discourage one from functioning as passive consumers - instead to strive as active constructivists of society.

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Responding to Children's Fears: A Partnership Approach

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Abstract

In the wake of the terrorism of September 11, 2001 in the United States, the emotion of fear has come to the forefront. Media and professionals have consulted experts for advice as to how to respond to this emotion. While it's too soon to gather a large amount of professional advice as to how to respond specifically to the kind of terrorism that happened on September 11, previous studies offer guidelines that educators will probably find useful and relevant. The research described in this article about children's fear suggests that forging strong bonds, or partnerships, between parents, children and teachers is one positive step towards addressing fear in young children. Partnerships, as this term is used in this research can be defined as interaction and participation between teachers, families and children to achieve greater understanding for all parties about children's schooling, needs, home life and background (Arthur et al, 1997; Dwyer, 1989). Partnerships can help all participants to better recognize fear displays in young children and to share ideas about best practice in responding to children's fears.

Introduction

This is an emotional world, magnified by recent world events that have left many confused, saddened and afraid. These emotions haven't missed young children, who grapple to make sense of what has happened through drawing, watching events unfold on television and questioning adults and older children. They must then relate the answers to their questions to their limited experiences and try to make sense of events that in reality make very little sense. To facilitate the understanding of emotions in the children we care for, it is our responsibility as teachers and parents to recognise emotion displays and respond effectively to them.

Fear is a particularly powerful emotion, in that its effects on children's learning and development can be devastating. Children's perception and problem-solving behaviour can deteriorate through fear (Izard, 1991; Mackie & Hamilton, 1993). Their self-esteem and social interactions can also be adversely affected (Garber & Dodge, 1991; Lazarus, 1991) and unresolved fear can lead to phobias in adulthood (Kindt, Bierman and Brosschot, 1997).

As adults, we may not always recognise fear in young children. Further, our responses to fear may vary depending on our role in the child's life. For example, while parents recognise fear of the dark in their children, teachers, who have little experience of the dark with their preschool students, may be unaware of this fear. They might therefore be surprised when the classroom is darkened for rest time or a video and a child becomes upset or, when reading *Franklin in the Dark* to the class, a child closes his eyes and covers his ears. Teachers, on the other hand, may recognise the fear that some children have of being teased, while parents may be unaware of this fear. Children, themselves, report fears of heights and falling from high places, but in many cases neither parents nor teachers are aware of these fears.

By working together in partnerships, teachers, parents and children can learn to recognise, understand and respond to children's fears in ways that best facilitate the development of emotional literacy in young children. Emotional literacy, according to Goleman (1995), is the understanding of emotion in oneself and in others and the ability to regulate one's emotions. Partnerships have been found to result in greater understanding and communication between home and school, fewer crises and misunderstandings, better student confidence and more goodwill between partners (Dwyer, 1989). In early childhood education, partnerships with families are said to be an essential component of effective programming (Arthur et al, 1997). In the Reggio Emilia approach, participation by families is considered as important to educators as the participation of the children (Arthur et al, 1997).

This article is based on a study of the fears of 3 to 5 year olds in Australian preschool settings. Participants included forty-five children, their parents and teachers. Parents, children and teachers were asked to list things that young children are afraid of and to describe how

children display fear. Parents were then asked to describe how they respond to their children's fears. All three participant groups were asked to describe how teachers respond to children's fears. Their answers indicated that there are discrepancies in the recognition of and responses to fear, and that one way those discrepancies could be addressed is through the development of partnerships, where understandings about fear and strategies to address fear are shared and developed between partners.

What are They Afraid Of?

Young children experience a number of fears, which were reported to various degrees by all three participant groups. Parents as a group reported a much greater and more varied number of fears than did either teachers or children. These fears were placed in six discrete categories, listed in Table 1 below with examples.

Table 1 - Fear Categories and Examples

Fear Category	Example
Fear of Separation from Attachment Figure	Fear of school/ preschool Fear of being lost Fear of being alone Fear of being left with a babysitter
Fear of the Unfamiliar	Fear of strange people, places and objects Fear of the dark Fear of loud noises
Fear of Being Harmed	Fear of injury accident, illness or death Medical fears Fear of deep water, fire, carnival rides and burglary Fear of heights or falling from high places
Fear of Failure, Criticism and Embarrassment	Fear of being teased Fear of being in a fight Fear of making mistakes Fear of adults arguing
Fear of Insects or Animals	Fear of spiders or other insects Fear of snakes Fear of dogs, cats, bats, etc.
Fear of the Intangible	Fear of bad dreams or nightmares Fear of ghosts, monsters or spirits

Clarity of Fear Display

In the literature, fear is described as being displayed in a number of ways. Early works by Darwin (1872) described a "fight or flight" fear display, where the body trembles, the heart beats rapidly, skin becomes pale and sweaty and the body freezes in fear. Action is taken to either confront or escape the fear. This is considered to be an evolutionary response to fear, based on earlier generations either escaping from or confronting danger (Darwin, 1872; Izard, 1991; Goleman, 1995; Ledoux, 1998). Other physiological symptoms, such as queasiness in the stomach and shortness of breath have been said to accompany fear displays (Ekman & Friesen, 1975). Still other forms of fear display include: facial expressions where the mouth opens and the eyes widen and become tense (Ekman & Friesen, 1975; Fewtrell & O'Connor, 1995; Izard, 1991); verbal responses where either verbalizations or vocalizations occur (Bowlby, 1973; Lazarus, 1991; Watson, 1970); withdrawal from the feared object; and drawing closer to the attachment figure (Bowlby, 1973).

Despite this variety of fear displays, participants in this study mainly reported external fear displays, such as crying, moving away from the feared object and clinging to attachment figures. No participant reported physiological responses such as rapid breathing and pale skin. The only facial expressions reported were done so by children. Four-year old Evan said that he shows fear "by opening my mouth." Many other children used facial expressions to describe how they display fear rather than words. Adults may either take this form of fear expression for granted, or need to be alerted to it.

Parents mainly reported that children display fear by crying, withdrawing and clinging to them. Teachers reported these behaviours as well as screaming, asking to go home and becoming aggressive. Teacher's additional fear display reports could be indicative of their knowledge of child development and their experience with large numbers of children. While these factors could enhance teachers' recognition of fear behaviours, many parents may not recognise behaviours such as screaming and aggression as indicators of fear.

All three participant groups were not equally aware of the breadth of children's fears and fear displays, but each group offered insights that would benefit the other groups. Through working in partnerships, teachers, parents and children would benefit from each other's insights and observations of children's fear expressions and so be better equipped to respond effectively.

Responding to Fear

In this research, a number of responses to children's fear were reported by parents, children and teachers. These included: verbal responses, such as talking to and reassuring the child; physical

responses such as picking up the child or staying near her/him; modelling non-fearful behaviour; taking action against the feared object (for example, by killing a spider); using teaching strategies (such as talking to children at eye level); and planning activities to address children's fears. As with fear displays, all three participant groups varied in their reporting of these strategies.

Parents' own responses to children's fears included a number of verbal strategies, such as offering safety, reassurance, acknowledging the fear, empathy and discussion. They also reported physical responses such as picking up and hugging or comforting the child. Some said that they would model non-fearful behaviour, or use some form of action to respond to their children's fears. For example, Hayley, mother of three-year-old Sam, said that after consoling Sam and acknowledging his fear of spiders, she would ask him if they could go to look at the spider together. "If he says 'yes, that's fine,' then we go and have a look at the spider and talk about spiders."

When reporting teachers' responses to children's fears, all three participant groups had different ideas. Children mainly reported that teachers take action as a response to their fears. For example, five-year-old Larry noted that when children are afraid of the dark at rest time, teachers "turn the lights on." A number of children also reported verbal responses from teachers to their fears. Four-year-old Allan noted that when he is afraid, "they [the teachers] talk to you." Other children said that teachers stay near to fearful children and one said that they "carry you."

Parents reported that teachers respond to children's fears in mainly verbal ways, such as explaining the fear to the child and offering the child safety. A few parents reported physical responses by teachers, such as keeping the child within close proximity. Yet teachers reported using a number of strategies to respond to children's fears, beyond those reported by parents. These included verbal responses such as reassuring, discussing and explaining; physical responses such as keeping the fearful child close by or giving the child a hug; modelling non-fearful behaviour; and taking various forms of action, such as accompanying a child to the door to wave goodbye to the parent. However, teachers also reported using teaching strategies, such as allowing the child personal space and time-out, and getting children to draw their fears. Some teachers described observing children and planning lessons based on children's fears. Lessons included reading and discussing books about fear, drawing or painting the feared object, dramatising the fear, or using dolls and figures to talk about the fear.

The differences in the three groups' perceptions of teachers' responses to children's fears are further indications of the need for partnerships. By sharing strategies and information, parents and teachers increase not only their understanding of each other's roles, but also the scope of their own strategies to help children to understand and live with their fears.

The Same Way That I Do

While there were differences in the ways that children, parents and teachers reported that teachers respond to children's fears, there was also a discrepancy in the way parents reported their own and teachers' physical responses to children's fears. While types of physical responses were described in similar fashion - hugs, cuddles and physical proximity - the number of reports was very different. Eighteen parents said that they respond physically to their fearful child; yet only eight parents reported a physical response from teachers. This occurred despite a number of parents reporting that teachers respond "the same way that I do." This points to the issue of child protection, an issue that may be implicit in parents' reports. For example, Renee, mother of five-year-old Adam, said that she responds verbally and physically to Adam's fears and that teachers respond, "the same way I would have." Yet her description of teachers' responses is only verbal: "to reassure them that if you're frightened of the spider, we don't touch the spider and we don't go near the spider."

With child protection a widely recognised concern in early childhood, parents' reports that teachers respond in verbal ways could be indicative of their wariness of potential abuse. On the one hand, parents would like teachers to be like "parents away from home"; on the other hand, they expect teachers to respond, but not to touch their children. Again, through partnerships between teachers and families a greater understanding of each other's roles could help to alleviate these concerns as well as to work together to develop plans for effectively dealing with children's fears as a team.

Developing Valuable Partnerships

To some extent, partnerships develop naturally. A teacher, who is welcoming of parents and has an "open door" policy, where parents are invited into the classroom, encourages open, participatory relationships with parents. However, partnerships that promote effective understanding of fear and other emotions can be developed through teachers employing some or all of the strategies below.

1. Include questions on the enrolment form about fear and other emotions. For example, "What is your child afraid of?", "Does your child have any worries?", "Are there any recent events that have been of concern to your child?" Encourage parents to reflect upon these questions and try to answer them as genuinely as possible, as well as adding any information that would help you to understand their child. As teachers do not always know of or recognise fear in children, parents' input through enrolment forms would be invaluable.

2. Encourage face-to-face meetings, both formal and informal, with parents. Listen to parents and value what they have to say. Consider open scheduling as parents may work or study during school hours. Getting to know parents is particularly helpful in shedding light on some fears, as they could be modelled or encouraged by parents. It also enhances continuity between the home and preschool environments. Mona, mother of four year old Ariel, spoke of her daughter's fear of having her hair washed which, she reported was a fear she, too, had experienced as a child. Other parents reported encouraging their children to be afraid of traffic or strangers.

3. Keep communication books with parents. This is especially helpful for working parents, but is a way for teachers and parents to share anecdotes and observations of the child and to make connections between events at home and at preschool. One day in preschool, Kaylene cried and cowered when an ambulance passed, blaring its siren. This incident was reported to the family in Kaylene's communication book, and Rachel, Kaylene's mother, was able to explain it: "Her little cousin's dad died and was taken away by an ambulance. So every time she sees an ambulance now, I think she associates it with taking someone away to die."

4. Invite parents to come into the class to share fear or other emotion experiences. This could serve as a catalyst to discussions and activities about fear with children, parents and teachers together sharing experiences and developing strategies to address fear. It may also be a way of acknowledging and validating children's fears, as well as giving them words to describe them. It is also important for adults to acknowledge their own emotions before they can effectively help children to deal with theirs.

Fear does not always have to be eradicated to be dealt with effectively. A goal of the partnership can be to work towards understanding and appropriate expression of the fear. This can include learning to use the face and body to express fear; learning words to describe the fear; using art, drama, music or movement to express fear; or talking to others and sharing ideas about the fear. Through these bonds with families, a broader understanding of the issues is shared, responsibility for addressing fear is not left to one or another partner, and ideas and strategies become more fluid and innovative. Goleman (1995), sums up the goals for partnerships in emotion education as follows: "The optimal design of emotional literacy programs is to begin early, be age-appropriate, run throughout the school years and intertwine efforts at school, at home, and in the community" (p. 281). With the uncertain state of the world in which we live, these partnerships need to be initiated at this time.

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The Role of Mentoring Teen Mothers: Nurturing the Mother-Child Bond

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Our Canadian society is seeing an ever-increasing number of teenagers between the ages of 14 and 19 giving birth. Often, these mothers are choosing to raise their infants in environments where there may be limited financial or emotional support to adequately provide for foundations necessary to foster the mother/infant attachment processes. This article reviews the literature on mentoring qualities and functions necessary during the mentor/mentee relationship with teen mothers and provides considerations for ongoing development of mentoring programs for this at risk group. It further attempts to establish the importance of understanding how mentors can facilitate a positive mother-child bond that leads to positive infant attachment and development.

McAnarney (1984) identifies a secure sense of one's identity and the ability to place the needs of others first as being central to adequate mothering. Research shows that teen mothers are psychologically immature for motherhood, and they lack the cognitive maturity to consider the needs of others as being more critical than their own. Because the primary developmental task during the teen years is to develop an individual identity, this necessitates that they focus on themselves. Adolescent mothers who do not have support available must deal with their personal and social development while trying to adapt to the 24-hour needs of an infant. Self-involvement interferes with the teen mother developing a reciprocal relationship with her child, which is necessary for effective attachment formation to occur. Caregiver-infant relationships that lack sensitivity and reciprocity may lead to insecure attachments that may place infants at risk for developmental problems.

Mentoring teen mothers in a way that supports them and is developmentally appropriate to their age group can enhance self-confidence and self-esteem and move the teen mother toward a firmer identity. With a stronger sense of self, comes greater emotional stability and greater concern for others. This concern for others is paramount in order for teenage mothers to establish a positive mother-child bond. Waller (1999) contends that the most important benefit of mentoring programs for teens is social support. She believes that it is a key factor in "positive adaptational outcomes" (p. 467). This belief is consistent with professionals working with teen mothers.

Qualities of the Mentor

It is important that mentors understand the developmental stage of the person they are mentoring. "Mentors are better able to help...if they know what life issues and priorities are important at different stages in a person's life." (Ferguson et al. 1999) According to Kanfer, Englund, Lennhoff and Rhodes (1995), understanding the teen mother will help the adult mentoring partner avoid or deal with problems in mentor-partner relationships. Some of the problems cited include the teen's lack of interest and/or lack of effort. However, Kanfer et al. remind us that teenagers may be uncommunicative for a variety of reasons such as: having been let down by adults in the past, thinking that what they have to say is not important, or rebelling against all adults as a typical adolescent response. Waller (1999) suggests that mentors must appreciate the environments from which some adolescent mothers come. There may be pre-existing negative social factors or experiences in their life that affect their ability to trust or which cause them to repeat negative patterns in relationships. Waller advises that patience and steadfast optimism are essential qualities in mentors because relationship building and positive change can be a slow process. Other essential qualities include interpersonal skills, cultural sensitivity, motivation, reliability, and experience as a parent (Waller). Kanfer et al. suggest that being patient, building trust, listening, avoiding judgmental attitudes, being positive, having fun, and being sensitive to the families of teen mothers, are also necessary qualities for mentoring.

Role of the Mentor

Communicating

Bloom (1995) describes some functions of mentoring: listener, questioner, and connector. She explains that mentors help young mothers find their voice by providing a sounding board for their ideas and concerns. " Mentors are concerned with the development of the...voice, and they facilitate this development by listening" (Bloom, p. 66). Bloom explains that listening confirms that the young mother has something important to say and that she deserves to be heard. Daloz (1991), too, highlights listening as one of his primary methods for providing support. He claims that listening assures the young mother that she has some control in directing the mentoring relationship. Having mentors

who listen, helps teenagers to move from expressing their feelings through actions to expressing feelings in words. In this way, mentors help move their partners toward independence and prepare them for adulthood.

Kanfer et al.(1995) acknowledge that communicating with teen mothers can be difficult. They suggest showing interest by making eye contact when the mothers are speaking and using positive body language to indicate that you are paying attention. In addition, it is important to let teen mothers know that you are listening by attending, not interrupting, listening without thinking ahead, asking questions to clarify what has been said, and repeating her words. In this way, mentors open the lines of communication by letting their partners know they can talk to them.

Often, mentors will have to start the conversation and keep it going. Kanfer et al. suggest using open questions as a method to improve two-way communication. Some examples of open questions for mentoring pregnant and parenting teens are: *Who do you think you could talk to about this?*

What makes it so hard to eat the right foods?

When will you find out the results of your tests?

Which of those things were you most worried about? (Kanfer et al., p. 14).

They further suggest that questions beginning with *how* and *what* and *could* help to get to details and feelings about situations. Kanfer et al. recommend that *why* questions must be used carefully because these questions can make teens feel defensive. Teens may think that their mentors are questioning their judgement and in this way interfering with their independence - like their parents. Kanfer et al. suggest that mentors pay close attention to how their mentor-partner responds when using *why* questions.

Another aspect of communication is connecting. Mentors do this by showing their partners that they understand what they are talking about. Repeating what their partner has just said or stating what they think their partner is feeling is an effective communication method for mentors to try. They suggest a mentor could respond after listening to the teen parent by stating, *It seems like you feel good about how you handled that situation*; *I'll bet that hurt*; or *You look angry* (p.16). They feel that this strategy generally opens up communication.

Decision Making

Teens may have trouble understanding their feelings or feel confused when they are trying to make a decision. Kanfer et al. suggest that mentors can be tipped off to a mixed-feelings signal when their partners use more than one feeling in talking about the same situation. They may use words like confused, mixed feelings or upset; or state that they do not know how they feel. Mentors can help them identify their conflicting feelings and help clarify each one. Kanfer et al. believe that this process of identifying and clarifying feelings will provide adolescent mothers with strategies to make good decisions. Because we often base decisions on how we feel, it is important for mentors to help pregnant or parenting teens to find good solutions based on the information that their feelings may provide. Mentors can help mentees "explore where [their feelings] come from and what they mean"(Kanfer et al., p.17). Finding good solutions prepares pregnant or parenting teens for adulthood by teaching them to identify and understand their feelings, thereby gaining self-reliance and the ability to make independent decisions.

Problem Solving

Mentors can help their partners think about problems in ways that will help them see that they can have some control over their life. Kanfer et al. advise helping them think about problems in 3 different ways:

What is wrong with the situation, or what they do not like about it? (complaint)

How would they like things to be? (goal)

How might they get to the place where they want to be? (action)

Once again, the mentor works with teens at their developmental level as they have a growing capacity for setting goals. Kanfer et al. suggest setting small, realistic goals which are close to what the teen mothers can already do, rather than too close to their ideal standard. Teens often have unrealistic expectations, which cannot be easily met. Rather than set themselves up for failure, an achievable goal will result in a positive feeling when they are successful. This positive feeling will motivate them to achieve their long-term goals. Helping teen mothers with goal setting in this way will help foster independence and the eventual ability to successfully set goals and follow them through. Using the problem solving process will move them towards the ability to think ideas through.

Promoting Self-Esteem

Teens often have a poor self-concept. Both Kanfer et al. (1995) and Waller (1999) emphasize the mentor role in bolstering teens self-esteem. Kanfer et al. propose that informing the teen mother of her strengths or her success in managing a situation can build self-confidence. This strategy helps to affirm the teen mother and, in doing so, supports her self-esteem. An "individual's self-concept is a central factor in learning" (MacKeracher, 1993, p.76). Understanding this helps mentors to appreciate its importance as a motivator in the learning process. Being motivated to learn, is imperative for the teen discovering how to meet her personal needs and those of

her infant. Gaining self-esteem is an important component in the development from adolescence to adulthood.

Meeting Affective Needs of Teens

Mentors offer emotional support by listening and providing an opportunity for mentees to talk things through. When mentors do this, Kanter et al. (1995) believe that teens feel supported, sort through their feelings, figure out what is going on or what happened in a particular situation, think about some way to improve the situation, release the tension of holding feelings in, and get another perspective on the situation. Emotional support meets their affective needs and is associated with reduced stress levels in young mothers (Coletta & Hunter Gregg, 1981).

Providing A Quasi-Parenting Role

Freedman (1993) believes that another mentor function is to prepare youth for adulthood. Blinn-Pike, Kuschel, McDaniel, Mingus and Mutti (1998) conclude that mentors, in helping prepare youth for adulthood, provide a quasi-parenting relationship. They define the role of the quasi-parent in terms of mentoring as similar to that of the classic mentoring relationship: reciprocity in communication, affective bond, and influence (p. 14). Blinn-Pike et al. (1998) suggest 3 reasons that the quasi-parenting role may have emerged in their study. They stated that:

- *The mentors were not confined to one location, or to one role, or restricted in the time that they interacted with their mentees.*
- *As pregnant adolescents, their mentees had particular medical and emotional needs.*
- *The mentor's own experience with teenage pregnancy may have made them empathetic to the unique needs of their mentees and motivated them to become mentors who acted in a quasi-parenting role.*

These reasons help to provide insight into another aspect of the mentoring function when working with pregnant or parenting teens. Blinn-Pike et al. believe that adolescents who may not have significant adults in their lives may be most in need of mentors who can provide a quasi-parenting role.

Providing Information

In addition, mentors need knowledge and expertise in providing teens with information about child development and parenting skills (Freedman, 1993; Kanfer et al., 1995 & Waller, 1999). A study on mentoring pregnant adolescents by Blinn-Pike et al. (1998) supports this belief. They determine that mentors need to be well prepared to answer questions and provide information about infant care, resources, medical issues related to pregnancy, and counselling and helping skills. Buchholz & Korn-Burxztyn, 1993; Haskett, Johnson, & Miller, 1994; Phipps-Yonas, 1980; Rickel, 1989 articulate that educating teens in child development and parenting skills seems to reduce the incidence of child maltreatment. Waller asserts that mentors must learn strategies for teaching young parents about child behaviours as well as age-appropriate and behaviour-appropriate disciplinary strategies. Kanfer et al. provide fact sheets that help mentors understand the factors affecting their partner and that furnish answers to the many questions that their partner may have about pregnancy and about being a parent. Topics include information about HIV/AIDS, healthy eating, exercise and weight gain during pregnancy, breastfeeding, nutrition for the nursing mother, things to avoid during breastfeeding, what to do when the baby cries, when to call the doctor, the baby's development, and so on. There is a difference between Kanfer et al. and Waller's focus on providing information to their mentees. Kanfer et al. seem to focus on the pregnant teen and baby's physical needs. Waller looks at child development with a focus on child behaviours. Although both of these topics are important, neither discuss the parenting skills required to develop the reciprocal relationship between the teen mother and her child that is necessary for effective attachment formation to occur.

In fact, there is a paucity of research on the topic of mentors providing information on parenting skills that enhance mother-child attachment and the impact of that attachment on the child's development.DeJong and Hansen Cottrell (1999) believe that teenage parents are generally focussed on interacting with their infants to meet their physical rather than their emotional needs. Stevens and Duffield (1986), and Ruff (1987) point to evidence that suggests teen parents are less likely to interact verbally with their infants and respond in ways that promote sensitive interaction with their child. Because of these concerns, Olds, London & Ludewig (1996) argue that it is important to help young mothers to understand the importance of interacting with their newborns visually, verbally and auditorally in order to develop the reciprocal relationship necessary for attachment to occur. It is also important to help teen mothers appreciate that infancy is a critical period for growth and development, and that attachment to the primary caregiver develops between birth and approximately six months of age.

In their study on working with teenage parents and their infants, DeJong and Hansen Cottrell (1999) advise that teaching specific topics in parenting class, such as "ways to foster positive emotional development in children" (p.40), and then scheduling the teen mothers into child care centre programs (under the supervision of their staff) where they can apply what they are learning, is an effective method for transferring knowledge into practice. Having teen mothers record how they interact with their infant and how the infant responds, placing these written anecdotal observations in the child's folder, and later sharing with classmates during a subsequent parenting class is recommended by DeJong and Hansen Cottrell (1999). Their study points to strategies for practices and procedures that support learning about effective behaviours and lead to attachment between teen mothers and their infants. Mentors who are working with pregnant or parenting teens should consider these strategies.

Considerations

Kanfer et al. (1995); Blinn-Pike et al.(1998); and Waller (1999) assert that mentors require training and tools to successfully mentor teen mothers, and they need to understand the time commitment, skills, and various roles that are required by them. In addition, mentoring programs must carefully screen prospective mentors. Mentees also play an active role in the mentoring relationship. They must learn to trust, communicate, solve problems, and make changes.

Mentoring programs for pregnant and parenting teens must continue to evolve as new research provides information on child development and parenting skills that enhance and support child development. As this information becomes available, mentors need to be given the facts so they may be a helpful resource to their mentees and assist them and their babies to be healthy.

Government funded programs must also pay heed to research and be guided by theories of child development when determining the rules and regulations of programs for pregnant and parenting teens. If attachment develops between birth and six months, government funded programs must support teen parents by allowing them to develop positive bonds and provide consistent care during that critical time.

Teens must be included in the design and delivery of mentoring programs. According to Gottlieb (2002), when marketing programs to youth, it is important to involve "youth at all stages of implementation" (p.3). With this in mind, a final consideration for mentoring is the possibility of having teen parents mentor pregnant teens and teen parents of newborns. Bibby (2001) maintains that friends have become more important to teens in recent decades because of the "changing roles of family members" (p.52). He points out that as children, teens spend more time on their own, so they have grown up valuing and needing their friends more than past generations. If friends are so valued, then perhaps *teens mentoring teens* is a logical next step.

DeJong and Hansen Cottrell (1999) point out that university students (themselves teens), who major in child development, early childhood education, nursing or social work and who act as interns at child care centres, often serve as important role models to teenagers who have infants in those centres. Perhaps it is the closeness of their age and stage of development that helps to create this positive relationship between the pregnant or parenting teen and the university intern.

Understanding the developmental stage of teenagers is important. Teen mothers who develop a strong sense of self are more likely to respond positively and sensitively to their infant's needs. In addition, adolescent mothers need to understand how their responses create those bonds that form attachment and how attachment impacts their children's development. Integrating current research in child development and parenting skills together with research in strategies and techniques for mentoring is imperative for meeting the needs of pregnant and parenting teens and for designing and developing mentoring programs that will nurture their early mother-child relationship.

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Nurturing the Enthusiasm and Ideals of New Teachers Through Reflective Practice

Karyn Callaghan

Karyn Callaghan is a professor of Early Childhood Education at Mohawk College, Hamilton. She and colleague, Paul Fralick originated and managed a project called, Artists at the Centre that has brought professional artists into child care centres that are exploring the Reggio Emilia approach. This project included an exhibit of the children's work at the Art Gallery of Hamilton. The Reggio approach was the focus of her graduate research.

The first job for a new graduate is a time of powerful learning. Ideally, it presents an opportunity to try out ideas that have been generated based on the reading, discussion and experiences they have had in their course work and on field placements. They can then use the knowledge gained from their own and their new colleagues' experience to inform their future efforts. Programs can benefit from the fresh ideas and enthusiasm that novice teachers can bring. They can help us to remember why we chose this profession.

"That's just the way we do it here!"

Unfortunately, socialization away from innovative or theory-based practices occurs for many students during their field placements and for many beginning teachers during their induction year, if their co-operating teachers or teaching partners do not use or support such practices. There is pressure to conform rather than question. The new teacher then adopts a survival mentality that is antithetical to growth for all involved. It has been said that teacher ideals drop as much as 85% during the first year of teaching. Recently publicized findings from a Canadian study called "You Bet I Care" indicated that a high number of early childhood educators flee the profession early in their career (Philp, 2000). Although low wages undoubtedly play a role, perhaps disillusionment is part of the picture. Herbert Simon (in Schon, 1983) presented a view that professional work involves change and designing things to be better. If we are to develop as a profession and wish to make the real world better, this loss of new graduates and the stagnation of some of those who remain are issues we must face.

If we are to develop as a profession and wish to make the real world better, this loss of new graduates and the stagnation of some of those who remain are issues we must face.

"Forget what you are being taught at the college. This is the real world."

I have taught Early Childhood Education for eighteen years at a community college. Years ago, a co-operating teacher said this to a student that I was supervising on field placement. I have heard the same words many times since and am always taken aback. It is no small irony that oftentimes the teachers who echo this sentiment are our very own graduates, who demonstrate practice that falls short of high quality and contradicts what they were taught – graduates who, as students, expressed concern about what *they* were observing while on their placements. This would seem to support the view that there is a strong tendency toward protecting the status quo: tomorrow's teachers are mentored by today's (Goodlad, 1990). In some cases, where the educators are superb, this may be good news. However, in other cases, it is cause for despair. It is important for educators to consider the role they play in the mentoring and support of new teachers. We lose opportunities for development within our classrooms *and* as a profession if some graduates abandon the tenets of good practice learned as students - and thus become part of the mould they had condemned, rather than helping to change that mould. How can we support new graduates so that their ideals are not lost? Veteran teachers who strive to do this may, in the process, sustain or rediscover some of their own ideals. We can all become agents of change.

Although they may be idealistic, students and new grads are aware of the political issues surrounding childcare. They know that severe under-funding takes a toll. There are certainly elements of quality that are directly affected by these realities. However, the practices which students find to be unacceptable but are told are "the real world" are linked not to funding but rather to respect for children, and are within the control of the individual teachers. We have discussions in class about respecting children's feelings, but too often they hear children being told, "Put your tears away." We talk about children's tremendous creative potential and explore the

many benefits of meaningful art activities that encourage use of media to express ideas and feelings, but they still see pre-cut shapes and photocopied illustrations to be coloured, and stereotypical busy work that fits a theme. We learn about developmentally appropriate practice, but many see preschoolers enduring daily calendar circle (see Katz and Chard, 2000, pp. 23-25).

New grads are often expected to fall into step with such practices in centres and do not have the confidence or support to question them aloud. Instead, they are told to forget what they were taught. The ECE training program can encourage reflection, but this inclination has little hope of long-term survival if it is not encouraged and modelled in the workplace.

Meaningful Collaboration and Reflective Practice: Taking Responsibility for Making Things Better

Early childhood education is a profession where there is tremendous potential to have impact. Early childhood educators are the creators of curriculum. There is no provincial document to blame. We also create the environments in our programs. Certainly, factors such as ratios and group sizes and other similar quality-linked variables that fall under the jurisdiction of legislation affect what we do. But the quality of care that children experience is strongly affected by the teachers in the room. This was shown to be true in the study done at the Johnson & Johnson Child Development Center in New Jersey, where ratios, group sizes, and staff training were all better than average. Nevertheless, it received a poor score on sensitivity of caregiving. After the centre went through the accreditation process of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, there was a dramatic improvement in the quality of interactions between teachers and children, with increased sensitivity and diminished harshness. This change was attributed to the extensive self-evaluation requirements of the accreditation process. The teachers became more reflective about their behaviour (Howes and Galinsky, 1996). This finding is cause for celebration, as it confirms that a significant degree of control over "the real world" of ECE lies *within* the educators.

We lose opportunities for development within our classrooms and as a profession if some graduates abandon the tenets of good practice learned as students - and thus become part of the mould they had condemned, rather than helping to change that mould.

In Wideen, Mayer-Smith and Moon's (1998) survey of research into teacher education programs, it was found that, where students were supported by program, peers, and classroom situations, and where deliberative exploration and reflection were encouraged, there was a flowering of empowered teachers. "These were beginning teachers who were not afraid to experiment, struggle, and make mistakes – teachers (who) expressed a sense of joy at their emerging understanding of what it is to be a teacher" (pp.159-160). They found that continuous growth was experienced by new teachers whose construction of knowledge "developed and evolved through *a sustained conversation* during their first year of teaching"(p.158, italics added). Both students and new teachers need to observe functioning decision-makers and inquiring, reflective teachers in the workplace - teachers who use knowledge to inform and question their work.

Opportunities to hear veteran teachers talk about their ongoing development can help to combat the notion that teachers should not need to ask for help with teaching practice (Gratch, 1998). The transition from student to teacher can be stressful, especially if the novice senses that she or he is supposed to know everything. We learn by doing, but while practice can make perfect, perhaps it is more often true that *practice makes permanent.* We can learn from our experience, but if it is not scrutinized, questionable practices may simply become the status quo. Exploring not just the *how* but also the *why* with the novice teachers, is a helpful provocation for all. It is an antidote to, *"That's just the way it's always been done here".*

The programs in Reggio Emilia are models of reflective practice. The educators there have inspired us to consider our view not only of children, but also of teachers (Malaguzzi, 1998). If we see ourselves as co-learners and researchers, we will have an attitude of inquiry. If we are to have sustained conversation, it is clearly a collaborative venture. Everyone has a place at the table, with students, new teachers and veterans each bringing a different perspective, making the conversation richer. With few exceptions, childcare programs provide great opportunity for meaningful collaboration because the work is seldom solitary. However, this potential is not automatically realized. Having a partner often translates into simple division of labour, alternating on a weekly basis the planning of circles and the setting up of art activities. *True* collaboration is a different view of working together, involving deliberate effort and intent. It requires explicit understanding that the shared goal is ongoing growth and learning for everyone in the program. It goes beyond mere friendliness. It means gaining

comfort with provocation.

I was deeply impressed while hearing two educators from Reggio Emilia talk about their teamwork. They had worked together for ten years. At first, they said, there was much conflict – not the nasty backstabbing kind, but the prodding and challenging kind – the kind that leads to reflection and meaningful discussion. Now, after all these years together, they had no more conflict, and so they agreed that they should split up because they weren't learning from each other any more. This is a very different perspective on teamwork. In our culture, we strive for harmony, even if only on the surface. Could we come to embrace an atmosphere where everyone has a responsibility to help everyone else to be the best she or he can be?

A Community of Learners

If reflective teachers provide better care, we should be looking at ways to create communities of inquiry within childcare programs. We could then have a milieu that promotes ongoing learning for novices and veterans. Perhaps in the statement of philosophy for the centre, it could be identified that this is a community of learners. The staff and parents could be involved in discussion about the practices that would make this philosophy real. Time could be allocated on the agenda at every meeting to discuss the "knots" that educators are working on and what they are learning about themselves as learners and teachers. There could be discussion of an article that every member of the staff has read. A student or new grad can be a good resource for these articles. The teachers and supervisor could revisit aspects of the centre's philosophy to see how accurately it is being reflected by the practice in the centre, and get input from parents and students. An ongoing question for these discussions is "How are we making things better?" It is this kind of dialogue that can help us to continue learning, and to be fully functioning professionals.

Programs in our community that have begun to explore the Reggio Emilia approach have been engaging in sustained conversation about their practice and using these techniques. The students on placement in these programs have come back to the college impressed with the atmosphere. "They are talking about teaching and learning *all the time*...and I was included", one student said. The subject matter of the dialogue has included other aspects of practice such as the physical environment, the schedule, and documentation. The sustained conversation is accompanied by an excitement that is palpable in these centres. It is interesting to hear the staff speak about the transformation they have experienced. "We stopped saying, 'That won't work here' and started saying 'How could we make that work here?' We realized that we were really good at *justifying* what we do. We're getting better at *questioning* what we do." These are educators who are engaged in what they are doing. Their hearts and minds and spirits are in their work. A supervisor in one of these programs was pleased with the change that she saw in the integrity of the teamwork. In the past, the teaching teams in each room had worked together reasonably well, but each team was a unit unto itself. "Now, the centre is a community", she said.

Each of these centres had a fresh look at the rules they had devised for managing children's behaviour. One centre discovered to their surprise that they had over twenty-five outdoor play rules. Another had close to fifty! In the process of discussion that included input from students on placement and new teachers on staff, they realized that they had not been consistent with the rules, and that rules were often devised as a result of only one incident. Over the next few staff meetings, they pared these down to fewer than five, and agreed to have ongoing discussion about rules, involving children and parents and students on placement.

The teachers have reported a thought-provoking outcome of this: the children are better behaved and spend most of their time enthusiastically engaged in collaborative activities. One centre reported a significant decline in the number of accidents. The teachers have found that rather than policing, they are able to use their time in much more meaningful and satisfying ways, talking to children and documenting their activity. Their focus is on the quality of their listening and their interactions with the children. It was unsettling at first to abandon the security and comfort of well-worn practice, and to reconsider assumptions and reconstruct their way of being with children. These educators are now adamant that there is no going back. Their sense of themselves as professionals has grown.

New grads were employed in two of these centres last spring, and their perspective helped their colleagues to take a fresh look. When I spoke with them recently about their first year, they identified that it had been tremendously fulfilling, and that the seeds planted during their ECE program were being nurtured every day. They were supported and challenged as co-learners, and able to contribute their own questions and insights to the sustained conversation.

Making the "Real World" Better: The Circle Grows

This sense of community is spreading beyond the walls of individual centres. The teachers and supervisors in these programs have also been active participants in a series of free professional development sessions over the past four years, providing support to anyone in the community who is interested in sharing in the journey. Two members of the faculty at the college initiated these sessions to provide the community with the opportunity to join an exploration of the Reggio approach. Our students and new grads were excited about the ideas we were discussing in class, but many centres had not heard about Reggio Emilia.

We did not want their enthusiasm to be dampened by an understandable feeling of alienation or defensiveness among centre staff whose ECE program had not included exposure to these ideas. The interest has grown, and now these sessions are hosted on a rotating basis in the centres that have begun to explore the Reggio approach, so others can see what these teachers are doing. They are excited about their journey, and it is contagious. There were over fifty early childhood educators at the last meeting. The local media have also demonstrated interest. There have been two extensive articles about these programs in the newspaper with colour photos of the children's artwork, and a televised feature on the evening news. The walls are becoming transparent. These educators are celebrating their ongoing learning while creating a new kind of 'real world'. What a stimulating environment for both novice and veteran early childhood educators!

The Reggio Emilia approach has served as a catalyst and inspiration for these particular programs. But a program need not necessarily pursue the Reggio Emilia approach to engage in this type of process of ongoing reflection and collaboration. Ultimately, children will benefit from being in the care of thoughtful enthusiastic educators. When we support reflective practice, we support students, beginning teachers, veterans, and the children in their care. We all grow.

In many jurisdictions in this country, early childhood educators are struggling for professional recognition. It is hard not to be hopeful that we are on the verge of seeing greater support and resources and recognition for early childhood education. If this is to happen, we must be ready. We must be functioning as professionals, not as babysitters. This means we must be involved in reflection, in making the real world better. It means we must support our students and new teachers, so that their idealism catches hold. If we believe Annie Dillard's (1987) message that no child on earth was ever meant to be ordinary, we should do everything in our power to see that each extraordinary child and educator is supported in extraordinary communities of learners.

The author acknowledges the contribution of the early childhood educators at McMaster Children's Centre, Hamilton Public Library Workplace Child Care Centre, and Scott Park Children's Centre in Hamilton Ontario for their contribution to the ideas expressed in this article.

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Carol Anne Wien and Mabel Higgins, met recently with Karyn Callaghan and Paul Fralick, originators of the Artists at the Centre Exhibit, Art Gallery of Hamilton, Ontario.

HandsONmusic Series

Monika Tusnady

Reviewed by Daniella Bernstein

Daniella Bernstein is a Montreal pianist, performer, and music specialist. She is a graduate of the Conservatoire de Musique de la Province de Quebec and of McGill University. As a choral accompanist for the English Montreal School Board Children's Choir, she has toured Canada, the United States and Europe.

I am always on the prowl for good music material for young children - material that stimulates thoughts, feelings and movement. So I was especially pleased to receive a set of CD's that came highly recommended by a learned and inspiring educational advocate for young children. "Listen and tell me what you think," she invited.

Just opening up this four-pack of two CD's each (one vocal and one instrumental) was already exciting. The package includes:

String Things

Blast o' Brass

Some Drum

Where the Winds Blow

They are well presented and well organized. Each package contains a 28-page booklet with the lyrics as well as ideas for integrating a multiple intelligence approach - that is, enriching young children's musical experiences with movement, art, literature and science.

A family of orchestral instruments (percussion, strings, brass and winds)is highlighted in each package. These instruments accompany songs and musical activities or play on their own. They include a lovely selection of classical music arrangements appropriate for young children. Most of the vocalists on these CD's are children, thus giving the music a natural appeal. The selections in these CD's provide meaningful and engaging musical substance and value.

As I listened to this music I thought "Someone has been doing their homework!" That someone, is Monika Tusnady, the author and producer of this handsONmusic series. Ms Tusnady holds degrees in music performance and in education from McGill University, the Hochschule fur Musik in Munich and the Kodaly Institute in Hungary. What I especially applaud regarding Ms. Tusnady's work is her respect and generosity towards young children's learning and appreciative capacities. She opens doors and generates possibilities through music. Thank you, Monika Tusnady.

Recorded and Produced in Canada
HearAgainMusic, 2001

The Best Figure Skater in the Whole Wide World

Linda Bailey, Illustrated by Alan and Lea Daniel

Reviewed by Sally M. Krueger

Sally Kruger who lives with her husband and four children is a school librarian at Erskine School in Alberta. Sally enjoys reading to her library classes and writes a weekly humour column for a paper in Red Deer. She has authored three novels.

The best thing about Lindy Bailey's book, The Best Figure Skater in the Whole Wide World, is the way she uses words to paint beautiful pictures of the characters in this story. The best thing about the illustrations by Alan and Lea Daniel is the way they tell Linda Bailey's story without words.

The story begins with the sentence, "All Lizzy wanted was to be the best figure skater in the whole wide world." Doesn't every kid dream of being the best figure skater or hockey player, singer or actress or dancer in the whole wide world? Kids who read that sentence wonder how Lizzy will achieve it. Adults who read it know right away that this story will be about disappointment and frustration.

It turns out that the only figure skating Lizzy has ever seen is on TV. She doesn't even know how to skate. At the beginning of the story, Lizzy is caught up in the beauty of the sport as she watches the championship skating on TV. She loves the moves the skaters make and she especially loves the beautiful twirly skirts the women wear. She watches them on TV and imitates every move they make on her living room floor. The illustrations are wonderful.

Lizzy is the quintessential kid. She has shining eyes, a brilliant smile, wild, messy hair, long legs and arms with big, puppy dog feet and hands. She looks nothing like the controlled, perfect, compact champion skaters on TV.

And sure enough, skating lessons turn out to be her first disappointment. Skating is hard and cold and you have to practice a lot. Ms. Bailey portrays Lizzy's mom's character clearly as she encourages Lizzy to practice and persevere. In contrast to Lizzy's mom, the illustrations that depict Lizzy's skating teacher show a young, pretty girl in a twirly skirt and blue skates with bells on them who does her job well but doesn't look as if she has a clue about the hopes and dreams of her students. We are also introduced pictorially to Lizzy's class which includes a lovely girl with jet black hair and snow white skin, everything that Lizzy isn't.

Finally Lizzy's big chance arrives. Her skating class is going to skate the story of Snow White and the Seven Dwarves in the winter carnival. Lizzy knows she has practiced hard and she believes with all her heart that she can be the best figure skater in the world. Surely her teacher will pick her for a good part in the story. But she notices that the teacher picks the short kids to be dwarves and the reader sees, even if Lizzy can't, that the teacher is choosing the parts according to the kids' looks and we steel ourselves for Lizzy's inevitable disappointment. Lizzy's mother comforts her, but there is nothing even she can do to help her.

Then as if things are not bad enough, the costumes arrive. The green wooden tree costumes are as far from the beautiful twirly skirt that Snow White will wear as possible. Lizzy feels she isn't even part of the story now as she skates out on the ice for the show, "the way trees do. Stiff. After that the real story began." Lizzy watches all the other skaters do the jumps and the moves that she had dreamed of doing until, "Finally, after a long, cold time the play ended." It is time for Lizzy to lead the trees off the ice. The picture of Lizzy at the head of the line of trees, her eyes barely able to keep from crying, sheer disappointment showing in every line of her body is perfect. Who in the world has not had to endure feeling the way Lizzy looks?

Most of us would simply endure the experience and file it away as a thwarted dream from our youth, but Lizzy does not. Suddenly, the little girl with the big dreams and the wild, untamed hair decides she cannot let her dream die. She takes matters into her own hands and she and the other trees steal the show! At least, a little bit.

The final picture in the story is Lizzy's mother hugging her, wooden tree costume and all, with the poster of the champion figure skaters in the background. "Maybe it wasn't the best feeling [Lizzy] ever, ever had..." But we the reader know that even if Lizzy doesn't grow up to be just like those skaters in the poster, she has learned something important about how to make your dreams come true in the face of disappointment.

I have rarely read a story where the pictures tell the story and the words show the feelings as much as this book does. The only small quibble I would mention is the part near the end of the story where the trees are skating in a line, with Lizzy in the lead, and the words describe one little girl tree who "looked Lizzy straight in the eye." How can this happen if Lizzy is in the front of the line and the girl is behind her? When you read a story where the words and the pictures are so completely in tune a small discrepancy like that seems big. But it is only a small discrepancy.

This is a beautiful story. Everyone can relate to Lizzy as she dreams huge dreams and faces disappointment and pain as they are thwarted. Yet she still manages to make her dreams come true in her own way in spite of the circumstances. I recommend the book, even if you've never laced on a pair of skates in your life.

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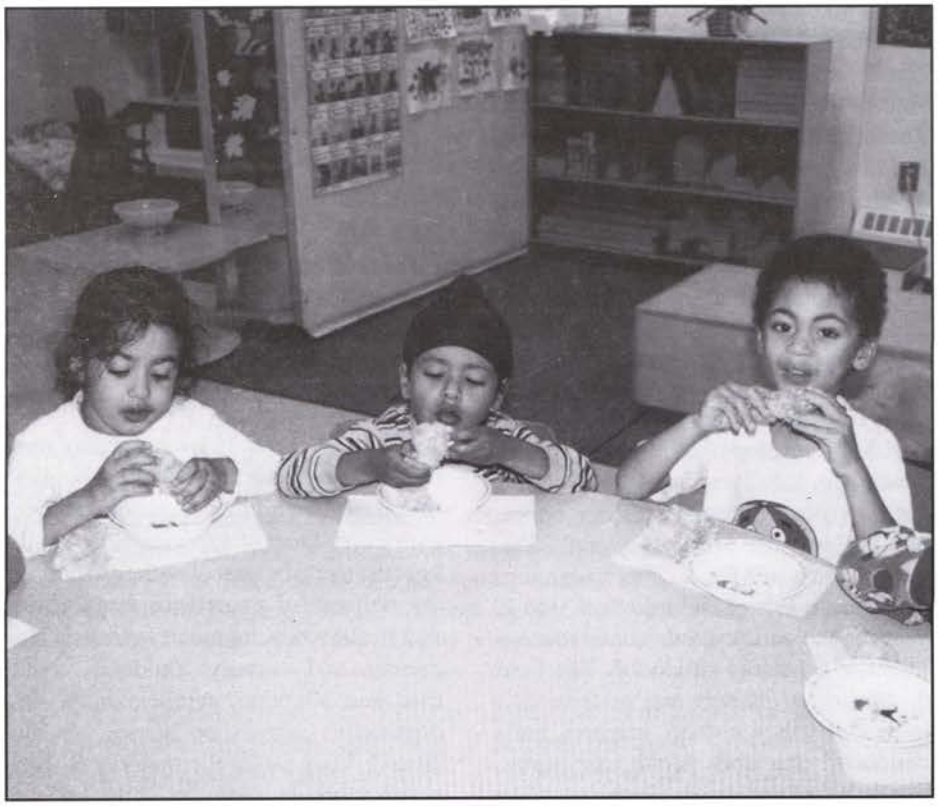

The Irreducible Needs of Children: What Every Child Must Have to Grow, Learn and Flourish

T. Berry Brazleton and Stanley I. Greenspan

Reviewed by Karen MacKay Young

Karen MacKay Young celebrates 30 years in the field of early childhood education. She currently teaches in the ECE Program at Georgian College in Collingwood and Owen Sound, in Ontario. In addition to providing professional development workshops for early childhood educators, and service providers working with parents, Karen also presents parenting programs for families in the Collingwood area.

Early Childhood Educators are very familiar with the names Brazelton and Greenspan. T. Berry Brazleton is the founder of the Child Development Unit at Children's Hospital in Boston and is also clinical professor of pediatrics at Harvard Medical School. He has written classic books on child development and parenting including *Touchpoints; Infants and Mothers; Toddlers and Parents;* and *On Becoming a Family.* Stanley Greenspan is clinical professor of psychiatry and pediatrics at George Washington University Medical School. He is a practicing child psychiatrist and is the founder of Zero to Three: The National Centre for Infants, Toddlers and Families. Many of us know him for his video *Floortime* and other books such as *The Challenging Child; Playground Politics* and *The Child with Special Needs.* Put these two esteemed experts and advocates together and what you get is a timely, challenging and highly important contribution to the area of child rearing.

Inspiration for the writing of the book came from the White House Conferences on Child Development a few years ago when then, U.S. President Clinton asked, *"What types of experiences are important and why are they necessary?"* This question inspired the authors to examine the unmet needs of children from 0 to 12 years and to outline fundamental requirements of a healthy childhood. The book is directed at parents and professionals including policy makers, teachers, early childhood educators, health care professionals, judges and anyone else who provides support to today's families.

The book begins with an important question in the Introduction. It states:

"Why are we moving into more impersonal ways of interacting with our children and in family life? After the first half of the century showing gains in our child care policies, why are we now going to the other direction towards a type of impersonal care that could undermine the ability of future generations to parent and nurture their young?" (p.XVIII).

Irreducible Needs is an attempt to define needs and how to foster those needs to which every child has a right. The seven needs identified are:

- The need for ongoing nurturing relationships
- The need for physical protection, safety, and regulation
- The need for experiences tailored to individual differences
- The need for developmentally appropriate practices
- The need for limit setting, structure and expectations
- The need for stable, supportive communities and cultural continuity
- A commitment for protecting the future.

The authors emphasize that healthy maturation is a product of the complex interaction of the child's genetic endowment with every facet of experience and highlight the many failures of society to provide the richness of experience required for that healthy development. Issues such as divorce and custody, childcare, foster care and adoption, mothers in prison, orphanages and group homes are discussed. They target the material to each group working with the child and the family and provide specific advice with regard to relationships, learning, discipline, time spent, teaching strategies, children with special needs, child abuse, and working parents. Recommendations are given for public policy related to the well being of children.

Each chapter begins with research having to do with the issues, then in a conversation style, the authors talk about their own clinical experience, research and opinions on the subject. In one instance Greenspan opines:

"Learning occurs through relationships and interactions. Trying to get technology or more hours of drilling to take the place of interactive problem-solving learning just doesn't work very well. The glue that makes minds grow is the glue of human interaction. If we try to substitute technology for the human factor, we'll come out dehumanizing our population. And they won't be well educated." (p.106). And on education they suggest: *" Mastery–oriented approaches should replace failure oriented approaches to the curriculum. Tests should be used to identify what children need to learn and to change the teaching methods for that child, not to blame the child."* (p.110).

This is a hard-hitting book and spares no one. It clearly addresses the needs of *children* and not those of parents, service providers or anyone else. In fact, there will be those who might not want to hear the message-highly recommended reading.

Publisher: Perseus Publishing,
Cambridge Mass. 2000
ISBN 0-7382-0516-8

Kids Knitting - Projects for Kids of All Ages

Melanie Falick, Photographer, Chris Hartlove Illustrator, Kristin Nicholas

Reviewed by Terri Kosik

Terri Kosik is the Executive Director of the Early Childhood Development Center at Saint Mary's College and the University of Notre Dame. She also teaches undergraduate and graduate early childhood classes at Indiana University, South Bend. A teacher of adults, she is always seeking ways to be more directly involved with children while administering a large early care and education program.

A learn to knit book for children and adults this book is much more than a typical getting started book, rather, *Kids Knitting* creates a knitting experience and promises many knitting adventures. It provides children, parents and teachers with basic knitting instructions and 12 delightful projects to knit, including colorful and simple bean bags, bath puppets, dolls, backpack, purse, a very long scarf for wrapping, fun hats and even comfy tube socks.

The knitting adventure begins with a simple recipe for dying yarn with kool-aid, such fun, and directions for making your own knitting needles using inexpensive dowels, decorating the needles with handmade clay creations or with simple acorn caps. These needles provide the yearning knitter with both a smile and inspiration to begin the journey. Once the yarn and needles have been prepared, the book provides simple projects beginning with finger knitting and spool knitting, bringing back fond childhood memories for many adults.

Once the basic steps of casting on, knitting and purling have been illustrated, the book uses captivating photos of children knitting to teach many different stitches and related projects. These stitch swatches are perfect for beanbags or a lively swatch scarf.

Throughout the book, the children display and wear their knitted creations while exploring the charming Morehouse Farm in New York State. The photos bring to life the feasibility of the various projects. When I discovered this intriguing book at a local bookstore, I immediately visited my favorite yarn shop. The socks were my first project completed using this book and my daughter wears them often.

It then dawned on me that this book would be a wonderful summer journey for our school age day camp children, ages 6 through 9. I searched various bookstores, both in our community and popular cyber bookstores, for other children's books on knitting. I discovered quickly that a few exist, but none with the splendid photographs of children knitting and displaying their work in a child-centered, natural environment. For those who appreciate and delight in documentation, this book is worth the read.

I am eager to begin our summer adventure with children knitting from the "Kids Knitting" book. I have been re-inspired by this book and hope to share the joy of knitting with others, providing children and teachers with yet another language with which to explore and create. I begin a teachers knitting group tomorrow evening... of course we are going to use the Kids Knitting book as our foundation text. Happy knitting!

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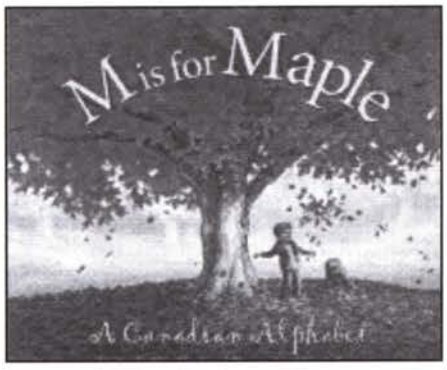

M is for Maple: A Canadian Alphabet

Mike Ulmer and illustrated by Melanie Rose

Review by Tracy Perron

Tracy Perron, M.Ed., B.A., E.C.E., and I/T has been an ECE faculty member at Lambton College since 1986. Tracy, mother of a 12 yr-old is co-author of Celebrating the Diversity of Mother Earth: Bkejwanong Children's Centre Journey. Tracy also spent several years on Walpole Island as supervisor of the childcare program there.

I read this delightful Canadian alphabet book for the first time on a very cold, snowy evening snuggled on the couch with my 12-year-old son, Leith. When we finished reading it, he looked at me, smiled and said, "I liked it. It was informative but not too school-ish." This, from the boy who much prefers shooting hoops and playing video games to reading and studying. I have to admit his sentiments were the same as mine. It was a small wealth of Canadian trivia presented in an enjoyable format. Prior to reading the book, I assumed I would know most of the information, but some interesting Canadian discoveries and developments surprised me! Do you know the real story behind the zipper?

I found that I enjoyed the book on a few levels: The illustrations alone were lovely and I appreciated them more as I looked at the book a second and third time. The details of the wind under "w" and the expressions of the hockey players under "h" are just two examples of the way the illustrations evoked feelings on each and every page. As I read the information about Terry Fox and then looked at the picture of a young man running at night in the light of vehicle headlights, I truly felt a sense of pride in sharing my heritage with such a wonderful Canadian hero. For anyone who has experienced the metamorphosis of a maple tree in the autumn, there is no question that the illustration on the cover is splendid, probably my favourite.

The rhyming verse was light and peppy. I found myself almost singing along as I read. What an appeal for children and what better way to experience the alphabet since they are already used to singing it. For young children, you could simply read the rhyming verses of the book and enjoy the illustrations. School-age children experience it at a deeper level because notes are provided in the borders with more detailed information on people and topics. What a great idea for older school-age children to use these tidbits to expand their knowledge on such topics as the Underground Railroad, famous Canadian inventors, politicians, important places, etc.

I particularly enjoyed the humour. My favourite alphabet highlight was "E is for Eh". I was an adult before I realized that I too said "eh" and once I made this discovery, I was amazed that it was unique to Canadians. Having completed my graduate studies in the United States, I was occasionally aware of the subtleties that distinguish us from our American friends and like the "I Am Canadian" commercial; this book makes you smile when you ponder the differences.

In light of the September 11th tragedy, I believe that most Canadians feel very proud to live in this country and this book serves to intensify our pride. Although, "it is not too school-ish", it could be used as a powerful teaching tool in the hands of a creative parent or teacher. As I read the book, I felt compelled to think of other things that started with 'a" that were uniquely Canadian. A city, town or community could be the impetus for an alphabet book in a classroom. It truly could by used as a springboard for many projects.

In conclusion, I enjoyed the interesting trivia, the lovely illustrations and the potential for inspiring young readers to experience a sense of pride in their unique heritage. Further, any book that includes Sarnia and eating fries under the bridge is worth adding to a Canadian family's library.

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Making Learning Visible: Children as individual and group learners

Project Zero and Reggio Children

Reviewed by Brenda Fyfe

Dr. Brenda Fyfe is Professor of Education and Director of the Kornblum Institute for Teaching Excellence at Webster University in St. Louis, Missouri. In 1989 she made her first visit to Reggio Emilia, Italy to explore its renowned early education programs. Since that time she has been instrumental in bringing the Hundred Languages of Children Exhibit to St. Louis twice, established and co-directed a professional development project for educators in St. Louis, and authored and co-authored several journal articles and chapters of books related to the integration of Reggio principles and practices in American schools.

Making Learning Visible is an exciting new publication that was born out of a collaborative research project conducted by educators from Reggio Emilia and a team from Harvard's Project Zero. It offers the reader a refreshing visual as well as verbal report of research that truly makes the learning of children and adults visible. The collaboration between the Italians and Americans is clearly based on the pedagogy of listening and the value of difference. Although the Italian and American authors communicate in very different styles, a thorough reading of the book makes it apparent that all of their work together was based on deep and extensive dialogue. As always, the chapters written by the Italian educators retain their aesthetic qualities through visual essays and a beautiful prose style of writing that is rich in metaphor and strong in philosophy. The chapters written by the Americans are clear, insightful, analytical, and grounded with citations of literature that help to connect, relate, and contrast the Reggio work to theory, research, and practice familiar to us in America.

In an early chapter Carla Rinaldi articulates the values that underlie the work in Reggio Emilia. Throughout the rest of the book, these values come to life through documentation studies, interviews with teachers, and the reflections by the Project Zero educators who studied their work. Several chapters present documentation of children's learning processes using photographs, quotes from children, as well as descriptive and interpretive comments by the educators. Unlike the Hundred Languages Exhibit and many other Reggio Children publi-

cations, this document takes us deep inside the minds of educators, the roles of teachers, the thinking of teaching teams, and the systems of support that enable them to collaborate with children, parents, and community. I had the extraordinary opportunity not only to be one of the first to gain access to this book upon its release last September, but also to use it as the focal point of a graduate course that I co-taught with Dr. Carla Rinaldi. Dr. Rinaldi was a visiting professor at Webster University for the fall, 2001 semester. She coordinated the Making Learning Visible research team from Reggio Children along with Howard Gardner and colleagues from Project Zero. At the end of the semester Dr. Rinaldi and I asked our students to share their perspectives on the book. Their comments are incorporated throughout the rest of this review.

"From the minute that you flip through it you know that you are not looking at some same old book on research." This response from a graduate student is typical of many students' appreciation for the visual orientation given by the table of contents, the photo series of "mini-stories" that are woven through the book, and the insights and examples offered with regard to the visual presentation and analysis of documentation.

My students and I valued the fact that the chapters offer multiple perspectives yet combine to form a cohesive whole. Twelve Reggio educators authored chapters, including pedagogistas, atelieristas and teachers, but many more are identified and quoted within the research data presented. Four Americans from the Project Zero team authored chapters, but the acknowledgements indicate that a much larger group of colleagues offered insights on early research reports. The data reported also makes visible the perspectives of parents and children through their words and images of their work and interactions. As one student said, *"I think it's striking how you can tell different perspectives of researchers throughout the book, who are writing and presenting the material, whether it's a teacher from Reggio Emilia or somebody who is listening to the teachers having a conversation. It's wonderful to move around in those different perspectives and see this understanding from lots of different points of view."*

Many of our grad students resonated especially with the chapter by Amelia Gambetti, *A Conversation with a Group of Teachers.* In it, Gambetti interviews a group of teachers who have been working at a school for many years and teachers who have only recently started their experience there. The purpose was to analyze the problem areas that were emerging from the daily practice of the new teachers. Many of my students felt that this chapter helped them to see that teachers in Reggio struggle with some of the same questions that they have. But more than a feeling of solidarity or relief, the chapter offered them insights about the level of open dialogue and, often, heated debate that is necessary to grow professionally and work collaboratively.

Our students struggled to make sense of the concepts articulated by Carla Rinaldi in the chapter, *Infant-toddler Centers and Preschools as Places of Culture.* But as we proceeded through the study of the book we could see how these values are both communicated and constructed with children and families. The book is filled with examples that illustrate enacted values. Students found it an extremely challenging book, *"not an easy read,* they said. At the same time student after student commented on it's usefulness, saying they found themselves reading and re-reading some of the chapters. Several stated that they found it an invaluable tool and a resource as they worked on their own documentation studies.

The chapter on the form, function and understanding in learning groups offers a synthesis of the research. The teachers in our class found this section, especially useful. A number of them talked of sharing this information with parents and colleagues. Many noted that the propositions about group learning have provoked them to look at children with new eyes, to see the dynamic nature of learning groups. As a group of graduate school learners, the students felt the propositions also applied to themselves in many ways.

The final chapters written by the Project Zero team (Steve Seidel, Mara Krechevsky and Ben Mardell) offer excellent analyses of some of the "cultural knots," false dichotomies, and different worldviews that often get in the way of our study and understanding of the Reggio approach. They are able to articulate the complexities and subtleties of the approach that often confound or are misconstrued by American educators. I think many readers will more fully understand the Reggio experience through this reading.

This research, like all good research, raises many questions and directions for continued study. This investigation and its findings about children as individual and group learners, offers us a challenge to continue the research in our own settings. It provokes us to rethink our definitions of research, the roles of teachers, children and parents as researchers, and the relationship between teachers and researchers from outside the school system. It asks us to examine how documentation is related to assessment, how documentation affects learning, and how we value and support the emotional and aesthetic dimensions of learning, to name a few.

My particular experience in reading and studying this book has, indeed, been a social one. Although I'm sure the richness of the book will come through to the individual, isolated reader, I highly recommend that it be used as a tool for group discussion and debate. I think that group processing of the book can lead to a deeper understanding of the collaborative nature of this kind of research and can offer the reader a personal basis for relating to the concepts revealed about individual and group learning.

Publisher: Reggio Children,
Municipality of Reggio Emilia, 2001
ISBN 88-87960-25-9.

Canadians in Reggio Emilia

CAROL JONAS, V.P.
PUBLICATIONS CHAIR

FROM THE PUBLICATIONS CHAIR

During the month of February the second Canadian delegation went to Reggio Emilia, Italy. I along with board members, Pat Breen and Larry Railton and colleagues from Montreal and across Canada attended workshops and visited preschools.

Memories of my first visit in 1993, under the guidance of Cathleen Smith, resurfaced. I was surprised to remember everything as much bigger that first time. While speaking to one of the educators at the Diana school we discussed this and came to the conclusion that I had 'grown' in my understanding of the Reggio philosophy and was not as overwhelmed with it. This is not to say that I learned nothing new; I definitely did.

The following words were recorded by Amelia Gambetti of Reggio Children, words that we as a group had spoken during one of our sessions. Just imagine... the richness of our conversations, dialogues and talks.

EXPERIENCE journey PHILOSOPHY/THEORY/PRACTICE
respect REFLECT

listening TRUST atmosphere UNDERSTANDING communication

PLEASURE questions LEARNING answers BREATHING

Meaning CULTURE agreement

DISAGREEMENTS feelings MISTAKES group working ENVIRONMENT

Discoveries POSITIVE revolution DIFFERENCES richness RIGHTS needs

DESIRES wishes ASSESSMENT guidance RESEARCH participation LIFE

Relationships PROCESS change PROJECT education

KNOWLEDGE dialogue VALUES exchange OBJECTIVE context SOCIETY

Community CHOICES competence VISIBILITY collaboration
RECIPROCITY similarities HOPE

As we left that session, Carol Ann Wein mentioned that JOY, should be added to the list. Malaguzzi had said "nothing without joy." It is with this attitude of joy and wonder that I once again came away from that city in northern Italy whose preschool philosophy is globally influencing many teachers and parents.

I was particularly pleased when the students that I work with at McGill saw the strong connection of Reggio Emilia to the book *Totto Chan*, reviewed in our last issue of Canadian Children. This is definitely worth reading.

Joy to your day,
Carol

Just imagine... the richness of our conversations, dialogues and talks.

CAYC ACJE

Cathleen Smith

~ FRIENDS OF CHILDREN AWARD ~
Cathleen Smith

Cathleen Smith was always intensely involved in all aspects of life especially where children were concerned. She was born in St. Paul, Minnesota and always proudly stated that she was herself a "kid who grew up in daycare". Her mother worked fulltime as a librarian, and Cathleen's love of books, especially children's literature stemmed from the hours she spent with her mother in the library. Cathleen was one of the unfortunate children who contracted polio in the 1947 epidemic. Her experiences in hospital in Sweden, where she was sent for rehabilitation gave her a special understanding and compassion for children who need extra support.

Cathleen graduated as an elementary school teacher, lived with her husband and three daughters in Argentina, before settling in Nelson, British Columbia in the 1960's. She was instrumental in establishing the first day care center and then an innovative family daycare program in Nelson. She also started the ECE program at Selkirk College. Later, moving to Vancouver, she began teaching in the ECE program at Douglas College in the early 1970's. She taught every course in the program, but is especially known for developing the course for teaching children who need extra support (special needs). "Making Friends", the video that she produced with Anne Carr is one of the major resources for educators in the field.

In 1993, Cathleen organized the first Canadian delegation to visit Reggio Emilia and on her return, she worked hard to introduce the ideas learned from Reggio Emilia into teacher education. Inspired by Reggio, she and her colleagues at Douglas College developed an innovative approach to teacher education called, "Children Teaching Teachers" in which children and teachers from local child care centres are invited to visit the college and participate with the ECE students in the classroom. She was also instrumental in bringing the Hundred Languages of Children Exhibit to Vancouver.

Cathleen's enthusiasm for life never lessens. After accompanying her husband Jaime, to the Yukon in 1998, she began working with the first nation's people that she met there. She has received Canada Council Grants to make a film of the life of her friend, Edith Josie whose program "Here is the News" was a popular CBC Sunday morning feature. Cathleen and Jaime lead an active and interesting life as they always have done, but now in Sidney, B.C.

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

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

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

~ Membership Profile ~
Laurie Kocher

Laurie Kocher

Laurie was born in Vancouver, near U.B.C., and one of her early memories is playing with David Suzuki's children in the university's science labs and libraries. This was the beginning of her lifelong curiosity about the world and interest in education. She went to St Chad's kindergarten, before kindergartens were part of the public school system. Recently she came across a workbook that her mother had saved from those days, and memories came flooding back of the worksheets she had to do, especially the directions to 'put the cross on the one that didn't match'. She recalls later telling a third grade teacher that someday she would also become a teacher, like "Anne of Green Gables." She moved to West Vancouver when she was in elementary school and lived close to the beach and the mountains of the North Shore. She still loves to go for long walks along the ocean, and every spring takes a group of children to outdoor school on the Gulf Islands, always taking along her camera, as she is an enthusiastic photographer.

She completed her undergraduate degree in psychology, and when her daughter was two years old she enrolled in the Early Childhood Integrated Program at U.B.C. After the birth of her second daughter she applied to be a substitute teacher in the Mission School District but was offered a position teaching kindergarten. She accepted although she was a bit apprehensive, as she had previously spent only one day in a kindergarten classroom during her teacher's training. She has taught kindergarten ever since and now teaches in the Abbotsford School District. While completing her Master's Degree at the University of Victoria, 'she stumbled onto the work of Reggio Emilia and ever since has found her passion', being profoundly struck by respect demonstrated for children's thinking in Reggio-influenced programmes. This is the focus of her present doctoral studies through the University of Southern Queensland. She is at present well into writing her dissertation on "The Disposition to Document", which is an exploration of teacher change influenced by implementing documentation in early childhood environments. This will involve at least three study trips to Australia.

Laurie loves to read everything, 'even billboards and the back of cereal boxes, in both languages'. Laurie likes to connect . . .talk . . .discuss but most of all she loves a problem, particularly one she cannot solve! She takes every opportunity she can in her busy life to travel and has just returned from her second trip to Reggio Emilia, this last time as a member of the Canadian Delegation. Readers will remember many of the articles and book reviews she has written and the photographs she has taken for Canadian Children. She has been a member of CAYC for a number of years and says she especially appreciates the way it connects her to other people in ECE across the country. Her hopes for the future are that we can better advocate for improving the quality of early childhood programs by taking our inspiration from Reggio Emilia and making the rich intellectual life of children visible. She has a quotation that she would like to share with members:

"I think we all put our boats out on a current, set our little sails, and when we hit something that impassions us, and our little boat begins to go there, the wind whistles through our hair and we know we are onto something...You become alive as you're doing it and you begin to develop gifts you just didn't know you had."

Sister Helen Prejean, The Progressive, January 1996

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