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Introduction

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Barbra McKenzie & Phil Fitzsimmons

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Introduction

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Creativity and the concept of engagement in children have a long-standing history in a number of disparate fields and areas of research. Many of those areas of specialisation were represented by the eclectic group of conference delegates who gathered to share and explore ideas and provide constructive feedback to their colleagues across the lifetime of this conference. The consensus among participants regarding the importance of further and more fully exploring the complex relationship between creativity and engagement was unanimous. Further study and research, especially through an interdisciplinary lens was warranted and several delegates from diverse fields of research left the conference with firm plans to collaborate to more fully explore this intersection.

The common thread across a wide variety of chapters and presentations was that creativity is still a nebulous and ill-defined concept. A cohort of educators from countries across the globe, from very different areas of education and from diverse teaching realities identified for the conference that from an education perspective there are identifiable tensions in the field with respect to what exactly is meant by the term creativity. What does it mean to be creative? Can creativity be taught? How can creativity be fostered and nurtured in a classroom environment predicated on the notion of testing and assessment? These were the types of questions that challenged delegates, that demanded answers and resonated and echoed across the interdisciplinary papers and presentations during their time at Mansfield College, Oxford.

A number of presenters identified that the term engagement with respect to children had significant ‘currency’ in some research fields during the 70’s and 80’s of the Twentieth Century. They also reminded us that it appeared that the use of and interest in this concept had in the main fallen into disuse since that time. A number of other delegates however, indicated that of late the concept of engagement has come to the fore once again- this time its use appears to have been re-framed in psychological terms that tend to flavour it with the concept of motivational behaviourism.

The structure of this international conference predicated as it was on the notions of respect, sharing, collegiality and fair play provided an environment where delegates felt supported and scaffolded by their co-presenters. As all conference attendees were present at each presentation the questioning that followed individual presentations was flavoured with a commonality of understandings with respect to previous discussions, a familiarity with points made earlier by others. This supportive structure encouraged presenter, questioner and other audience members alike to move
into a deeper, richer and more in-depth exploration of the concepts under discussion.

The resulting higher-order interactions among delegates revitalised, refreshed and reinvigorated many previously static and one-dimensional interdisciplinary understandings of both concepts. It provided delegates with a range of alternate views often flavoured with a socio-cultural perspective. The introduction of an alternate way to view the process of creativity and its possible intersections with engagement as being aspects of cultural, situational and personal components, intimately connected with individual situations and circumstances provided an alternate worldview that initiated considerable dialogue.

Again and again a series of presenters initiated the means by which their colleagues returned to tackle the questions that haunted many across the lifetime of this conference, ‘What is creativity?’ ‘What is its relationship to creativity?’ A series of well argued, interesting and informative frameworks of understanding attempted to answer these and other important questions from the worldview of their own discipline areas. In attempting to explore and answer these questions conference delegates were in fact provided with a challenging academic exercise, how to synthesise discipline specific knowledge and understanding and then re-frame this in such a way that this became accessible to colleagues across a range of alternate discipline areas.

The levels of interdisciplinary engagement, sharing and positive collegial interactions that took place across these three days at Oxford is a testament to the ability of conference presenters to accomplish this task. The success of this conference, the willingness to ‘hear’ an alternate range of perspectives across a diverse number of disciplines and to share with others their own understandings stand as a marker of their success in this area.

As presentations and discussions took place during and after the conference it became clear that papers presented fell into one or the other of three major themes. In what follows these chapters are introduced, identified and discussed in terms of these themes.

The Role of Significant Others in the Development of Creativity and Engagement

Chapters that explored this theme discussed the vital role that parents, teachers and oftentimes the child themselves played in the exploring the nature and understanding of creativity and engagement. A common thread that flowed through many of the chapters in this section acknowledged that children themselves are active in their own learning, in striving to come to terms with the world they inhabit. These chapters tended to identify the roles of adults who act as significant others to signpost in some way this journey of exploration and discovery and the ways that creativity and engagement support and extend this developing understanding. The majority
of these chapters explore the role that education in its many forms plays in expanding horizons during childhood.

The chapter by Adva Margaloit poses the question as to whether or not we should actively ‘teach’ creativity to pre-service teachers by exploring a range of useful tools while the chapter written by Nado Aveling and Helen Hatchell again focuses on pre-service teachers and explores their use of a simulation game involving racism to promote higher levels of engagement that impact upon identify construction. Cecelia du Toit’s research focuses upon the important role that narratives can play in identifying and teaching resilience to under privileged children in South Africa who have been impacted by social disintegration caused by escalating poverty and disease. Harrison and Morardini focus upon the role that multiliteracies play in supporting children with diverse ability levels in an inclusive pre-school setting and the role this framework plays in valuing difference. Mostafa Sheikhzade’s chapter is also linked to the classroom as he discusses the means by which creativity was explored in a Social Studies classroom through the use of generative questions. Barbra McKenzie’s chapter moves us back into the tertiary classroom and challenges educators to teach for creativity and engagement by modelling and demonstrating these concepts for their pre-service teachers through their own teaching methods. Serendipitously, in separate chapters, first Glaveanu and then Phil Fitzsimmons and Ruth Lindsell urge us to explore even more widely still in their chapters the cultural psychology of creativity. More specifically, how creativity emerges from early childhood and the role played by symbolic space and significant others in this process.

The Role Played by the Environment in Nurturing Creativity and Engagement

The chapters contained in this theme consider the role that the environment plays in supported and developing the means to become creative and engage at ever-deeper levels. Mokwunyei’s chapter deals with the important role played by creativity in performance within a traditional African community in Benin and explores how children develop their creative abilities within a particular context of performance. The chapter by Naile Berberoglu discusses the role of an entirely different type of community and its influence on creativity- that of the media by exploring how children’s interpretation of what childhood is for them differs from the childhood that is depicted in television advertisements. Jane Simister’s research explores the role of creativity and engagement in changing a school culture to encourage questioning, critical thinking and problem solving, that. While Hsio-Chi Chang also discusses aspects of organisational learning and culture and what this means with respect to engaging students and steering both students and teachers in the direction of engagement. Lesley Caust’s
research concerns the intersection of Multiple Intelligences and outcomes based education and the role played by creative thinking in this context. Sofia Pantouvaki helps us explore the role that theatrical creativity played in the lives of children in the Theresienstadt ghetto during World War II. While in her chapter Sujin B. E. Huggins takes our hand and leads through the vital role that Library’s play in fostering creativity in children.

**Ensuring Creativity and Engagement: Exploring Future Possibilities**

Chapters in this final section involve a difference view of the future - they ask where to from here? They explore the types of transformations that at present we consider to be important, and propose the types of tools required for us to engage with a future that we are at present only beginning to dimly predict. Lucia Helena Cavasin Zabotto Pulino invites us to share a journey into a program called the *Aion* Space, which focuses on the use of multi-aged groups who explore and participate in activities around a specific theme. Widjaganto et al. discuss their use of a specially developed web-based platform called ‘Wayang Authoring’. Here children from a range of cultural backgrounds can explore and share stories in a culturally different mode. In the final chapter in this e-book Morag Gaut discusses her method and results in a study involving three and four year old children who are engaged in philosophical enquiry.

**Final Comments:**

This e-book captures a moment in time, a ‘snapshot’ of the papers presented at Mansfield College, Oxford during the presentations that supported this conference. Although it is of necessity a static series of documents the resultant interactions among and between delegates were far from inert. The fertilisation of ideas and possibilities that flowed from the intersections of interdisciplinary viewpoints served as a catalyst for change. For many who attended left the conference with a different vision of and for a future that included the possibility of alternate ways to think about our use of time, space and rethinking our ritualistic responses to the value of a range of many differing environments. This ‘moment out of time’ encouraged many into explorations of alternate views about thinking and learning about the how and what of creativity, about how to nurture and foster engagement. It is to be hoped that for some delegates these interactions in learning, sharing and collegial support continue to open research pathways that allow them to continue to explore other and more optimal ways of being.
Section I

Significant Others
Can We, Should We Teach Teachers Creative Thinking?

Adva Margaliot

Abstract
We present a stuff meeting for developing creativity in teacher trainees; describing the underlying theory, the applied procedures and methods of enhancing creativity in teachers' education. Group of teacher trainers looked into the subject of creative thinking, a higher order skill of thinking. Creativity associated with words like 'innovation,' 'paradox,' 'invention,' 'idea,' and 'originality.' We asked, 'Can creativity be taught, and should it be taught to student teachers?' Csikszentmihalyi says: 'A creative idea or product arises from the joining of many sources, and not from one creative mind alone.' Kreitler defines creativity as one of the guarantees for the continued existence of humanity. She says that creativity should connect people to active doing. Agreeing with Kreitler, and adopting the motto 'I create, therefore I am!' we asked 'Is there a pedagogy of creativity, and if so, what is it?' We discussed methods of helping future teachers adopt creative tools, and examined methods of nurturing the ability to play, and of encouraging internal curiosity and learning motivation. We discussed the pedagogies of creativity versus nurturing the artist. We saw that creative thinking enables transition from one-dimensional perception to multi-facetted understandings. One staff member raised the example of the metaphor of preparing for flight as an image for the role of the educator in class. Others came up with additional metaphors which would give the students a broader understanding of the educational context. Turning to the world of imagination enables students to choose an image, which they can use to describe educational events they have experienced. The planning staffs include teachers' teachers from diverse kinds of contents. The staff’s power stems from connecting disparate worlds of subject matter and experience in creative learning events. We will present the staff's work and will experiment with a learning tools developed by the staff.

Key Words: Creative thinking, innovation, models for teaching creativity, teachers' education.

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1. **Creative Thinking as an Island of Opportunity**

And now, I must find myself other opportunities,
I must leave the earlier ones behind, those already realized.
I must find new opportunities - timely ones, broad and open possibilities.

And they are looking for me, just as I search for them
For I am their opportunity, just as they are mine.³

Which opportunities does creative thinking demand of those whose calling is education in general, and the training of teachers in specific? Can a concerted, directed effort improve creativity in teaching? Is it worthwhile to add creative thinking to the already overloaded list of teaching skills and content? If so, what will that addition grant the teacher trainee?

A task force devoted to the subject of nurturing creative thinking in teacher training was established at the Mofet Institute.

The Mofet Institute is an international institution located in Tel Aviv which focuses on the research and development of learning programs for teachers’ training colleges, the setting in which most of Israel’s teachers obtain their academic education and teachers’ training.

The task force’s central question was ‘Is there pedagogy of creative thinking, and if so, what is it?’

2. **What is Creative Thinking?**

Creative thinking is considered a high-order thinking skill as are critical thinking, logical, and scientific thinking, and is associated with a vocabulary which includes the following words: innovation, paradox, invention, problem, idea, and originality.

Herbert Fox⁴: ‘The creative process is any process of thinking which solves a problem in an original and practical way.’

Nikka - 6 years old defines love: ‘Love is … if you want to learn to love, better…start with a friend you don’t like!’

Nikka’s suggestion for an explanation of the word ‘love’ is an example of Herbert Fox’s definition of the word ‘creativity.’ Nikka doesn’t speak of those for whom her love can be taken for granted. She chooses to begin in an original and practical way, with those whom she doesn’t like. That is the way it is with creativity. If our goal is to end up with a creative product, we would do best by abandoning those areas in which we feel comfortable,
knowledgeable, and secure and venturing out to areas of issues and content with which we are unfamiliar.

Fruitful thinking and problem solving are found at the heart of the educational endeavour, whatever it may be. Therefore, what is special about creativity? After three years of meetings, our staff has come to the understanding that there is no single, universally agreed upon definition of creativity. Creativity is a complex phenomenon with various facets which provide society with innovation and contributions which affect mankind. We understand that there are two areas in which one can identify creativity:

1. Productive, inventive, innovative, creativity of the sort which distances itself from the day-to-day. This kind of creativity is usually the province of those who develop new products, the kind of activity found in the offices of patent attorneys, among the entrepreneurs dreaming of the exit which is about to make them the next Bill Gates, while they down another Coke, and throw the empty into the recycling bin.

2. Innovation within known limits, which pushes those limits, dismantles them, creates limits of excellent performance, and transcends those limits. One can measure innovation according to the characteristics of a product, the idea behind it, the process and the reactions it elicits from those who view it (and example is the way the world of human communications appears today, as compared with how it looked before the popularization of the cell phone). An innovative product can surprise, shock, may elicit the feeling that the product matches an obvious need, and/or make the observer say, ‘Why didn’t I think of that?’ All the above are accompanied by sensations of satisfaction, pleasure, and aesthetic harmony. Innovation is a necessary requisite of creativity, but it is not sufficient in and of itself. The innovation must contribute to humanity in some way. In the case of education we continue to ask where and how are we making an innovation?

The task force staff acquainted itself with models of nurturing creativity, three of which we present below:


2. The model for nurturing meliorative thinking - creating connections between areas far removed, one from the other.
3. The cube model - structured learning of creativity.

3. **SIT – Systematic Inventive Thinking**
   Henrich Altshuler developed this approach while looking for a common denominator in the development of patents and inventive solutions to problems. Over the years, Horowitz and Goldenberg developed and perfected Altshuler’s method. Systematic Inventive Thinking focuses on the creative product, and on the way to arriving at an innovative product in a short time. They have a much-focused approach, based on an analysis of problems or products. It includes the following principles:

1. The condition that the process takes place in a sealed System - The solution is comprised solely of the factors which caused the problem.
2. The condition of qualitative change - The variable which caused the problem is at the root of its solution. Their approach contains four thinking tools:
   a. Divesting oneself of an element
   b. Breaking symmetry
   c. Consolidation
   d. Multiplication or division

Studying the approach includes solving problems of various kinds according to the principles of the SIT approach.

Following is an example: Add one line, without changing the equal sign, and solve the following equation: **IX=VI**

The solvers first inclination is to do something with the equal sign, or to address one of the arithmetical values in the equation. The solution comes from uniting the numerical and verbal meaning of the numbers on both sides of the equation.

SIT is used in many companies which use it for research and the development of existing products, as well as for the invention of new ones. In education SIT is used mainly for the solution of problems in mathematics, science, and technology. The SIT approach can be studied and applied in a relatively short time.

4. **The Model for Imparting the Melioration Skill**
   Melioration, a high-level theoretical cognitive skill, was selected as a possible future skill which will be needed to be implemented in future schooling. The melioration skill is defined as:
The skill of selecting the appropriate amalgam of information and implement it in problem solving in different situations dependant on time and place, in order to ameliorate that commixture.

The melioration skill is recognized as being of great importance because of the necessity of amassing, selecting, discarding, and combining a large quantity of data sources quickly, in order to create and formulate new ideas.

The model which we developed, whose goal is to train teachers in the mastery of the melioration skill, is similar to the joining of two geometric forms, a pyramid and a spiral; thus the model’s name the Spiramid. It synthesizes a) various training models, and b) the component of the skill.

*Figure 1.* The Spiramid Model (Spiral + Pyramid) for the imparting of the Melioration Skill.

The skill’s component parts

In previous studies we found that the melioration skill develops in five continuous stages: Intention, process, production, evaluation and continuation. The model was designed to accompany step-by-step students so that they could succeed in meliorating their knowledge by identifying and formulating a new idea that would have the potential of solving a given problem.

The pyramid sides represent the background within which the melioration is taking place. This knowledge is what we refer to as the scientific, ethnic, cultural and personal knowledge. Within this context one could meliorate an idea by bringing together a personal amalgam of information, referring to a given concept or subject matter.

The example below comes from presenting students with a problem and asking them to solve it by applying the Melioration Model:
The Problem - A boy watches TV for hours. He gains weight, becomes isolated from social activity and develops a ‘closure of mind’ character.

- Intention - students are asked to use scientific knowledge to find a solution for the boy’s problem. They are asked if it is possible to use TV time for productive and useful activities.
- Process - students are asked if it is possible to convert energy produced by physical activity to operate a TV set.
- Production - Are we able to think of a training instrument as a power station for producing the energy needed to watch TV?
- Creative product - Our child can ‘buy’ TV broadcasting time by producing the amount of energy needed for TV watching. (i.e., exercising on a stationary bike).
- Evaluation - Students’ statements at the end of the process of learning: ‘The program contributed to meaningful learning of the concept of energy’.
  
  ‘Our process of thinking was creative and surprising.’
  ‘I recognized applications of energy which I hadn’t noticed before.’
  ‘Now I understand the connection between scientific and cultural knowledge.’

- Continuation - May they be able, as future teachers, to take their content far beyond thinking of new solutions to common situations?

5. The Cube Model – A Three-Dimensional, Multi-Layered Model for Structured Learning and for Creative Teaching

A member of our task force, Shay Sergio Hervitz, developed this model. While the cube model is aimed at nurturing creativity, it is not intended to explain creativity, nor does it deal with the creative product. The point of departure or the source of creativity is the element of play.

Shay opened his presentation with a random presentation of concepts connected with creativity, such as flow, the unexpected, provocation, paradox, double meaning, imagination, and movement. He said that the Concepts were thrown in the air without any order on purpose.

In his presentation, Shay read associative sentences from a book by Joel Hoffman, named: February is a Good Time to Buy Elephants. As an example of limit-breaking thinking, Shay uses different cubes in different
contexts, such as Rubik’s Cube and creativity, which, in his opinion, are connected to surprise and randomness. Shay suggests looking at the six sides of a cube as at six doors or gates. One may look through each one, and study a different area of creativity.

The six doors are pictured below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Images</th>
<th>Tools</th>
<th>Traits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Symbols</td>
<td>MI (Multiple Intelligences)</td>
<td>Social ties</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The range of images includes archetypal images which have in common the quality of being subversive. The images are of a clown, a child, a crazy person, and angry person, a rebel, an anarchist, and an adventurer. Shay mentions the movie ‘Patch Adams,’ which shows how a subversive character is of vital importance to the establishment’s being able to continue to exist.

The range of traits are those which we want to develop in our students, including curiosity, wonder, sense of humour, spontaneity, flexibility, playfulness, courage, the ability to improvise, and complexity. The range of tools includes linking by bringing together, combining, and rearranging, turning around, randomizing, provocation, metaphor, analogy, exaggeration, substitution, anthropomorphization, improvisation, bi-sociations, and bionics. The range of intelligences includes all intelligences which have been identified by Gardner. The range of symbols includes the maze, mirrors, masks, wood, the Mandala, the bridge, the house, and others. The range of social ties includes the family, the school and the club, place of work, community and society.

In the course of the task force’s work, we asked ourselves what it is that enables people to be creative. Also, we wanted to know why
some people generate original ideas on an ongoing basis, while others join the crowd with boring contributions. Lubart and Sternberg\textsuperscript{12} addressed this issue. They maintain that creative ability is the product of six following sources: cognitive processes, knowledge, styles of thinking, personality, motivation and environmental context. They all work together with the person’s personal composition and with the environment to allow for the existence of the person’s creative initiatives.

Returning to the models we have presented above we can say that each one uses the above six sources in order to advance creative thinking. Creativity is a trait possessed by every human being, and is recognizable in different areas and at different opportunities. The good news is that studies have shown that training can broaden and improve both individual and group creativity.

The research literature contains dozens and dozens of theories dealing with the study of creativity. The better-known figures in this field are Torens, Koestler, De-Bono, Guilford, Wallace, Cziksmihaly, and Sternberg. The common denominator in these theories, which differ from one another in their approaches to the mechanism of creative thinking, is that all of them see the creative process as being different from non-creative problem-solving processes. Each researcher attempted to discover the unique character of creativity. Weisberg,\textsuperscript{13} as opposed to all the others, maintained that the creative process is an expression of a very good problem solving. In his book, Creativity beyond the Myth of Genius, Weisberg maintains that creativity is not the sole province of people possessed of unusual talents. The creative product, in his opinion, comes from a combination of expertise in a specific content area, environmental support, opportunity, motivation, and commitment.

The professional literature shows that creativity must be joined with critical thinking, to deep learning and acquaintance with the content area within which it exists. In other words, we must have mastery over the field of education, with all its complexity, with all the opportunities it creates, so that the creativity to which we aspire will be a tool in the teacher’s hands for advancing effective learning, while being entertaining, challenging, and innovative. It must galvanize creativity on the part of both the teacher and the student, and motivate them to learn out of interest, and by choice.

And what of us, ourselves? In light of the above, it will be understood that there is no place to ask if we are creative. Rather, we must discover where and under what conditions does our creativity come to the fore?
Notes

10 J Hoffman, February is a Good Time to Buy Elephants, Massada, 1988.
Bibliography


Adva Margaliot currently lectures in Pedagogy, Sciences & Creativity to pre-service teachers in Achva College of Education, Israel.
A Case Study in Doing Anti-Racism Pedagogy

Nado Aveling and Helen Hatchell

Abstract
While many researchers have documented the presence of racism in education, the literature also suggests that the existence of racism tends to be denied and that, further, teachers are not well equipped to deal with the more covert expressions of racism. As teacher educators this is a concern that has led us to reconceptualize our curriculum. If future teachers are to engage their own students in anti-racism in a meaningful and constructive way to address the everyday racism that many of us take for granted, then they themselves must actively explore how their own racial identities have been shaped within a broader racist culture. When we say that we want to ‘engage’ students, what we want to do is to create a climate that allows them to move beyond intellectualising ‘the problem’ to actually connecting with racism in all its manifestations on a physical/emotional level. Thus, the aim of this paper is to tell the story of a group of twenty-three Australian teacher education students as they engaged in exploring the workings of prejudice and discrimination within the context of a simulation game designed to expose white privilege and to challenge racism at both the individual as well as the institutional level.

Key Words: Affective learning, anti-racism, critical pedagogy, engaging teachers, indigenous education, teacher education, student engagement.

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1. Introduction: Racism and Schools
There is ample evidence from outside Australia which suggests that racism affects the academic performance of minority students.\(^1\) The Australian literature similarly suggests that racism is a problem, particularly for Indigenous students.\(^2\) Indigenous educators and communities have been painfully aware of this for some time. During a seminar arranged by the Equal Opportunity Commission, for example, the problems endemic to Aboriginal education in Western Australia were discussed. Chief among the issues cited were ‘racist attitudes among teachers and white students.’\(^3\) More recently, the work of Martino found that almost all of the Indigenous boys whom he interviewed claimed that racism at school not only flourished but also was condoned.\(^4\) Indeed, Groome maintains that racism should be seen as a key element in the overall lack of success of Indigenous students because it ‘deflects Aboriginal children from entering fully into the life of the school.’\(^5\) Given the pervasiveness of racism, it has been suggested that dealing with
racism must be a key strategy if Indigenous school attendance and under-achievement is to improve. Within the context of nationwide concerns about Indigenous under-achievement in education, the connection between racism and educational outcomes ought to be of some disquiet. However, at the school level at least, this connection tends to be denied because other than the most blatant and obvious excesses of crude racism, racist practices are normalised. As Hollinsworth suggests: ‘Social structures and processes become taken-for-granted and their consequences in maintaining racial inequality go largely undetected.’

This is experienced by Aboriginal people as the ‘pin-pricking of domination, abuse of personal power, utter paternalism, open contempt and total indifference.’

Given that it has been acknowledged that teacher education programs do not always provide teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary for teaching Indigenous students, as well as for teaching Indigenous Studies to all their students regardless of cultural background, and given further that racism is ‘the word nobody likes’ it is, perhaps, not surprising that there is ‘a real fear and reluctance’ to address issues of racism within Australian schools. As teacher educators we are concerned to engage future teachers in the complex process of confronting racism so that they themselves will have the confidence and skills to be able to engage their students. While our students would say that they abhor the idea of white supremacy, we have often been told that racism is not an issue in Indigenous education; that the real issues are grounded in cultural differences and relate to truancy, health issues, second language acquisition and so forth. These are important issues with which teachers have to deal. However, if future teachers are serious about maximising learning outcomes for all students, that is if they are to engage them in the process of becoming active citizens, then they must also address the endemic nature of racism in Australian schools.

For us, the critical engagement with whiteness is part of a larger project of anti-racism in education because for too long research has focused on the differences/shortcomings perceived in the ‘Other’ and equated race with ‘studying down’ in the power structure. We contend that we need to turn the gaze around and instead of attempting to ‘fix’ Indigenous students and other marginalized students, explore ways in which teachers can become part of the solution rather than being part of the problem. In other words, teachers need to understand that racism is a problem for Indigenous students in which they are implicated, rather than racism being ‘the Indigenous problem’. Deconstructing ‘whiteness as race’, as privilege, and as social construction is part of that process. Deconstructing whiteness is, moreover, important in teacher education because:

Analysing whiteness opens a theoretical space for teachers and students to articulate how their own racial identities
have been shaped within a broader racist culture and what responsibilities they might assume for living in a present in which whites are accorded privileges and opportunities (though in complex and different ways) largely at the expense of other racial groups.\textsuperscript{15}

To be sure, it is crucial to explore the role played by ‘whiteness’ in student engagement with anti-racist multicultural education; engagement that incorporates active involvement and commitment and embraces both ‘critical pedagogy and antiracist education as necessary conditions for its realization.’\textsuperscript{16} Thus, in this paper, we move beyond intellectualising ‘problems’ to affectively connecting with racism in all its manifestations on a physical/emotional level.\textsuperscript{17} We suggest, in fact, that if future teachers are to engage their own students in anti-racism, then we must all actively explore how our own racial identities have been shaped within a broader racist culture. It is only then that teachers are able to engage their students in this difficult task in a meaningful and constructive way to address the everyday racism that often go unnoticed.

2. Moving beyond Preaching about the Evils of Racism

One successful vehicle for achieving affective objectives is to make use of games or simulation exercises,\textsuperscript{18} and affective engagement is certainly the rationale for introducing the Challenging Racism\textsuperscript{19} game into our curriculum. We incorporated this game into our teacher education units because it specifically related to the Australian context while being based on principles similar to the Blue Eyes/ Brown Eyes exercise; an exercise created by Jane Elliot which ‘labels participants as inferior or superior based solely upon the color of their eyes and exposes them to the experience of being a minority.’\textsuperscript{20} In a similar fashion, the Challenging Racism game is ‘a tool for people to look at their racism.’\textsuperscript{21} The developers of this game further suggest that there are no ‘correct’ conclusions but that a ‘positive outcome’ to the game is achieved when racist attitudes are explored.

Thus, the Challenging Racism game draws on what we know but also brings attitudes into play and moves towards engaging our feelings as they force us to interrogate our own racialized, gendered and class-based assumptions. When working with teacher education students it has been our experience that it is only when we are ‘willing to dismantle knowledge, values, and so forth that are taken for granted, mainstream, status quo, quite secure, familiar and known, or a threat’\textsuperscript{22} that we can begin to understand the ways in which our taken for granted assumptions have been instrumental in preserving the white, western, masculinized experience as the norm and in marginalizing the experiences of those who do not fit the norm.
Working in this way with teacher education students is not easy. Certainly we find it much simpler to talk about social justice than to ‘do’ social justice. ‘Doing’ social justice or, indeed, just setting the stage to move one step closer to becoming a social justice educator often finds us ‘too close to home, the past, family, or friends [and take us into experiences] that will shock, scare or sicken.’ While it is certainly simpler to stick to the ‘facts’ in our teaching, we remain convinced that pedagogies that engage the whole person are more productive especially when ‘powerful emotions’ come into play as discrimination and prejudice is explored. Byrne and FitzGerald pertinently suggest that:

People can feel their cherished values under threat and instinctively resist any pressure to change since so much of their sense of self can feel bound up with the views and behaviours they have brought to the course. For this reason a ‘sermon’ on the evils of racism will not be effective, nor will information alone.

3. Wanting to Make a Difference: Grounding the Study

During the summer term of 2006, twenty-three students had given up two weeks of their holidays to enrol in an education elective in which they hoped to gain the practical skills and ‘know-how’ of not only working more productively with Indigenous students, but also teaching Australian Indigenous Studies to all their students, whether Indigenous or not. Most had completed a mandatory undergraduate unit that deals more broadly with cultural diversity and enrolled in the elective because they felt committed to learning more so that they could make a difference in the classroom. Of the group of twenty-three, almost all were white and seventeen were female. In terms of age the students ranged from their early twenties to their mid fifties. We hoped to facilitate an environment that enabled these teacher education students to envisage a white subject position that was able to fulfil their desires to ‘make a difference,’ not from the point of view of the benign good white but from the position of a change agent who is able to ‘speak with, rather than for the Other.’

The unit had begun with a talk by an Indigenous Elder on Nyoongar language and culture. Students had seen videos depicting the struggle for Indigenous land rights and had discussed, among other things, the Stolen Generations and agreed that a national apology would be appropriate. They had also begun to research Aboriginal heroes to explore the contributions made by Aboriginal people, rather than always focusing on the negative legacies of the colonial period. On day six, the Challenging Racism game was scheduled to move beyond intellectualising the issues. In the following sections, therefore, we tell the story of a group of Australian
teacher education students as together we engaged in exploring the workings of prejudice and discrimination within the context of this game; a game designed to expose white privilege and to challenge racism at both the individual as well as the institutional level. The game was video taped and where students are identified, pseudonyms are used.

4. Challenging Racism: Playing the Game

Despite some trepidation, students were keen to embark on the game. While the group was not familiar with the specifics of the game they knew about Jane Elliott’s Blue Eyes/ Brown Eyes exercise which most of them had seen on Australian television. There were some nervous giggles when students who had blue eyes were asked to stand up. They knew they were to become the ‘out-group’ as they were asked to leave the room during the setting up of the game. As ‘out-group’ the rules of the game were not explained to them, nor were they given any play money to rescue them should they land in ‘gaol’.

This game is similar to board games like monopoly where participants take turns in throwing dice to determine their movements around the board; however, in this game it is the players who move around the room on game squares positioned on the ground. Participants collect instruction cards on their way around the squares but for the armband group (the ‘out-group’) the cards tend to be negatively loaded and for the non-armband group they are invariably positively loaded. As a consequence, during the playing of the game, racism, structural inequality and oppression is highlighted with advantages constantly awarded to members of the non-armband group. To further ‘stack the cards’ the non-armband group is instructed that they are not to engage with the armbands and that any armband group member is not permitted to occupy the square taken by a non-armband.

Having finished setting up the game, the armband group was ushered into the room, perfunctorily allocated the order in which they should take their turn but otherwise pointedly ignored.

5. Analysis and Discussion

There were a myriad of issues that arose during the course of the game. However, on reviewing the video, what struck us in particular were the ways in which participants responded at the emotional level as they were challenged to ‘walk a mile in someone else’s shoes’ and at the same time, the ways in which those who constituted the ‘in-group’ seemed to enjoy the power that their status bestowed on them.

As the privileged group, members of the in-group were, of course, first in line. Graeme was the first non-armband person to receive a card that read: ‘Did you know that one in every ten Aboriginal children was removed from home and family. If this were to happen to you, how do you think you
would you feel?’ There was a long pause before Graeme answered ‘Not very good.’ Lauren added: ‘Absolutely devastating! I don’t think of myself in that position, I don’t have children. When I think of my nieces being removed from my sister that just kills me.’ She was visibly on the verge of tears. The others appeared uncomfortable and unsure whether to respond to her or not. On the next dice roll Clare received $100 payment for good citizenship and said exuberantly ‘Thanks.’ All laughed to break the tension. However, the next player landed on Graeme’s square, so she too, needed to place herself into the position of trying to think how she might feel if she or her children (the question is ambiguous on this point) were taken away. She said: ‘I’d want to run away from wherever they decided to take me.’ There were nods of agreement from the others. At this point someone commented: ‘How effective would that be? You’ve seen *Rabbit Proof Fence*, haven’t you?’ Again there was a pause as the futility of that action sank in. Then Graeme spoke up again: ‘It’s like separations and divorces that I’ve been involved with, you get some sort of idea of it, where you can’t see one parent anymore. The fact that they are taken away completely is too much.’ He shook his head.

These students were clearly uneasy in the position of having to imagine how they would feel and had trouble articulating their responses. At the same time, however, they showed a willingness to grapple with the issues on a personal level. We found this particularly gratifying because in the past it has not been uncommon for students to turn the question around and rather than genuinely attempting to address ‘how would you feel?’ we have known students to distance themselves by drawing on their reading and most eloquently recount the imagined Aboriginal experience of forced removal. Within the context of this game it appeared to us that this group really made the effort to imagine themselves in a position of utter powerlessness. Needless to say, they found this difficult. Later conversations during the debriefing session when students spoke about how difficult it had been to imagine if they themselves had been taken away from their parents, or indeed their children had been taken, seemed to back this up. For the moment, however, the game took a quite different turn.

Given that the non-armband group (the privileged group) was instructed not to engage with the armbands and further, that any armband group member was not permitted to occupy the square taken by a non-armband, it was perhaps inevitable that the mood of the game would change once the armband group entered the game. As luck (or lack thereof) would have it, members of the armband group consistently rolled sixes which took them to a square that was already occupied. Danielle was the first of the armband group to reach the square that challenged them to respond to the ‘How would you feel?’ question. Clare, a member of the non-armband group, who was already on the spot responded with: ‘Don’t bother.’ Her body
language was such that Danielle got the message and returned to her group. A number of other players met with the same fate as Clare smiled and hissed while the others in her group encouraged her and laughed. We were surprised to see how easily they accepted their privileged status and how quickly they seemed to have forgotten their earlier unease. During the debriefing session, students talked about this at length and admitted shamefacedly that while they felt that they ought to do something, they had actually enjoyed watching members of the armband group being put in their place. From that point on the discussion became quite painful as students attempted to make connections between their actions in the game and the outside world.

6. Conclusion

The debriefing session - which must follow the actual game - allows participants to evaluate the game, their actions within it, and also to examine the possibilities of looking at strategies and actions for the future. Students reported feeling bored, guilty, sad, angry, frustrated, powerless, silenced and intimidated. Yet there were differences in the emotional tenor of the two groups’ responses. Tanya from the out-group, for example, was not unrepresentative of her group when she said:

Because I couldn’t talk and I couldn’t express those feelings I was trying to follow the rules but I was still ignored. I stood, I sat, I got cold, bored, it didn’t matter, even though I followed the rules I didn’t get anywhere.

While some in the armband group attempted to resist the rules of the game, they nevertheless felt that their efforts became increasingly futile. The non-armbands, on the other hand, seemed to be much more caught in the dilemma of ‘doing the right thing’ according to how they felt they should act and ‘following the rules’ as they were set out in the game. Lauren said:

For me it was the conflict thing… from the privileged point of view I would prefer to give over my square, that’s how I felt, I just didn’t want that, I wanted to run away from that. I found that really confronting.

Playing the game raised a great many questions about power and racism and our complicity in perpetuating racist practices. As we have indicated before we find it much less stressful to talk about social justice than to ‘do’ social justice because it is not only students who were called on to engage with racism at the emotional level. For us too, as facilitators of the game, exploring the role played by ‘whiteness’ in perpetuating racism is a confrontational exercise. In a game such as this it is impossible to remain
detached, nor should facilitators strive for detachment because all of us have much to learn about the ways in which we have been shaped within a broader racist culture. Certainly, for the students the conversation proved to be ongoing for the remainder of our time together. We suspect that, in one way or another, the conversation continued even beyond the summer semester. We maintain that it is through this engagement that students learn ‘how to read social and political situations, familiarize them with power interests, and connect ethical values with political actions in order to bring about change’ which, as part of ‘a critical pedagogy informed by antiracist multicultural education’ become central tenets of good pedagogy.

Notes


5 Groome, op.cit., p.76.


Aboriginal Education Strategy, Education Department of Western Australia, Perth, 2002; and Australian Principals Association Professional Development Council, Dare to lead: Taking it on, Commonwealth Government Department of Education, Science and Training, Canberra, 2003.


10 ibid p.55.


19 The Challenging Racism Game is copyright 1987 Justice Freedom and Hope Workgroup of South Australia, GPO Box 2145, Adelaide 5000. This game was kindly loaned by One World Centre, 99 Hay Street, Subiaco, Perth, Australia.


21 Challenging Racism Game, op.cit.
23 ibid p.132.
25 ibid p.4.
26 Standfield argues that certain events in Australia’s history, or ‘discursive breaks,’ such as the removal of the white Australia policy or the 1967 referendum bolster notions of ‘benign whiteness’ in the face of continuing structural inequalities based on race. See R Standfield, ‘A remarkably tolerant nation?: Constructions of benign whiteness in Australian political discourse’, *Borderlands eJournal*, vol.2, no.3, 2004, p.4.
28 Indigenous peoples in the southwest of Western Australia belong to the Nyoongar language group.
29 Since the release of the report *Bringing them Home* by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (1997) into the forced removal of children from their communities, there has been ongoing national debate about whether the Prime Minister should, as an important symbolic act, apologise for past practices enacted via government legislation. In 2008, Kevin Rudd, as the newly elected Prime Minister of Australia, formally apologized to the Indigenous peoples of Australia.
30 The movie *Rabbit-Proof Fence* (directed by Phillip Noyce, 2002) is based on the story of Molly Craig, a young Aboriginal girl, who together with her younger sister and cousin, was taken away from her family ‘for their own good’. Despite their heroic attempts to elude their captors the girls were eventually recaptured. These three girls are part of the ‘Stolen Generations.’
31 McMahon, op. cit., p.267.

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Exploring Resilience through Narrative Texts

Cecilia du Toit

Abstract
The phenomenon of children living on the street is a tragic yet familiar reality of city life in many countries. Due to the death of primary caregivers in the wake of the AIDS pandemic as well as ever-growing poverty in South Africa, even more children will be forced on to the streets, resulting in a steady increase in social problems such as crime, violence, drug abuse, prostitution, teenage pregnancy, STDs and child exploitation. Many children manage to escape the dire consequences of social upheaval or dysfunctional homes. Some youth novels explore avenues for survival while striving to give a realistic portrayal of the problem. In this chapter, a youth novel by a South African author serves as a matrix for the application of the theory of resilience as opposed to failure and total collapse. The question is asked to what extent resilience steers the actions taken by the protagonist. While the depiction of coping mechanisms is not the purpose of a literary work, the use of narrative texts to address troubling issues has been shown to be a channel of communication and support for learners and a vehicle to gain some understanding of complex psychosocial issues.

Key Words: At risk children, bibliotherapy, developing life skills, resilience, youth literature.

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1. Preamble
Reading-related battles have often bogged down in unresolved issues, inter alia the phonics versus whole language deliberations, the nature of assessment strategies, and the use/abuse of literary texts. This chapter proposes an amalgam of three domains, mixing literacy and literature, psychology and bibliology, the child and the book and the teacher. It revisits a slightly discredited strategy that marries book and experience, adult views with childlike pleasures, the conceptual with the contextual, in the belief that teachers have reason to believe that it is a good and an educationally sound avenue to pursue.

The tension between the art of reading and the act of reading is kept alive by, on the one hand, injunctions against the ‘contamination’ of books by theme-related discussions, and on the other, a belief that children’s literature is also a powerful vehicle for the teaching of life skills, or even moral education. In a second camp practice-oriented people, such as Baffour-Awuah, maintain that since story telling has traditionally been ‘a tool for
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African societies dealing with issues... to emphasise taboos, stress good behaviour, condemn unacceptable relationships. Modern children’s literature invites a dual functionality to the reading with literature, in addition to abetting language development, also offering cross-curricular experiences. In a third camp, Chall indicates that learning to read becomes a self-defeating exercise if the texts are puerile, mind-numbingly boring or devoid of literary merit. Of course, enticing texts and prescribed books can be summarised and work-sheeted so exhaustively that learners declare they would never reread the book or anything by the specific author again, fueling purists’ objection to the use of literature in the language classroom. This chapter’s argument arises from the belief that the marriage of two worlds for the benefit of both through a flirting with a third party, in this case, the phenomenon of resilience, is a salient approach, and is abetted by Umberto Eco’s declaration that he is not idealistic enough to believe that literature can offer relief to the vast number of people who lack basic food and medicine. But I would like to make one point: the wretches who roam around aimlessly in gangs and kill people by throwing stones from a highway bridge or setting fire to a child (turn out this way) rather because they are excluded from the universe of literature and from those places where, through education and discussion, they might be reached by a glimmer from the world of values that stems from and sends us back again to books.

2. Reflecting on Resilience

Whereas early resilience psychology examined pathology, deficits and delinquency, later resilience studies, even in the clinical field, focused on children who confronted and overcame adversity. Resilience research developed from an attempt to understand pathological behaviour through an investigation of the deficits and threats in the environment and the conduct of at risk children, to a more holistic approach to how these risks could be prevented, resolved, or transcended. The salience of a ‘wellness’ approach - rather than a measurement of risk factors due to shortages, trauma and failure - was universally appealing and the concept of resilience expanded to denote the maintenance of equilibrium and function in all individuals, whether they have experienced upheaval or not.

The increasing complexity of South African society, exacerbated by mounting substance abuse, violent crime, parental psychopathology and systems dysfunction as scars of risk factors have created an even greater sense of urgency regarding at risk children. With the swelling of the number
of homes without primary caregivers in the wake of the AIDS pandemic, poverty is perhaps the greatest risk factor of all.

The definition of resilience has come to denote not only the ability to ‘bounce back’ from adversity, but to ‘bounce beyond’. According to Enthoven, there is a clear discrepancy between resilient and non-resilient learners’ ability to access the factors of safety and good education. This crucial resilience factor derives from the positive interchange between children and their environment, and proponents of this transactional view emphasise that a combination of factors within the child and the environment are ‘mutually interactive over time’. Firstly, as Vygotsky indicated, the concept of mediation implies that factors external to children can help their development which is characterised by discontinuous sets of adjustments and qualitative change. Secondly, since children’s interactions with other people and their environment are bi-directional, children are dynamically engaged in and direct their own experiences relative to an ecosystem.

Enthoven identifies three qualities of resilience. Firstly, resilient adolescents have insight, which implies a good understanding of their own abilities in dealing with challenging circumstances or trauma, as well as an ability to identify and utilise internal resilience characteristics. Secondly, the resilient adolescent possesses the quality of overview which is a capacity for astutely assessing the requirements, risks, expectations and the potential of the environment when circumstances are challenging. Finally, the internalisation of resilient qualities enables the adolescent to harbour positive future expectations. Personality factors conducive to the fostering of resilience include self-efficacy, tolerance for negative effect, hopefulness, adaptation, empathy, an internal locus of control and a sense of humour.

Ecosystemic resilience is fostered by a positive relationship with adults. Resilience is not a non-static characteristic that certain youngsters possess and others lack. O’Dougherty and Masten caution that the ‘tendency to view those children who do not adapt successfully as somehow lacking the “right stuff” and as personally to blame for not being able to surmount the obstacles they have faced’ is a damaging aspect of such polarisation. Such a focus plays down crushing ecosystemic risks in many children’s lives. For this reason, resilience factors are placed along a continuum with vulnerability or a propensity for negative consequences at one end, and buoyancy upon exposure to risks at the other. Children are more or less resilient at different periods in their lives depending on the interaction and accumulation of individual and environmental factors.

In the youth novel, *A Red Kite in a Pale Sky* by Dianne Hofmeyr, the risk factor privation gives rise to problems in individual development, with poverty breeding related social problems, such as disorganized family circumstances, inadequate schooling, parental neglect, delinquency and poor housing. Although there is little consensus on whether acute but brief crises
have greater or less impact than long-standing risk factors which exacerbate children’s powerlessness against negative environmental factors, the weight of risk factors increases significantly when children are exposed to multiple risk factors. Children growing up in the presence of various risk factors, therefore, need multiple resilience factors, both in themselves and their environment, in order to overcome adversity. The good news, however, is that resilience factors also work cumulatively, and it is for this reason that well-intentioned teachers with well-intentioned books play a starring role.

3. **Un-Bibliotherapy**

For bibliotherapists, the reading of fiction can help to resolve in the young reader troubling psychosocial problems in an effective yet harmless way with a focus on the ‘fantasies and feelings’ that are inherited as part of the human condition and are ‘the inevitable outcome of the tensions inseparable from all family life, happy or unhappy’.12 This approach is preferred to a direct confrontation with problems which in an early stage can produce negative reactions of defence and denial. For Bettelheim literature is a means to assist children in their struggle for meaning since reading is an encounter that helps the individual find deeper meaning in life by transcending ‘the narrow confines of a self-centred existence’.13

Ideally, teachers help learners without clinical diagnosis, but merely by recognising children’s emotional or social needs and by tallying these with books or authors that are appropriate and by helping to lessen a learner’s sense of isolation, bringing about a catharsis after experiencing, vicariously, the conflicts and emotions of the protagonist.

Psychotherapists’ condemnation of bibliotherapy is based on the fact that teachers are not trained to diagnose and treat psychological disorders, and they fear that harm can result if teachers ‘meddle’ in affairs that they cannot resolve in a clinically responsible way. This disapproval is supported by literary critics, but for another reason. While agreeing that a book is not a psychotherapeutic tool, they maintain that serious authors do not write children’s books to serve a psychoanalytic perspective or a didactic methodology. Moreover, neither children nor adults read for psychoanalysis; people read because the activity affords pleasure.

Few teachers, however, wish to exceed bibliotherapy’s limitations by attempting to replace psychotherapeutic intervention with reader response activities where help is seriously needed. Fictional characters are complex beings who exist in place, time and context, who are imbued with a biography, personality and character traits, with the course of their lives and consequences of their actions clearly plotted. The unforgettable force of great characters is a phenomenon as old as fiction itself and readers have identified with them through the ages, from Achilles to Adrian Mole, from Hermes and
Hamlet to Harry Potter. It should not be any different with Laurence, the protagonist of *A Red Kite in a Pale Sky*.

### 4. The Text and the Resilience Model

The purpose of this chapter is to apply aspects of resilience theory to a fictional scenario depicting street children with a view to mediation. The term street children here describes children who are homeless, some of which are orphans, and who work, live and sleep on the streets. The term also refers to so-called market children who hawk or beg in the streets but live with their families. What is common is their vulnerability to exploitation and maltreatment, substance abuse, crime, prostitution, and general destitution.

*A Red Kite in a Pale Sky* does not end in the traditional mode with everyone living happily ever after. It is set in Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa, during the 1987 floods following in the wake of the tropical storm, aptly named Demoina, which wreaked havoc on the Indian Ocean coastline. Some learners find the unresolved ending intolerable; others argue that a novel set against the devastation caused by a natural disaster in an impoverished community cannot end happily, that the complexity of the challenges cannot be resolved with the introduction of a deus ex machina, that if in real life there are no easy options, facile solutions will mar a novel such as this. The protagonist, Laurence, has few illusions about his future:

> And sooner or later (Pa) will be coming back, like he always does. And when he comes, I’ll be waiting for him. Waiting to tell him that everything matters. That life is not as easy and simple as he makes it seem. Right now, I am alone with nothing inside but an ache. Everything is so different now that there seems nothing that I can do to make it right. But with Ma the way she is, someone has to make it right. Someone has to try. And it will have to be me. Who else is there?¹¹

However, though the ending is bleak like the sky, there is a glimmer of hope, albeit not as bright as the scarlet kite soaring freely. The crux of the matter is therefore the juncture of text, teacher, technique and teenager, or put differently, the resilience model, learner response and role of the facilitator.

Resilience theory argues that individuals within the same context profit in different ways from resilience factors. After trauma, Enthoven¹⁵ maintains, internal resilience factors may be induced in four ways, namely, first, through reintegration with resilience which implies that the individual has experienced personal growth in the course of the process; secondly, through reintegration to a comfort zone, also termed stagnation, which indicates individuals' inclination to remain in the comfortable equilibrium.
they were in prior to upheaval and their rejection of opportunities and support for growth in a self-protective desire to resist uncertainty and change. In a third manner, reintegration with loss takes place, which indicates that some or all resilient characteristics, which include motivation, hope, lust for life or capacity for endurance, have been negatively affected. Lastly, dysfunctional reintegration is an option, which means that a reduction in resilient characteristics is accompanied by further problems such as substance abuse, promiscuity or an escalation into crime.

Although Hofmeyr did not write a case study of resilient behaviour, four boys in the novel represent each of the four reintegrations. Kalla, a menacing character, represents dysfunctional reintegration. A wily charmer and a conman even before the flood, he becomes a gang leader a la Lord of the Flies. In the pandemonium Kalla’s leadership qualities sharpen his risqué dealings into full-fledged criminality. As a power hungry gangster he breaks into the school, sets the desks on fire in the classroom, steals the school fees, makes cigarettes and alcohol a habit for his gang of very young children, threatens disobedience with a knife and robs Laurence of the money given by the kind engine driver. The disaster has given him the opportunity to start a youthful crime syndicate. There is no indication that when order is re-established and the school returns to normal, that Kalla will not continue the downward spiral into hard crime, taking his weaker followers with him.

Jake, the homeless boy Laurence meets on his way to the Durban hospital where his mother and baby sister are, represents reintegration to a comfort zone. Jake is flamboyantly streetwise and has a manner as attractive as Dickens’s Artful Dodger. He teaches Laurence how to hitchhike successfully by choosing potential rides with care, to run alongside the road to indicate a sense of urgency, to show the passers-by that he is already ‘bringing his side of the bargain’ and limp if necessary. He has honed begging skills to a fine art. Jake uses his knowledge of the streets to steer clear of danger, for instance by first making sure that the empty warehouse he frequents in Durban has not first been taken by a gang leader ominously called Razor. Jake has clearly been on the streets for a long time and he relishes his freedom: ‘It was almost as if he was always enjoying some joke’. There is no indication that, after the disaster, Jake will not continue living on the streets in the comfort zone of his own making.

Laurence’s brother Horace is an example of reintegration with loss. He used to be teased by his older brother and appeared to be timid and easily dominated. With hindsight, however, Laurence realises that his brother has always been stronger than he suspected, because he never complained of Laurence’s bullying to their mother, who was in any case too preoccupied to notice, and by braving a visit to a cemetery at night which Laurence was too scared to enter. Nonetheless, Horace is deeply traumatised when the house collapses in the mudslide and he witnesses their mother and baby sister’s
entrapment, pain and rescue. He finds refuge at the school that becomes a haven only during the flood and joins a gang of shifty acquaintances in their vandalised classroom. He seemingly undergoes a complete change of character when he joins gang activities such as looting and is successful at stealing a radio. The gang clearly gives him the sense of belonging that he didn’t find at home with a busy mother, an absent father and an overbearing older brother. He refuses to leave the gang and follow Laurence on his quest to find the missing family members and brusquely tells Laurence: ‘I’m clever enough to know that I don’t want to be with you any more. Kalla needs me, and I don’t need you’.

Horace’s reintegration takes place with losses on many fronts, from the loss of a house, family and school, to succumbing to peer pressure and escalating into crime. The proximal risk factor of exposure to the felonies of Kalla and his delinquent acolytes without positive mediation renders Horace painfully vulnerable. The novel ends with an open question as to whether he will leave the gang when school starts again. In his case the ecosystemic deprivation prevents his losses from being reclaimed; after all, there is no home to return to, no parental concern and no indication that he shares Laurence’s glimmers of hope.

In the beginning of the novel, Laurence fails to understand his brother and is guilty of the usual fraternal butting and growling. However, he attains a painful understanding in the course of the catastrophe:

Yet it wasn’t really Kalla’s fault that he had become Horace’s hero. Perhaps in a way it was my fault. Although I hadn’t really thought much about, it maybe I’d been Horace’s hero before. I just hadn’t realised it. Horace had always been there to kid about with, to tease a little, to boss around and try out my ideas on. But I had been too dumb to understand that you can’t just go on pushing someone about. Horace had been growing up and changing, and all the time I was still treating him like he was some sort of scared fool. I should’ve seen he was changing. And now since the flood, since he’d been away from me, he’d had enough of being made a fool of.17

There is a clear discrepancy between Laurence and Horace’s ability to access the factors of safety and good education. As protagonist, Laurence is a prime example of self-efficacious resilience, with his locus of control firmly established. This foundational sense of self, however, isn’t a new acquisition in the aftermath of the disaster. He has always been ‘the man in the house’, appointed to the position by his happy-go-lucky father. Due to his mother’s long hours at work and as the oldest child, Laurence has always felt
responsible for his siblings. As a thirteen-year old he sometimes chafes at the bit, begrudging his duties – ‘It’s always me’ – but he conscientiously acts as ‘the man of the house’ before, during and after the flood.

5. Conclusion

Hofmeyr did not conduct research on resilience. Neither did Dickens, Nesbit, Serraillier, Golding or Rowling. Remarkably, however, most children’s authors deal with resilience, possibly because these truths are self-evident to the artist. The role of a teacher in the turbulence of a South African classroom is therefore crucial, especially in the brief school careers of street children. Although a plethora of risk factors cannot easily be ameliorated, the school environment can more directly address the issues of resilience by fostering in learners the qualities of overview, insight and positive future expectation. A combination of text, teacher and insight will show that resilience does not arise from rare or special qualities, but from quite ordinary positive human resources in the characters of children.

Notes

5 ibid., p. 200.
6 ibid., p. 14.
8 Enthoven, op cit., p.218.
9 Enthoven, op cit., p.197.
14 Hofmeyr, op.cit., p.98.
15 Enthoven, op. cit., p.40.
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Children Creatively Engaging Each Other

Cathie Harrison & Christine Morandini

Abstract
This chapter explores the implementation of multiliteracies pedagogy and practices within an inclusive pre-school program for children with diverse abilities in outer Sydney. The project occurred as part of a three-year national research project undertaken in early childhood centres in Australia. The implementation of a multiliteracies framework supported educators to observe children differently and to value and support the many forms of meaning making demonstrated by the children. Educators shared their observations with families and used the diverse forms of meaning making to inform the spontaneous interactions and planned experiences that enabled children with diverse abilities to engage with each other. Diversity of learning styles and processes became central to pedagogy for all children and was fundamental to building a community of learners. The links between literacy practices, such as Boardmaker, sign, ICT and popular culture and the increase in shared learning, by children with and without additional needs are explored through teacher and researcher journal reflections and observations.

Key Words: Boardmaker, differently abled, engagement, families, meaning making, multiliteracies, pedagogy, peer scaffolding, strengths based, inclusion.

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1. Sharing the Pathways
Brendan is highly agitated again. He takes off out the door and heads for the path outside. He walks back and forth along the preschool path, up and down and up and down. I have watched this pattern before and wondered. The path has become familiar and well worn as he seeks out the comfort that it seems to provide. I begin to walk with him looking for the meaning that this experience has for him. I travel with him up and down and slowly he calms. I offer affirming comments - 'You like to walk Brendan, up and down and up and down.' ‘Makes you feel better’ and some time later, 'You are calmer now'. I begin to see that this repetition rather than being dysfunctional is indeed functional - for Brendan. It helps him to regain control and to find his centre. I mirror his behaviour and reflect back to him its meaning by offering my presence and occasional
affirmative comments. When settled he clearly has a purpose and desired outcome. He leads me and we walk back inside holding each others hands. I go with him to the storeroom and say, ‘Yes, choose one toy.’ He gives positive, non verbal utterances. He chooses a toy and we sit together on the carpet in the hallway. Later I feel that he is able to maintain his composure within the complexities of the shared environment and I take his hand and together we re-enter the shared play space and the complex social dynamics of the group. Brendan moves towards the children at the train set. He sits and begins to play - with his own engine but accepting the other children playing with their own engines near him on the shared track. Rather than being excluded or excluding others he gradually shows the children and me what he can do and gives us clues to what he needs. Together we watch, listen and respond. Slowly Brendan and I accept that his pathway could be a shared one and that there are many paths to choose.¹

This story Sharing the Pathways illustrates the relationship of trust between child and educator and mutual respect for different ways of knowing and being. It highlights the transformation which is possible when understandings of learning and teaching are expanded and beliefs about disability, normality and functionality are reconfigured. It is included here as a metaphor for the transformation which occurred within a three year research project that investigated a pedagogy for multiliteracies and information and communication technology [ICT] in an inclusive program for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder [ASD]. This chapter outlines the journey which two children diagnosed with ASD and their educator undertook within the research project. The journey began with the educator identifying and building on the children’s existing strengths and lived experiences and continued with a shared exploration of new pathways to literacy that increasingly shifted the focus from traditional text based literacy practices to multiliteracies. Children initially identified as disabled were increasingly seen as differently-abled and in the process moved from the margins of the group to sharing their pathways for learning and creatively engaging with others as active and essential members of their community of learners.

2. The Project

The project outlined in this chapter occurred as part of a three-year national research project undertaken in early childhood centres in Australia.² The goal of the project was to determine the most effective pedagogy for the
use of ICT in Australian early childhood education. A collaborative action research investigation was undertaken by four academics in association with a network of twelve early childhood educators in three states. This innovative research approach was based on a multiliteracies framework. The term ‘multiliteracies’ refers to two significant aspects of language use in contemporary times - the variability of meaning making in different cultural, social or professional contexts and the nature of new communication technologies. As the New London Group noted:

meaning is made in ways that are increasingly multi modal - i.e. written-linguistic modes of communication interface with visual, audio, gestural and spatial patterns of meaning.3

The project investigated how ICT can best be used for enhancing children’s learning and identified specific ways in which teachers can develop multiliteracies in early childhood educational environments.

Following an action research paradigm the particular questions for investigation emerged from the participating educators and the research instruments that were used evolved as a function of the collaboration with them. Educator reflections were an essential component of the methodology. The participating educators were supported to document their professional reflections in a journal particularly as they related to their daily practice with children including those interactions that involved the use of ICT. A portfolio including documentation of planned experiences and samples of children’s work was collected and also used as a focus for collaborative reflection with other participant educators, researchers and families. The data collected included digital photographs, video recordings, narrative observations, children and educator work samples, teacher reflective journals and researcher’s field notes. This chapter draws on this rich and diverse documentation. In NSW one setting was an inclusive preschool for children aged three to five years, and it is this program and two children with ASD that are the focus for this particular discussion.

3. Introducing the Children

Brendan and Charlotte aged three have both been diagnosed with ASD. They had come to Macarthur Learning Together, an inclusive preschool program for both typically developing children and children with additional needs after participating in two other programs for children with additional needs. The earlier programs, Starting Points and Stepping Stones, had focused on support for families, the development of functional skills and some basic social skills that enabled the children to participate at some level in a social situation. Brendan and Charlotte came to Macarthur Learning
Children Creatively Engaging Each Other

Together initially one day per week and then the following year two days per week. Chris the Director of the program recalls:

When I met Brendan and Charlotte I met children with limited spontaneous speech, little interest in social interactions with adults or children and who demonstrated a pattern of interactions that reflected their prior experience of social skills training. Their verbal responses and interactions were formulaic and they exhibited an intense preoccupation with objects of interest - such as trains in the case of Brendan or popular culture figures in the case of Charlotte.4

The families of both children were very well informed about their children’s needs and highly supportive. They had been actively searching for an optimal educational program that would maximise their children’s opportunities for development and learning. They quickly recognised the expertise of the Director and valued her role as a caring professional working alongside the child and the family in more than a professional diagnostic role. The strategies which were utilised in the preschool were built around the fundamental relationships between parent, child and educator and the families responded very positively to this and became active partners in their children’s learning. This is evident in Chris’s notes:

We quickly established a very strong bond of trust that enabled a clear sense of reciprocity and shared respect for what both parents and educators could contribute to the children’s learning opportunities. We each acknowledged that we brought different expertise but both were essential if we were going to extend the children’s fragile connections with others and their unique pathways to learning. We also shared genuine affection and respect for each child.5

4. Looking at Children in New Ways

The preschool program reflected contemporary perspectives in early childhood education such as an image of the child as strong and capable, peer scaffolding and socio-constructivist approaches to learning6 and was informed by the state based curriculum framework - The Practice of Relationships.7 The educators implemented a strengths based approach to learning for all children, including those with additional needs and this was reflected in their observations, interactions and curriculum planning. Play and learning experiences included traditional early childhood resources such as
blocks; dramatic play materials, visual arts and music resources and books as well as computer, DVD player and CD player. Literacy learning at the preschool was founded in a view of literacy as social practice and so literacy resources provided for children also included magazines and newspapers that children were familiar with from their homes and communities. Chris describes the initial stages of the project:

We knew through our close connections with the children’s families that Brendan and Charlotte were both very adept with the computer at home. They were confident users of the computer and were familiar with many of the technical aspects of turning the computer on and off, accessing different programs, using the mouse effectively, as well being able to navigate their way through a number of familiar programs.

As educators applied their strength based approach of working with children to the use of the computer they found that the children with ASD were able to bring this knowledge to the context of ICT and multiliteracies. They found that children with ASD had many functional and foundational skills associated with computer use that they began to share with others. The initial observations undertaken by the educators indicated that the children with ASD were more proficient in this area of the preschool program than their typically developing peers.

We found that the children with ASD were also able to bring to preschool the strengths with the computer that they had developed at home. These strengths included the technical aspects of manipulating the parts of the computer - mouse, disk drive and keyboard. They also showed their proficiency in memory and recall. They have technical wiring that is strong. There is also a fascination with objects which we may have previously seen as obsessive behaviour but this behaviour had actually facilitated a strength in the area of ICT.

These initial observations of the children’s technical skills led to more in-depth conversations with families. As the educators began to share examples of the proficiencies and increased levels of participation in the program that Brendan and Charlotte demonstrated in relation to the computer the families reciprocated with more information about what the children were interested in and involved in at home.
It became increasingly important to find out and use more of what children knew from home. We asked, ‘When and how do they use computer? What are their particular interests, their favourite programs and interests in popular culture? What are the games they are interested in using?’ As we incorporated this new information we allowed the children more scope and greater access. These children were in fact so proficient that they were both able to remove the inbuilt five-minute timer that we had set up on our computer. We realised that we were working with highly competent computer users who were more ICT savvy than we were ourselves.

This experience highlighted the notion of ‘differently abled’ as opposed to disabled for the educators and for the families. The parents were thrilled to hear about positive aspects of their child’s day and to see the competencies that they had seen at home being reflected in the play and learning at the preschool. Educators also began to see these children in new ways as they built connections between learning at home and the educational context and to increasingly value the literacy learning that these children were undertaking through ICT and visual learning. As Chris noted in her reflective journal, ‘When the project came along we began to look more broadly at literacy and ways to connect with children’s worlds.’

5. Observation and Meaning Making

As educators began to observe and interact with children differently they began to identify and value the diverse forms of meaning making which children with ASD use. Chris recalled:

We applied the same process as *Sharing the Pathways* and looked for examples of meaning making for these children when they were at the computer. We observed when and how they responded and what these children did to connect with the aspects of the computer program. We looked for any possibilities that there may be within this interaction with the computer which would support them to connect with other children. We worked from the children’s strengths and their lived experience outside the preschool context and rather than leaving that outside our role was about drawing it in to what was happening in our learning community.11
Educators observed closely the elements of working with the computer that facilitated engagement for children with ASD. The visual supports for turn taking such as the children’s names on a board which could be moved to reflect their position inline, the two seater bench and the placing of the chairs around the computer provided for close peer proximity and more opportunity for interaction that did not require speech or eye contact but did allow for strategic pointing and the many nuances of non verbal communication. Situated learning and guided participation by the educator were fundamental to this process.

When we have a child at the computer we usually have a staff member sitting beside the child, supporting or prompting the child and also to encourage those children in the social aspects and shared problem solving. Computer time isn’t hands off time but hands on time for teachers. It is a time to be there watching, listening and helping children to make the most of the experience across different developmental and curriculum areas.

The children with ASD became peer tutors and also sources of knowing for educators. They may have been using non verbal scaffolds to guide and direct us but a carefully placed finger effectively indicated which button needed to be pressed or where to move the mouse. Charlotte who had previously observed others from the edges of the play became central to the play of her peers when at the computer. Charlotte’s turn on the computer was supported by the use of sign and without hesitation she was able to respond. Although for both children speech was very limited initially she would repeat words but by the end of her time at preschool she could sight read words and read to other children in the group.

6. Building Relationships with Families

As Brendan and Charlotte began to show more of what they could do and how, educators communicated these new developments to their families and simultaneously sought more specific information about the child’s home learning experiences. This building of collaborative relationships and ongoing communication about learning strengths and interests was seen by the educators as crucial to effective curriculum planning for the children. Chris wrote:

In a strengths based and collaborative approach we don’t just ask parents about needs and deficits. We want to know about children’s interests, their loves and their strengths. It
is about asking the parents and getting their feedback. So when an educator says that we have noticed that she loves music videos, we get the parent response, ‘Yes, as you said, she loves this, she loves music videos.’ Then we invite the parent to write some relevant information about what happens at home and that comes back in to the preschool and we work with that new knowledge about the child. The parents are thrilled that we believe their child has strengths and interests as well as the many areas of difficulty. So much of their experience with their child is challenging and more focused on the hard work of developing functional skills. You can see their relief when we are focusing on the positives that the child already has. We use the stuff the child can do and we see the parent’s joy that someone else can see this in their child and value and use it too.

When the educators heard of Brendan’s familiarity with the digital camera at home these skills were incorporated into the program. Chris describes:

Brendan and I were sitting opposite each other on the floor in block room. I had the digital camera. He looked at me, smiling, and I held the camera up. It was obvious that he was comfortable with the camera from his home environment. He smiled and then reached out for the camera. I quickly turned it around so he could see the photo of himself. I then gave him the camera. He looked at me, held up the camera and pressed it. And then he got me to look. For children who supposedly don’t have a sense of self or awareness of the other this was great progress. In this moment Brendan was able to see himself and see me and there was shared meaning and shared emotion. By tapping into pre-existing knowledge and a technical strength I seemed to affirm a sense of self for him and this was central to his participation. He was able to join in an interactive experience that in other contexts would have been highly problematic. Generally looking at another person with a direct gaze was difficult for Brendan however he was able to look through the lens of the camera and capture an image of me as had been modelled previously to him. We both expressed the joy of this collaborative connection, and spontaneous playfulness. I printed the photos and included the story of what happened in our daybook. ‘Chris took a photo of Brendan and
Brendan took a photo of Chris.’ This sounds simple but it reflected a new level of connection that had in the beginning seemed impossible. I shared this experience with his mother. She got it; she knew the ramifications of this.  

Brendan’s mother also shared her stories of moments of reciprocity and connection that included the following:

Brendan was laughing and full of joy as he sang all of the song Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star - to the end with sign. This is so different to the few phrases and single words and sound effects that we often see.

And some time later:

Today he initiated a new conversation - one that was meaningful and seeking a connection with me. He came down stairs and looked at me and said - ‘Bit cold, bit cold Mum’ as he wrapped his arms around himself and gestured cold.

The strength of the collaborative relationship between family and educators provided the context for sharing the wonderful moments of exchange and common pathways and provided a foundation for Brendan and Charlotte’s subsequent creative engagement with peers.

7. Reflecting and Reframing - Transforming Pedagogy

As time progressed educators and families worked more effectively together and communicated in more in-depth ways about their work. These interactions offered opportunity for deep reflection for the educators.

We realised that the environment as the third teacher was something we had underestimated. When we observed more closely to see the ways the children with ASD operated at the computer we realised that these children were able to sustain eye contact and look forward when at the computer, stay seated on a chair and that they responded well to multimodal communication. The combination of visuals, sound effects, movement, repetition and being able to have a direct impact on what happened worked for these children and they demonstrated a range of abilities that we had not observed before in the preschool learning context.

These new discoveries also created moments of uncertainty as the educators were prompted to think differently about their ways of working with children. New insights disrupted familiar practices and offered a new
lens through which educators could connect and engage with children’s minds.

We subsequently used this knowledge to inform the ways that we implemented our planned small group learning experiences. We set up chairs in a semi circle, rather than expecting the children to sit on the floor. The children were able to face the educator seated at the front when this behaviour was scaffolded by the placement of the chairs and the board. We used visuals placed on the board and this reflected the icons and symbols that children were familiar with from the computer. The children were encouraged to select a card as a way of directing the experience. For example, cards that symbolised familiar songs were offered for children to choose. We also used signing to support participation and turn taking in ways that reflected the processes which occurred at the computer.  

The team of educators at the preschool began to value and actively incorporate the diverse forms of meaning making that they saw being used by the children with ASD. Knowledge of children’s forms of meaning making was included in both spontaneous interactions and the experiences planned by educators. Brendan and Charlotte responded to the changes in the program that offered them a ‘better fit’.

8. **Children Creatively Engaging with Others**

The educators at the preschool initially viewed literacy in traditional ways and these included listening, speaking, reading and writing. The inclusion of children with additional needs into the mainstream program led to the implementation of augmentative communication systems alongside the traditional literacy practices. Early on in the project the readings on multiliteracies and the reflective research workshops encouraged educators to view literacy in new multi-modal ways. In doing this educators began to see a broader framework for literacy practice so that traditional and augmentative literacies merged into multiliteracies. For example, the Boardmaker visual system of communication fitted with visual literacies as described in the multiliteracies framework and signing fitted with gestural literacy. As educators began to implement this multiliteracies approach with all children they observed that differently abled children selected from the broader ‘literacy menu’ offered to all. The children took the lead in utilising the many ways to make individual and shared meaning and communication. There were more opportunities for differently-abled children to lead literacy experiences and have interested peers and educators follow their lead. For
example, Charlotte was able to lead and scaffold her peers use of the computer by pointing to the area on the screen where the other child needed to click the mouse. Most excitingly the educators were able to observe that children with ASD, who were seen as having impaired ability to distinguish between self and other, were able to build on social awareness and being part of this community of learners when involved in multiliteracies experiences.

Chris notes:

One day, Charlotte was having her turn on the computer. Brendan was sitting on a chair to her right and I was sitting behind Brendan. I could see that he was having some difficulty waiting for his turn, as he kept placing his hand over Charlotte’s hand on the mouse. I gently removed his hand saying, ‘Charlotte’s turn.’ I pointed to Brendan’s name on the visual chart saying, ‘Brendon’s turn next.’ Brendan placed his hand over Charlotte’s hand again and I gently removed his hand saying, ‘It’s Charlettes turn. Brendan’s turn soon.’ This pattern repeated for several minutes, then Brendan gently placed his hand on Charlotte’s shoulder and said, ‘Charlotte’s turn.’ I couldn’t wait to share this moment with Brendan’s mother when she came to pick him up. Again we knew the significance of that moment and we shared the joy.

Over time the children with ASD used the social processes associated with ICT and multiliteracies in their self initiated play. The patterns of interaction initially founded in the use of ICT became a very effective social pathway. The children progressed from the visuals on the computer to using visuals in the form of the Boardmaker cards as scaffolded by the educator in small group experiences to including these cards in their own self initiated play. Their play began in a solitary manner with individual children taking ownership of the cards, using sign and the actions of a song and some speech utterances. This play evolved over time into a shared experience as they began to include other children in their play. Over time they were observed taking turns of being both leader and follower in this play and participating positively in highly complex social interactions. These children had internalised the sequences of interaction and the various conventions that group members use to facilitate shared participation. They had progressed from social skills training to creative social engagement. To see the children take this level of ownership and demonstrate this level of empowerment was remarkable progress for children with ASD.
9. Conclusion

During this research investigation it was apparent that diversity of learning styles and processes became central to pedagogy for all children and fundamental to building a community of learners. The links between literacy practices, such as Boardmaker, sign, ICT and popular culture enabled shared learning, by children with and without additional needs, to occur. The Multiliteracies framework legitimised diverse literacy practices enabling all children to participate in ways that were meaningful to them regardless of disability or socio-economic disadvantage. Participation in the investigation challenged notions of disability and functionality for both the participating educators and the researcher and many discussions resulted. Chris added her comments in the research discussion:

It may be only a matter of semantics but the way that we see the child and the language we use is fundamental to the ways that other children, other educators and the families see the child who is different. There is so much talk within the special education field about functionality, to play appropriately, to behave as others behave. Our experiences with Brendan and Charlotte caused us to pause and to ask what is functional and to whom? The use of visuals rather than being a system of augmentative communication for children with additional needs was normalised and legitimised within a multiliteracies framework and therefore implemented across the program for all children.20

The project with its focus on multiliteracies and ICT offered value to many of the skills and ways of meaning making that children with ASD demonstrate at home and in educational settings. It facilitated collaborative relationships with families, transformed educator’s practice and facilitated children’s creative engagement with each other.

Notes

Bibliography


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The Cultural Genesis of Creativity: An Emerging Paradigm

Vlad - Petre Glăveanu

Abstract
The aim of this chapter is to discuss different approaches to creativity and underline the cultural nature of its genesis. Biological genius (the ‘He-paradigm’) and psychological-individualistic (the ‘I-paradigm’) standpoints are contrasted with social and cross-cultural ones (the ‘We-paradigm’) and the cultural psychology of creativity is introduced and positioned. This emerging paradigm, drawing from both social accounts of creativity and the latest developments in cultural psychology and the theory of social representations, emphasises the contextual and generative nature of creative acts and employs a person (creator) - other (community) - object (artefacts) model. Creativity is conceptualized as a complex process that leads to the generation of new artefacts by working with ‘culturally-impregnated’ materials within a representational space. This particular viewpoint highlights the meaning-oriented nature of creativity, its link to personal and group identities, and also calls for ecological research and situational interventions.

One of the central issues addressed by the cultural psychology of creativity is the problem of ‘genesis’ or how creativity is developed and manifested within cultural settings. The pioneer in this field is undoubtedly D.W. Winnicott who asserted at the beginning of the 70’s that creativity and cultural experience are twinborn. Children experiment culture creatively and they do so in the ‘third’ or ‘potential’ space, one that we can identify today with the social world of representations. In his view of ontogenesis the origins of creativity are found in the first forms of playing and are shaped by the nature of the mother - child relationship. The final part of the chapter will develop further this account and show how creativity emerges from early childhood within a symbolic space where children ‘play’ with artefactual resources, a space of dialogue between self and significant others, constantly alimented by social and collective systems of beliefs and practices, life experiences and communication.

Key Words: Artefacts, creativity paradigms, culture, genetic account, play, representational space, the cultural psychology of creativity.

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1. Preamble
Both theory and research on creativity in psychology have been largely focused on adults and their creative behaviour. This is understandable if we consider the incredible ‘asset’ creative persons represent in any branch
of industry or social life. Indeed, creativity is a social need, a valued feature in most societies. At the same time, it is one of the most complex phenomena and, therefore, a largely unsolved mystery for most scientific endeavours.

Despite this predominant adult-focused theorizing, most scholars (as well as parents and educators) acknowledge the immensely creative potential characterizing the childhood period. Children, especially at small ages (such as the preschool years) seem to know no other way of expression outside of creative playing. They constantly experiment and discover themselves and others in the process of opening up to the world around them. Unfortunately, little efforts have been made to study the ‘beginning’ of creativity in ontogenesis, or at least no notable attempts have been made to observe and comprehend the continuities in creative expression, as well as the mechanisms that underpin this developmental process.

Further more, the vast majority of contemporary investigations reflect the Western individualistic bias in conceptualizing and studying both creativity and the psychology of the child. By and large, the two have been ‘disconnected’ from their social and cultural origins and dynamics. The development of the child has been for the most part considered in its biological and psychological notes. More has yet to be done to understand the child as a cultural being. Similarly, creativity studies have repeatedly emphasized cognitive or personality factors and depicted a biological, individualistic and a-historical view of the creative process. In this context, the present article will address the social and symbolic nature of creativity and, most importantly, its cultural genesis in early childhood.

2. He, I, We - Three Paradigms in Creativity Theory and Research

A brief historical inquiry is needed in order to identify the main paradigms that have dominated scientific thought on creativity along with their chief theoretical and practical implications. One of the first things that become transparent when engaging in such an inquiry is the fact that there is a massive time disproportion between the centuries of religious, philosophical or biological approaches on creativity and the decades of psychological research.

Initially creative traits have been seen as describing only a few ‘chosen’ individuals. A long person-oriented tradition ‘located’ creativity exclusively at the level of the individual. Explained primarily as a consequence of madness or Divine inspiration, a unique bio-psychological constitution or spiritual calling, creativity soon passed to be considered the effect of special hereditary-transmitted traits. The genius or highly talented individual was born as such and not made. He (here the pronoun is used as a symbol of ‘otherness’) would revolutionize art or science and would have exceptional features, above all, a colossal intelligence. This is the initial and long-lasting vision that can be called the ‘He-paradigm’. Geniality was
scarce so much so that the genius ‘other’ (He) was someone to be easily recognized, and usually belonging to certain respectable families. Although history has proven that many exceptional individuals suffered greatly throughout their life and gained only post-mortem recognition, this paradigm asserted such a great distinction between creative individuals and the anonymous ‘mass’ that a genius would literally stand out from the crowd.

Although presented as a vision on creativity the He-paradigm has historically flourished in a time when the mere word ‘creativity’ did not dominate scientific discourses. Gordon Allport is acknowledged as the one who first proposed the term in psychology and initiated a paradigmatic shift to what can be called the ‘I-paradigm’. While integrating the biological aspect, the new framework was primarily a psychological one. It recognized the fact that all individuals are endowed with a creative potential and that they realize this potential differently. Most importantly, creativity can be educated and is not exclusively associated with major findings or creations the so-called H or Historical creativity but also with everyday creative processes and outcomes. Unfortunately the ‘democratisation’ of creativity failed to equally be a ‘socialization’ of the creative expression. Focusing especially on cognitive and personality aspects of creativity, the ‘I-paradigm’ has in fact continued in the same note as the ‘He-paradigm’. The emphasis remained on the isolated person, just that in this case it was no longer a particular individual but each and every individual.

A major landmark in the psychology of creativity has been the year 1950, considered as the starting point for systematic studies on creativity, followed by a boom in the ‘60s and ‘70s. Approximately at the end of this period, more and more psychologists started to focus on the social nature of creativity. Scholars like D.K. Simonton and Teresa Amabile proposed social accounts of creativity and with them a ‘We-paradigm’. From this perspective, individuals are creative or non-creative only around other individuals. The social environment is largely responsible for both enhancing and diminishing creativity. One of the main gains of this approach stands in the new focus on social and contextual factors that impact the creative process. Regrettably though, Amabile’s proposal of a social psychology of creativity kept the individual as the major study unit and frequently reduced the social to a set of external constraining or facilitating influences.

Cross-cultural investigations made a step further in acknowledging the contextual expression of creativity. By and large, these studies have shown that although creativity is valued in almost all cultures there are some major differences in conceptualizing creative processes and products. Westwood and Low conclude in this regard that Western cultures focus more on the product or its ‘performative’ nature while Eastern cultures show interest in the personal fulfilment of creators, and creativity as revelation.
In concluding, while the ‘He’, ‘I’ and ‘We’ paradigms of creativity are easily discernible they all, in one way or another, hide an individualistic fallacy in understanding and theorizing creativity. Truly social accounts of creative processes are yet to be developed within the We-paradigm. At the same time, as many authors argue, in order to avoid further reductionism, these accounts should step beyond ‘binary choices’ and research more intensively the relationship between individual and social creativity.

3. New Understandings: The Cultural Psychology of Creativity

Emerging from social and cross-cultural studies and continuing their efforts of constructing a more comprehensive understanding of creative persons, processes and products, is the cultural psychology of creativity. In the past years several authors have acknowledged the fact that the creative expression always occurs within a cultural and historical milieu and therefore creativity is embedded in a cultural context.

Another theoretical stream nurturing this emerging paradigm corresponds to the theory of social representations, a theory of both social knowledge and change. Standing at the basis of all knowledge systems and their genesis, representations construct social objects through the patterns of meaning shared by social actors. Emphasizing the contextual relation between knowledge and communities, the social representations theory is central to understanding the role of symbolic resources and communicative action in mediating the intricate relationship between self, other and object.

From this perspective, creativity is conceptualized as a complex process that leads to the generation of new artefacts by working with ‘culturally-impregnated’ materials within a representational space. Artefacts here are understood in a way similar to that of M. Cole: both ideal or conceptual and material objects or outcomes and processes, manufactured by humans to mediate the relation between self and other. We all live in a world of culturally constructed artefacts where continuity and creativity are the main phenomena that shape our existence and the existence of our societies. Most importantly, culture (and the myriad of material and symbolic artefacts that compose it) does not work from outside the individual, but from within. Culture is not the coercive force a genius must defeat (like in a He-paradigm) but the very nature of our being, always plural, always in the making.

The cultural psychology of creativity does not ‘change’ the tyranny of heredity for one of culture. On the contrary, it proposes a systemic and dynamic model in which available cultural models are never just assimilated automatically by individuals or groups but also accommodated, adapted, ‘personalized’. It employs a person or creator – other or community - object or artefacts model in understanding creative acts, one that stresses the deeply rooted connections between self, community and culture.
What the cultural paradigm proposes is a contextual, generative and meaning-oriented account of creativity. The label of ‘creative’ is socially constructed and depends on time, place and community of reference. At the same time creativity as a phenomenon is not a mirage. We discover it in our everyday experiences, we recognize, understand and evaluate it. Creativity takes place in a representational space in the sense that it depends on our representations and skills in generating new representations and practices. Finally, there is a direct bond between creativity and personal and group identity. We are defined by what we create including the ways in which we constantly and creatively build ourselves. And this process is particularly intense during childhood years, as we will immediately discuss.

4. The Problem of Genesis

There are numerous links between social psychology and developmental psychology and unfortunately most of them have remained unexplored. Although some progress has been made in the direction of understanding the social development of the child, much remains to be done in what concerns the development of knowledge and the social and cultural mechanisms that underpin creativity from early ages.

The cultural psychology of creativity is committed to exploring these issues and gives them a central position in its construction. A genetic account of creativity is a stringent necessity since in its absence all theories of creativity lack a solid foundation. Creativity is not born at adulthood and ignoring the problem of genesis can only further the artificial gap between child and adult creativity. Most of the times children creativity is ‘dismissed’ because of the assumption that the childhood period is one of biopsychological maturation and that only at its completion creative acts will lose much of their bizarre and incomprehensible nature and become not only original but also socially ‘appropriate’. This pragmatic viewpoint fails to see continuities in the way creativity works between child and adult. Last but not least, since childhood is a time of intense socialization and a child’s creativity is among the first to be infused by this process, disregarding the ontogenesis of creativity leads to a disregard of its socio-cultural origins.

Among the first authors to link children creativity with play and cultural experience is D.W. Winnicott and it is his account that we will consider in the next section.

5. Children, Culture and Creativity

The ontogenesis of creativity is the ontogenesis of the symbolic function and therefore of the capacity to represent. Human ontogeny is from the outset both phylogenetic and cultural. The baby comes into a social world in which all his/her potentialities are met by cultural repertoires of knowledge and practices that will soon be internalized.
The starting point of this journey is represented by the difference that first exists between the child and the object-world, between the me and the not-me. Initially newborns live in a subjective word in which self and other - the mother merge in a feeling of omnipotence. The road to decentration[18] is a road to socialization, the path towards primal creative contacts with a world that is both mine and of others, of objects and persons. The child’s knowledge of the object-world is never a form of dispassionate cognition. The world is emotionally invested, lived, desired in and through acts of action, participation, symbolic play and creative contact. The mediating function of signs and tools arises from a process of cultural development and internalized relations. It is this ontological vision that the cultural psychology of creativity emerges from. As the theory of social representations it ‘presupposes the symbolic and communicative interdependence of the Ego-Alter as its point of departure’.21

In this context the contribution of D.W. Winnicott[22] is essential to the understanding of the link between creativity and culture in the ontogenesis. His main claim is that during the early years of childhood cultural experience and creative playing are twinborn and both take place in a potential space between the baby and the environment. This potential space, also called the third space - because it is different from both the subjective and objective experience, can be identified with the representational space, an intermediate area of intersubjectivity ‘between the subjective object and the object objectively perceived, between me-extensions and the not-me’. It is the area where creative reality testing takes place, where children learn the constraints of the object-world while driven by the pleasure principle. Because of these unique characteristics, the potential space is seen as the origin of creativity and as a precondition of social life in all its forms and dimensions: art, religion, imaginative living, creative scientific work, etc.

The crucial contribution of Winnicott doesn’t lie exclusively in the fact that he considered children’s creative playing with cultural artefacts as the birth of the social and healthy human being but also in the fact that he presented its dynamics and conditions. He has shown how the origins of symbolism can be found in ‘transitional objects’ and ‘transitional phenomena’. The first possessions, like the thumb or the toy, stand for the mother’s breast and are neither internal nor external. They are the first to occupy the potential space and to open the child to a new world of objects, persons and experiences apart from his/her own body. This contact is always a mediated and creative one. The baby and further on the child travel from pure subjectivity to objectivity through intersubjectivity and it is this intersubjectivity that first develops along with a form of primary creativity.

Being a psychoanalyst interested in child development, Winnicott considered that the basic condition for the existence of a potential space it the feeling of confidence the dependent baby develops in relation to the mother.
There is no such thing as a baby; there is always a mother and a baby, a relationship. The mother figure or the caretaker, he added, is essentially adaptive because of love; it is her responsibility to introduce the world to the baby. Care is the first socio-psychological context of infants and can be placed also at the origin of creativity and creative living. It is because of this basic feeling that the baby will develop a healthy separation from the non-me by 'filling in … the potential space with creative playing, with the use of symbols, and with all that eventually adds up to a cultural life'. The dynamics of holding and handling is the dynamics through which the baby makes the first steps towards independence.

Summarizing these points, the genesis of creativity can never be disconnected from the genesis of social relations and the symbolic function. Further more, creativity plays a central role in this development process. The potential or representational space that takes shape in early childhood supports and is supported by a creative contact with the social and cultural environment and this dynamics continues throughout the lifetime.

6. Creative Living, The Primary Type of Creativity

Adopting a cultural genesis perspective brings numerous theoretical and practical implications for the cultural psychology of creativity and developmental psychology in general. Maybe the most important one stands in a new understanding of what creativity is. As initially shown, for century’s creativity has been the feature of a few and even in psychology the person-oriented approach has not faded. On the other hand, the ‘I-paradigm’ considered everyone to be creative in certain moments and for certain tasks.

Winnicott’s vision is one of creativity not just as a separate activity but as a continuous way of living. It is this perspective that can bridge the creative expression of children and adults: creativity is one of the engines of maturation, socialization and well-being. For Winnicott the greatest challenge adults face is that of keeping their spontaneity and through it using their entire personality. In this broad conception of creativity as a way of living non-creative means deficient, maladjusted, unhealthy.

Of course, this perspective does not aim to equate creativity with existence and by expanding its meaning so greatly to lead to a dissolution of the term. On the contrary, it aims at distinguishing between different understandings of creativity, different levels of the phenomenon. Creative is not only a ‘product’ that revolutionizes art, science or society or the activity that leads to original and useful outcomes. Creativity as a process is deeply connected with our existence as human beings from the moment we are born. The cultural psychology of creativity is focused on the ways in which creativity takes place within a representational or potential space and uses cultural artefacts in a constant process of expressing the self and the relation between self and other. Creativity starts as the mark of a relationship between
baby and caretaker and continues to be embedded in a social and cultural
ground throughout the entire life. It starts from opening up the world and
continues with transforming it. Finally, it is one of the main ways of
expression during childhood years and continues to be crucial for the
existence of adults as well, maybe in other forms, surely with other types of
outcomes, but most certainly supported by the same need to explore, to
appropriate, to live.

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Teaching Creative Engagement

Barbra McKenzie

Abstract
How can we encourage classroom teachers to view their classrooms as creative spaces? To understand that in order to foster and develop creativity and enhance engagement in the children within that space they may be required to shift gears and both ’be’ and do things differently? How indeed-when the teaching examples and pedagogical practices provided for them by university educators are most often sadly lacking in both creativity and engagement. Researchers ¹ assert that many education courses lack cohesion and in fact hinder pre-service teacher development and understanding. Fostering a culture of creative engagement within any classroom requires the development of a particular ethos or culture- a composite of a set of common values and beliefs.² This ethos is one that relies in large part on the interpersonal skills of the teacher influenced by their ‘biographies, experiences and perceptions’.³ Another important component impacting upon the creation of classroom culture is an ability to use humour and a willingness to change the traditional power relationships between student and teacher. If we are to encourage classroom teachers to explore the development of classrooms that encourage creativity and engagement, university educators must first be courageous enough to develop such spaces within their own university subjects. This paper explores just such a cultural change initiated within one university subject and charts the types of pedagogical decisions that were required to create this type of space. By first modelling good practice and then mentoring pre-service teachers through explicit discussion and the development of supportive classroom activities, many came to an increased understanding of what was possible in their own classrooms- they were able to use concept mapping to highlight and identify these connections.

Key Words: Classroom culture, creative engagement, pedagogy, pre-service teachers.

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1. Introduction: The Call for Creative Teaching

In recent times a greater concern linked to societal change has created an urgent need for a highly skilled, flexible and entrepreneurial workforce that is capable of successfully negotiating this shifting face of a more globalised society. Education systems must respond to the globalisation of society by recognising the need to increasingly become a ’learning society’⁴ and compete on the international stage via the schooling systems.
These are the factors that Hargreaves earlier called attention to that drive the need for change to schools and teachers

With so many traditional Western economic strongholds looking increasingly precarious in the context of an expanding global marketplace, school systems and their teachers are being charged with onerous tasks of economic regeneration.

Literature emanating from both Federal and State sources substantiates the need for educational change in schooling systems, schools and teachers by associating this need with a wider societal change related to increased technology and globalisation. The ability of Australia to foster a climate of innovation via its schooling system will be a key factor in taking part in a knowledge economy that is technologically driven. Assuming our place in this global environment will ensure we remain economically viable, socially relevant and able to retain our competitive edge among neighbouring countries. To maximise the potential of Australia’s youth and ensure the ‘nation’s social and economic prosperity’ it is vital that our schools prepare their students to become part of a skilled work force.

Teachers and schools are the key to ensuring that students have access to quality schooling in order that they achieve their maximum potential. Internationally too, there has been a shift in thinking about the role creativity may perform. As Feldman and Benjamin report, increasingly this has moved from being seen as less about individual expression towards a more socially, culturally directed and constrained set of qualities important to a society’s well being, if not its survival.

To achieve this aim, educational institutions at all levels have as one of their primary foci the responsibility to develop graduates who can assist to change and transform our society in this era of globalisation. Speaking of this transformative process in terms of the university Cantor and Schomberg attest:

‘...some of the transformative quality of education comes from who we are as institutions- how we constitute ourselves, what we do and stand for, where we see our students going and how we work to send them there. In other words, some of it is a function of the kinds of places we are and continue to be in a world with many pressures to act otherwise- to rely on convention, the known and the familiar. Some of our impact is a direct function of what we
If we wish to develop the types of teachers who can change and transform society, who can engage their students and teach creatively, university educators may need to reconsider their own pedagogical approaches. In fact some researchers are concerned about the lack of structure and cohesion within university education courses and contend that this hinders pre-service teachers development and understanding. It appears that while teacher educators advocate that our pre-service teachers should teach creatively in order to engage their students, effect positive change and thus assist to develop and transform society through the creation of an entrepreneurial workforce- we are less successful in modelling and demonstrating these qualities.

2. Why Creative Engagement is Important- Views From the Field

A realisation of the increasing importance that creativity may play in the transformation of society has resulted in a greater focus on creativity itself and caused considerable debate in the field. In the UK policy makers have allocated sizable funds, in a number of areas to creativity and there are currently ongoing debates in the field that revolve around such issues as:

‘... tensions between the pressures and principles of assessment, the extent to which creativity develops as opposed to being nurtured, and what sorts of pedagogical strategies help or hinder’,

A number of reports and studies have flowed from this research on creativity including the NACCCE (National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education) report. This report made a distinction between teaching creatively and teaching for creativity- a distinction that some researchers contend had the potential to fracture the field further if education researchers took up one position or the other. However, the NACCCE report did make the connection that teaching for creativity would involve teaching creatively and that teaching for creativity could be thought of as concerning ‘learner empowerment’ while teaching creatively could be thought of as ‘effective teaching’. It would appear that in order to foster an educational climate that promotes creative engagement that teachers need to spend some time reflecting upon the type of factors that promote and support that type of environment.
3. **How Might That Be Realised in the Classroom?**

Each teacher creates a particular climate, atmosphere, culture or ethos\(^{16}\) in their classroom that is a reflection of their own teaching beliefs and philosophy. This climate or culture according to Cropley can be thought of as a ‘…metaphor for describing a combination of behaviors, attitudes, values, and feelings that are common to the people in the classroom’.\(^{17}\) This classroom climate illustrates what is considered appropriate in the context of that particular classroom and involves such aspects as interpersonal relationships with both teacher and peer group. It also includes the types of classroom activities developed, the type of feedback that is instituted and the social demands considered usual in that environment.\(^{18}\) Like the culture of all organizations, the classroom culture can be either positive\(^{19}\) or negative.\(^{20}\)

The classroom climate or culture that teachers create serves to mould perceptions of what is regarded as acceptable in that space; flag the level of tolerance for any deviations from that norm and the types of punishments or rewards that can be expected.\(^{21}\)

In the interests of creating and supporting a classroom culture that fosters creativity, teachers need to engender a space where ‘…variability is welcome and that people who generate it are respected’.\(^{22}\) In order to ensure that our pre-service teachers are able to create and foster such supportive teaching and learning spaces, teacher educators first need to model and demonstrate this type of climate in practice.

4. **How Can We Encourage Classrooms as Creative Spaces?**

If we want classroom teachers to embrace the notion that fostering creativity in the children they teach is a powerful means by which to ultimately transform society then we need to provide them with some type of modelling or demonstration of how that could ‘look’ in their classrooms. Without this type of scaffolding or support it would be unlikely that novice teachers would have the degree of self-efficacy required to facilitate this type of process. While we know that teacher self-efficacy both as an individual and collective process plays a vital role in any change process and contributes to school culture, we also know that the majority of novice teachers are less likely to exhibit positive self-efficacy with respect to their teaching.\(^{23}\)

Teacher educators could provide this type of scaffolding for the pre-service teachers in their classrooms by explicitly modelling the types of behaviours and pedagogical strategies required to foster creativity.

Jeffrey\(^{24}\) reports on international research with an ethnographic focus across a varied array of research sites that included early years classes through to secondary schools as well as higher education institutions and adult learning situations. The CLASP project identified some teaching
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strategies that promoted creative learning. One of these included the creative use of *space* that often involved:

- altering the nature of the space in which teachers and learners usually worked or the whole group was moved to unusual spaces for the development of creative learning.  

This is consistent with the enactment component of sensemaking theory  that identifies that people create the environment that contains their actions in order to make sense of action in their world, this same environment also functions to constrain their actions. ‘When people act they unrandomise variables, insert vestiges of orderliness, and literally create their own constraints’. So through enactment people construct an environment in order to both reflect upon their actions and to: ‘provide opportunities for future actions’.

Another factor that teachers manipulate concerns *time* that involved ‘...adjusting temporal boundaries for time spent on activities beyond the normal length of lessons’. Here teachers variously manipulated the allocated amounts of time in order to free up time for a focal activity or re-adjust the typical time allocations to allow more time to be spent in other areas.

These special arrangements for extended periods for creative activities modelled the importance of the critical event for creative learning and the increased interest and commitment that time can give to the value of creative learning.

Another important aspect was that of *modelling creativity*, here teachers acted as ‘...models for learning, for creativity itself and for creative learning’. This included the interpersonal aspect of teaching- the value teachers attributed to interactions between themselves, their students and other involved stakeholders. It also included demonstrations of teachers’ spontaneity, their ability to change and modify plans at short notice when classroom circumstances changed.

Many of these creative factors were instigated when we moved to change the ethos; flow and sequence of a university subject on literacy teaching and provided the means to explore how some of Jeffrey’s notions could work in practice.
5. **Encouraging and Promoting Creative Engagement**

This final year elective subject with a focus on language and literacy has approximately 30% of final-year students in attendance. They have previously experienced two core language and literacy subjects, one with a focus on reading and the second with a focus on writing. The usual teaching mode for this subject was a two hour lecture focus followed by 2 x one hour tutorials conducted simultaneously. In order to promote and encourage greater interest and engagement we moved to revamp this subject in a number of ways that relate to those discussed by Jeffrey. Initially we needed to rethink the structure of the subject and in doing so modelled for our students alternate ways they could consider traditional pedagogical strategies used in the classroom.

Our creative interpretation of the traditional university model of lecture-> tutorial meant that we were able to manipulate both time and space in order to create an environment that was more interactive and supportive of our students needs. We shortened the lecture component and developed a series of workshop activities for students to engage in and report upon based on this input material. Then, by negotiating adjoining (or close to) tutorials spaces were able to use these spaces for students groups to report within. Often students from one group reported to and engaged with students from the other tutorial group. We then reformed as a whole class and team-taught the last component that make active classroom connections and raised implications for teaching. This manipulation of both time and space by us did not remain an abstract concept; we actively and explicitly discussed this creative use of space and time as having application in their professional lives.

In terms of modelling the *types of behaviours* Jeffrey refers to as encouraging creative engagement, again we were very explicit about why this subject assumed a different format. We use our own behaviours and pedagogical approaches regarding the re-structuring of this subject as a model or demonstration of the types of behaviours and pedagogies that our students can utilise within the classrooms they will later occupy. For example:

- Drawing student’s attention to the initial needs analysis in their first lecture where they identified gaps in their knowledge about the teaching of literacy. Their challenge is then to implement something similar in their own classrooms.
- Identifying the role of an environment or ethos that supports learning and promotes and shifts the balance of power from the teacher to the learner. Citing the use of
inclusive language—such as ‘us, we, our’ that demonstrates the commitment to sharing power and control with our students.

- Reminding students that the initial needs analysis was built upon and the flow and sequence of the curriculum negotiated. An additional challenge they could initiate with their own students.
- Advising them about the need to become used to and find comfort in feelings of ambiguity— and accept this as a natural part of teaching life—they don’t need to know it all.
- Explicitly discussing our own reflective process regarding changes made to this subject. Relate this to the process that Schon referred to as ‘reflection-in-action’ where practitioners can mentally slow down time, return to selected aspects for further exploration, mentally try out a variety of actions or strategies and suspend or control some of the impediments of the situation.

In order to assist students to make further connections between the types of behaviours and pedagogies they have experienced in this subject and the looming reality of a classroom of their own, they are asked to summarise their knowledge.

6. **Making the Tacit Explicit: Promoting Creative Engagement**

As part of the engagement process in this subject students are asked to undertake the completion of two concept maps as a type of pre and post-test instrument. In tutorials in the first week of session students create a concept map using the phrase ‘Literacy teaching is...’ that is dated and collected. In the final week of session they are again asked to use the same phrase and complete another concept map, and their first concept map is returned. The creation of these maps enables students to make their tacit knowledge and understandings both explicit and accessible to themselves and to others. Students are always surprised by how their knowledge and understanding has developed. Many relate that they can see the value in initiating the type of explicit process regarding both behaviours and pedagogy that have been identified and discussed in this subject into their own classroom practice.
Notes

1 G Hoban, Teacher Learning for Educational Change, 2002, p. 235
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A Creative Social Studies Classroom

Mostafa Sheikhzade

Abstract
Problem posing and problem solving are obviously close to each other. Problem posing involves generating new problems and questions to explore about a given situation, as well as reformulating a problem during the course of solving the problem related to it. Teachers can help develop this habit by understanding the children’s thinking processes and developing these processes using generative questions. This chapter reports two experiments in which high-performing ninth grade students promoted through a social studies course who were asked to solve and pose social problems. In the first experiment, subjects were given problem situations and were asked to solve and pose problems that could be solved with specified concepts. In experiment two, subjects were asked to generate problems that matched the textbooks and were required to make scenarios. Findings indicate that when followed by an interview and an observation, problem solving and problem posing is a powerful learning and assessment tool for probing student’s understanding of social studies concepts as well as their ability to transfer their knowledge to novel contexts. This suggests that using problem solving and problem posing makes appropriate curriculum to make students active in class. Suggestions for using problem methods as a pedagogical tool are presented.

Key Words: Creativity and social studies, problem posing, problem solving, social studies experiments.

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1. Introduction
Thus study reports an interesting new methodological approach within the domain of social science for learning about both the ability to apply conceptual knowledge flexibly and the organisation and application of social science knowledge across different problem solving contexts. This study also sheds light on conceptual change as a developmental issue for students with regards to the ability to incorporate information that is in conflict with extant mental knowledge frameworks. The methodological approach explored is problem solving and problem posing; although the tasks within which subjects pose problems is somewhat structured in order to focus the study, the tasks are open ended in the sense that subjects can pose any problems they wish so long as the problems meet the constraints delineated in the task. This chapter is organised as follows; section two, 'Problem Posing
and Posing Questions’, provides a theoretical background for the study. Two experiments are described in section three and a general discussion of the findings is provided in section four.

2. Problem Posing and Posing Questions

Problems are a central part of human life. As problems are a central part of human life, it is important to understand the nature of problem solving and the sources that can make it difficult. When people have problems, how do they identify, define and solve them? Problem posing and problem solving are obviously closely related. On the one hand, problem posing draws heavily on the processes of problem solving, such as identifying the key elements of a problem and how they relate to one another and to the goal of the problem.

The original motivation in introducing the term ‘problem posing’ was to place some responsibility on students for deciding what tasks are to be considered because this reflects a more natural and independent practice in doing mathematics. However, the stress this chapter puts on the role of ‘problem posing’ in determining openings for a solution certainly suggests that a very wide interpretation is intended. This impression is reinforced by later papers; Silver and Cai explicitly introduce the term ‘within-solution posing’ and Cifarelli makes the perceived role of problem posing in instigating solution strategies more explicit by invoking the notion of ‘abduction’ a kind of reasons beyond inductive and deductive reasoning. In regard to the appropriate usage of the term ‘problem posing’, it is also significant that some researchers in the field prefer the phrase ‘posing questions’.

3. Experimental Groups

The two experiments comprising this study used problem posing as a means to investigate conceptual understanding, reasoning and the extent to which conceptual knowledge is linked to problem contexts among proficient physics novices. In the first experiment, subjects were given problem situation (i.e., a story line accompanied with a diagram from which problems could be constructed) and were asked to solve and pose problems that could be solved with specified concepts. In the second experiment, subjects were asked to generate problems that matched the textbooks and were asked to make scenarios. Interviews held with all subjects immediately following both experiments afforded the opportunity to explore their understanding of how the problems they posed embodied the specified principle(s).
3.1 Experiment 1: Linking Principles to Problem Contexts

3.1.1 Subjects

Six students selected of ninth grade (all male) who were studying in public school in the Iranian city of Uraemia, were recruited to participate in the study. All subjects had completed the rudiments of the lesson. Henceforth, the subjects will be referred to as S1-S6.

3.1.2 Task

Subjects were given problem situation i.e., a story line accompanied with a diagram from which problems could be constructed, and were asked to solve and pose problems that could be solved with specified social science concepts. Two different problem situations were paired with two different social sciences: ‘The Family as a Social System’ and ‘Individual and Family’. Diagram one summarizes two problem situations and two principles as well as the general instructions given to the subjects. For example, individual and family consist of development of personality, supporting and guiding; arrival of independent personality and psychological tranquillity.

Diagram 1. Problem situations, specified principles and instructions to subjects.

In order to investigate subjects’ abilities to apply principles flexibly across problem contexts, the two problem situations and two principles were chosen.
3.1.3 Procedure

Each subject participated in the experiment individually in presence of the experimenter, with each experimental session lasting between 50 – 60 minutes. Subjects were given 10 minutes for each situation to pose as many problems as they could; they were asked to write each new problem posed on a separate sheet. Following each 10-minute problem posing session, an interview was conducted in which the subject was asked to explain how each problem posed could be solved by the specified principle.

3.1.4 Results and Discussion

Two levels of analysis were performed. The first evaluated the performance of the subjects on the task according to whether or not the problems posed met the criteria set forth in the task instructions, an attempt was made to classify why they failed to meet the criteria. The resulting ‘profile’ of problems posed provides a first indication of subjects’ ability to pose problems within specified contexts that are solvable by specified principles.

A second level of analysis reviewed how the problems posed by the subjects were solvable by the specified principle. The interview data provided many insights into the subjects’ understanding of the two specified concepts and how they could be applied.

3.1.5 Profile of Problems Posed

A skilful teacher with an M.A. degree independently reviewed the problems posed by the subjects. A profile of the problems posed was constructed by binding problems according to four categories:

1. Number of problems posed;
2. Number of problems posed that were solvable;
3. Number of problems that were solvable by the specified concept, and;
4. Number of problems out of those problems solvable by specified concept on which, during the interview, the subject provided a correct explanation of how problems posed could be solved by the specific concepts.

After the review was complete, the two reviewers met to discuss their findings. In those cases where the tallies disagreed, the two reviewers discussed the disagreement until a consensus was reached.

Table 1 contains the profile of the problems posed for each subject as well as for all subjects combined. The total number of problems posed varied across subjects from a low of 14 to a high of 18, with a mean of 16.2
per subject. Overall, more problems were posed for the individual and family principle than for the family as a social system principle, 53 vs. 44.

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Table 1. Profile of the problems posed in Experiment 1.

Overall, the percentage of solvable problems posed was quite high at 93%; however, the distribution of solvable problems differed across two concepts. Whereas 36% of the family as a social system problems posed was solvable, only 46% of the individual and family problems were solvable. This finding indicates that it is very difficult for novices to pose problems that are solvable by a specified principle if the problem context is one not typically used in traditional instruction for constructing problems embodying that principle. Mestre also provides a new perspective to examine instructional approaches used to teach physics.

3.2 Experiment 2: Posing Problems from Concept Scenarios

In the previous experiment, subjects were provided with a context concerning the problem situation within which to generate a problem that could be solved with a specified principle. Hence, both the context and principle were available for the subject to be considered during problem generation. In experiment 2, subjects were asked to generate problems that matched the textbooks and wanted to make scenarios.

3.2.1 Subjects

Six different male smart subjects having exactly the same profiles as those used in experiment 1 were recruited to participate in the study. These subjects will be designated as S7-S12.
3.2.2 Task

Subjects were given concept problems, which consisted of descriptions of the principles / concepts that applied to a problem and asked to pose scenario problems according to textbook problems. Diagram 2 shows a problem as well as the general instructions given to the subjects.

Diagram 2. A problem and instructions to subjects

3.2.3 Procedure

Each subject participated in the experiment individually in the presence of the experimenter with each experimental session lasting between 60-70 minutes. Subjects were given 15 minutes to pose as many ‘textbook-like’ problems as they could for each problem; they were asked to write each new problem posed on a separate sheet. For each scenario, a stack of identical sheets was provided to the subject containing the scenario on which they were asked to write the problem posed. Following each 15 minute posing session, an interview was conducted in which the subject was asked to explain how each problem posed matched the concept scenario.

3.2.4 Results and Discussion

Three analyses were performed. As in the previous experiment, the first analysis generated a ‘profile’ of problems posed by evaluating the performance of the six subjects on the task according to several criteria e.g., whether the problems posed matched the problem, whether the problems posed were solvable, etc. In the second analysis,
contexts that subjects used to match the problem were characterized. The third analysis, which reviewed the interviews during which subjects were invited to explain how the problems they posed matched the concept scenarios, provides insights into subjects’ understanding of how and/or why concepts and principles apply to problems.

3.2.5 Profile of Problems Posed

As in experiment 1, the problems posed were reviewed independently by a skilful teacher with a M.A. degree. A profile of the problems posed was constructed by binning four problems according to four categories. The total number of problems posed varied across subjects from a low of 7 to a high of 16, with a mean of 11.25 per subject. The total number of problems posed across all subjects was fairly evenly distributed across the three scenarios. However, a considerably lower fraction of solvable problems was posed for scenario 3 at 25% than for the other two scenarios at 63% for scenarios 1 and 2; this is not surprising since scenario 3 combined more concepts than the other two. Overall, the percentage of solvable problems at 53% was considerably lower than that found in experiment 1 which was 83% indicating that posing solvable problems from concept scenarios was much more difficult for subjects than posing solvable problems from specified concepts when the problem context was provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Number of scenarios posed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Number of solvable scenarios posed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Number of scenarios that were solvable by the specified diagram concept</td>
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<td>(4) Number of scenarios (out of those problems solvable by specified concept)</td>
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*Table 2. Profile of problems posed in experiment 2.*

The proceedings of scenarios matching the textbook was 65% with considerably more matches for scenario 2 at 60% than for scenario 1 at 40%. It is interesting that posing problems that match a simple application of family as a social system as in scenario 1 was about equally difficult for subjects as posing problems that match an application of individual and
family as in scenario 2. Out of the total of 43 scenarios posed that matched the problems, only in 23 of them were subjects able to provide an adequate explanation of how the scenarios matched the problems.

4. **General Discussion and Instructional Implications**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the potential of problem posing within the domain of social science for learning about the ability to apply conceptual knowledge flexibly as in transfer, the organization and application of social sciences knowledge or declarative and procedural knowledge, traits of expertise, across different problem solving contexts and the characteristics of reasoning, among competent novices. Findings from this study suggest that problem posing, at least as structured in the two experiments in this study, is a very useful tool for probing the development and organization of knowledge, as well as its application to problem contexts. This study also indicates that problem posing is a cognitively demanding task for students. In both experiments, only about half of all problems posed were solvable by the specified principles or matched the concept scenarios; only in fewer than one third of all problems posed in both experiments were the subjects able to provide an adequate explanation of how the problems were solvable by the specified principle or how they matched the concept scenarios.

The novices in this study were able to pose problems that could be solved by the specified principles or that matched the concept scenarios, yet in many cases could not adequately explain how the concepts and principles were applied to the problems they posed. The findings of this study were consistent with the research of Bransford et al. The high-performing novices of this study had retained a considerable amount of declarative knowledge after finishing the course and were able to verbalize this knowledge during the interviews. On the other hand, none of the subjects displayed awareness of some specific conceptual knowledge that one would expect them to possess.

Findings of this study support the views of researchers like Clement, Disessa and Minstrell who argue that many of students’ erroneous scientific concepts are useful starting points from which to build accurate conceptual understanding by helping students refine, reorganize, and prioritise their concepts. The misconceptions that surfaced during this study were embedded within a core of useful knowledge that could be mined by instructors in helping students refine their knowledge.

This study also provides a new perspective from which to examine instructional approaches used to teach social science. When teaching, instructors present an arcane precise vocabulary and syntax in discussing concepts and principles that makes perfect sense to them and subsequently discuss procedures for applying the concepts and principles to solve problems.
problems. This study indicates that, although high-performing students who have learned a considerable amount of social sciences after taking an introductory course cannot apply their knowledge flexibly across different problem contexts, they are able to apply pieces of their knowledge correctly within some specific contexts. Clearly, we need to find better ways to help students not only develop and organize conceptual knowledge, but also apply that knowledge flexibly across a wide range of contexts. Some recent attempts in physics instruction to do just this have been rather successful.9

Notes


Bibliography


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Finding The ‘I’ In Creativity

Phil Fitzsimmons and Ruth Lindsell

Abstract
This chapter discusses a project that grew out of Lindsell’s investigation into a previously untested theory of motivation. Her data in concert with ensuing interviews with highly motivated people revealed that their perceptions of how their creativity was developed was based on the concept of cognitive dissonance and the concept of ‘emotional topography’. In other words, they current creative abilities were the result of emotional disturbance as well as being personally close to ‘significant others’, which in turn resulted in an ability to be highly reflective risk takers who were personally discerning and emotionally aware. These elements provided these individuals with a worldview that was both optimistic, artistic and with a high degree of personal efficacy.

Key Words: Creativity, emotion, emotional distance, family.

*****

1. The ‘New Wine in Old Wine Skins’ Concept
As with all quality naturalistic research, the ‘emergent design’ of Ruth Lindsell’s investigation into Ford’s ‘Motivational Systems Theory’ not only provided a rich vein of data that revealed the veracity of this previously untested concept, but also gave rise to Guba and Lincoln’s notion of the ‘unappreciated rose garden’. In other words, while the data revealed a great deal of information about motivation and personal ideals, it also dealt with other issues such as memory, the processes by which creativity was developed in childhood as well the notion of engagement as a key aspect of the conditions of learning. While this chapter discusses these aspects it is not intended to imply cause and effect relationships or even a ‘grounded theory’ of creative development. However, it does offer foundations for reflection and further research in regard to these points given that this field is overwhelmingly grounded in quantitative research and ‘there has been a complete lack of consensus as to the forces that generate and give impetus to creativity in childhood’.

Hence, as this chapter shifts into a focus on qualitative data detailing a ‘narrative expedition into the qualitative unknown’, it also reflects the seminal work of Kneller in this area and in particular his pertinent question of ‘what does awaken creativity in children’? In seeking to explore this question through ‘walk down memory lane’ interviews there will now be a
change tenor ‘which gives a more powerful and appropriate voice to the data’.⁶

Listening to people talk in their own terms about what had been significant in their lives seemed to us far more valuable than studying preconceived psychometric scales or contrived experiments’.⁷

It should also be noted that the literature that accompanies the following section is not the typical protocol of qualitative research, and was in no way undertaken a priori to the research. Instead it reflects the iterative cycle of response in which the inductive process of data analysis lead to related avenues and pathways of related connections across several fields of literature.

2. Placing I in ‘Creativity’: Descriptions of Methodological Elements

As I sifted through Ruth’s data as it ‘cascaded’ out of her micro-ethnographic field-work, I began to see snippets of the motivational forces that underpinned, and were the impetus for success of a group of ‘tall poppies’, Australian parlance for high flyers, also gave insight into the nature of a group of respondents that were highly creative in their respective spheres. These people were not world leaders in their sphere, whose lives and beliefs form the foundation of research into creativity, but an example of what Botticchio believes needs to more fully examined, the lives and beliefs of ‘small c people’.⁸ People who are creative in their respective field and whose impact is more localized and community based.

This sifting process was initially based on the recognition that the interview data provided by these ‘small c people’ was grounded in elements of ‘conceptual metaphor’.⁹ The interview data for each respondent began with these lexical facets of ‘unconscious systems or ideas, … or frames that shape the way we reason, how we perceive and the way we act’.¹⁰ Having isolated these initial framing units or metaphors, other key frames were isolated and a process of coding was initiated which involved ‘segmenting and labelling text to form descriptions and broad themes in the data’.¹¹ By doing this I was seeking to make sense of the data and activate the ‘inductive process of narrowing the data into a few themes’.¹²

Initially an introductory key in the methodological bilge of unlocking and unpacking the data was the long held view of the literature base that ‘creativity is both diverse, complex’¹³ and ‘characterized by difference’.¹⁴ While on the surface the interview data appeared to support an ongoing case for diversity, as did the initial entrée into understanding via the
conceptual metaphors, ‘the ongoing constructivist cycle of continuously refine and examining the data’ revealed that there was set of thematic similarities. Albeit expressed in different formats and language use, the threads of related structural metaphors and codified themes revealed a connected set of crossover ‘essences’. While acknowledging that ‘member checking’ was not possible for the data set undertaken by Lindsell during the revisitation of her data, the thread of meaning that arose out of her data was reviewed and revisited through this triangulation process through three follow up interviews post Lindsell’s work.

As revealed in the following section, the themes or braids of meaning that emerged from this analytic process revealed, in a ‘grounded sense’ that creativity was ‘home grown’ emotionally based process arising out of the tension between cognitive dissonance and an emic understanding similar to Hargraves notion of ‘emotional geography’.

3. Finding I in ‘Creativity’: Descriptions of Participants and Process

While there were obviously degrees of difference in the thematic similarities that arose out the interviews with the eight respondents in this study, it would appear that key facet that they believed gave rise to creativity was related to a sense of who they were as an individual. This in turn was based on a binary of refuge and disconnectedness. In relation to the first, this facet can be summed in the words of ‘Helen’ who stated that ‘...my main memory of my childhood is, I guess if I had a word to describe it, it would be secure’. This sense of sanctuary was either received from the parents, or at the other end of the spectrum experienced in small everyday ways through ‘significant others’. However, at some point in this safety zone, there appeared some form of dysfunctional elements within the family such as the death of a father or grappling with being considered not very bright. For another this sense of disconnectedness was realised as the need for independence in the need to simply get things done through shopping with parents as an interpreter in a new homeland.

I think that at a very early age I knew things weren’t right in the family, although I was loved, I think. But I think I recognised that I also had to become, what I thought at the time, was a good boy so I wouldn’t get into trouble.

Whatever the individual family circumstances this sense of disconnectedness was often reported in terms of ‘cognitive dissonance, a psychological tension, somewhat like pain’. For one respondent this tension was ‘a yearning to know his father’ while for another it was ‘the heartbreak
For the respondents in this study, rather than allow these circumstances to overwhelm them, their interviews revealed a reflective-reaction process based on optimism or a process where ‘you make your decision as to which things are important and which are not’. As indicated in the previous section this sense of disconnectedness produced an impression of spirit, independence and a common element of seeking to generate an overall positive outlook. For each the relationship between disconnectedness and optimism was also linked with there being at least one significant other who tended to speak words of encouragement at just the right time or constantly talked to these individuals in terms of being able to shorten or decrease an experience similar to what Hargraves has termed ‘emotional distance’. That is the spatial, experiential and emotional connections that these respondents experienced with their significant others were all about creating another binary of closeness as well as openness.

I didn’t know what to do, but I remember thinking I have to do it. It was my grandfather who gave me a sense of getting off the beaten track and a sense of worth. He would take me walking, hold my hand, pull me close and simple turn of the track and hack his way into the bush. ‘This was you have to do in life’, he’d say. I loved him for it. I grew into me by being with him. Whenever I get stuck I think of those times.

The interview data supplied by these respondents indicates that there were three forms of this binary. The first was one related to these people being able to reflect even more deeply, or gaining an understanding of ‘emotional implanting’. It would appear that because of early issues with being alone or disconnected, but becoming emotionally and physically close to someone who genuinely cared for them provided a platform for more focussed introspection and a taking on of attributes which in turn, they believed, lead to self awareness. The focussed talk with another in many cases in tandem with this inward look also became transformed into artistic pursuits such as poetry writing, music and drawing. Thus, as inward focussed beings they now also explored their own emotions and contexts of situation, which gained an outlet in artistic expression.

An emotional bridge between their sense of where they were, the notion of an idealised family, an idealised way of personal being and a heightened sense of exploring the connections between these elements were now also built over several years and in at least one case over a decade. This exploration of self and their immediate world also created other elements of cognitive dissonance. At least two of the respondents claimed they was often...
seen as being depressed, they knew this was far from being the case and that they were simply deeply introspective.

This quietness was not only a place of safety but through their artistic outlets they developed not only had a sense of personal place but also became aware of personal responsibility in understanding and development self-contentment, the creation of a keen focus of attention to the things and people around them and the elements in there sight and situation that they believed really mattered. Gradually they built up sense of personal empowerment that in itself was at times taken for selfishness or stubbornness.

Looking back those early years were critical. I needed that space, it was where I gained the skills I now have, or at least the start. You need to be alone to do that. Also, … as well I began to know what was really happening around me. I guess I had to prioritize all kinds of stuff but that is what creativity is now for me. Just a sense of realising what’s good by listening, being focussed and just knowing.58

Perceived to be loners or at the very least highly independent this group were learning to not only develop an ability to read them but also learned skills through which they learned to read others.

Thus, over a period of time a second form of emotional understanding or distance was set in place; the notion of ‘emotional demasking’. Through their introspective viewing of self, the respondents also seemed to now be able to recognise the positive aspects of environments and within other people in regard to how their own learning could be enabled. As a whole they began to see that a positive learning environment is centred on being, or becoming focussed on taking risks and learning from these aspects. Again significant others often played a role in developing this understanding as they either engaged with these people in risk taking activities across a range of intellectual, artistic or physical pursuits. For at least three of these respondents thought the risk taking process had become a part of their life but it remained as a dormant entity akin to pushing boundaries. On failing university, Simon, for example, went to a local pool and simply swam a mile; but he described this experience as a milestone in his life.

And I went down to the local baths, and I just felt so low, and I dived in and I swam a mile - straight without stopping. It was just I suppose a means of me proving to myself that I could do something. I had never swum more than a quarter of a mile before, so that was quite a significant event.59
All spoke of at least one risk taking or boundary pushing event that was not only a life-changing event but also a force that had become almost indelibly ingrained within their psyche. In the times when they were either forced or chose to engage with new aspects in their environment this events would often surface as a means of understanding that difficulties were not insurmountable. Risk taking became gradually an acceptable if not pleasurable experience as they had learned that this involved a decrease in 'emotional masking' and a corresponding sense of self-efficacy. In other words reflection and increased self-belief allowed them to take risks within sight and a site of others and not be afraid of the consequences. Power relationships were no longer an impinging factor as this group appeared to have increasingly realised and actualised their own beliefs, values and goals and if people reacted negatively they were ignored to a large degree. This was not a form of arrogance but self-belief. If people reacted positively then their advice was taken into account and the cycle of reflection commenced again.

I’ve learnt that my art is me. It was ‘Gillian’ (pseudonym) who gave me that sense of what I could do. I could see that my skill was minimal but that I could take and copy other’s work in my practising in the train to work. I did this for years until I felt I could step out on my own. The first time I did, I got this job. The portfolio really took a matter of weeks, and you know I think I got the job because I didn’t care what they thought. This was my way and my style and that’s all that counted. Its when you can see the best in the worst of comments that are given with the best of intentions; and know the difference is when you’ve got it.

Typically this third aspect of this emotional-creative linkage and development became fully developed soon after they moved out of their teenage years. Each found them selves in employment that not only gave personal satisfaction but also allowed them to act in ways that enabled their creative energies to reach fruition. In regard to the means this was developed and now maintained they all claimed that they are able to deeply reflect on their past experience knowing that the ‘grounding of self confidence got them through, and none of that old baggage came with it’.

4. Placing the E in Creativity: A Final Comment

While this project demonstrates that creativity is diverse and different, it also provides evidence that environmental aspects are deeply grounded in the social and the symbolic. More importantly, it shows albeit through a limited sample, that while ‘the emotional factors may be subtle’
they appear to be the underpinning force behind the respondents in this study. Again, recognising the limitations of this investigation it would appear that in this case at least creativity is an ‘emotional infection’ in which optimism, emotional understanding and risk taking become deeply imbued in the psyche.

Notes

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12 Creswell op. cit., p. 237.
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18 Charmaz, op. cit., p. 38.
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21 Allen, semi structured interview, 12/12/07.
23 David, semi structured interview, 15/4/97.
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Ruth Lindsell is a classroom teacher at Cassurina School for Steiner Education, Coffs Harbour, Australia.
Section II

Role of the Environment
Engaging Students via Organizational Engagement

Hsiao-Chi (Angel) Chang

Abstract
Previous research suggests that students’ and teacher’s dissatisfaction is increasingly equated with nonparticipation in education, training and employment. Student engagement can provide a key response to this situation. How to embark on student engagement within educational setting? Organizational culture can serve as a compass to steer students and teachers in the direction of engagement and provide a set of norms defining student engagement. School culture is formulated and strengthened by interaction among different personalities and entities within the school. Student engagement lies on a continuum from being disengaged to be engaged. Then, how can culture serve as catalyst to initiate students’ engagement in school? This article will explore student engagement from different perspective and schools will function as a premise.

Key Words: Academic achievement, schoolwork, student engagement.

*****

1. Introduction
The main purpose of this study is to examine current schoolwork and its contribution to students’ academic achievement. Does current schoolwork, namely, teachers’ assigned homework in this article fully explain students’ academic achievement? Standardized tests, such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test. Scholastic Aptitude Test is abbreviated to SAT, have been widely used for measuring students’ academic achievement. The strong emphasis on test scores and measurable student engagement, however, masks true learning and other kinds of student engagement in schooling.

Student engagement refers to a student’s behavioural and psychological involvement in schoolwork. Behavioural engagement includes attendance at school, participation during class and effort in schoolwork. The time that students spend on homework is widely used to examine their academic achievement, and the public believed that the more time students spend on homework, the better scores they should be able to achieve. The time that students spend on homework is considered to be another factor that influences students’ standardized test scores. Does the time students spend on homework actually help students in academic achievement? I will examine whether time spent on homework can fully explain students’ performance on the math portion of the SAT.
An alternative perspective proposes that students’ academic achievement may be influenced by their family background. Schools and classrooms are microcosms of society. According to Coleman’s report and London studies of school effectiveness in the 1970s, students’ academic achievement is mainly due to their predetermined background. Students can be compared to goods moved into storage, in which nothing changes during the process. I will explore whether students’ predetermined background can fully explain their academic achievement better than the time that they are willing to devote to schoolwork.

2. Organizational Engagement

Schools and schooling can be thought of as a catalyst. Schools stimulate students’ learning potential and lessened their disadvantages. According to the National Research Council, students who are disadvantaged by their predetermined background can be helped by participating schools with high academic standards, skilful instruction, and the support they need to pursue their educational and career goals. The circumstances that require youth to remain enthusiastically engaged in schoolwork are shown in Figure 1.

![Figure 1](image)

**Figure 1.** A theory on educational conditions that promote engagement based on.

As the figure shows, academic engagement requires conditions that are not currently measured in our schooling, such as school climate, values, goals and social connectedness, and beliefs about competence and control. Educational context refers to school environment that facilitates collegiality, in which teachers have enough resources to meet their needs such as professional development programs. Beliefs about competence, values and goals, and social connectedness can be defined as an impersonal or personal environment and its effect upon learning. The following scenario which took place in a municipal girl’s high school in Taipei, Taiwan illustrates several factors presented in Figure 1.

At the beginning of the class, the Art teacher, Mrs. Huang, told students that class would be on the Concept of Chinese Ink and Wash. Then, she started to show students 5-10 art pieces of horses in traditional or contemporary genres of ink and wash and told students that their final project was going to be similar with those examples. One girl raised her hand and asked, ‘Mrs. Huang, can I draw something closer to my daily life? Can I use another medium?’ Mrs. Huang said, ‘No! Did you pay attention to our class? I told you that it was going to be Chinese ink and wash and we were going to draw a horse.’ Then, she gave students 5 examples and told them, ‘That’s what I want you to do for your final project!’ While students were working on their final project, Mrs. Huang was sitting at the front of the room. One student raised her hand, and Mrs. Huang asked her, ‘Yes, Number 15, what’s your question?’ She stood up and showed her piece to Mrs. Huang, who looked at it for 10 seconds and told the student that she had not followed the directions that she had given her and turned away. Another student took her piece to the front of the room to show Mrs. Huang. Mrs. Huang nodded and said, ‘You did a good job of following directions!’ She basically drew the same thing shown in the examples. The Art teacher held her piece up and declared to the whole class, ‘This is what you should do for your final project! Just follow directions!’.

Student A: I cannot wait to finish this stupid crap. It is so meaningless. Why can’t I do something that I’m more interested in?

Student B: Well, you know her… just copy the example that she gave us and you will be fine. I heard from May’s mother who went to our school when she was a girl that her final project has not changed in twenty years.

Student A: OK. Whatever. I am going to get it done and study for our midterm exam.

Educational context and instruction in the scenario is highly mechanistic. Mechanistic organization discourages initiative, encouraging people to obey orders and keep their place rather than to take an interest in and question what they are doing. Although students attended the class,
participated in the classroom activity and completed the requirement, they were not interested in what they did. In other words, they are not psychologically engaged. Students were persistent in finishing the assignment in order to have time to study instead of really engaging in learning. They did pay attention to Mrs. Huang’s instruction because they had to. Psychologically, student engagement includes interest, feelings of connectedness, and motivation. In terms of feeling of connectedness, there is barely any interaction between Mrs. Huang and the students. Students’ motivation to finish the art final project was to get it done so that they could study for their midterm exam. The content of their conversation mainly concerned the process necessarily to complete their project, which is, copying Mrs. Huang’s examples.

Csikszentmihalyi describes cognitive engagement as a state of ‘flow’ that allows a person to focus on goals that are clear and compatible, and provide immediate feedback. Does teacher’s assigned homework can achieve such learning objectives? The following data and regression analysis may provide us some implications.

3. Data
The data source for this analysis is the 1988 National Educational Longitudinal Study from the National Center for Education Statistics. The NELS: 88 is a nationally representative dataset of students originally sampled in 1988, when they were in 8th grade, and then followed in four subsequent waves of data collection through high school, college and/or the workforce. The reason that I chose the NELS: 88 instead of a more recent one is because of its representativeness. In addition, the study is closer to Coleman’s report and the London studies of school effectiveness in the 1970s. A random sub-sample of 700 respondents who took the SAT was chosen from the NELS: 88 dataset. Descriptive characteristics such as mean, standard deviation of variables are listed in Table 1.

4. Variables

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*Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Variation in SAT Math and Possible Predictors*
The following paragraphs will introduce my variables and the reason that I chose them.

A. Outcome Variables

Scholastic Aptitude Test math score. My outcome variable Scholastic Aptitude Test math score is abbreviated to SATM which is a continuous variable and represents the test score on the math portion of SAT.

B. Predictors

Homework time, is abbreviated to HWTIME which is a composite indicating how much time students spend on homework, ranging from 1 to 8, with 8 indicating the most time. The average time that students spent on homework in my sample is 4.49 and is more skewed to the right. Homework time was also correlated with SATM and the correlation coefficient was .158.

C. Controlled Variables

Socioeconomic status and student 8th grade standardized math scores were considered to be control variables in my model because they may have a causal effect on the outcome variable. When I ran the regression, those two variables were all significant and had a causal effect on the SATM. Another reason that I chose those variables is that they were correlated with the SATM. Results were that students’ 8th grade standardized math score had a correlation coefficient of .72. Then, socioeconomic status was correlated with SATM and the correlation coefficient was .40. My controlled variables are listed below:

Student socioeconomic status composite is abbreviated to SESCOMP is one of my controlled variables. SESCOMP is a standardized variable based on mother’s education and occupation, father’s education and occupation, household income and possessions. The average socioeconomic status for my sample is 3.32.

Student 8th grade standardized math score is the other controlled variable, which is abbreviated to MATH 8. The average test score of MATH 8 is 57.547. It is skewed to the left; however, it is still considered to be normally distributed.

5. Methodology

I used multiple regression analysis to construct my models. The technique allowed me to fit models to the data to simultaneously test for the independent effects of time that students spent on homework, socioeconomic status, and students’ standardized test scores on grade 8th math. I examined the assumptions of regression analysis by checking residual distribution, studentized residuals and Cook’s D of SESCOMP. The two control variables
in my model are: SESCOMP and MATH 8. When I added MATH 8 into the model, my main predictor, HWTIME, is not significant in this model. By controlling for MATH 8 and SESCOMP, HWTIME is not associated with SATM scores. Generally, students who perform well on the standardized math test in 8th grade will do well on the SATM as well. Math test scores in 8th grade can explain sixty-six of the variation on the SATM. Therefore, if a student has a high MATH8 score, then it is unlikely that that individual student will perform poorly on the SATM.

6. Result

Table 2 presents fitted regression estimates models examining the relationship between SAT math, socioeconomic status of students, time that students spent on homework, and standardized test score in 8th grade math.

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<td>(2.985)</td>
<td>(2.738)</td>
<td>(1.75)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SESCOMP</td>
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Summary Statistics

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Note: standard error in parentheses, p< .05 *, p<.01 **, p<.001 ***

Table 2. Predictors of Changes in SATM

A. Homework Time is Associated with Increases in SATM Scores

Model 1 of Table 2 contains the estimate for a model of one predictor, homework time by itself and is significant at the level of p< .001. The model explains three percent of the variation in SATM scores, which means that the time students spent on homework, only explains three percent of the variation in SAT math scores.

B. Homework Time and SESCOMP are Associated with SATM Scores

Model 2 of Table 2 contains the estimate for a model of time that students spend on homework and SESCOMP. Homework time and SESCOMP are both significant at the level of p< .001. The model explains nineteen percent of the variation in SATM scores while homework time itself explains only three percent. When I added SESCOMP into my model, R² increases sixteen and point zero one percent, which can explain the greater
variation in SAT math scores compared to Model 1 without adding SESCOMP. A one-unit increase in homework time while holding SESCOMP controlled yields an eleven and point forty-seven increase on SAT math score. The equation for Model 2 is:

\[
\text{SAT math} = 253.3 + 11.47 \times \text{HWTIME} + 64.65 \times \text{SESCOMP}
\]

C. Math 8 and SESCOMP are Associated with SATM Scores
Model 3 contains the estimate for a model of Homework time, SESCOMP and Math 8. Model 3 explains 67.93 percent of the variation in SATM scores. My main predictor, homework time, had no effect on changes in SATM score. Since my main predictor was not significant in Model 3, I did not use Model 3 to solve my research question.

7. Engagement in Schoolwork
Engagement in schoolwork involves both behaviors and emotions.\(^8\) Behavioural engagement includes students’ persistence and effort; students not only attend class but also pay attention and complete course requirements. According to my regression results, time spent on homework had limited effect upon students’ SAT math scores. Students’ standardized Math 8\(^{th}\) grade test scores do not fully explain students’ SAT math scores either. Adding the behavioral engagement is commonly used in today’s schooling, they explain 68 percent of the variation in SAT math scores. Relying on observable and measurable academic performance as evidence of engagement can be deceiving. Even if students did their homework and score excellent results on the test, they can be disengaged. What factors not included in my predictors may contribute to students’ academic achievement?

Students are engaged when they ‘devote substantial time and effort to a task, when they care about the quality of their work, and when they commit themselves because the work seems to have significance beyond its personal instrumental value’.\(^9\) Homework is one of the approaches that teachers use to evaluate students’ learning, and it represents the amount of time that students devote to studying. According to my regression results, time spent on homework has proven not the most effective evaluation tool. Students’ socioeconomic status more fully explains variation in SAT math scores compared to time spent on homework. ‘The first rule of educational inequality still applies: Class matters’.\(^{10}\) The possibility may be that when I assigned variable, homework time to my regression models, it already included the element of socioeconomic status. As Vivian Louie’s research indicate that middle-class Chinese-American mothers tend to have more time, resources, and educational experience to help their children through
schooling than working-class mothers. Mothers from working-class Chinese-American families have longer work hours; therefore, they do not have the same amount of time to help their children on their homework compare to those of non-working class. However, approximately 80% variation on SAT math scores cannot be explained by socioeconomic status composite and time students spent on homework. Thus, other factors must also influence students’ learning.

Notes

1 Student engagement particularly refers to Glanville and Wildhagen’s definition.
2 Behavioural engagement is referred to the Finn and Marks’s work.
3 This quote was directly quoted from Engaging Schools: Fostering High School Students’ Motivation to Learn on page 1.
4 The figure was directly copied from Engaging Schools: Fostering High School Students’ Motivation to Learn at page 34.
5 Morgan described Mechanistic organization in Images of Organization.
6 Finn and Marks again defined student engagement in psychological aspect.
8 This quote was directly quoted from Engaging Schools: Fostering High School Students’ Motivation to Learn on page 31.
9 This was directly quoted from Priorities for the Future: Toward a Common Agenda at page 242.
10 As Chang and Au wrote in their article: You’re Asian, How Could Fail Math.
11 Vivian Louie’s research indicated the impact of social, economic status with Chinese people.

Bibliography


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Abstract
This chapter acknowledges the contributions of Howard Gardner in the area of multiple intelligences. It also acknowledges the possible inclusion of additional intelligences such as the spiritual and the existential and, for the purposes of this chapter, emotional intelligence. However, recent debates in Australia surrounding issues in Outcomes-Based Education have not adequately positioned the theories underpinning OBE within a framework of both values education and multiple intelligences. Once this occurs, not only do OBE exponents and their critics need to highlight the importance of process learning as crucial to the encouragement of creative thinking in children but also in valuing ‘process’ with respect to promoting emotional intelligence, beyond the intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences. Unless this is done, commentators may seek to undermine OBE with impassioned pleas for testing and assessment. Gardner, too, deplores the conservative emphasis on testing and assessment, as does this chapter. But his limited attention to emotional intelligence demands analyses and a re-working if effective classroom learning, involving reciprocity between child and teacher, also a learner, is to become fully integrated in the quest for life-long learning. The chapter applauds Gardner’s contributions to educational theory, while evaluating practice in the area of emotional literacy, in schools today. Creative possibilities are available for emotional growth to reduce bullying and enhance self-awareness.

Key Words: Educational innovation, emotional fluency, emotional intelligence, emotional literacy, outcomes-based education, essential learning, transformational OBE.

1. A Place for Emotional Learning: Re-evaluating Testing
Outcomes-Based Education or OBE, in various forms, has been successfully introduced into Australia since the 1990s, referred to recently in Victoria, as Essential Learning. Yet, according to some, its demise is imminent; or, more correctly, it is teetering on the precipice of an uncertain future. These commentators seek to place the importance of testing above outcomes. Perhaps, the emphasis on standardized testing is actually fostering the demise of OBE. This chapter supports Gardner who is critical of ‘conservatives’ who undermine educational innovation with an over-emphasis on testing. Howard Gardner is not an educator but a cognitive...
psychologist for whom testing per se is questionable. Yet his ideas and insights have been embraced by some OBE curriculum designers. He is certainly not a supporter of intelligence testing yet his work on the multiple intelligences is internationally regarded.\(^5\) It is opportune, therefore, that the positive aspects of OBE receive reconsideration while the negative aspects need to be reassessed.

The negative aspect to be addressed here is the little regard paid to emotional intelligence in the curriculum. This intelligence enables us to select appropriate emotional strategies and behaviours for a variety of circumstances and situations. The role emotional literacy plays in thinking and learning has been established.\(^6\) The next step is to encourage its application in schools, deemphasise standardised testing and emphasise process learning. This approach acknowledges a key component of OBE: transformational outcomes-based education. OBE stresses values education and creative solutions in the areas of thinking and learning but neglects the importance of emotional education.

2. **Gardner’s Intelligences: Student-centred Learning**

Gardner’s eight intelligences or ‘human intellectual potentials’ are the linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spacial, bodily-kinesthetic, the intrapersonal and interpersonal and, finally, the naturalist. They are often used as a rubric for activities in a variety of disciplines in order to cater for differences in student learning in the outcomes-based curriculum.\(^7\) This intimate relationship between Gardner and OBE is evident, yet the area of emotional intelligence is subsumed within the personal intelligences.\(^8\) The personal intelligences are derived from a crucial component, explains Gardner, in the work of both Sigmund Freud and William James, ‘the centrality of the self.’\(^9\) They require one to be able to access ‘one’s own feeling life’ and to acquire ‘the ability to notice and make distinctions among other individuals.’\(^10\) The interpersonal intelligence is our ability to focus outside the self toward others; their motivations, ways of looking at the world and their partialities. The intrapersonal intelligence is looking inward, evaluating and re-evaluating our own motivations, feelings and acquiring insights into our own behaviours. Gardner explains that whereas the other intelligences operate independently, these two intelligences are ‘linked’.

He also acknowledges the difficulty to ‘scientifically investigate’ the personal intelligences but that they are cross-cultural and cross-historical although not necessarily recognisable across cultures. There is the sense that they are determined by the cultural context. It is not clear from Gardner’s earlier work, however, that emotional strategies, especially emotional fluency, such as managing feelings, impulse control and empathy, is intrinsic to the personal intelligences. Nor is it clear that he embraces the view that there may be a discrete emotional intelligence related to a high degree of self
motivation, self reflection, self awareness and self knowledge of one’s emotions to the extent that one can monitor them from moment to moment which is worthy as a discrete area of study, as some educationalists and psychologists claim.11

The importance of this link between Gardner’s work and OBE should affirm an educational approach that concentrates teachers’ ‘efforts on what students learn and [my emphasis] on what they achieve’ rather than merely the development of basic skills and the constant assessment of them.12 OBE accepts that both long term goals, such as transformational OBE or exit outcomes informed by global contexts, as well as short term ones, or the core disciplines and subject areas, are important. It concedes that both teacher and managerial objectives are considered, whereby the teacher becomes the curriculum designer, during the formulation and implementation of this educational policy.

Finally, it considers that deep understanding, meta-cognition, as well as life-long learning, especially the high level competencies such as critical thinking and complex problem solving, can be acquired. Therefore, while schools focus on what students actually learn and how to monitor and encourage their learning, there is a growing responsibility for schools to accept ‘that students need to leave schooling with a broad range of high level skills’ to operate at a high level in an increasingly complex world.13 This latter aspect is close to transformational OBE which considers the complexity of ‘real-world’ contexts and the extraordinary multiplicity of expectations and ‘role performance’ required in this present time in history for contentment in life. Initially outlined by Spady and Marshall, this area of OBE is the area least practised and understood.14 Clearly, the eight intelligences contribute effectively to this approach outlined above. An outcomes approach is a shift in emphasis from what is taught to an emphasis on what is actually learnt, or learner centred.15 It acknowledges the importance of inter-disciplinary learning rather than discrete subject-based learning, although core disciplines, known as key learning areas are a central feature. It does not consider to any large degree, the role emotions play in learning and thinking.

3. Curriculum Design and Continuous Innovation

The value of OBE for those critical of earlier curriculum designs is the move toward an on-going dialogue within schools about school effectiveness, values and continuous innovation.16 Unfortunately, the emphasis on standards and testing seems to undermine this ‘continuous improvement’ climate. Hence the theoretical debates that could grow in schools are thwarted by the pressure to maintain standards. This trend coincides with a move away from traditional views of intelligence as a single entity; especially the assumption that linguistic/logical mathematical
competencies are superior to other competencies and the assumption that practical intelligence and tacit knowledge are ‘not intelligence’. As Sternberg and Wagner explain in the Preface to *Practical Intelligence*, earlier notions of intelligence as IQ were dominated by the study of tests which, in turn meant that theoretical issues were side-lined while measurement issues were high on the agenda for research. Is this not dissimilar to what is occurring in education today? We are returning to an era of testing and assessment to the detriment of theoretical and intellectual debate. In other words, healthy debate on issues of testing and assessment are being sidelined. The move away from IQ in the traditional sense is clear and welcomed but the importance of testing in a range of cognitive areas remains unquestioned.

One needs to re-consider the purpose and the role of testing. Theoretical discussion in this area needs to be ongoing. The move toward a discussion of theoretical issues is increasingly apparent in OBE but such discussions are constantly undermined and explained negatively as ‘ideological motives’ underpinning curriculum change.

It is acknowledged by Gardner, in the Foreword to Kornhaber et al., *Multiple Intelligences*, that this emphasis on tests is currently in vogue, signifying a conservative trend in education. Academic achievement and intellectual expertise remain ‘at the core of school mission statements.’ Schools tend to ‘manage’ emotions and relegate them to student welfare areas or pastoral care, and are less aware of the intricate connections between thinking, learning and emotional activity. It has been thought that emotions disrupted intellectual processing but it has now been accepted that emotions contribute to and enhance our thought processes.

It is concerning that the interconnections between mental disorders, lack of appropriate responses to stress and low social and emotional health of students are not acknowledged. Some students may feel stigmatised for having, ‘owning’ or admitting to some form of emotional or behavioural dysfunction. Schools need to acknowledge that ‘students’ mental health should be of equal importance to academic achievement.’ According to Dr Michael Bernard, Melbourne University:

They’re [teachers] out of touch with the skills they need in communicating about emotional literacy and how to cope. Teachers haven’t had the initial teacher training and ongoing staff development opportunities to develop these skills.

Often teachers in the current climate do not define themselves as ‘teachers’ per se but human beings on a journey who are, at this point in time, teaching. In this sense, some teachers grappling for solutions to classroom/school difficulties can be dismissive of their abilities to be perceptive and caring, knowledgeable in both subject disciplines and
divergent thinking and, able to adapt to constant change in both the classroom and the institution. Nevertheless, as Bernard observes, emotional intelligence and emotional literacy training need to begin in the teacher training area and to continue as an integral component of teacher professional development.

4. Emotional Decision Making: A Creative Initiative

Hence, the emotionally destructive displays in the classroom and the playground, that seem to call out for some mature emotional decision making may suggest that teachers are ill equipped in this area. Yet there are many occasions, as outlined in different articles by Hatch and Saarni, when emotional strategies can be learnt and can provide the necessary solutions. With constant repetition and reinforcement of positive behaviours, emotional negotiation in the playground or in the classroom can become the responsibility of the children, but, in the meantime, they look to adults, especially teachers, to guide them.

As children learn to recognize patterns of behaviour that do not work for them in the long term such as that of victim or rescuer and to recognize the new patterns that are more successful in helping the child to get their needs met such as that of the leveller, children learn to choose the emotional responses that are more appropriate. Surely the promotion of outcomes-based education, one that encourages the classroom application of multiple intelligences can also focus its attention from values education as mere rhetoric, to fostering a classroom climate that facilitates ‘becoming emotionally intelligent’. Emotional education can be too readily subsumed beneath a values approach which, in the long run, may undermine emotional literacy. Both emotional intelligence and emotional maturity are vital for the success of life-long learning toward the promotion of positive life outcomes. Many fail to see the connections between some mental disorders, anxiety and bullying; and low level emotional functioning. Nor do many admit the need for young people, let alone adults, to aspire to higher levels emotional functioning. Some educationalists admit the urgent need for emotional education to be part of the curriculum. Goleman argues that difficulties such as family violence and ‘chronic unemployability’ could be positively addressed with attention to learning emotional literacy skills in the curriculum.

It may be assumed by some policy makers, teachers, educationalists and researchers that young people acquire emotional strategies and understandings independently of teachers and schools. Perhaps many do. However, other educationalists, policy makers, teachers and researchers are reassessing this assumption and suggesting the profound role teachers and schools can have in the area of emotional growth. It is also noted that teachers need to be supported in any changes to the school curriculum. It seems that in OBE ‘they are weighed down with the responsibility of
implementing hundreds of learning outcomes’. 28 ‘Teachers [in the American context] are overwhelmed, under-supported and overextended’, explains Joshua Freedman in the Forward to Corrie’s practical guide Becoming Emotionally Intelligent. This is also true for Australian teachers. Outcomes-based education, in part, may contribute to this sense of teachers becoming over-extended with excess policy expectations. Yet, properly implemented, OBE could become a bit player in this life-long process of personal growth but teachers need to believe in its efficacy. In time, one would hope these investigations into emotional intelligence may be helpful in the global enterprise for better understanding, sharing, caring, loving and cooperation, values most societies would like to encourage. These values are intrinsic, I argue, to transformational outcomes-based education.

5. Values Education and Emotional Literacy

The VCAA Curriculum Reform Consultation Paper, 2004, notes the importance of values education to the new Victorian Essential Learning Standards. It highlights such values as ‘social competencies’ or developing positive relationships and respect for oneself and others; ‘moral and spiritual attributes and values’ or working for the common good, and developing values and clarifying and questioning one’s own beliefs; ‘cultural understanding’ or ‘acting with integrity and responsibility towards others’; and, finally, ‘personal development’ or ‘understanding the physical, social, emotional and mental dimensions of health’. 29 One may consider that these are lofty aims and ideals. Certainly the connection between the emotions and mental health is welcomed. Yet these are only examples of the values expectations of the new curriculum and, certainly, those devising the curriculum reform need to be congratulated not chastised, for these lofty aims. The emotions underpin our values, I argue, rather than vice-versa. Hence emotional education, or literacy, is fundamental to any gains we might make in the values area.

The significance of utilising and encouraging emotional intelligence and emotional literacy lies in the roll-on effect that would occur for new generations of children, if we could harness our capacity for emotional intelligence in the classroom. Bocchino explains that a 1995 Gallop Youth Survey in the USA showed that teenagers felt something profound was missing in their education: 96% believed that honesty should be in the curriculum; 92% thought caring ought to be there too; 88% wanted the inclusion of moral courage; 92% wanted the inclusion of tolerance. These values allude to how we function with respect to our emotions; hence, they form part of the introduction to Bocchino’s book entitled ‘Emotional Literacy’. However, Bocchino agrees that values education is inextricably linked to emotional literacy. It is not clear that mutual respect can successfully be taught in schools if one is only concerned with the core
Lesley Caust

curriculum, pastoral care or values teaching. As we further consider the skills, strategies and tools required for emotional negotiation and clear thinking, as Bocchino, Corrie and Salovey and Sluyter have done, it is impossible not to acknowledge the crucial role the emotions play in promoting values and underpinning the ways children negotiate the myriad of tasks and activities in the core curriculum. It seems that parents, children and teachers ‘are looking to schools as a place to learn what young people will need to be successful in the future’, explains Bocchino.  

The corollary to this is that unless we grasp this responsibility in a committed fashion, some classroom teachers may continue to teach subjects/disciplines/skills rather than children and school managers may continue to manage teachers as if they are minds only, rather than complex and emotionally fragile human beings who also need emotional skills, strategies and tools in their day-to-day functioning as adults. We are foolish to ignore the responsibility to teach emotional literacy, argues Bocchino, because ‘in some schools, the interventions are yielding significant long-term positive effects’.

6. Mind and Body Integration: A Creative Alternative

Ironically, the multiple intelligences paradigm that recognised the importance of the arts and the personal intelligences came from studies in cognitive psychology, a science. Traditionally, the sciences were not merely different, but opposed, to the arts; and the emotions, or the passions, were opposed to reason. Hence the emotions could more readily be situated in the areas of the arts and culture which were deemed to be closer to the passions. In fact, it was this lack of acknowledgement in scientific research of the importance of the arts that stimulated Gardner’s initial research. Catherine Corrie explains: ‘Emotional intelligence is not something you do in your head ... it is an emotional, physical, mental and spiritual experience’. Although recent research clearly notes ‘regions of the brain central to emotional development’, Corrie’s position cannot easily be disputed. This fixation of ‘the mind’ as the centre, a mind/body split if you will, which was Gardner’s initial position, is possibly why the emotions have not assumed a more prominent position in his theories.

I centred the multiple intelligences far more within the skull of a single individual in 1983 than I would one decade later.

Following on from Corrie, the emotions are not a mind experience alone but a complex set of experiences in many places/parts of the human body, mind, psyche, unconscious and the spiritual. Gardner initially focused on intelligence theory as an important area to re-evaluate because he was
struck by the virtual absence of any mention of the arts’ from those purporting to understand the meaning of intelligence.\textsuperscript{35} We have yet to fully integrate the arts and the significance of creativity into this contemporary educational paradigm but as we do so, we continually challenge the dominance of certain notions of reason and promote debate over the connection between creativity and the emotions. By connecting the emotions to the word ‘intelligence’ are we suggesting that they only have value as ‘intelligence’? As de Bono explains, creativity does not have to be constantly linked to the arts or the intellect. In valuing creativity, we challenge the accepted structures of learning and thinking in schools and provide spaces to review skill-based and process-based learning, and reconnect with thinking. It is in the area of process-based learning that we allow students to take more responsibility for their learning, work on projects, share cooperatively and enjoy conversation. The advantage of cooperative learning, often part of skill-based learning as well as process-based learning, is the space and time given to try out new possibilities.

In order to see a new idea there is a need to create it first in the brain as a new possibility, a speculation, an hypothesis or a construct. This needs creativity, design and imagination. You cannot create a new dish just by analysing past successful dishes. You need to dream up ‘possibilities’ and then to try them out. Have you tried a mixture of marmite (vegemite in Australia) and marmalade?\textsuperscript{36}

Imagining future possibilities, or visionary and creative thinking, is a vital part of a complex picture for emotional education. Bloom, decades ago, recognised that students can achieve outcomes successfully if given the time to do so. The differences in student learning styles acknowledged by Gardner’s research complements Piaget’s developmental view; that there are developmental differences as well and, if given the time, all students can succeed. This gives us optimism for the success of emotional literacy. Given the time and the space for creativity and possibilities, emotional education may go beyond Gardner and OBE.

Notes

1 Outcomes-based Education is also known as OBE.

4 M Kornhaber, E Fierros & S Veenema, *Multiple Intelligences*, foreword by H Gardner, Pearson Education, USA, 2004. Howard Gardner makes the point that, at the time of writing in 2003, the USA had entered a conservative phase in education focusing on tests and standards. This can also be said of Australia which has tended to follow the American model.


7 M Kornhaber et al, op. cit., p.21-29. There has been much success in implementing multiple intelligences in the curriculum in the USA, which has enhanced student learning and the achievement of outcomes. Also see VCAA 2004 Consultation Paper, op. cit., p.6. Gardner is used here to justify the framework’s core disciplines.

8 H Gardner, *Frames of Mind*, second edition p.238-278, ‘An intelligence is the ability to solve problems, or create products, that are valued within one or more cultural settings,’ p.xiv and ‘The decision about what constitutes an intelligence is a judgment call,’ cited in Introduction to the Twentieth Anniversary Edition, 2004.

9 L Caust, *The Irreducible Other: The Second Sex Meets This Sex Which is not One*, unpublished PhD thesis, Monash University, 2007 p.90. I explain that philosophers have argued that, for Freud, the human subject is de-centred and the unconscious becomes the centre.

10 ibid


15 Alderson & Martin op. cit. p. 2
21 Harrington, op. cit.
23 Corrie, op. cit., pp. 53.
27 ibid.
28 Donnelly, op. cit., p. 5 and p. 11.
30 Bocchino, op. cit., p. 3.
31 ibid, p. 5.
32 Corrie, op. cit., p. vi.
34 Gardner, op. cit.
36 ibid p.79. Gardner, op. cit., 2006 is critical of de Bono’s approach, p.79. He seems to go beyond Piaget (1956) and complements Bloom’s taxonomy (1956)
Bibliography


Outcomes-Based Education


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Creative Development through Performance

Josephine Mokwunyei

Abstract
Every normal human being is capable of being creative. However the degree of an individual’s creativity depends on a number of factors. This chapter examines how children develop their creative abilities within a particular context of performance. The study involves an examination of children’s creative performances in a traditional community in Benin. The findings show that children’s creative development, especially in the informal setting follows a process of observation and imitation through participation, improvisation and expression of individual skills as an extension of assimilated musical ideas. The conclusion proposes a way forward for curriculum development and instructional strategies.

Key Words: Benin-City, creative, development, moonlight-games performance.

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1. Introduction
Since the main concern of this study is within the context of performance we need to contextualize that domain which most aptly describes the type of creative activity this chapter seeks to examine. Performance is a fundamental dimension of culture as well as production of knowledge about culture hence in the broadest sense it is the praxis of everyday social life. Performance is more aptly defined by M.T. Drewal as the application of embodied skill and knowledge; as behaviour twice behaved; as restored behaviour in which performers often- but not always-have some responsibility either to an audience or to each other, as in participatory performance that better defines our main focus.1

Still within the realm of participatory performance it can be said that creative engagements in Nigeria occur as heritages within the realm of the people’s culture. Sofola states that the cultural heritages of Africa are extensively rooted in the living traditions of the people of a society. The society through it collective experience arrives at a philosophy which in turn stipulates certain precepts, moral values, religion and modes of behaviour. These in turn constitute the values of the people:2

The culture of a people’s lives in the people and is as old as the people. Edo oral tradition talks about the varied cultures and history of its people. For them, dates were alien and
they still are for many; no more than flashes that go out faster than the blink of a firefly? Yet, both oral tradition and creative art have left the people with some of the memories, some of the ways and much of the images of the past.  

2. **Theoretical Framework**

This study is based on the theoretical premise that creative engagement provided by African culture remains a source of knowledge and formative strategy for the needs of growing children. Thus culture meets human needs by providing people with the tools and knowledge to survive. Culture also provides us with the social institutions and relationships to facilitate and transmit these needs. Therefore societal cohesion is achieved through the collective participation at various stages of cultural activities such as storytelling, songs rendition and role-playing where and when required. In one Nigerian village; *Okpe* in Delta State investigated by Idamoyibo for instance:

…a group of children during moonlight games, may come together, form a circle, stretch arms over, and beat each other’s shoulders while singing a song in call and response pattern with each child taking a turn to be the cantor. Whoever becomes the cantor uses the first names of participants one after the other in a clockwise order, to give the musical call to which others respond. He fails the game where he loses memory of a name of lacks ability of pronouncing it well before completing the circle. The aim and concept of this game is to produce aggregate processes of developing the knowledge of names. Recall and reproduce them verbally and correctly through a standard mental exercise. If we examine the themes of other songs used during moonlight games it will be obvious that some of them teach the child the sequence in daily routine.  

These play activities in pre-colonial times were encouraged by parents, knowing that they contribute to the intellectual development of children through creative participation in specific cultural /musical activities such as earlier noted. They informally provided fundamental education that enable children acquire basic knowledge and understanding of societal and environmental problems as well as how to contribute to solving them. 

The concern of this study is that the traditional situation appears to have since changed. With electricity and other modern societal malaise, children are no longer allowed to leave the comfort of their homes where the
moonlight experience has been substituted with television watching and computer games. Hence in order to achieve the aim of this study it became necessary to find a cultural society not yet with all the facilities of the township facilities.

3. Ekosodin Village

A traditional community was identified beyond the main campus of the University of Benin, though so near to modern civilization yet very much original African with various facets of their lives and still doing things in traditional style of the local culture such as chewing on stick fibre to clean their teeth, cooking with fire-wood and plaiting hair in traditional designs.

*Ekosodin* Village is located about 3 kilometres off the Benin Lagos Express road near Benin-City in Nigeria. However, its proximity to the main campus of the University of Benin has transformed its original village status to a semi-urban one with part of the population of the modern University community spilling over and occupying parts of the village while the original settlers still manage to maintain their traditional values as presented in everyday/creative activities.


As revealed in *Ekosodin*, Benin, up to this day, villages in Edo - Benin land - still have gatherings termed *igbebu*, that take place outdoors - *ore*, regularly in the evenings - *ota*, after a day’s work. As gathered, it is these three Benin words put together; *igbebu-ore-ota* that have been conveniently shortened to the more widely known *ibuota* as the phenomenon is currently referred to in modern Benin parlance. It is about young people settling down in the sand to sing, drum, clap rhythmic accompaniments and dance. Sometimes as part of *ibuota*, they tell folkloric stories. *Ibuota* as a creative engagement has been practiced throughout Edo land for thousands of years when young people looked forward to such evenings oblivious to them for education, information and entertainment.⁶

All these do not happen formally in an enclosure but informally in the *Ore* traditional environment which is an open ground or grove, where the children choose to play. It is usually sandy hence a cushioning effect less able to hurt or cause injuries to their tender feet during creative activities that involve a variety of movements.⁷ In *Ekosodin* the community has a designated grove that serve as venue for adult meetings during the day and such children’s activities in the evenings. The grove is naturally shaded with large virgin trees but the ground cleared and cleaned regularly. Until relatively recently:

One of the reasons for the *ibuota* is to secure communities in the evenings. In the early days when people and homes
were few, animals from neighbouring forests came close to homes foraging for food. Children playing scared them away and so, protected the communities. 8

Otherwise children convene in the evenings under the moonlight to play, while the elders keep a safe distance; far enough not to interfere but near enough to hear, see and be able to pre-empt unforeseen mishap or danger. However as people developed better coping strategies, these activities were maintained as part of their heritage for reasons earlier adduced.

5. **The Creative Engagement**

As experienced in *Ekosodin*, children call their friends and neighbours to *ibota* singing a popular song in the local Edo dialect entitled *No ma rio’rere* raised by a peer-leader. When they hear this song they run out to join the playgroup.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Edo</th>
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<tr>
<td><em>No ma rio’rere</em></td>
<td>Come let us play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>No ma rio’rere</em></td>
<td>Come let us play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Em’oghede, em’iyokho</em></td>
<td>Plantain <em>fufu</em>, coco-yam <em>fufu</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>No gha gbere’ko uwa o</em></td>
<td>Will burst/constipate your stomach if you do not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>No ma rio’rere</em></td>
<td>Come let us play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>No ma rio’rere</em></td>
<td>Come let us play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ihomwan I tie re,</em></td>
<td>I call not the elders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>I ma tie eni nwanren o</em></td>
<td>I call not the elders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>No ma rio’rere</em></td>
<td>Come let us play</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Above song immediately attracts attention of other children who immediately troop out from various homes to the grove location. What follows as observed is a sequence of creative verbal and kinetic performance activities manifest as singing, dancing and story-telling. The songs reveal the prosodic features of the language that seem to be responsible for the sense of rhythm and balance as in the following song.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B. Edo</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Uki no n’ba na o</em></td>
<td>Oh this bright moon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Erio vbe ba vba Evboehgae</em></td>
<td>As bright as in <em>Evboehgae</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ogue de gb’ode</em></td>
<td>A log fell across the way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Oma gum mwen la y’Evboehgae</em></td>
<td>And stops me from going to <em>Evboehgae</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Evboehgae, n’okpevbo</em></td>
<td><em>Evboehgae</em>, the great place</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The games are far more complex than they appear as shown by the lack of coherence and nonconformity of movement by the younger children who we purposely invited and introduced to the circle. These neophytes watched, imitated a few times and interestingly began to integrate gradually. The result is that by the age of 8 most of these children, through such engagements are able to expand their intuition and creativity to solve problems as well as acquire ingenuity to cope with life’s daily challenges.

6. **Music and Creative Engagements**

Highlighting the role of music in creative engagements, Idamoyibo states that:

> ... within the African teaching and learning system, children of various age grades come together during moonlight for some games. Culture, from primordial time has stratified various lessons of learning experiences within these games and made music the key to the motor of the games since music plays significant roles in the intellectual development of children.⁹

As he further informs, knowledge gained through music stays in memory till life terminates. Not only does it stay through life as an aid to memory recall, it provides necessary information that helps the individual – in this case the child -remember data organization and sequential order in which they occur when recalled. Learning therefore occurs consciously and unconsciously through a repetition of information sequentially set to music as occur in moonlight games.⁹

7. **Folk Tales**

On dark or rainy nights when children are unable to go out for the usual moonlight interaction, they sit around the fireplace and busy themselves with folk tales, derivative songs and other creative forms of musical accompaniment. In Nigerian ethnic societies as in Benin, folktales are used as medium of moral instruction, entertainment or for relaxation. Some tales involve literary and cultural values as poems, songs, dialogue or role play meant to achieve positive goals in human situations or correct certain negative attitudes. Tales on the other hand may inform about nature, origin of man, religious beliefs, rites and rituals, life and death as well as other human predicaments. Each artistic session is usually followed by aesthetic analysis, questions and answers to clarify grey areas. The main objective is to provide moral, spiritual and educational development that prepares the child to appreciate and imbibe held values of the society. These enable him/her fit
into the social set-up as he grows. Through such tales, attributes such as patience, love, honesty, goodness and others are also imbibed.\textsuperscript{11}

For example in a story situation where the hero/heroin is subjected to unjust treatment, the child develops a repulsive attitude to the tormentor and a value of justice as opposed to injustice, kindness as opposed to wickedness is learnt. Furthermore, a didactic story in which a problematic situation is resolved because of the co-operation among the characters of different ethnic groups could imbue in the child the merits of co-operation and competition among individuals as against the demerits of inter-ethnic rivalry. These translate positively to acceptable values in the larger society.\textsuperscript{12}

In utilizing folktales as materials for the education of the child therefore, emphasis is usually placed on those aspects that enable the child appreciate and initialize the cherished values that govern the society which in turn enable him develop his potentials as a functional member of the society. As Ogo-Ochi puts it:

\begin{quote}
The act of story telling requires the total attention of the child and more often may involve the re-enactment of such stories for effect. In the process of this imaginative exploration, the child begins to develop resources and internalize new things which will inform his adult behaviour as a result of empathizing with the characters in the story.\textsuperscript{13}
\end{quote}

S/he will thus internalizes the lessons gained from the fictional world of the tales and carry same over to the realistic world of every day life. While enacting the stories, the child further learns how to be expressive through the use of speech, song, gesture and body movement, thus developing his potential as an artist.\textsuperscript{14}

\section{Creative Engagements and Formal Education}

The orientation of a nation is a factor of its education as one of the basic aims of education is to create a better society through the normal development of the individual. If normal refers to norm, meaning rules, standard, average, abnormality would therefore imply something seriously wrong or more succinctly put; traits that may appear strange, unusual and far from average. It is these traits that should be eliminated through a development of behaviour in a process of play itself at the earliest ages in order to influence development at later stages.

Owing to this discovery as further experimented upon by this researcher with children in a school environment, many teachers elsewhere in recent times have used music to advantage in teaching sometimes very difficult concepts to pupils especially in the nursery and primary schools, as
we may individually acknowledge. Specifically, some of the songs are used to teach mathematics, music, morals, culture, civics, hygiene and discipline globally. Sharing his experience a similar situation about a children’s choir movement in Indianapolis Leck reports that parents noticed that their children choristers become more disciplined. Consequently, from a 130 membership 10 years before, the choir grew to 800. The understanding and belief is that music does more for a child’s soul and inner being to make them grow into better adults.

9. **Creative Engagements and Formal Education**

The Benin experiment is based on the theoretical premise that development means a progressive series of changes that occur in an orderly and predictable sequence or pattern as a result of maturation and experience. Therefore in view of the fact that the traditional scenario is changing or has changed due to the advent of developmental facilities such as electricity and television taking the place of outdoor games, it behoves on us as humanistic scholars therefore to develop strategies to equip schools adequately to cope with development issues. The hypothesis is that play is an activity carried out entirely for its own sake- for the mere enjoyment of the activity. This way, children are more likely to benefit directly and innocently without reference to the planned motives of the teacher or researcher.

The methodology developed from the creative dramatics course of the University of Benin, Department of Theatre Arts and Mass Communication that I teach entails practically introducing play in the form of music and theatre into primary and secondary schools activities. This is to augment the curriculum based subjects that are inadequate to cope with the learning experiences derivable from the performing arts. By this we refer to derivable influence related to mental and physical growth of the children contacted. The objective of the programme is to help students aged between 5 and 18 develop confidence, self esteem, communication and performance skills. It is pertinent to note that some of the salient words used as ideas in building lesson notes include trust, compassion, authority, discipline, freedom, beauty, hope, truth, love. With these values built into the lessons the expected outcome or objectives which the student teachers set out to achieve include; creativity, education, positive interaction, communication, performance skills, confidence building, concentration, discipline and self esteem that together make the journey through life much easier.

10. **Findings**

This study also tested the possibility of strategy transfer from informal to formal learning environment. By this study a new way of appreciating culture, societal norms, values and morals is achieved by borrowing directly or indirectly from the living traditions of the people. Not
only did creative dramatics prove to be feasible as a teachable subject it enhanced understanding other subjects. The program which was planned to attract and instigate the school management achieved positive results—from scepticism at the beginning—open invitation to continue at the expiration of the experiment. The programme was therefore a success because; pupils who were earlier introverted or comported themselves shyly thereafter eased out and intermingled freely with their peers even from other classes.

11. Conclusions and Recommendations

Starting from a the theoretical premise that creative engagement through African culture remains a source of residual knowledge from which abundant resources could be tapped, creative engagements for children also remain a formative developmental strategy for formal education. The job of the humanist scholar is to organize our huge inheritance of culture by making the past available to the present and making the whole civilization available for the use of mankind. We must examine the whole of mans culture again and again in order to reassess, reinterpret, rediscover and translate into modern idioms hence the Creative Engagements conference through this and other papers articulated contributes to standardization of knowledge in the creative discipline, towards stabilizing the world of children.

Obviously in today’s world, only the confident and articulate succeed hence this chapter adds to the awareness, especially for parents and school proprietors in developing worlds. Perhaps a thriving example to emulate is the community based drama program of Helen O’Grady Drama academy, the world’s largest community based drama school with over 1,500 locations globally and recently established in Nigeria. Finally it is recommended that children should be availed the opportunity to benefit from self-development programmes through the inclusion of creative dramatics engagements with local content, into the curriculum of all primary and secondary schools for the welfare and wellbeing of today’s children who are tomorrow’s leaders.

Notes

7 ibid., p. 98.
8 SB Omoregie, op. cit., p. 77.
10 ibid., p. 92.
12 ibid., p. 87.
13 Ogo-Ochi, op. cit., p. 87.
14 Ogo-Ochi, op. cit., p. 87.
16 Ogo-Ochi., op. cit., p. 86.

Bibliography


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Abstract
This study focuses on how children’s interpretation of what childhood is for them differs from the childhood that is depicted in television advertisements. Childhood as a constructed concept proposes different roles that structures children’s activities, habits, beliefs and understandings within different social settings. The aim of this study is to give children the opportunity to express their opinions on their experience, and also to engage them in a discussion on how, from their point of view childhood is represented in television advertisements. This will be achieved through conducting focus groups and interviews with children. Another part of this study involves a discourse analysis of the television advertisements that are used in this study. I derive from the discourse analysis applied to the advertisement texts and analyse the discourses of the focus groups and the interviews with children in order to elucidate the ways in which children’s articulation of the social construction of childhood are portrayed. This study puts forward an approach for how the social construction of childhood can be approached. Do children feel like childhood is given to them as a socially and culturally loaded word for them to act upon? Can children have this question in their mind? Or is this process so hegemonic that taken for granted behavioural patterns cover the possibility of such awareness? How do children as social actors recontextualize the practices of childhood? How do every day practices situate children and how do children experience this? Through deploying these questions throughout the study I will be positioning myself as an interpreter of how childhood is being portrayed in television advertisements and how children who experience childhood in their ‘own’ way fabricate their social status.

Key Words: Advertisements, childhood, children, focus groups, media, television.

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1. Introduction: Why Children and Media?

Though children spend a considerable amount of time engaging with the media, there is a dearth of studies and literature on children and media within sociology. As Buckingham writes ‘sociologists of childhood have largely neglected the role of the media in children’s lives. Yet it is now impossible to understand contemporary childhood without taking account of the media’¹. To this end, this chapter presents an approach for incorporating
media studies with childhood studies in order to give children the voice to talk about issues related to childhood in relationship to media.

I propose an exploration of how children’s interpretation of what childhood is for them differs from the childhood that is depicted in television advertisements. In other words, I look at what children understand from the concept of childhood and in what ways they see this in television advertisements that they watch. The concept of childhood as constructed by adults proposes different roles and models which structures children’s activities, habits, beliefs and understandings. My intention in this study is to give children the opportunity to express their opinions on their experiences of being a child through engaging them in a discussion on how childhood is represented in television advertisements. In turn, this study combines the theories of construction of childhood and theories of media studies in order to study the way children are represented in television advertising. The different representations of children portrayed in television advertising and children’s interpretation of these representations provides an understanding of how children perceive the way childhood is constructed within the consumer identity oriented society.

I consider this endeavour as a step towards accomplishing Goldson’s call in which he states ‘children are not only future members of society they are active participants within society, and such the temporal and spatial institutional arrangements intrinsic to familial and state forms of socialization require critical scrutiny’.

2. **Childhood as a Construct**

For the purposes of this study, it is crucial to see that childhood as a concept cannot be fixed with one meaning or interpretation in time and space. The concept is contingent upon the discourses within which it is used and experienced. It should also be noted that there are many articulations of the concept of childhood that needs to be embarked on. Yet, for the most part, these articulations are structured by adults through the media and other means insofar as ‘adults control the process of ‘growing up’’. The conceptualisation of childhood as a process of growing up around the discourse of adulthood would lead one to consider childhood as a stage that individuals go through as they become adults. That is the child in becoming. This chapter rejects this point of view and suggests that children are individuals who are entitled to their own rights and who have the ability to interpret the world around them.

What we might like to think of ‘childhood’ today may not directly refer to the ways in which it was understood in the past. The ‘historical construction and reconstruction of childhood have relocated children from mill, mine and factory into school, family’ and playgrounds. While contemporary interpretations of what ‘childhood’ stands for may be contested, a dominant interpretation is maintained, partially through media
Though the intentions in ordinary everyday living are usually naïve, the common belief is that:

Children should, as a matter of principle, do what adults tell them. Thus, apart from reflecting adult authority in general the phrase ['do as you’re told] highlights the ability, and often the wish, of adults to exercise control not only over children but also over their childhood.\(^5\)

Descriptions of childhood would be incomplete without the recognition of the binary opposition between childhood and adulthood which are both constructs. Jenks’ account of the similarities and differences between adults and children and how they on the one hand form an opposition to each other while on the other do not speaks to this point.

The child is familiar to us and yet strange, he or she inhabits our world and yet seems to answer to another, he or she is essentially of ourselves and yet appears to display a systematically different order of being.\(^6\)

While acknowledging children, adults need not reduce the differences but rather celebrate them. In order to recognize the differences adults have to first distinguish what the child as the other and what his/herself is as the self. There might appear to be a contradiction since unlike the question of ‘how to keep the ethnocentric Subject from establishing itself by selectively defining the Other’\(^7\) which is part of the critique and question of orientalist studies, in dealing with children as a subordinate group under heavy or limited subjugation of adults within the society. Here though, within the framework of this study, we are faced with the dichotomy of the self having gone through a phase of being the other, i.e. children. Due to the difference between the adults and children ‘the child…cannot be imagined except in relation to a conception of the adult, but essentially it becomes impossible to generate a well-defined sense of the adult, and indeed adult society, without first positing the child’\(^8\). Therefore, children should first be differentiated from the adult on a theoretical level by the adult in order to achieve any practical differentiation in the practices of institutions such as law, education, media and the family, which does not lead the children further into subordination.

In fact Burr points out that ‘the idea that children should be rights-bearing citizens of their countries’ was not recognized until November 1989 when the ‘United Nations formally adopted 54 principles that make up the UNCRC convention’\(^9\). Yet, Jackson and Scott state that on a closer look at the Convention due to the contradicting and conflicting interest on how to
conceive children’s rights two opposing perspectives emerge: ‘in terms of rights to autonomy, control over their own lives and independent status as citizens or in terms of rights to protection and freedom from adult risks and responsibilities’\(^\text{10}\). Since ‘the UN Convention attempts to balance those opposing views, to expand children’s autonomy without undermining adult authority…children’s continued exclusion from citizenship is tacitly reinforced’\(^\text{11}\). The concept of anxiety that emerges due to adults’ attempt to identify children in their own terms partially structures what is expected from children within the society. As Cunningham mentions in his examination of the development and integration of child policy matters in the political arena, he states ‘children were seen as the most valuable assets a nation had, one which, if not properly nurtured, would lead to a process of degeneration and to a loss of power and status relative to other countries’\(^\text{12}\). I would thus argue that, children’s rights and their recognition as active agents within the society continues to be limited within the constraints of what adults perceive childhood to be. Rather, beyond the dominant adult group’s interest in maintaining authority, this then leads to an understanding of children being perceived as needing protection and therefore not being equipped with the ability to take part in the society as active agents.

Recent literature on childhood has been reiterating that childhood is a concept that is constructed within the society. Jenks posits that ‘childhood is a variable of social analysis. It can never be entirely divorced from other variables such as class, gender and ethnicity’\(^\text{13}\). Therefore, it is not only inappropriate to talk about childhood as a fixed and never changing phenomena but also as a unified concept. Childhood and children’s identity differ according to cultural, historical, geographical, economic, political, religious and social contexts within which they are situated. As Scott, et al suggest that ‘the construction of childhood needs to be understood at a number of different levels: the structural, the discursive and the situated’\(^\text{14}\).

In doing so, it is crucial to take into account the production and maintenance of meanings around the concept of childhood. ‘A theoretical emphasis on the means of communication as means of production, within a complex of general social-productive forces, should allow and encourage new approaches to the history of the means of communication themselves’\(^\text{15}\). Williams’ emphasis on means of communication as means of production is an important one in regard to analysing the different representations of different childhoods in society in order to uncover the connotations of the dominant ideology around which the concept is understood, experienced and maintained within the society.

However, it is also equally important to realize that means of communication must be understood beyond the communication technologies themselves. Buckingham shows that media literacy both for ‘old’ and ‘new’ media is the only way for individuals to be able to use communication
technologies in a creative and productive way and he states that ‘we need to move beyond the idea that technology has consequences in and of itself’. This does not mean that it is sufficient to consider how different media technologies are used by individuals, it is equally important to consider in what way different representations of any concept such as ‘childhood’ is interpreted by the audience and how certain productions are constructed.

3. **Children and Television**

   Longman describes childhood as ‘the time or condition of being a child’. Yet ‘child’ is described as ‘a person between birth and full growth’. If childhood was merely a stage that human beings went through from birth to full growth- not to mention the ambiguity of when ‘full growth’ is complete why do we not experience it in the same way? Childhood as a concept is a contextual construct that is founded upon a cluster of associations that resonates culture, politics, economics and social affairs. In our contemporary society media, and in particular for the purposes of this study television, act as one of the producers and distributors of artefacts that are constructed within a particular cultural, political, social and economic system which help shape the social life we live in and therefore play a role in the construction and reconstruction of the term ‘childhood’. As Arthur states ‘Popular media and digital culture are part of the everyday lived experiences of adults and children’.

   A quick glance to the literature on children and media will show that studies conducted with children and their relationship to media especially since mid 1950s, have shown a strong correlation between the medium itself and children in terms of physical and psychological effects of the medium on children. Research in the era adopted a traditional and administrative perspective and sought to achieve results that presented evidence of ‘negative effects’ of television on children. The early studies conducted by Wilbur Schramm and his colleagues on the effects of television which was published in 1961 as a report titled Television in the Lives of Our Children concluded that ‘children who had high exposure to television and low exposure to print were more aggressive than those with the reverse pattern’.

   Without a doubt television is a part of the everyday lives of children and consequently must be a key component of any studies of childhood. However, communication scholars have included children and childhood less frequently in their research agendas than other social groups. There is nevertheless a promising trend on the part of researchers and scholars dealing with the sociology of childhood and media literacy to incorporate issues relating to the construction of childhood and media. David Buckingham’s work can be said to be pioneering in terms of advocating and encouraging research on children and media literacy.
Yet the dominant tendency, even in recent research when children are considered in relation to media, is to take on either a technological determinist or administrative approach, which leads most research to conclude that the content or the medium itself is, in some way, harmful for children. This, in turn strengthens the argument for ‘protection’ since from an administrative viewpoint children would are considered naïve, vulnerable, passive and innocent receptors - see Ornia, 2004, Götz, 2004. From such a perspective, research would tend to conclude that violence on television should be considered in terms of children’s viewing habits and reactions.

Such views on media and children tend not only to conceptualize what childhood is in terms of a state that young individuals go through but also enclose children into and under the protection of what adults decide is ‘bad’ or ‘harmful’ for children. Notwithstanding the effects that media is assumed to have according to this paradigm either as positive or negative, the approach to the concept of childhood, and consequently what the children are capable of doing remains the same.

An in depth look at the relationship between children and television is crucial in order to comment on the construction of childhood and analyse children’s experiences of everyday living in an adult dominated world. For this we need to go beyond the notion of children watching television like zombies and rather challenge it.

4. Working with Children: Focus Groups

In my research I have conducted 10 focus groups with children between the ages of 7 and 12 in groups of 4. My intention in doing so was to engage them in a discussion on what childhood is for them, how they experience it. I showed them 5 television advertisements, all of which they were already familiar with, which depicted children of different ages in various roles as they took part in the advert. I moderated the discussion children had among them after watching each advertisement on what they thought of the way children acted in these advertisements. In addition to the focus groups and individual interviews that were conducted with children who appeared to have more to say and were shy in the group environment I also conduct discourse analysis of the advertisements that were used during the focus group.

Discourse analysis both as a methodology and method has been very useful in my study since it allows for a comprehensively and contextual framework for the analysis and also provides the tools with which a socio-linguistic analysis can be carried out. Taking into account my reason for applying discourse analysis on television advertising targeting and using children in their text, which is to be able establish a context for the analysis of the focus groups conducted with children, I have found that the focus groups, interviews and discourse analysis of both the advertisements and the
discourse of the focus groups are compatible in terms of conducting qualitative research with children. Snape and Spencer posit that one of the main characteristics of doing qualitative research is that such research ‘aims … at providing an in-depth and interpreted understanding of the social world of research participants by learning about their social and material circumstances, their experiences, perspectives and histories’. Taking into account my perspective on children and the methods used here, these three methods are complementary to each other insofar as children as social agents should be able to express their interpretation of their experience as participants within the society and also their interpretations and their actions are already bound to some extent within socially constructed contextual frameworks.

As this is an on-going research as it currently stands my findings are only tentative at best. However, there are a number of themes that have emerged as a result of the focus groups conducted with children which I would like to share with you. One of these major themes relates to the theory of ‘disappearance of childhood’ one which is mostly advocated by Neil Postman. According to him due to the increased use of technology by children and a vast number of subjects that are readily available to children of today via internet childhood has come to an end. During the focus groups while I directed and moderated children’s discussions on children who were acting like adults using adult language and vocabulary in the advertisements I paid special attention to explore this theory. Besides the fact that the theory of disappearance of childhood in its essence is highly technological determinist my preliminary findings show that children in no way feel childhood has disappeared for them. They were not only identified some to the language used in these advertisements as adult talk but also were clearly not sure of the connotative meanings used.

Another crucial theme that came out of the focus groups is that as the age of the children in the focus groups increased their perception of protection from adults and authority of adults increased. Especially eleven and twelve year olds were making comments similar to those that would be made by adults on ‘proper’ up bringing of children. Rather than mentioning that certain things are expected of them they were saying that is also how they think, whereas most of nine, ten year old children were using the rhetoric of expectations.

To conclude, I would like to emphasize that the way we perceive children and childhood plays a crucial role in our engagement with them. Perceiving children as active individuals who are capable of making decisions for themselves and who can engage with technology as who they are in active and interpretive manners partially determine their role within the society. As scholars it is equally important for us to adopt this sort of
perception of children as we explore the society and the different institutions and power relations that help shape the socio-cultural environment we live in.

Notes

4 Goldson, op. cit. p. 94.
8 Jenks, loc. cit.
11 ibid.
15 R Williams, Culture and Materialism, Verso, New York, 2005, p. 53.

Bibliography


**Naile Berberoglu** is a PhD student at the University of York. Her areas of research cover sociology of childhood and media studies with a special interest in critical pedagogical approaches to children’s education.
Abstract
Creativity embraces many of the key areas of cognitive development. We want our children to be developing ideas that inspire them to ask interesting questions, that prompt them to think critically about what they hear and read, that equip them to solve complex problems, that help them to make wise decisions and that encourage them to reflect upon their areas of strength and weakness. At Northwood College, we recognised that many of our students were active learners, motivated to work hard and achieve at school, but passive thinkers, wanting to be spoon-fed with the knowledge required for them to pass the necessary examinations. As a result, we launched our Advanced Cognitive Development Programme in September 2004 and it has had an enormous impact on our day to day practice. This report describes some methods we have used to engage students, teachers and parents and outlines a few of the practical strategies we use in the classroom.

Key Words: Active thinkers, assessment, creativity, critical thinking, dispositions, parents, spiral thinking, strategies.

1. Active Learners - Passive Thinkers

‘The brain is a wonderful organ: it starts the moment you get up in the morning and does not stop until you get into the office.’ The poet, Robert Frost - feeling a tad cynical - probably never expected this to be applied to schools as well as to the workplace. And yet, there is a real and growing concern that this is what we are training our children to expect. We have programmed them to become receivers of information, ideas and advice. Somewhere along the line, education’s prime function has become to impart knowledge rather than to encourage debate. We expect children to be active learners - to be diligent, motivated and enthusiastic in their studies - while being passive thinkers - content with being spoon-fed the facts necessary to waddle through the next hoop.

At some point, we forgot to listen to those voices who have been warning us that this is not a long-term strategy for a successful or fulfilled life. Heraclitus, ‘Knowing many things doesn’t teach insight’ or Montaigne:

I gladly come back to the theme of the absurdity of our education: its end has not been to make us good and wise, but learned... We ought to find out not who understands
most but who understands best… We work merely to fill the memory.¹

Creativity is the vital counterbalance to ‘knowing many things’. It’s not just about the arts - and we need to challenge this common misperception. It is about ideas - having lots of them, playing with them, trying them out and adapting them where necessary. It involves transferring the focus from receiving to generating, from avoiding risk to stepping into the unknown, from hesitant and anxious to brimming with enthusiasm. It’s a mindset - and one that needs certain conditions and experiences to flourish.

2. Launching a Whole-School Thinking Skills Initiative

Four years ago, at Northwood College - an independent 3-18 school in North-West London - we looked at our students and realized that, while they were highly skilled at passing exams, they were in no way prepared for a future that would require them to be creative, risk taking, independent-thinking individuals, responsive and innovative in the face of change.

As a result, in September 2004, we launched our Advanced Cognitive Development Programme and, since then, our emphasis has been on finding as many ways as we can to nurture the sort of mindset and opportunities required for creativity to flourish. The journey has been an exciting one - and there is still a long way to go before all our ideas are truly embedded in practice. It was rewarding, therefore, when our latest Inspection Report described the programme as ‘a major and successful initiative’ which ‘makes an outstanding contribution to pupils’ general education, influencing both their own and their teachers’ approach to learning.’²

This report picks out just a few of the strategies and themes that we have developed over the past four years.

A. Teaching for Creativity

Our model - Spiral Thinking³ - identified those thinking and learning skills and dispositions that we hoped to nurture in our students, while ensuring a shared vocabulary and understanding of the school’s goals. Once this was established, we gradually introduced a range of classroom strategies to help translate these ideals into a more practical day to day reality. These have formed a toolkit and have been useful in giving our teachers a place to begin the process of shifting the emphasis from teacher to student, from passive to active. This section outlines a small sample of these.

i. Asking Creative Questions.

At the heart of creativity lies the instinct to challenge the world around us - to refuse to see everyday realities as fixed and permanent. Teaching children to ask searching, open-ended questions is one of the most
satisfying aspects of a thinking skills programme, as their response frequently goes so far beyond what we could have expected.

Lots of strategies can be used. Simple lesson openers might involve debating answers to ‘What if…?’ or ‘Just suppose…’ questions, then getting the girls to generate their own questions of this sort. Alternatively, we might take an object or topic and invite the children to generate ‘thinking questions’ about it (for butter recently, one girl asked whether it had ever cost anyone their life!), then challenge them to group these into categories by, for instance, using some form of tree diagram.

We sometimes ask students to dream up an intriguing ‘I wonder’ question then write it down and stick it on their back. After spending a few minutes wandering around, speculating on the answers and writing their suggestions on the sheets, it’s fascinating to share the ideas put forward. Another popular activity is to invite the class to imagine they have magic truth powder and can sprinkle it on someone relevant to their history topic, a character from a book or a figure linked to current affairs. If commissioned to write the ultimate exposé, what five questions would they ask?

We have discovered that each of these strategies can be taken as far as the teacher - or class - wishes. A five minute activity can easily become a whole afternoon of hypothesis and research - and some teachers now use this approach with particular success to launch new topics in the Junior School. What is so rewarding is that by getting the children to ask the questions, we place them in the driving seat of their own learning - which, not surprisingly, they find far more gripping than playing the traditional role of passenger.

ii. Making Creative Leaps

It is no wonder that, as children grow up, they often become increasingly timid in putting forward their own ideas: this is a perfectly rational response to our over-emphasis on seeking one right answer. One antidote is to state openly and boldly and in as many different ways as possible that, for certain exercises and activities, there is no right answer.

Challenging the class to find ‘20 ways to…’ works well to emphasise the principle that ‘anything goes’: that, in the first stages of any creative project, all ideas - no matter how absurd - can play a valuable part in delivering the final strategy. It’s also fun!

So, for instance, Year 7 pupils - when asked for ‘20 ways to make a brain happy’ - came up with the following (and many more) ideas:

- Give it toys (what sort of toys might a brain like?)
- Go out on dates with it (where might your brain like to be taken?)
- Don’t confuse it (what’s your brain’s favourite way of learning?)
Complement it on what it can do well and don’t tell it it’s stupid
Don’t ignore it - listen to what it’s telling you
Give it a makeover (how might you make over your brain?)
Don’t give it second hand thoughts - let it come up with its own
Think lots so it can feel proud

Our experience is that the early hesitation that we have seen in so many of our students - something which Carol Dweck found to characterise bright girls in particular - is quickly replaced by a wonderful sense of liberation. Humour is reintroduced - and along with it come one or two absolute gems of ideas. The secret is to celebrate these when they happen - and, if possible, to highlight how they developed as a communal result of the other points that were made along the way.

Another strategy is to use ‘Up in the air’ as a means of gathering opinions and ideas. Teams generate an open-ended question about the chosen focus - perhaps using question starters such as:

Why do you think that… (eg In the story, X behaved as she did when….?)
What could be done about… (eg the problem of litter on the playground?)
If you were… (eg made head of your council, what would you change?)
Should… (eg recycling be made compulsory?)

Each question is written in the middle of a sheet of paper, then teams note as many responses as they can in a set amount of time. The paper is then scrunched into a ball and thrown across the room! Finders are sent to retrieve a ball, then further time is allowed to read the responses and add some more. The emphasis again is on the building of ideas - the fact that one team’s responses can act as triggers for further, yet more creative, thoughts. At the end, the questions can be returned to their original teams, whose job it is to select the most intriguing, unusual or interesting ideas to be read aloud.

We believe that it is activities like these that are having a dramatic impact on the scope and quality of ideas generated further up the school.

iii. Addressing Problems

A commonly used activity to promote creative or ‘lateral’ thinking is to take an everyday object and consider how it can be altered in some way so as to turn it into something completely different or simply a new improved version of the existing item. Children love re-designing televisions and
sunglasses, transforming roll-on deodorants into devices to ice cakes and dreaming up the next generation of mobile phone - and all of these pursuits can play a part in developing a creative spirit.

However, more interesting perhaps is the application of this activity to real-life situations and problems. What can be done about the problem of litter or graffiti? How can a solution be found to combat the rise in gun crime or teenage pregnancy? The same skills are required - analysis of the existing situation, then a brainstorming of possible alternative ways of perceiving the current reality. Can any existing ideas be adapted, combined or improved? Or do we need to look at things in a totally different way?

The curriculum affords all sorts of opportunities for this sort of discussion. However, even a short creativity course during lunchtimes can have impact, with our sixth form students responding quickly to the techniques and ‘habits’ of lateral thinking. When trying to solve the problems created by queues and congested lifts in a high-rise office block at the beginning and end of the day, their suggestions ranged from the wacky (jet packs and a fireman’s pole) to the practical (high speed lifts between popular floors, staggered starting and finishing times for the companies that shared the building) to the seriously lateral (get rid of the lifts entirely and introduce exercise classes and incentives to help people cope with the stairs?).

iv. Combining Critical and Creative Thinking

There is a clear overlap between the disciplines of critical and creative thinking. At Northwood College, we introduce critical thinking skills in the Junior School, with activities that help the children to develop their understanding of what is logical and illogical, what are definite and what are merely possible conclusions, and with games that help them identify alternative explanations for a given set of evidence.

‘Layers of Inference’ is a strategy that we have found of value from Reception to Sixth Form. Within virtually any subject, it is a highly effective way of encouraging a deeper exploration of a statement, a piece of text, poem, graph, map, picture or photograph. Each pair or group of students is given the focus item, with three concentric rectangles drawn around it - the first labelled ‘What is definitely true?’, the next ‘What might be true?’ and the third, ‘What questions would you like to ask?’

As a prelude to a more formal comprehension, this works extremely well - encouraging speculation and imagination as well as the careful use of observation and evidence. It can also be used as a starter activity for further research - with groups deciding to investigate different areas and presenting their findings at a later date. When Year 7 was recently given the statement ‘Girls tend to do better than boys at school’, their initial response was exuberantly positive. However, as they worked through all sorts of interesting
deductions, they realised that definite conclusions are virtually impossible to
draw and immediate reactions should nearly always be questioned.

Year 4 recently used a second strategy - ‘Alternative Explanations’ -
to explore sentences such as ‘My friend doesn’t want to play with me today -
it must mean she doesn’t like me’ and ‘I didn’t do as well as I hoped in my
maths test - I knew I was rubbish at fractions’. In groups, they completed the
sentence, ‘I’m not so sure. It could be that…’ by thinking of as many
alternative explanations as possible. This proved useful in encouraging them
to challenge assumptions and avoid jumping to the sort of conclusions that so
often cause problems in the classroom. Immediately its application to the
disciplines of history, economics, law, literature and science can be seen.

B. The Dispositions of Creativity

Underpinning the use of these strategies is a focus on modelling and
nurturing the dispositions of creativity. Children are unlikely to learn to play
with ideas if they can’t let go of the feeling that there must be one right
answer - something which requires adaptability and flexibility of mind. Even
then, their ideas will be of little use unless they are willing to share them - a
step that involves courage and resilience. And finally, even the best idea is
lost if not pursued - calling for initiative and a willingness to take a risk.

We have developed our own set of these qualities - closely based on
A. Costa’s ‘Habits of Mind’7. These have been introduced to students,
teachers and parents in a variety of ways - through fortnightly articles in the
bulletin; our own set of stickers celebrating things like ‘I’ve got a bendy
brain’ (flexible thinking) and ‘I used my thinking muscles’ (persistence); and
a progression of word cards displayed in classrooms. Reception to Year 7
focus on one disposition each half term, learning about these in depth and
taking certificates home to be completed by their parents with examples of
occasions when they have demonstrated that particular quality.

We have had fun devising activities to introduce these dispositions.
Year 1 invented their own characters based on the famous ‘Mister Men’
series (Little Miss Curiosity and Little Miss Northwood College Thinker now
adorn the walls), while Year 2 conducted research to find examples of
famous people or individuals from their own families who have demonstrated
qualities such as persistence and risk taking.

Meanwhile, further up the school, a risky - but thankfully highly
successful - lesson in initiative involved a whole year group arriving at the
assembly hall to find it seemingly empty, the lights off and furniture pushed
to one side. After a certain amount of confusion (and singing), they gradually
noticed the various ‘clues’ placed strategically around the hall. It was then
that we teachers, lying hidden on an upper balcony, doing our best to
suppress laughter while watching the whole thing on video, began to be
tremendously impressed with a number of the girls. This proved a great focus
for discussion afterwards, as the year group considered what initiative meant in practice and how it had and hadn’t been demonstrated.

Each of our Junior School year groups has a particular quote displayed in their classroom - such as Wittgenstein’s ‘If people never did silly things, nothing intelligent would ever happen’. Our experience is that children latch onto these - they are memorable and it proves an effective way of helping the ethos to become ingrained. So much so that now very often a teacher just has to say, ‘the best way to have a good idea…’ for the class to respond with ‘…is to get a lot of ideas!’’, Linus Pauling’s famous comment.

3. Assessing a Whole-School Thinking Skills Initiative

A variety of methods help us develop a picture of how the programme is developing and the impact it is having on the students.

A pupil self-evaluation questionnaire monitors attitudes towards thinking and learning. We are also gathering data to measure the spread of strategies across year groups and subjects. Alongside this, external verification is clearly of enormous value. Recently, we were awarded HTI’s new ‘Go4it’ award - created in response to their Issues Paper ‘Cotton Wool Kids’ that seeks to identify ‘schools where creativity, innovation and a positive attitude of risk permeate across all activities and thinking’.

Most exciting, however, are the individual stories - the anecdotes that mean the world to us but which often go unrecorded. One example came from a fourteen-year-old student, who stunned us recently with the following:

Before I came to Northwood College, I was known as the quiet girl who sat in the corner and never ever spoke or smiled. But that’s all the past now. It was like taking off a black coat and putting on a multi-coloured one revealing all my potential. I am a changed person.

4. Future Plans

Many more plans are in the pipeline for the coming years. Our annual ‘Explore Thinking’ evening offers parents a practical opportunity to try out – over a few glasses of wine – several of the games and strategies that are used across the school. The next step is to develop a Thinking Skills Forum for parents as a vehicle for offering advice, sharing ideas and extending the impact of our programme.

We hope also to move to the next stage in our professional development. Once familiar with the range of techniques we have introduced, opportunities must be found for reviewing these and considering which work best and which could be adapted and improved. In this way, we hope to become increasingly creative ourselves as individuals and as teachers.
Notes


Bibliography


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A Gift to Our Lost Childhood

Sofia Pantouvaki

Abstract
This chapter discusses the areas of influence of theatrical creation by and for children in the Theresienstadt ghetto during World War II and presents unpublished evidence of the effects of creative participation in theatrical performance on the surviving children. During the years of the unique case of the Theresienstadt or Terezín ghetto in former Czechoslovakia from 1941-1945 and despite the harsh living conditions, several hundreds of performances are known to having been held there. Theatre for children was extensively developed in Theresienstadt; the two main productions presented in the ghetto were the children’s opera Brundibár and the dance-musical performance Little Fireflies. These performances, the cast of which consisted entirely of children, offered the children a chance to dance and sing beautiful music and brought to their eyes images of life that were then lacking. Furthermore, it is proved that the children’s creative engagement in theatre provided education and served as a means for psychological survival. The results of research through archives and personal interviews with child survivors are presented in this chapter, focusing on the effects of theatrical image and storytelling on the life of the children. These effects are examined under four perspectives: a cultural, educational, sociological and psychological aspect, showing how children can deal with reality with the support of their imagination through creative interaction.

Key Words: Children’s theatre, creativity, drama, theatre, Theresienstadt, Terezín.

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1. Introduction to the Theresienstadt Case
Theresienstadt in former Czechoslovakia was a unique case of a ‘model ghetto-town’ where a whole town, the Czech town of Terezín, had been taken by Nazi occupational forces and was transformed into a ghetto in its entirety during the years 1941-1945. During World War II, Theresienstadt served two purposes: it was a large concentration ghetto in the heart of central Europe, but it was also advertised by Nazi propaganda as a ‘model ghetto-town’, ‘designed to deceive the outside world and to hide the truth of the murder of the Jews from public opinion’. From 1942 to 1945, 140,000 people were transported there, where they lived for different lengths of time, as numerous transports were organized from Terezín to the extermination camps in Poland, mainly to Auschwitz.
Another unique characteristic of the Theresienstadt case is that, during the ghetto period and despite the harsh living conditions, a surprisingly large number of artistic activities of considerable merit took place, covering areas of the visual arts, literature, and performing arts. In the beginning, cultural activities were designed to alleviate the strained atmosphere in the ghetto and were presented secretly. These artistic activities formed a bizarre weapon of ‘defiance’ against Nazi oppression within the Terezín ghetto. For the Theresienstadt inmates, making art was a way to escape and to hope, but also a way to secretly educate their children, as schooling was not permitted. Besides secret lessons and the preparation of theatrical performances open to the audience, many smaller-scale theatrical activities were undertaken in private in the children’s Homes, where children lived separated from their families.

My research through children’s theatre in Theresienstadt proves that, thanks to theatre, imagination could at times play an important role in giving the children a vision and a chance to experience aspects of life, which were then missing, as well as the perspective of a future life in freedom.

2. Children’s Theatre in Theresienstadt

Theatre for and by children in Theresienstadt covered all genres of performance: plays, operas, dance, pantomime, poetry readings, puppet theatre of all types, concerts and other types of musical theatre, as well as a series of private ‘performances’ presenting improvised sketches and pantomime shows. Children’s theatre in Theresienstadt can be divided into the following categories: performances prepared and performed by adults for children, performances created by adults with the active participation of children as performers, performances by children for children- these were usually shown unofficially and privately, and performances in which children participated addressed to an adult audience.

The vast majority of these works were based on text, while in several other performances spoken text was combined with music, in singing and dancing. Text performances were based on children’s literature, or were written in Theresienstadt especially for the children, while children or youth groups in the ghetto also staged well-known theatrical texts. Furthermore, there were dramatised readings of texts or group narrations of children’s fairytales, as well as plays based on Jewish themes and traditions.

The two major productions presented in the ghetto were the children’s opera *Brundibár,* a simple story in which the children sing collectively so that good wins over evil, and the dance-musical performance *Little Fireflies or Glühwürmchen,* which discusses the values of life and family. The cast of both these theatrical works consisted entirely of children.

Adults had no other means but the visual and performing arts to work creatively with children in Theresienstadt.
My observations on the main characteristics of theatrical performances for children in Theresienstadt are the following: A preference for child performers; Use of simple stories; Use of themes irrelevant to ghetto life; Emphasis on principles of life; Symbolic use of characters in the storytelling; Extensive use of music; Development of choreography as direction; Use of images.

Due to the importance of image for children, the adults working in children’s theatre in Theresienstadt attempted to create a type of illusionary theatre despite the fact that they did not have the means to do so. In particular, visual metaphors were reminiscent of ‘normal’ life: they reminded of aspects of free life lacking in the ghetto circumstances, such as eating rich food and attending school, thus giving the children a chance to remember or to be taught what normal life was like. Theatrical creation, more than any other type of artistic creative activity and due to the visual imagery and the direct and physical participation of the children, visualised imagination and the children’s dreams and gave them a chance ‘to be children again’.

3. Influence of Theatrical Activity on Children’s Lives in Theresienstadt

My research is based on bibliographical and archival material and approximately 76 archival testimonies, as well as on original interviews, which I conducted with 26 child and youth survivors- see Note 14 for more information regarding accessing extra information concerning the interviews and interviewees used in this chapter. It supports my argument that children’s theatre in Theresienstadt affected children’s lives under four complementary perspectives:

- A Cultural Aspect
- An Educational Aspect
- A Sociological Aspect
- A Psychological Aspect

The Cultural Aspect
Performances of a high artistic and aesthetic value
‘The Ghetto policemen used to say that in Prague there was no such cultural life as in Terezín.’

Introducing theatre to the children
‘Two years before it was forbidden for Jews to go to the theatre. So my first encounter with theatre was in Terezín.’

Providing entertainment
‘Entertainment was very important for us kids…’
Providing imagery and colourfulness in everyday life
‘All of a sudden they were allowed to appear on a
genuine stage and play genuine theatre.’

Creation of a cultural environment
‘[Theatre existed] because it was part of life
before the ghetto; it was not something new.’

The Educational Aspect
Education and learning through theatre
‘The first time I came to tell my mother that I also learned to
dance, she was wondering where, what. I said ‘I can dance
with you now the waltz’ …and I was humming the melody
from *Brundibár*. How important it was in my mother’s life
that I had become nearly like a young lady…’

Development of skills, later developed as professions
A means for self-expression
‘*Brundibár*, in my memory, was a strong impression because
of the great energy coming from the children; they loved it and
they played it with such enthusiasm.’

Development of creative thought, critical thought and observation
‘It was my first experience in Terezín, to do theatre in this
way. I had to learn something and play something for all and
there were exercises to do it very well.’

Training of the imagination and memory
‘The moment you were on stage you were the school child; that
was it.’

The Sociological Aspect
Learning the power of unity
‘*In Brundibár*, the evil power is frightened by the word *crowd*;
that was sung there.’

Development of social relations
‘Theatre was one of the few opportunities for people to meet in
public.’

Establishment of a protected environment
‘An island where we were not obliged to see every time, the
whole day, where we were, what happened with us, and we
were so employed and so together, we were really creative
among ourselves.’

Being a member of a group
‘It was great satisfaction to be a part of the opera group, to be
part of the team.’
‘I wasn’t so much afraid in Theresienstadt because I was
surrounded with people of my age, who were in the same situation.’

Creating a sense of collective identity
‘The song ‘Brundibár poražen’ or Brundibár is defeated was like our hymn... We sang the song all the time; everybody, also the kids that were not in Brundibár.’

Providing a link to their national background
‘I remember the first performance of the Bartered Bride. Everybody knows this opera, every Czech knows it... it is very difficult to describe it, what it meant to us.’

A sense of giving
‘We were sent to old people on their birthdays and we sang to them or congratulated them. We had a very good feeling that we were doing something good.’

Preserving social and moral values
‘At the finale you could feel the response in the audience and everybody was happy when justice prevailed and evil was punished. Everybody reacted positively.’

Maintaining a sense of continuity in life
‘The continuity of pre-Terezín and Terezín activities played an important role in the entire cultural life in the ghetto.’

Providing documentary evidence

The Psychological Aspect
The power of theatre to support the spirit
‘So it was not only entertainment to amuse other people. It was a mission.’
‘For us it was a medical treatment.’

A chance to experience childhood
‘Brundibár was for us something special. Brundibár was a gift to our lost childhood, because in it we could be children.’

Providing satisfaction
‘It was great happiness for us and necessary, the possibility to make it. It was like being in another world.’

Escape from reality / An attempt not to realise reality
‘It was an escape; escape in a world which was not a real world, which was like a fairy tale’.
‘It was something which took us out of the day-to-day troubles, the day-to-day life.’

A sense of freedom
‘For two hours in the theatre you had been free; there was no world around you and no SS men and no Hitler, it was gone.’
Development of personality

‘Playing in Brundibár in some way gave me a little self-awareness and self-confidence, that people praised me.’

Spiritual resistance and a sense of winning

‘In the end Brundibár must go and we were the winners. It was very much in that time to be a winner.’

Providing a link to normal life

‘That moment was also a little bit of normal life: to go and sit, and sing, and listen, and come together with other people.’

‘At that time, I think it was for us something important that during the rehearsals and the performances… it was like to see a normal life.’

‘All of a sudden you had moments of normality. So all of a sudden there was a school, a dog, a cat, and milk and ice cream, everything he wrote, this was so special, you could imagine it. So that was worth it.’

Hope and dreaming of the future

‘It was also a mirror of what was actually happening at that time and sort of reviving a sense of courage and hope.’

4. The Effects of Theatrical Performance on the Surviving Children in Later Life

The people I interviewed were involved in theatrical activities as active participants or as members of the audience. Child survivors describe their childhood and early adolescence during the Terezín years as being connected to many good memories. This is not only due to the passing of time and their memories softening the negative aspects of the past. As evidence shows, theatre was one of the main sources of enjoyable moments in otherwise very difficult conditions.

The survivors also consider that participating in cultural activities in Theresienstadt not only helped them to carry on with their everyday lives then, but also contributed to providing a measure of normal life. Similar to an interview with Herrmannová, they claim that during their difficult ghetto imprisonment period, creative engagement helped them develop a positive view towards life and a deep appreciation of all its good aspects.

I think that the theatre helped me more than in normal life
because many things were lacking and life was not normal.

Another most important aspect was that the children were taught to confront life with humour and inventiveness and that they realised that friendship and unity could give them strength. They also learnt to appreciate drawing, acting and singing as substantial means for personal expression, and
to comprehend how things can be told through metaphors if they cannot be said directly.

When the war was over and they had to plan their post-war lives, the children used the positive experiences of the ghetto cultural activities as a counterbalance on which they based the continuation of their lives. Art and theatre influenced many children in Theresienstadt, who later became professional visual artists, while there are also several other child survivors who became active in the performing arts.  


When evaluating the historical, artistic and humanitarian value of theatre by and for children in Theresienstadt it is essential to highlight that this creative activity took place under very specific circumstances. Theatrical creativity was translated into a way to protect the children, and became a distraction from suffering, a reminder of normal life and the basis for psychological support, resistance and hope. I argue as most important the view that creative engagement in theatrical activity was a foundation for the children’s *spiritual survival*, which resulted in *support* and *freedom of the spirit*.

In order to understand the function of theatre in the case of the Theresienstadt children, it is important to recognise the adults’ desire to offer them a ‘better life’, and, more than anything, a life close to normal. Therefore, a conscious strategy was devised, providing a cultural environment, which supported the children spiritually. It was a concerted effort by adults to maintain a moral centre, despite the abnormality of the living conditions. All the adult decisions and actions in terms of theatrical creativity were guided by this desire; although, it is also necessary to realise that the desired was not always possible.

Contrary to the function of theatre for adults as a means to escape from their well-known reality, theatre provided a means of distraction for the children in order *not* to realise the gravity of reality. What I consider central about the Theresienstadt case is how decisions on theatre for children were made: the spirit of the adult inmates encompassed a great belief in the power of theatre in coming to terms with life.

Therefore, the effect of theatrical activity on child survivors lies in the *development of a personal way of thinking*, what I call *a stasis*, towards life and in finding alternative ways to survive in extremely hard situations. In the Theresienstadt case, this effect is today filtered through time. The example of Theresienstadt theatre for children shows that perception of theatrical performances may enhance children’s psychological make-up and their temperament, and have a positive influence on children on cultural, educational, sociological and psychological levels. Although no
contemporary situation can be compared with a Nazi concentration ghetto, this experience can be linked to contemporary examples of children in oppressive environments, and offer insights on how to use theatrical creativity to deal with difficulties.

**Notes**


3 Lederer, loc.cit., Blodig, loc.cit.


7 *Brundibár* was created in 1938 by Jewish Czech composer Hans Krása and librettist Adolf Hoffmeister in Prague.

8 *Little Fireflies* was based on the homonymous fairy tale by Czech writer Jan Karafiát.

9 See archival interview of V Schönová, Holocaust Department, the Jewish Museum in Prague, JMP/3042, R Frahék, ‘Brundibár’, *Terezín*, F Ehrmann, O Heitlinger, R Itlis, (eds), The Council of Jewish Communities in the Czech Lands, Prague, 1965, p. 251.

10 What is unique about Theresienstadt is that most of the children’s dreams were about reality and what everyday life is like under normal circumstances.

11 Flachová, loc. cit.

12 There is a need to address to the interaction of the subsections of these aspects, due to the multi-faceted and inter-disciplinary quality of some effects.

13 All references for the quotes that follow are from my personal interviews with child survivors, coded: [Surname of Interviewee]_Int[Interview]SP[to Sofia Pantouvaki]_[Year the interview took place]. For detailed information on these interviews, see Pantouvaki, op.cit., p. 333.
16 E Šormová Theatre in Terezín 1941 – 1945, p. 68.
17 For further information, see Milton, op. cit., p.34, Pantouvaki, op. cit., p. 295.

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Blossoming through Literary Engagement

Sujin B.E. Huggins

Abstract
During the latter part of the nineteenth century, when notions of childhood as we know it became more well-established, public libraries began to dedicate space and personnel to children in an attempt to influence their reading tastes, and their future adulthood. By the mid-twentieth century, the field of children’s literature burgeoned and the professionalization of children’s librarianship emerged. Greater attention was paid to the diverse needs and abilities of children, with the promise to provide ‘the right book or information for the right child at the right time in the right place’. As the library strives to maintain its relevance as a community partner in the promotion and support of literacy in children, the collections and services offered continue to change. In consideration of this new paradigm, there is an inherent mandate to actively facilitate the development of creative and critically engaged citizenry. The aim of this presentation is to explore the ways in which this mandate is achieved while maintaining the focus on literary engagement and with consideration of and allowances for issues of ethnic diversity and socio-economic inequalities. Examples of best practices will be drawn from the author’s professional experiences in the United States and Trinidad and Tobago.

Key Words: Children’s libraries, library programmes, literary engagement.

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1. Introduction
Creativity is like a symbol, a spirit that blooms continuously. We don’t know when the child will reach for the spirit, but what we can do is to guide a child along the path that will lead him closer within reach of the creative spirit.¹

Whether one believes that creative individuals are born as opposed to made, it is generally accepted that the creative impulse or ‘spirit’ is a distinctly human attribute that begins in childhood. Some researchers investigating the development of creativity have found that it is primarily influenced by the home and school environments; which are, in turn, influenced by the wider cultural and societal ‘implicit theories’ and beliefs about children and their creativity.² Other researchers have cited factors such
as motivation, personality and cognitive and affective processes as ‘critical components of the creative process and creative behaviour’. 3

Outside of the theoretical or cultural debates with respect to delineating creativity, the importance of encouraging children to be curious, to use their imaginations, to express themselves in a variety of ways and to use their emerging understanding of the world to create new representations and to overcome present - and future - challenges, cannot be overestimated. In essence, it is our collective responsibility as adults to ensure that each child has the tools and the ‘spirit’ to function effectively within the context of his or her society and the wider global landscape.

It is with the latter point of reference in mind and a balanced consideration of the prevailing notions of creativity that this chapter examines the role of the public library, as opposed to the school library, as one of the institutional ‘guides’ that can pave a path for a child’s exploration of this creative spirit. The discussion looks at this role within the framework of the contemporary library’s mission and mandate; the professionals, resources, space and services offered to children in the library; and its ability to support or supplement the work of other institutions (such as home and school) in addressing the creative needs of the child. This examination is by no means exhaustive and will be informed largely by specific examples of good practice; interviews conducted with seven librarians at two public libraries in Champaign, Illinois, United States and the author’s personal experiences serving as a children’s librarian in the National Library of Trinidad and Tobago. It should also be noted that the emphasis on literary engagement represents engagement with the written word in a variety of formats, including print and electronic media.

2. Children and the Library

In the latter part of the 19th century, library service to children evolved out of a strong desire to influence their reading tastes and choices; choices which were thought to have a direct impact on the quality of their adult lives. In the United States, this early moralistic certitude was evident in the rhetoric of early supporters of provisions for children, but were soon tempered by the views of the new experts in child studies who advocated that proper nurturing of a child’s social, physical, emotional and educational needs would allow them to ‘take their places in a better society.’ 4 Notable children’s librarian, scholar and children’s book author, Betsy Hearne paralleled the work of the pioneers of children’s library service to that of a ‘visionary quest’ with a goal of ‘enrichment of experience through whole reading, the kind of reading that engulfs the heart as well as engaging the head and ultimately shapes a lifetime.’ 5

By the end of that century and the earlier part of the next, children were allotted their own space within the library; special training was
administered to those who served children in this space, which later evolved into a professional specialisation within the field of library science; and broader collections were being developed as publishing houses were gently encouraged to produce more ‘quality’ works of literature specifically for children. There was also the emerging belief among practitioners, especially visionaries like Anne Carroll Moore, the first supervisor of children’s service at the New York Public, ‘that the public library could contribute to the socialization of children as well as their literary development’. These conceptual trends fueled significant innovations in service and pervaded the canon of early professional literature and encapsulated by librarian, professor and scholar Christine Jenkins as the seven articles of faith.

Even though library service to children expanded steadily from that period to become an ‘institutionalized part of public library offerings’, there was little deviation from these early practices until a decade after the Second World War. Increased funding to libraries at the time stimulated an interest in serving the underserved -’the nonwhite and economically disadvantaged’ non-traditional users of the library - through the establishment of outreach programmes.

This move engendered an increasing sensitivity to and consideration for the ethnic and cultural diversity that existed within the communities visited by outreach librarians, which in turn resulted in the implementation of a range of inventive activities to capture the attention of children (‘from tricycle races to African dance presentations’, as well as the addition of books with multicultural content to the existing book stocks. These services also cultivated a commitment to cooperation between the library and the wider community; a pattern of library service that continues to this day.

On the international front, the 1950s marked the establishment of children’s libraries in many other parts of the developed and developing world and saw the inauguration of the Committee for Library Work with Children at the International Federation of Library Associations’ Congress in Brussels. The initiative was spearheaded by Dutch children’s librarian Johanne Wolf, Aase Bredsdorff from Denmark and Eileen Colwell from the UK. The founding and guiding principles of the committee dovetailed with the UN’s Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which proclaimed that ‘mankind owes children the best it has’, as well as the advances in the field of developmental psychology.

The UNESCO manual, *Les services de lecture publique pour enfants*, published in 1957, demonstrated a move toward global consensus on the articulation of the library’s role and the qualities of the librarians serving children, including ‘easy access to books, readers’ clubs and clubs for creative writing, storytelling, drawing and painting.’ It also stressed that children’s librarians should be ‘interested in working with children...know
and love children and children’s books [and] be practical, young at heart, realistic, patient and open to all children’s questions.”

As the influence of IFLA increased, the Children’s Section, as CHIFLA became known in 1977, continued to build upon these recommendations and established their own Guidelines for Children’s Libraries Services, first published in 1991, to which countries throughout the world subscribe. The introduction to these guidelines makes a compelling case for the importance of these services, stating:

Library services for children have never been as important for children and their families all over the world, as they are today. Access to the knowledge and the multicultural riches of the world, as well as lifelong learning and literacy skills have become a priority of our society. A quality children’s library equips children with [these] skills, enabling them to participate and contribute to the community. It should constantly respond to the increasing changes in the society and meet the information, cultural and entertainment needs of all children.  

It is further stipulated, and in accordance with the UN’s Convention on The Rights of the Child, the these needs be addressed irrespective of age, race, gender, language, socio-economic status, personal skills and abilities or religious, national or cultural background.

3. **Contextualising Creativity in the Library**

Based on the historical traditions and current incarnations of the public library, not all definitions or theories of creativity would be relevant to a discussion of its promotion in this setting. Consequently, there is an inherent gravitation toward the more general and inclusive conceptions that presuppose the potential for creativity in every child and acknowledge the role of social and environmental factors in nurturing this potential. Most definitions to this end incorporate the following fundamentals:

- The use of the imagination
- A definite purpose or intention
- A new and original idea or product
- A valuable idea or product

Equally, all of the librarians formally interviewed for this chapter echoed these sentiments when asked to provide their personal definition of creativity;
stressing the use of the imagination or ‘thinking outside the box’ to find new ways of doing familiar things as the most common attributes.

It has been suggested that when relating these criteria to children, one must further consider the fact that everything is new to a child and that his or her exploration is almost always deliberate and purposeful. A child’s imagination is fed by exposure to a range of experiences and the internalization of these experiences can result in creations that are of personal value and significance. Sue Cowley asserts that ‘creativity is as much about an attitude as any specific activity’ and that ‘we should be able to apply creativity to…every aspect of our lives.’ Within the framework of this understanding and the specificity of the setting, one can purport that the library serves to:

- inspire interest through exposure to a range of experiences and media
- create opportunity for exploration through space, programmes and resources
- support passion and motivation through access to information and ‘involved’ personnel

These objectives are invariably pursued alongside the fundamental recognition of the ‘child as reader’.

A. Literacy Acquisition and Reading Engagement as ‘Creative Processes’

To further extrapolate and manipulate the meanings and uses of creativity in the context of the public library, it is useful to look at the act of literacy acquisition as itself a creative process and the state of reading engagement as a facilitator of the creative process. To illustrate: if one were to consider the components of divergent thinking as expounded by Guilford’s Structure of the Intellect (SOI) model, which encompasses the characteristics previously noted, but rewords them as ‘fluency, flexibility and originality’, it is easier to recognise a direct correlation.

To acquire literacy skills, the child must first master an array of language concepts, sensory cues and physical formats; namely the book. Once these skills have been mastered, the child is now able to utilise the full extent of the resources and genres available to find answers to questions or for aesthetic gratification.

Ultimately, the ability to exercise proficiency and control choice gives way to self-expression, original thought and creation when they write their own stories, critically analyse text, dramatise a scenario and so on. The greater the levels of engagement, therefore, the more deeply entrenched and
familiar the processes and skills associated with creative thought inadvertently become.

B. The Children’s Librarian as ‘Creative Practitioner’

Public librarians who work with children are in the unique position of being ‘required’ to think and act creatively while serving as models and inspiration for the child’s creative journey. This ‘happy medium’ is driven by an intellectual and empathetic understanding of the ages and stages of a child’s development and an intrinsic desire to work with them at each of these levels. The breadth of their responsibility also includes a comprehensive knowledge of the literature and resources that are most reflective of potential and existing interests as well as the diversity of the children they serve. In practice, this amounts to a state of constant balance, flux, observation, mediation, investigation, passion, evaluation, opposition, intuition, innovation and negotiation—conditions that some have argued are necessary for creativity to result.

Additionally, public children’s librarians are also required to work with parents, teachers, administrators, authors and others who are directly involved in services to children; which in itself demands a level of fluency, flexibility and originality to successfully execute. The librarians who participated in the small-scale study for this chapter all agreed that although not all children’s librarians are creative in the traditional sense, they must adopt a creative approach to practice in order to ensure that they reach their young clientele and present useful models for parents.

C. The Children’s Library as ‘Creative Space’

Most modern public libraries have well defined children’s areas within a shared space; if not on a separate floor or building. The design, decorations and furnishings chosen for these areas are meant to create an atmosphere that is ‘both attractive and interesting to children.’ Bernadette Duffy, Head of the Thomas Coram Early Childhood Centre in the U.K., highlighted the equal importance of the emotional environment and the organisation of that environment on the child’s ability to tap into his or her creativity.

Although there are rules and conventions to ensure the safety of each child and the proper handling of resources, the library strives to be a welcoming and inclusive place to every child who walks through its doors. There are areas for play and exploration including a puppet theatre, construction blocks, and board games; spaces to work/read alone or in groups; open rooms for movement and activity such as storytelling, dance, and the like, and multipurpose rooms for any activities that require a more versatile space. With free and easy access to computers and a plethora of
entertainment media thrown into the mix, a wide spectrum of interests can be easily addressed.

D. Children’s Literature as ‘Creative Stimuli’

The world of children’s literature is now much more extensive than it was in the early days of children’s librarianship. Again, it can be noted that the creative appeal is evident both in the content and appearance of the literature and its effect on the thought processes of the child. One need only utter the words ‘Harry Potter’ for an understanding of the impact of literature on an entire generation of children (and adults). It is of little surprise then that fantasy was identified as one of the more popular and creative genres by the librarians interviewed for this study, some literary critics, and more generally, from Internet-based surveys conducted with children.

Other popular forms and formats identified by these sources include contemporary realistic fiction, graphic novels now being produced for a broader age group, and humour in a variety of formats and styles. While studies have found distinct gender differences in choice of literature—girls are said to prefer fiction and boys, non-fiction—equal access to as wide a range of material is the key to stimulating and supporting the imaginative and creative inclination of all children. ‘The right book for the right child at the right time’ must remain a core guiding principle of the profession.

4. Making Connections: Promoting Creative Literary Engagement

As previously noted, for engagement to ensue, there must first be the stimulation of curiosity and exploration of interests. There are various ways in which programmes are developed and used to accomplish this objective. At the heart of the process, however, is a connection to books, or in some cases, more general resources in the collection. This is usually combined with the necessity to appeal to the various intelligences - as most famously outlined by Gardner - and restricted capabilities of the young patrons. In cases where books or literacy do not form the basis of a programme, items are promoted through displays, reading lists and personal recommendations following the activity to encourage the connections. The most common programming activities that appear as examples of the breadth of good practice are outlined briefly in the following sections.

A. Literature-based Programmes

These programmes, as the heading suggests, focus on creating direct connections between the child and the literature and include storytelling and ‘read-alouds’ for younger children and book discussions and reading clubs for older children.
B. Arts-based Programmes
These programmes introduce children to the visual and performing arts both as observers and participants. They include, but are not limited to, concert performances, craft, dance or music workshops, and creative writing groups.

C. Thematic or Event-based Programmes
These programmes present an opportunity to delve more deeply into areas of group interest or cultural significance; for examples major holidays, sporting events or popular characters or activities.

D. Curriculum-based Programmes
These programmes provide direct support to the existing school curriculum in a variety of ways, including homework assistance, special demonstrations or experiments and librarian-led teacher workshops.

E. Technology-based Programmes
These programmes teach the skills for and promote the use of technology and can range from computer literacy classes to computer game tournaments.

F. ‘Special’ Programmes
This broad label can be used to refer to programmes that incorporate all of the previously mentioned categories, as in the case of summer reading clubs, or it can refer to programmes that do not fit neatly into any of the above categories, for example a presentation from a wildlife animal clinic.

5. Conclusion
To be entrusted with any aspect of nurturing children is an invaluable opportunity and a remarkable responsibility. Public library service to children has embraced this opportunity and continues to assume the responsibility through provisions of space, time, resources, technology and dedicated staff. Though not without its challenges, the ability of the library to serve as ‘the great equaliser’ with respect to access to information and experiences, which would otherwise not be available to an individual or group, cannot be ignored. Many expound on the importance of encouraging creative thought and action in children as a means of increasing their ability to navigate the demands of the future, but in order to do so effectively there must be a flexible approach to the understanding, mechanisms and practices involved in its fulfilment. Through the public library’s tradition of reflection and careful consideration of the developmental, spatial and societal influences on childhood, it is poised to remain at the heart and forefront of fostering each child’s ‘creative spirit.’
Notes

6 Walter, op. cit., p. 3.
7 Walter, op. cit., p. 6.
8 Hearne & Jenkins, cited in Walters, op. cit., p. 6.
9 Walter, op. cit., p. 7.
10 ibid.
12 Stričević, loc. cit.
13 ibid.
14 ibid.
16 IFLA, loc. cit.
18 Cowley, loc. cit.
19 Walters, op. cit., p. 13.
20 Claxton, Pannells & Rhoads, op. cit., p. 327.
21 Sisson, op. cit
24 Claxton, Pannells & Rhoads, op. cit., p. 32.
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Section III

Future Possibilities
Filoesco and the Aion Space

Lúcia Helena Cavasin Zabotto Pulino

Abstract
There are many programs which aim to foster creative thinking in children. The program Philosophy with children - Filoesco - has been used to prepare teachers to employ this approach in schools. Last year, however, we created a new program called the Aion Space, which focused on organized groups and communities. In it, professors and students coordinate multi-age groups and invite them to participate in activities related to a specific theme. Participants are asked to make questions about the chosen theme, think about those questions, and propose answers based on their imagination and analysis of their own everyday life. In the Aion Space, children are in their neighbourhood, with their friends and family. In Filoesco, children are at school, which is marked by a clear hierarchy and set curriculum. In both cases, children are engaged in critical and creative thinking, but in Aion, adults are not in their professional roles and children are not students, therefore, they are expected to think and communicate their ideas more freely. In this text, we analyse the importance of different contexts to the development of creative thinking and look at ways adults and children relate to each other creatively in an experience like Aion.

Key Words: Aion, Filoesco, philosophy with children.

1. The Project
On December 13th, 2007, we hosted a Philosophical Symposium at the University of Brasília. The guests were our friends: Psychology, Philosophy and Pedagogy students and professors; public-school teachers; and children. We had wine, fruits, breads and cheeses. We met to celebrate the anniversary of a project in which all of us have been engaged. For ten years, the professors and students at the University of Brasília have been developing the project Filoesco, Philosophy in the School, or Philosophy with children in the school, dedicated to encouraging elementary and secondary school teachers to introduce Philosophy to children and young people. This project has been applied in public schools, where children of low and medium social classes study.

The project, though inspired by Lipman’s Philosophy for Children, introduced some changes in the original method. Instead of using philosophical novels, we use literary texts, children’s stories, movies, pictures, and objects as motivating elements for a conversation, in which a
theme is chosen to be the subject for a collective reflection. Instead of using manuals to guide teachers’ work in class, we invite them to participate in an introductory course on Philosophy with children. There, they are given a theoretical and practical introduction to our program, followed by participation in the community of inquiry that they coordinate with the students in classrooms. The themes are chosen by the community of inquiry, as well as the perspectives of the reflection/discussion approach and the dynamics of the workshop. We then evaluate the process, relating it to points we study and the experiences during the formation process. At the end, teachers are able to think about the best ways of fitting philosophy practice into their schools, so that they fit with other courses, and so on.

We have been working with more than 10,000 people - children, teenagers and teachers - in many schools in Brasília and Federal District, and the results have been very satisfactory. Children have become more critical and creative and more participative in everyday life at school. A no less important result of Filoesco is the teachers’ qualification, not only for the practice of philosophy, but for developing a new kind of relationship with their students.

In a text written in 2003, I presented the thesis that Filoesco allows children and adults to redefine their roles with each other. Filoesco is a theoretical and practical collective project that considers each child as an original person, and develops pedagogical procedures that invite students to participate in the engagement and to occupy a place reserved for her/him in the community of inquiry: the place of ‘the other’. This place invites to the dialogue, and so, the teacher in Filoesco takes the child as someone unknown, that he, an adult, wants to know, because he considers that she has something important to say.

This way of relating to children is different from one in which it is expected that they behave merely as listeners, or that they repeat someone else’s opinion; acting as the teacher wants them to do. During the workshop, it may appear as an unsuspected, unthinkable idea, as the infantile experience is different from the adult’s. However, the experience is enriched with different points of view and different ways of talking about the world, about other people and about the child herself.

Filoesco has recently become especially important, as the Brazilian government made Philosophy an official course in secondary education. However, we have been questioning our motives for practicing Philosophy only in schools and with children and young people. Why don’t we adopt the practice of philosophy out of school, with different people, at different ages? Why do we distinguish groups or members of philosophical communities in terms of children, young people, adults or old people?
2. Extending Filoesco: Creating Aion Space

In answer to this, we have created Aion Space, a new project at the University of Brasilia. Aion intends to enlarge and diversify the presence of Philosophy in everyday experiences. It is a space/time of reflection, practice and divulgation in Philosophy, Humanities and Arts. Just as there are museums and expositions of Exact and Natural Sciences, Aion is a kind of space of collective experience, consisting of a multiuse space - with a library, ateliers, projection equipments, a stage, and some writing, drawing and painting materials - that promotes philosophical reflection on ethical, aesthetical, political, epistemological subjects, or psychological, historical, anthropological themes, and the appreciation or production of works of art. Philosophy, as a critical and creative thought, passes over the experiences and reflections in other areas of investigation, as it is nourished by sentiments of admiration and astonishment.

Aion is expected to be - unlike the school context - a space of resistance to the naturalization of the human universe, for it proposes that this is a contingent and not a totally determined and fixed world. Because of this, it can always be redesigned and reconstructed. It is a world of many possibilities of living, thinking and acting; a world of different kinds of intellectual, aesthetical and affective ways of men and women being together. Aion fosters the typical attitude of childhood; the investigative attitude, the creative, the playful and imaginative thought that searches for the sense and the consequences of being, living and thinking in the way we have been living and thinking, in order to create new possibilities for humanity to be in the world.

After choosing a theme, and selecting relevant texts – films, theatre plays, fairy tales, poems, essays, musical auditions, painting expositions, or everyday practices, typical beliefs and values in the community - the group is divided in smaller ones and they are invited to ask some questions. Everybody then comes back to the bigger group and the questions are 'socialized' as everybody thinks about them together.

What is happiness, liberty or reality? Is justice possible? What is the purpose of education? What is madness? What is the meaning of life? What is reality? Is truth possible? Why does someone consider something beautiful? Why do we believe in what we believe? Are we free to choose our beliefs? Is it possible for the nations not to make wars? Why does social inequality exist? Is it necessary? These are some questions we have reflected upon.

So, the meeting between academic and popular thoughts, feelings and practices is promoted; an opportunity of putting in doubt some of our convictions, opinions and experiences, reflecting about them together, and trying to imagine new possibilities for human becoming, for the human devenir.
Philosophy in *Aion* is conceived in its original sense as *philosophia*, the friendship with wisdom, as an inquiring activity, a dialogical practice, a pleasant meeting for thinking together. It is a kind of philosophy based on posing questions in order to question the naturalization of current concepts, beliefs, values, or truths, which have been presented to us, since childhood, as they were absolute, universal and natural. The practice of asking questions does not aim to achieve their right answer, but its purpose is to understand the questions, to contextualize them, to think about several possibilities of answering them and the choices involved in this, and to formulate more articulated questions about the world and about ourselves.

*Aion* is conceived as time in the sense of *devenir*, the time of becoming, the time of transformation. The meaning of *Aion* is time, eternity, ‘a child at play, playing draughts; the Kingship is a child’s’.

*Aion* is different from chronological time, though; it is a space/time for new possibilities, and not the space of institutions limited by rigid rules and aims, nor the space of school or university. It takes the philosophy practice to the streets, to the life of communities. *Aion* Space opens possibilities of exploring the relations and dialogue between popular and academic productions, practices and ideas.

This kind of approach allows people engaged in a collective philosophical inquiry to think with autonomy, about subjects that are usually taken as something natural. So, people can develop their imagination in a way that they can explore the various social and educative possibilities of living.

*Aion* is a space opened to several kinds of groups in communities. There is no restriction of age, so we can invite multi-aged groups, with children, young people, adults and old people, or a group with people from different professions, social classes and interests. At the University of Brasilia, we have invited students, civil servants and professors, from several areas, for thinking workshops. It has been a space that assures an opportunity for people to create a fruitful meeting, a reflection that includes many voices with different experiences.

By taking themes from Human Sciences, Literature, or Arts, as pre-texts or previous texts to inspire philosophical reflection, *Aion* opens the possibility for people to think not only about common sense notions, but for the contextualization of some important themes on human life, which are studied and expressed in the areas of those sciences and arts. Together with the professors and students from other areas, the group responsible for the coordination of workshops promotes a practice of philosophical reflection about ideas inspired by a film or a documentary, a piece of music, a theatre
play, a story or a poem, photographs or paintings, or narrative reports of quotidian facts.

Last but not least, we have been engaged nowadays in promoting contexts of discussion in multi-aged groups, in order not only to offer the opportunity for children to come into contact with adults and learn the grown-up ways of thinking and acting, but to make it possible for the adult to listen to the child and to learn with her how to look at the world as if for the first time, to imagine unusual situations and to search for new words to ‘baptize’, or to dare dubbing new unknown things, to create new words, new worlds, and to create and recreate oneself. Adults and children can have the opportunity of constructing together: questioning each other; showing their own style to feel and think the world; and their original ways of giving meaning to life. By learning to ask questions collectively, they can open spaces for acting together and for looking at one another in new ways; not trying to see the same, the expected, the pre-determined, but hoping to meet the novelty, the otherness. When this is achieved, they will be able to go on asking questions together, changing the world and diversifying the possibilities of human beings’ living and thinking.

3. Extending Aion

In a country like Brazil, where the poor people do not have the access to cultural events and productions, Aion proposes not only an interesting work, but a necessary one. In this space, people of different ages and social conditions may meet each other and have experiences of thinking together. Aion constitutes a new possibility of changing people and the ways men, women and children choose how they want to live their lives. In order to reach poor communities, we are trying to get a bus from research agencies. This bus would be equipped with a library, a DVD player, a data show and a projection screen, many toys, painting and drawing materials and other interesting things that could be used as motivating strategies for thinking together. In the absence of a bus, we have been working in communities with other projects of the University.

Recently, we had a meeting with a group to philosophize. There were four children: two brothers (10 and 12 years old) and their parents; a 10-year-old girl and her mother; and a 10-year-old boy, who is a friend of the other 10-year-old boy. They were presented to our project and we all introduced ourselves. After this, we showed them two comic strips by the cartoonist Quino, from Argentina, in which the protagonist was Mafalda, a very critical girl.

In the first strip, Mafalda asks her father, before going to bed, at 10:30 pm: ‘Dad, are all the people in the world equal?’ and her father answered: ‘Yes, Mafalda, we are all equal. But why don’t you sleep instead of being worried about this?’ And she answers him: I am not worried. I was
only answering.’ And her father says: ‘Ok, Till Tomorrow!’ The next two scenes are black, one showing the clock, three hours later and the last one, shows the hour on the clock, 2:50 am, and Mafalda’s two eyes, with the words: ‘Hy: Equal to whom?’ In the second strip, we have only Mafalda’s figure, made by points.

At the beginning of the workshop, we asked the children and adults to divide into two mixed groups in order to discuss and to compose questions about the two strips. Both groups came up with questions and everyone formed a circle in order to ‘socialize’ the questions.

In both groups we had questions about the way Mafalda was drawn. ‘Why is she made with points?’ ‘Is she a developing person?’ ‘Is she an incomplete person?’ ‘Is she unfulfilled because she makes questions?’ ‘Why is she undoing herself?’ ‘Is her figure made with points because she is questioning her father?’ ‘When her father answers does he fill in the blanks?’ ‘Not necessarily: he may enlarge the distance between the dots, as it seems in the strip!’ ‘Can answers generate new questions?’

Children and adults were talking about the comic strips, asking questions and trying to answer them. Suddenly, the boy without his parents cried: ‘I know! It’s a game! A game of linking the dots! The questions are dots and the answers are lines!’ All the others agreed with him and they continued to make connections between the two strips while reflecting on the possibility of one person completing the other by answering his questions.

This experience shows us that one boy had an idea that was a synthesis of what the others in the group were talking about and the way he did so was a playful way. He brought his experience in games of filling in the blanks to the practice of philosophizing.

We believe that the difference between the adults’ and the children’s approach is the factor of enrichment in the engagements between people and in the process of thinking creatively. In Aion Space, we intend to be engaged with people of different ages and different life conditions to think and act for the construction of a diverse cultural world, creating new possibilities for human becoming or devenir, and keeping alive the original feeling of astonishment even at the University, or in social life.

4. Conclusion

Returning to the discussion of our Philosophical Symposium: it was a pleasant party and a space of reflection and friendship. There were many participants of Filoesco and Aion, and we talked about Plato’s Symposium and love, about the Tales of 1001 Nights and Scheherazade, about experiences of torture lived in a period of dictatorship in our country, and about our experience in schools with the project. However, the celebration suddenly got its real meaning when a girl recited a poem, while another spontaneously started to sketch an original drawing, as third one laid on the
floor, and other children began to make noise, running around us as we talked, as most adult people behave. That was a party.

*Aion* Space is a space/time to welcome this kind of experience that takes people out of the planned and expected moments, and opens a gap for the new, the unexpected, and for an original experience. Our symposium was truly ‘*aionic*’ engagement.

**Notes**

1 As in Lipman’s model.
3 Here, I will refer to the child as *she* and *her* and to the teacher as *he* and *him*.
4 Heraclitus, fragment 52.
5 You may visualize this picture searching in Google for ‘Mafalda’, and clicking in ‘images’.

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Filoesco and the Aion Space


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Children’s Creative Imagination

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Abstract
In our web-based platform ‘Wayang Authoring’ children with different cultural background can share stories and make experiences in culturally different storytelling. The research question focuses on whether and by which design our system can enhance creative imagination and self-expression as well as helps share cultural diversity. The idea of Wayang Authoring is based on the Indonesian ancient art form Wayang. A wayang puppet is a two-dimensional movable archetypical image that is a representation of mental power and the physical world. In Wayang Authoring children are able to compose a story by using digital puppets, saving, and sharing it. This interactive tool also enables children to reload the story and play it again. Furthermore, the story can be modified or extended by other children. In a small window for each character, a story line is created as a map to show enough dynamic movements of the performance.

Key Words: Dual-coding theory, imagination, Wayang, Wayang authoring.

1. Introduction
Throughout the world puppet show is a popular entertainment form. Sometimes it is an ancient heritage, a reminder of an age long past; sometimes a medium for contemporary artist’s experiments with shape, colour and movement. For centuries it has been used to relate myth and legend and enact simple traditional farces. Now, as well as undergoing a tremendous revival as entertainment for both adults and children, it is becoming more and more widely used in education and also in therapy.

Involvement in puppetry, which encourages children to give their imagination free rein, to enact and come to terms with experiences of everyday life, may help considerably towards their satisfactory emotional and social development.

The idea of Wayang Authoring is based on the Indonesian ancient art form Wayang. A wayang puppet is a two-dimensional movable archetypical image that is a representation of mental power and physical world.

The function of wayang can be compared to a picture book. In particular, the pictures structure an uncertain confusingly complex world for children. Moreover, wayang is a puppet show, which represents a base for
role-plays. The Wayang Authoring enables children to adopt many distinct characters and to act out moods, conflicts, and imaginative fiction in a safe environment. The interactive functions of Wayang Authoring connect the world of gaming with traditional art of wayang and enhance imaginary and creativity power of the children. And even more: Allan Paivo comes to the conclusion that there is a close relation between imagination and the ability of thinking.\(^1\)

2. **Wayang Kulit**

Wayang Kulit is one of the traditional arts from Indonesia. *Wayang* is an ancient form of story telling that originated from the Indonesian island of Java. Over the centuries its religious character has increasingly developed into a distinct art form; foreign influences introduced new stories, characters were added, and new refined styles were developed at the courts.

UNESCO proclaimed the Wayang Puppet Theatre as a Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity on 7th November 2003.\(^2\)

*Wayang Kulit* consists of two words, *Wayang* and *Kulit*. *Wayang* is a Javanese word meaning shadow or ghost, *kulit* means leather, and added together ‘shadow from leather’. The *wayang kulit* is a two-dimensional puppet, made of buffalo or goat leather; like paper dolls, but with arms that swivel, see Figure 1. A *wayang kulit* puppet is a representation of mainly human characters and the physical world. Every part of a puppet’s design has symbolic significance. Different shaped eyes and noses denote such qualities as nobility, patience, crudeness, steadfastness, strength, loyalty, clownishness or wisdom.

*Figure 1. An example of wayang puppet*

The performances of *Wayang Kulit* are held for religious occasions, purification ceremonies, or when some transitional event occurs within the life of people. The puppets are stored in line, on a banana tree trunk, which is
behind the white screen and in front of the puppeteer. The puppets symbolize the original entities or the celestial archetypes whereas the white screen represents the World. The puppeteer is called the *dalang*. The *dalang* manipulates the puppets, sings and taps out signals to the traditional orchestra. He also speaks the parts for all characters; he must be able to render the shy sweetness in the voice of a princess, the spiteful whine of a lackey and the righteous but controlled anger of a noble hero. An orchestra, consisting of gongs, drums and tuned percussion instruments, accompanies the action — it is known as a *gamelan*.

3. **Related Work**

Storytelling is a communication means and an expressive art form in words, images, and sounds, which has been employed since the beginnings of humankind. At the beginning, storytellers tell a story by word, that is speech, gesture and expression. The technological development has changed the media that are used by storytellers. Media have changed from printing media to digital media. Digital storytelling is combining the art of telling stories with a mixture of digital graphics, text, recorded audio narration, video and music to present information on a specific topic.

Stories have probably been shared in every culture and in every land as a means of entertainment, education, preservation of culture and to instil knowledge, values and morals. Important elements of storytelling include plot and characters, as well as the narrative point of view.

A story can be created by an individual or by a group. The members of a group - distributed or in the same place - collaborate on the creation of a story, which may be done synchronously or asynchronously using different media. This collaborative storytelling has the capacity to build social interaction and to facilitate communication among the members of a community. In the following we refer shortly to some examples of digital storytelling.

TellStory is a web application system that supports the collaborative construction of stories. One of the most important issues of TellStory consists in the user’s possibility to use a template in order to address the elaboration of the story through the typical characteristics of a narrative structure.

KidPad is a collaborative story authoring tool for children. KidPad provides drawing, typing and hyperlinking capabilities in a large two-dimensional zoomable space. By these functionalities children can create stories by scenes and link them together in a virtual space. KidPad supports multiple users through the use of multiple mice. Collaborative storytelling helps children develop interpersonal and story-related skills. KidPad only supports collaborative storytelling within one computer but not in computer networks.
KidStory proposes to build systems that support collaborative learning which itself may underpin the development of storytelling and visualization skills along with the development of multiple forms of literacy. Technology offers an opportunity to support and facilitate collaboration in many respects. Today’s technology is designed to support either one individual at one computer, or one individual collaborating with another individual at a different computer using internet technology.

4. **Storytelling and Imagination**

The Indian American novelist Siddhart Dhanvant Shanghvi mentioned in a talk the preconditions, which made him a writer and storyteller: It was his grandfather, a Jungian psychoanalyst, who asked him to speak about his dreams. This brought clearness and structure in the chaotic world of his imaginations.

Speaking about mental images can enhance imagination. But how can the process of story creation support the ability of imagination? Allan Paivio focused his work on imagination and language. With his dual-coding theory he described how we store and remember information. The results of Paivio’s research supports his hypothesis that verbal information is processed differently than visual information. Depending on the context, the access of both of these channels is needed for mental processes.

For Paivio mental images are analogue codes and represent the physical stimuli we observe in our environment. The verbal representations of words are symbolic codes and these arbitrary symbols represent concepts related to the context of use. The media pedagogue Franz Josef Röll invented a method how to use media in pedagogical contexts. The bases of his concept are imagination, symbols and verbal expression. In his book he discussed some main results of the research of Susanne Langer and Alfred Lorenzer. In the following we recapitulate shortly the main ideas.

Symbolic images and by imagination created pictures are focal point for a quest of identity. It makes invisible things comprehensible by a visible sign. Our verbal language deals with semantically arranged constellations of meanings. Through pictures we endow meaning and comprehend our world.

Franz Joseph Röll develops in his book a specific view on the mental process of image creation. Imagination means two actions: first it comes from *imago* what is in his understanding related to presentation. Secondly it comes as well from *imitor* what stands for mimic acts. To symbolize is an act of construction and a very important act of thinking. Language and script are the basic symbol set of our culture. In order to progress in mental processes the subjects are supposed to translate experiences into symbolic representations. Symbolization is in this view the basic of invention and creation of ideas. Symbols are not only surrogates of
the objects of this world; they are also a vehicle that helps to picture and understand the real objects. Firstly, there is a process that might be described as a process of communication with one’s own mental processes and secondly there are also processes of communication with other humans.

Culture induced several art forms for symbolic condensations such as theatre, fine arts, myth, and fairy stories. Wayang as a living traditional art form hold on a set of symbolic shapes that can be used as a medium to express one self and to evoke fantasy and imagery, to communicate with the own inner world and with others. The associations that are stimulated by the wayang shapes are extended when a constellation of shapes is used. This constellation of shapes motivates and attends emotions in the process of story creation and story telling.

The wayang puppet presents an imagination. Their shapes themselves are on one hand a symbol and on the other hand they have a rich visual and sensual appearance that tells already a story. Those symbolic figures might evoke imagination and associations for stories. Notwithstanding wayang puppets have a complex and ornamental appearance giving a lot of space for one’s own imagination. Not all parts of a figure are completely visual fixed. The interplay of decoration and abstraction generate this space. This interplay between perfect composition and perfect visual design on one hand and indetermination on the other hand will be extended by the possibilities and perfection of digital media. Virtual wayang puppets may encourage to use digital media in a more active mode by communication and symbolization. In order to use the symbolic shapes of wayang, more activity and emphasis is demanded.

5. Prototype

Authoring tools can be roughly categorized into five basic programming approaches: script-based, card-based, icon-based, timeline-based and object-based.12 Wayang Authoring tool treats the application as a collection of objects. Children choose some objects and define properties of these objects.

Wayang Authoring is composed of three elements: imagination building element, creative working element and social interaction element see Figure 2. Children can get an idea or an inspiration from the tutorial or from other stories that are built and shared by other users. They can also give comments and rank other children’s stories. A child as a member of this system can compose a story, save and share it. This process will support children to get friends and to connect with friends in the context of the social network. A story is composed by using an interactive, a simple and an easy tool.
6. **Discussion**

According to Jenkins paper which he published with the McArthur Foundation from 2005 more than one-half of all teens have created media content, and roughly one third of teens that use the Internet have shared content they produced. He summarized that trend under the term participatory culture.\(^{11}\)

The *Wayang* Authoring tool serves all three forms of a participatory culture described by Jenkins:

1. *Affiliation* - through creating a user profile and joining a group centered on its favorite character.
2. *Expression* - through creating a new story with the authoring tool.
3. *Collaboration* - through rating and commenting other children’s stories.

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**Figure 2.** Basic elements of *Wayang* Authoring

**Figure 3.** Screenshot of the *Wayang* Authoring’s Prototype.
As the software would mainly attract the attention from younger children age 6-11, the social software tool does not need to have too many functions in order not to become confusing and taking away attention from being creative.

Social software can usually be broken down in 7 pieces: identity, presence, relationships, conversations, groups, reputation, and sharing. Wayang Authoring focuses on 5 functions:

1. **Identity** - is necessary. Children login to the application by a user profile. They identify were they are from, they add a picture and their age.
2. **Conversation** - would be provided by the possibility of commenting on each others stories on a wall.
3. **Groups** - are established through the main character of the story. We assume that similar to comic heroes children will have favourites and are eager to see what others have created with the same character and they can exchange about that.
4. **Reputation** - would be either a rating system on the quality and entertainment value of stories or stating the activeness within the system.
5. **Sharing** - can be organized over a map that places icons of the main featured character of the story on the home location of a child. That way the children can search either according to character or location.

When children create a story themselves and share the knowledge through the stories, children learn through friendly environment and develop their knowledge them self and also share it with others. So Wayang Authoring aims at media pedagogy in a way. The shared stories of a child enrich the imagination of another child through his culturally new images. In order to edit a shared story the children interact with these new images and assimilate them as well. This is a process of imitation of unknown images, which enhances the capacity of imagination.

**7. Summary and Future Work**

In summary, we propose a new approach to design story authoring that is intended to enhance children’s imagination and self-expression. The traditional art form wayang is full of visual characters and symbolic images. During a performance the imagination of the audience is requested by the story and the performed images. Wayang Authoring combines the world of computer games with this traditional art context. Future work will involve children from diverse cultural background to evaluate this system, focusing on whether our system enhances creative imagination, self-expression, and intercultural understanding.
Notes

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Can Children Engage in Philosophical Enquiry?

Morag Gaut

Abstract
This chapter shows that children of three and four can successfully engage in philosophical enquiry, develops a distinctive method for conducting philosophical enquiry, and shows that the method enhances the ability of the children to think critically. The research preceded with two groups of three and four year old children. There were ten enquiries, covering several areas of philosophy: ethics, metaphysics, epistemology, political philosophy and philosophy of mind. Drawing on the methods of Nelson, Lipman, McColl, SAPERE and Murris, and on the feedback obtained from the enquiries, a distinctive method of enquiry was developed, which takes into account the short concentration span of the children and their inability to formulate their own initial questions. The enquiry method employs stories and scenarios, and is prop-based, using a philosophy box, which contains the props. The research showed that age is not the only determinant of whether a child can take part in philosophical enquiries; it is also his or her level of cognitive development. A statistical comparison of the children’s contributions in the first and tenth enquiries demonstrates a marked improvement within that short time, with more children talking and providing relevant reasons without prompting. The children were able to use arguments, give reasons, respond to counterexamples, and use terminology such as ‘I agree’ by the last enquiry. They were able to discuss a variety of subject areas, although they had difficulty with epistemology.

Key Words: Philosophy box, philosophy enquiries, props, teaching methods, thinking, three and four year olds.

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1. Introduction

Philosophy has traditionally been a subject which is studied only at university and many professional philosophers have expressed a great deal of scepticism about the suitability of philosophy for children. Gordon Graham, when Regius Professor of Moral Philosophy at Aberdeen University, stated that young children are unable to engage in abstract thinking, ‘Philosophical questions have taxed the most brilliant of human minds over centuries – children are no more likely to grasp philosophy than they are nuclear physics.’

Mark McLean, who organises the Philosophy for Schools Unit at Aberdeen University, believes that children need to be thirteen or fourteen
before they ‘have the ability to think very carefully.’ In the face of such negative opinions, it is perhaps surprising that philosophy for children has developed at all. Other commentators believe that young children can engage in philosophy and some believe that children as young as three and four can do so. Rosie Dempster, nursery teacher at Tower Nursery in Alloa, has been successfully holding philosophical enquiries with her children for over a year and is enthusiastic about how the children can cope with the enquiries and the benefits they gain, ‘Philosophy encourages them to be free-thinking … accepting everybody’s ideas … justify their answers.’

This debate, as to the age when philosophy can be introduced to children, has been going on throughout the history of philosophy. For example, Epicurus, 341-271 BC, in his letter to Menoeceus believed that philosophy was for all ages, ‘Let no one when young delay to study philosophy, nor when he is old grow weary of his study. For no one can come too early or too late to secure the health of his soul.’

What is philosophy? Philosophy is comprised of certain methods of argument and a subject matter. Philosophical methods include devising theories and principles, reflecting, debating, making connections and providing reasons, examples, responding to counterexamples and using the method of reflective equilibrium, as it is called by John Rawls and using appropriate terminology. Philosophy provides ‘a framework within which … questions can be intelligently discussed.’

2. Philosophy and Young Children: A Review

The subject matter of philosophy comprises many separate subject areas, including ethics, the study of good and bad; political philosophy, which includes the study of fairness; epistemology, which asks the question of how we know what we know; metaphysics which studies what things are real; and philosophy of mind which concerns the nature of mental states. This chapter will show that children of three and four years of age are capable of engaging with both these philosophical methods and also the subject areas.

In order to make philosophical enquiry accessible for three and four year olds it is necessary to devise a suitable method by which the enquiry can be presented to them. If one of the existing methods, which have been devised to use with older children, was used, it might be found that these young children were unsuccessful and one would too quickly conclude that young children could not engage in philosophical enquiry.

To devise a suitable method, I reviewed existing methods which have been developed for primary aged children, for example by Leonard Nelson, Matthew Lipman, Catherine McCall and Karin Murris and I chose appropriate aspects to use from each of them and added some ideas of my own. For discussion of these methods, see Fisher and Murris and Haynes.
When choosing a stimulus, it is necessary to think about whether it would interest the children, and also whether there is sufficient philosophical content to create an enquiry. Since children enjoy listening to stories, I chose to use an appropriate story, either in book form as recommended by Murris or by creating my own narrative which unfolds throughout the enquiry.

I decided that the facilitator would provide the main question for the enquiry, as stated in Nelson’s Socratic Method. The reason for this decision is twofold. Firstly, it guarantees the philosophical content of the enquiry. Secondly, children of this age find it difficult to formulate this type of question and tend to make ‘comments or statements if called upon to ask a question.’

As it is important that this initial question encourages in-depth reasoning, is open ended and enables the children to think rather than to give just a yes/no answer, this task needs to be carried out by the facilitator for these young children. Still following the Nelson Socratic Method, the facilitator keeps the discussion focused on the question with all the children being able to speak without direction from the facilitator. As in the method of McCall the facilitator summarises at the end of the enquiry, which brings the discussion to a close and also reminds the children of what conclusions they have reached.

3. **Innovation**

My own innovations in the method of enquiry are designed to meet the constraints imposed by the relative short concentration span which three and four year olds have and to exploit the fact that they enjoy and respond to visual and tactile stimulation. Unlike the existing methods which enable an enquiry to last for approximately an hour my method has an average enquiry time of fifteen to twenty minutes, as this is the usual concentration span of children of this age. Also the enquiry is conducted near the beginning of a nursery session because if it is held late in the session the children are likely to be restless and have problems staying focused on the discussion.

My method is based on the use of props which are employed to help to keep the children’s interest and make philosophy an enjoyable experience. The main prop is the philosophy box, which contains the other props required for the enquiry, for example, a large teddy, two smaller teddies, a tablecloth, plate and a cake, which were the props for an enquiry, the Teddy Bears’ Picnic that examined the topic of sharing and fairness. The box is opened at the beginning of each session and helps to make philosophy a special activity. The children put the box in the middle of the circle and eagerly wait to lift the lid and see what is inside. The use of the philosophy box creates a feeling of excitement and expectation which concentrates their attention and as the children can handle the props and interact with them this helps to focus their minds and re-enforce the ideas which are being put to them.
I discovered that the props inside the box work best if they are interleaved throughout the enquiry, rather than if they all come out of the box at the beginning. This interleaving creates an atmosphere of anticipation, producing an item for the children to look at which helps to keep their interest and helps their concentration. The success of this interleaving of the props during the discussion, as opposed to using them all separately in a block at the beginning, is shown in Chart 1.

**Chart 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of contribution</th>
<th>Separation</th>
<th>Interleaving</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaking unprompted</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons given</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unprompted reasons</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant reasons</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>1.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The success of this prop-based method in terms of enjoyment was proved by a questionnaire in which all the children except two said that they enjoyed philosophy and in particular the success of the philosophy box was shown, as all the children said that they enjoyed seeing what was in the box. The results of this questionnaire also supported the results shown in Chart 1 as at the end of ten enquiries the ones that the children could remember best and talked about with most enthusiasm were those which had interleaved props.
4. The Enquiry: Philosophy with Nursery Age Children

The philosophical enquiries were conducted in Anstruther Primary School Nursery, Fife, Scotland, using two groups of children. Both groups consisted of two three year old children and seven four year old ones. Each group took part in ten weekly philosophical enquiries. These enquiries covered different areas of philosophy: ethics, political philosophy, epistemology, metaphysics and philosophy of mind.

Evidence was collected using a variety of methods, which included questionnaires for the children that were completed at the end of the ten weeks, and video recordings of each enquiry, which were used to write transcripts. This information was used to form a database, constructed as a PivotTable within Excel, which recorded the child’s age, the number of times the child spoke, with and without prompting and whether the child gave reasons and if so whether these were unprompted and relevant reasons.

The analysis of the data showed that the children had been successfully engaged in philosophical enquiry, using the methods of philosophical argument referred to at the beginning of this chapter, devising theories, reflecting, debating, providing reasons, examples and responding to counterexamples and using appropriate terminology. The children were able to devise their own theories, e.g., during the enquiry about whether things in your dreams do not really happen, K. made the following responses:

MG. – How do you know that what happened in your dream didn’t really happen?
K. – Cos it’s just a fake.
MG. – How do you know it’s just a fake?
K. – Cos it’s just pictures.
MG. – So where are these pictures?
K. – In your brain.

The children also showed their ability to adjust their principles in light of counterexamples, an aspect of Rawls’ method of reflective equilibrium. For instance, in the Teddy Bears’ Picnic enquiry the children decided on the general principle of dividing the cake equally between the two medium sized teddies, which they kept to even when a bigger teddy was introduced and said that he needed more cake because he was bigger. However, when I introduced the example of mummy and daddy being bigger and therefore needing more food, they decided that it would be fair for mummy and daddy to have more food. So they changed their minds and abandoned the equality principle, deciding instead that it was fair to divide the cake according to need:
D. – You could do a big piece there and two little pieces there (pointing to the cake).
MG. – So what we could do is a big piece like this for big teddy and two small pieces like this for the two smaller teddies. Would that be fair D.?
D. - Yes.
MG. – Can you tell us why you think it is a fair way to do it?
D. – Yes, because that teddy is bigger and that piece is biggest and those two other pieces are littlest for the two little teddies.

Although I provided the counterexamples, the children did respond to them and saw them as a relevant part of the argument, e.g., during an enquiry examining the relationship between friendship and sharing the children had decided that they should share everything with their friends. I introduced the counterexample, that if you had a cold should you share this with a friend? As a result of the ensuing discussion the children decided that it is not a good thing to share a cold. They then agreed with the general principle that one should share only good things with friends. The children also supplied their own examples to substantiate their thoughts, for instance in the Teddy Bears’ Picnic Enquiry:

MG. – So are we all agreed that we will cut the cake down the middle and we have two equal sized pieces which is fair because we have two teddies and they would now get the same sized pieces?
O. – Yes.
T. – When my granddad’s here my mum cuts it into loads of pieces until it’s all done and how many there is.

The children supported their statements with relevant reasons, e.g., in the discussion about whether animals in the storybook really exist:

MG – Why can we not touch the animals in the book?
E. – Cos…they’re spikey.
MG. – Any other reasons?
M. – They’re just pretend.
K. – They’re just drawed on paper.

The children showed ability to learn and use terminology which has been introduced during philosophy, e.g., ‘agree’ and ‘disagree’:
D. – Three of us agree of that.
MG. – What about you L. do you agree?
L. – Yes.
D. – That is five.

So we can see that the children can use the methods of philosophy. To show that children of three and four can engage in philosophical enquiry, it is also necessary to show that they can engage with the subject matter of philosophy, for instance, ethics, political philosophy, epistemology, metaphysics and philosophy of mind. The children did discuss topics within all these subject areas, although some of the areas were easier for them to cope with than others. Those topics of which they had personal experience and understanding were the most successful. For example, sharing, ethics, pain, philosophy of mind and whether the animals in the story are real or imaginary, metaphysics. The area in which they were least successful was epistemology, particularly in discussing how they knew that they were not dreaming that they were in the nursery. This could partly be because the children have never been asked why they know something and how they know whether something exists. It could also be because the majority of four year olds have only recently acquired the ability to reason about false beliefs, Smith, et al. 2003 and the majority of three year olds do not have it, so that they have insufficient experience of this concept to be able to answer philosophical questions using it.

As the children became more accustomed to philosophical enquiries and gained confidence about what was expected of them their ability to do philosophy and reason critically improved. The differences between the first and tenth enquiries are striking, as can be seen from Chart 2 below.

**Chart 2**
This chart shows an improvement in the abilities and interaction of the children in that the number of children making a contribution and speaking unprompted rose. The children have begun the process of thinking in a critical manner, shown by the increase in the number of reasons given to support a statement, especially the large rise of unprompted and relevant reasons, those which are not a repetition of ones given by myself or another child.

5. Conclusion

Philosophy has provided the opportunity for the children to develop skills, concentrating on a task for a certain time period, listening to other adults and children, and developing the confidence to speak in a small group. It has enabled a task to be presented to a group of children that can be tackled at a variety of levels, thus suiting the ability of all the children in the group. There is no sense of failure and everything that a child says is valued and is thought about in a respectful manner. The evidence I have presented proves that, providing philosophical enquiries are presented to three and four year olds using an accessible method, then the children can cope with philosophical methods of arguments and a variety of philosophical topics. I conclude that three and four year olds can do philosophy and have benefited from doing so.

Notes

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**Morag Gaut** is the Nursery Teacher at Anstruther Primary School, Anstruther, Fife, Scotland. She has introduced philosophy into her nursery and is currently developing material which can be used for philosophical enquiries by three and four year olds.