



UNIVERSITY OF
REGINA

POLICY AND *PRACTICE* **IN EDUCATION**

A JOURNAL ADDRESSING
ISSUES, RESEARCH AND PRACTICE
IN THE EDUCATION OF TEACHERS

VOLUME 12

NUMBERS 1, 2

2005/2006



POLICY AND PRACTICE IN EDUCATION

The editorial board welcomes contributions on most aspects of the education of those who teach. Whether this teaching occurs in elementary, secondary, or postsecondary institutions, which is our primary focus, or in other institutions, such as business and industry, government, or the military, the board is interested in exploring how people become teachers, how their practice matures, what issues and challenges they face, and how the public policy context shapes their practice. The board especially wishes to encourage two kinds of manuscripts: (a) those in which are illuminated the complexities of teaching through established and emerging theories and programs of research, and (b) those in which matters preoccupying contemporary debates about teaching and the public policy context of teaching are critically examined. Manuscripts should be written in an accessible and rigorous style, which communicates to specialist and nonspecialists. *Policy and Practice in Education* is published by the Faculty of Education, at the University of Regina, Regina, SK, Canada.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Ann Kipling Brown, Editor
Phone: (306) 585-4525
Ann.Kipling.Brown@uregina.ca

Associate Editors

Warren Wessel
Phone: (306) 585-4555
Warren.Wessel@uregina.ca

James McNinch
Phone: (306) 585-4124
James.McNinch@uregina.ca

Valerie Mulholland
Phone: (306) 585-4618
Val.Mulhollnad@uregina.ca

Patrick Lewis
Phone: (306) 585-4608
Patrick.Lewis@uregina.ca

Juanita Duncan, Editorial Assistant
Phone: (306) 585-5142
Juanita.Duncan@uregina.ca

All correspondence should be addressed to Juanita Duncan, Editorial Assistant, ED Room 220.4, Faculty of Education, University of Regina, Regina, SK S4S 0A2. Telephone: (306) 585-5142; Facsimile: (306) 585-4880.

Copyright ©December 2006. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be photocopied or reproduced, or stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted electronically or mechanically without written permission of the copyright holder.

ISSN 1708-2749

Policy and Practice in Education: A Journal Addressing Issues, Research and Practice in the Education of Teachers

Previous title, *Journal of Professional Studies*, Vol. 1(1), December 1993 to Vol. 9(2), June 2002

Back issues are available in microform from:

Micromedia Limited
20 Victoria Street, Toronto, ON M5C 2N8
Toll free: 1-800-387-2689 Phone: (416) 362-5211 Fax: (416) 362-6161

ADVISORY BOARD

Cathy Campbell
Faculty of Education, University of Lethbridge, AB

Galen Erickson
Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia, BC

Fernand Gervais
Faculté des sciences de l'éducation, Université Laval, PQ

Jeff Orr
Department of Education, St. Francis Xavier University, NS

Renate Schulz
Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba, MB

Catherine Sinclair
Faculty of Education, University of Western Sydney, Australia

Jack Whitehead
School of Education, University of Bath, United Kingdom

CONTENTS

ABSTRACTS	3
EDITORIAL	5
Ann Kipling Brown	
ARTICLES	
<i>Educators and Student Rights: An Ethical and Legal Challenge</i>	8
Nora M. Findlay	
<i>Integrating the Creative Arts (with INTEGRITY)</i>	29
Robyn Gibson and Robyn Ewing	
<i>Experiential Learning and Debriefing in University Classrooms</i> ..	44
Nancy Browne and Kathryn McNaughton	
<i>Using Contextual Cues to Promote Associative Information Retrieval in Multiple-Choice Assessment Scenarios</i>	58
Wanda Boyer	
REVIEWS	
Park, J. (2005). <i>Writing at the edge: Narrative and writing process theory</i> . New York: Peter Lang. Reviewed by Valerie Mulholland	70
Hocking, B., Haskell, J., & Linds, W. (Eds.). (2001). <i>Unfolding bodymind: Exploring possibility through education</i> . Brandon, VT: Foundation for Educational Renewal. Reviewed by Mary Jane Warner	74
Solomon, R. P., & Levine-Rasky, C. (2003). <i>Teaching for equity and diversity: Research to practice</i> . Toronto, ON: Canadian Scholars' Press. Reviewed by Meredith Rogers Cherland	78
EVENTS	
<i>Crossing Boundaries</i>	83
<i>Wondrous Places to Learn and Grow</i>	84
Subscription Application	85
Notes to Contributors	inside back cover

ABSTRACTS

PAGE 8

Educators and Student Rights: An Ethical and Legal Challenge

Today's parents and students appear to demand more of educators and schools. In this article, Nora Findlay discusses the notion of student rights in the post-*Charter* era and their corresponding responsibilities in an educational setting. As well, she examines the ethical and legal dilemmas that educators may experience as they endeavour to balance the rights of individuals against the rights of the majority in a school setting. Finally, options are explored that may assist teachers and school officials to act ethically and legally when meeting the challenges of school leadership in the area of student rights.

PAGE 29

Integrating the Creative Arts (with INTEGRITY)

The creative arts should be acknowledged as both powerful teaching and learning strategies across the primary curriculum as well as disciplines in their own right. However in many New South Wales primary schools, the arts continue to be marginalised or remain extracurricular activities. In this article, Robyn Gibson and Robyn Ewing outline how they developed and implemented two innovative preservice teacher education course units for primary teachers at the University of Sydney. These units focus on integrating the creative arts with integrity and on the need to make meaningful connections across content areas. In doing so, they show the difficulties of challenging traditional teacher education stereotypes or cultural scripts.

PAGE 44

Experiential Learning and Debriefing in University Classrooms

While recent learning theorists have discussed the centrality of experiential learning for transformative education, university

programs continue to rely on text-based methods of teaching and learning. In this article, Nancy Browne and Kathryn McNaughton describe their use of experiential learning methods in their university teaching and suggest that these methods are appropriate and necessary for certain types of learning. For experiential methods to be successful, instructors must understand the types of concepts or topics that experiential learning best serves, the planning and preparation required, the demanding debriefing process, and how institutional barriers can be overcome.

PAGE 58

***Using Contextual Cues to Promote Associative
Information Retrieval in Multiple-Choice Assessment Scenarios***

In this article, Wanda Boyer investigates the use of contextual cues as a memory trigger for associative retrieval strategies on multiple-choice exams among 60 preservice elementary teachers enrolled in a Child Development course. One group received thematically sequenced multiple-choice questions and the other received randomly dispersed questions on the final exam. The results were unexpected. There was no significant difference in learner performance on the final exam when multiple-choice exam questions were thematically sequenced, in spite of cognitive strategies and test-taking skills introduced to students throughout the term.

EDITORIAL

Ann Kipling Brown

Policy and Practice in Education is a young, refereed academic journal, which began life with its first print volume in June 2003. However, as with most things new, the journal has experienced some unexpected, albeit, interesting growing pains and only managed to produce two more additional issues since its inception. This year I assumed the post of Editor, with Dr. Warren Wessel, Dr. James McNinch, Dr. Valerie Mulholland, and Dr. Patrick Lewis joining the Editorial Board. This new Editorial Board brings renewed energy, commitment and perspective to the journal. The Board plans to publish Volume 12 this year, Volume 13 in 2007, with a subsequent enlarged volume in 2008.

Policy and Practice in Education addresses issues, research, and practice in the education of teachers and invites articles and reviews of significant texts that investigate good practice in teacher education. It is important to study the education of teachers in the interconnected contexts of governance and policy, institutional transformation and interrelationships, and professional leadership and development. All four articles in this issue have implications for teacher education: The first emphasizes the need that all teachers be prepared to meet the challenges of their position; the second supports and validates the role of the arts in education and outlines how in-service teachers can support the curriculum; the third considers the importance of reflective practice and dialogue in the university classrooms; and the fourth makes a strong case that assessment should be fully reflective of the ongoing educational dialogue between teacher and student.

The first article, *Education and Student Rights*, by Nora Findlay, explores the issue of student rights in the school setting. The author is cognizant of the difficulties that face teachers, administrators, and parents when dealing with student behaviours, suggesting we need to locate a delicate balance in dealing with incidents in the school context. At times teachers are torn between the rights of the individual or minority groups and the rights of the whole school. Parents demand their child be dealt with fairly, and students often believe their behaviours will be excused. Herein lies some misunderstandings and certainly some challenges!

The first premise of this article is based on the belief that education fosters peace and justice. A second is that it is important to deal with decisions about student behaviour from an informed, fair position. To do this, the author delineates the foundation for ethical and moral decision-making in the school setting. Beginning with the Canadian Constitution and the entrenchment of the Charter that codifies people's inherent rights and guarantees fundamental freedoms and democratic and legal rights, Findlay explains that all people benefit from these rights. These rights make it possible to live in a fair and just world. She further elucidates that those rights of the individual may be restricted to protect the rights of the majority and that students do not lose these rights because they are in school. One of the rights not contained in the Charter is the right to an education. This came about with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 that affirmed people worldwide had equal access to a quality education. Additionally, the rights to an education were reaffirmed in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1959 that obligated parents to ensure their child attends school.

Findlay outlines each person's responsibility in making the school function according to ethical and moral principles. Parents are obligated to ensure their child attends school. Students are required to attend regularly and be punctual and accountable for their behaviour and submit to fair discipline. Teachers and administrators must be able to justify any decisions made about behaviours in relation to the legal aspects of student rights and the ethical restrictions of their roles.

The second article, *Integrating the Creative Arts (with Integrity)*, is also about providing a quality education for our students. Here the arts are recognized as essential components of human experience, contributing to personal and social growth and cultural understanding. Dr. Robyn Gibson and Associate Professor Robyn Ewing, talk about success in the arts relating to success in other subjects, such as mathematics and reading. Thankfully, they also recognize the importance of learning in, about, and through each of the arts disciplines.

Many arts educators will commiserate with the authors as they explain the marginalization of the arts in the New South Wales (NSW) primary schools. To deal with this situation, they introduced two innovative preservice teacher education course units for primary teachers. These units modeled integration across subject areas and were introduced by the preservice teachers to selected

schools. The results provide useful information about implementation of the arts into the traditional curriculum, the responsibility of teachers in supporting the learning of preservice teachers, and the role of the arts in students' lives.

The third article, *Experiential Learning and Debriefing in University Classrooms*, continues the theme of quality education. The authors, Drs. Nancy Browne and Kathryn McNaughton, recognize how experiential learning has taken an important place in K–12 schools and how experiential learning methods should also be present in university classrooms. As mentioned in the above article, they, too, talk about integration in the school curriculum and how university students need to experience integration across the elementary curriculum. An assignment, entitled Celebrations, is described to support the goal that students would be able to create authentic, meaningful learning experiences. Debriefing and reflecting on the goals and outcomes of these assignments is recognized as an important aspect of the learning experience for these preservice teachers. While the authors give emphasis to experiential learning, they also recognize that teachers should be able to move between different styles of teaching.

Continuing with the importance of a quality education and the ongoing dialogue between teacher and learner, the fourth and final article, *Using Contextual Cues to Promote Associative Information Retrieval in Multiple-Choice Assessment Scenarios*, addresses the importance of constructing tests that truly assess knowledge acquisition and reflect the significance of well-shaped opportunities for students to demonstrate their knowledge. Dr. Wanda Boyer, researcher and author of this article, asks whether thematically sequenced questions would enable students to better demonstrate their knowledge than through randomly distributed questions. The study involved two groups of undergraduate, third-year preservice elementary teachers. In the midterm examination, both groups took the same examination comprised of 55 multiple-choice, randomly distributed questions. In the final exam, one group's exam involved randomly sequenced multiple-choice questions, and the other group experienced sequential, thematically related multiple-choice questions. The author was surprised that there was no significant difference in learner performance on the final examination. Maybe young adult learners are able to organize their learning in thematic, structured components for straightforward retrieval!



Educators and Student Rights: An Ethical and Legal Challenge

Nora M. Findlay

Regina, SK Canada

[Parents] have been known to argue that it is their child's inalienable right to be picked for a certain sports team or to pack a peanut butter sandwich in their lunch . . . that they have that sense of entitlement. (Owens, 2002, A2-3)

Today's educators and school officials know only too well the veracity of this assertion. Many parents are becoming more forceful, loudly advocating for what they perceive are their own or their children's rights in the school setting. As baby boomers raise their children, such "parental meddling" is seen as "the inevitable fallout of the reform movement that swept education in the past decade or so and that bequeathed to parents considerable new powers in the system, courtesy of legislated parent councils and advisory bodies" (Owens, 2002, B3). The fact that some parents believe they have the right to demand a certain teacher for their child, to be aggrieved if their student is placed in a split classroom or, indeed, not chosen for a particular sports team, may be linked to a recent national survey where researchers found that more than one half of Canadians could not name any of the rights they were guaranteed under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (Majority, 2002). Such statistics appear, at best, unsettling, especially since the number of people unable to name even one of their rights ranged from 44% in Alberta to 62% in British Columbia. Clearly, Canadians' understanding of their actual rights is lacking/wanting.

According to Snelgrove and Warren (1989), the entrenchment of the *Charter* in the Canadian Constitution in 1982 was, "perhaps the most significant factor in increased 'rights awareness'" (p. 7); in many instances, however, it appears this awareness may be quite inaccurate and faulty. In a rights culture, "It is often difficult to distinguish real rights, that is to say provisions under the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and provincial Human Rights Codes, from

‘desired rights,’ ‘personal want’” (Black-Branch, 1993, p. 334). There exists, even among teachers,

Misconceptions and misperceptions ... about the nature and consequences of rights, [while] students are aware of their ‘rights’, or in some instances that which they ‘desire’ as rights, and use this rights talk as a means of gaining power and control within school systems. (Black-Branch, 1993, p. 334)

Moreover, schools are being called upon to instruct students in the basics of *Charter* rights, because its contents affect them daily (Majority, 2002). This perceived need for human rights education echoes the contention of Ray and Tarrow (1987) who note the critical role educators must play in helping students develop their sense of rights and responsibilities. Similarly, Peters and Montgomerie (1995) maintain that they, like others, believe “the views of teachers and their advocacy of and support for human rights in general and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and its underlying philosophy in particular,” (p. 51) is essential in molding our society into “a humane and tolerant, pluralistic community” (p. 52). Shafer (1987) also posits that “particularly teachers must be familiar with human rights if they are to effectively help their students to respect these rights and to recognize any flagrant violations in the world” (p. 191). As a measured response to world terrorism, and in an effort to act preemptively against future incidents of violence by nurturing the tenets of multiculturalism, tolerance, and understanding, educators must assume a pivotal role in rights education.

This paper explores the notion of student rights in the school setting. Today’s parents and students, it appears, are often demanding more of educators and schools alike. This paper discusses the rights accruing to students in the post-*Charter* era, their corresponding responsibilities, and some of the ethical and legal dilemmas educators may experience when they endeavor to balance the rights of individuals against the rights of the majority in a school setting. A number of possible options are also explored that may assist practicing teachers and school officials to act ethically and legally when meeting the challenges of school leadership in the area of student rights.

The Nature of Student Rights

The Canadian Constitution does not render unto Canadians their rights; instead, it codifies those inherent human rights its citizens already possess (Ignatieff, 2000, p. 28). With the entrenchment of the *Charter* in the Constitution in 1982 as the supreme law of the land, Canadians were guaranteed fundamental freedoms and democratic and legal rights. Nonetheless, rights, such as freedom of religion (Sec. 2a) or freedom of opinion and expression (Sec. 2b), are never absolute and are qualified and “subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society” (Sec. 1, *Canadian*, 1982). This so-called limitations clause in Section 1 of the *Charter* upholds the violation of rights under certain circumstances where, for example, a limit may be placed on an individual’s right to protect the collective rights of the majority. As Watkinson (1999) notes, limiting a student’s right under Section 1 of the *Charter*, however, can actually be beneficial for teachers and school officials since it “is a useful tool or filter, through which [they] can evaluate and reflect upon the decisions they make or contemplate making” (p. 52). In this way, “limits are to be screened against the backdrop of respect for the inherent dignity of the student, commitment to social justice and equality and the accommodation of a wide variety of beliefs”; furthermore, the limitations imposed by the “requirement of meeting a Section 1 test is of value to those challenging the authority of school officials because it forces school officials to justify their decisions” (p. 52). However, the limiting of student rights must be done in an environment of respect and belief in justice and equality. Watkinson recommends that more empathy, caring, and compassion in decision-making is required in the school setting, and that

Educators can limit the rights of students if the need to do so meets a sufficiently important objective and if the limit is cognizant of the students’ inherent dignity and is concomitant with the principles of justice, equality, and the accommodation of beliefs. (p. 196)

Consequently, educators must ensure their actions and decisions are in accordance not only with the legal aspects of student rights, but also with the ethical constraints of their roles. They must be able to justify any limits placed on students’ rights, and ensure that those limits must be based on the dignity and worth of the

individual, with a respect for diversity, and with a commitment to the principles of equality and justice.

The *Charter* “standardize[s] rights for all citizens and even though some group rights may be enhanced, all members of society benefit [by] the rights that have been won have been won for everyone” (Ignatieff, 2000, p. 117). “Something more than dry legalistic phrases,” rights are the means by which people express their values and their desire to live “in a fair world” (p. 2), and help “determine what is *right* [emphasis added], not necessarily what is just” (p. 30). In the school setting, children do not lose their human rights simply because they are students. Snelgrove and Warren (1989) maintain that “the most basic of human rights accruing to students in the educational context is the right to an education” (p. 17), but observe that the relationship between education and human rights is “further complicated when one considers that other human rights, in addition to those dealing directly with education, can come into play within the educational setting” (p. 16), and even more so when combined with the rights of the individual as delineated in the *Charter*.

Some parents may be surprised that the right to an education is not entrenched in the Canadian *Charter*. As Keel (1998) explains, “there are no provisions in the Charter [sic] or in most human rights legislation specifically dealing with the right to education” (p. 3) and, furthermore, “the courts have not yet seen fit to recognize the right to education as a constitutionally entrenched or protected right” (p. 10). Ray and Tarrow (1987) observe that whereas rights were once afforded on the basis of social status, caste, nationality, ethnic group, gender or religion, after World War II, and with the advent of a new political climate in the world, the members of the United Nations assumed a global responsibility for promoting, among other things, rights to education to foster peace, justice and the respect for human rights and freedoms with the establishment in 1945 of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) further affirmed that people worldwide had a right to an education, with equal opportunities for access and for quality of education. Because Canada appeared as a signatory on the Declaration, it is obliged to ensure that it conforms to this basic premise. All provincial legislation in Canada regarding education complies with the Declaration and the right to attend school, yet from province to province, in both legislation and case law, there may exist not only inconsistencies but also discrepancies on some

issues. It should be noted that, inherent in the understanding that the right to education is legislated and not constitutionally protected, the fact is that it could conceivably be changed or withdrawn at some future point; however, this eventuality appears remote.

With the acknowledgement of a right to education, however, also comes a corresponding responsibility. The passage of the Declaration of the Rights of a Child in 1959 “reaffirmed the right to education and also imposed an obligation on parents to ensure the quality of education” (Keel, 1998, p. 5). It is for the betterment of society that its children go to school and are educated, and

As a result, the right to education must also be complemented by compulsory attendance. At the same time, however, there are obligations on the part of the parent to ensure compulsory attendance. This juxtaposition of right and obligation is inherent in many aspects of education legislation. (Keel, p. 7)

The responsibility to attend is consistent with international policies; in order to foster education as a universal goal, then, if a right to education exists, it must be balanced by provisions requiring attendance. As such, there is a measure of rights accountability, since “legislative provisions regarding the right to attend school and compulsory attendance must be measured against human rights principles” (p. 12). In Saskatchewan, for example, *The Education Act* (1995) entitles all persons who have “attained the age of six years but [have] not yet attained the age of 22 years” (Sec. 142 [1]) to attend school and to “receive instruction appropriate” to their “age and level of achievement” (Sec. 142[2]). However, with that right comes the compulsory attendance provision that “every parent, guardian or other person having charge of a pupil who is of compulsory school age shall take all steps that are necessary to ensure regular attendance of that pupil” (Sec. 156[1]). Sanctions can be imposed and parents can be subject to a fine of \$100 on a summary offence conviction if this section is contravened. Furthermore, in spite of exceptions in legislation for compulsory attendance (i.e., provisions for home-based education, illness, or unavoidable causes), students of compulsory school age with irregular attendance can be suspended from school (Sec. 185[2]). Keel also notes the link between attendance and discipline: The right to education can be abridged or removed by disciplinary actions authorized by legislation, such as suspension or expulsion.

For many educators, nonetheless, chronic absenteeism is a major barrier to student achievement and, although legislated provisions exist for truancy, these are rarely enforced. Some teachers and school officials are often frustrated by a parent's claim "to hold certain expectations of the education system" (Snelgrove & Warren, 1989, p. 21), such as competency and accountability, when they refuse to ensure the obligation for student attendance is met.

Students enjoy personal rights and freedoms which must be respected by educators, while parental rights extend to the type of education parents want their child to have, such as religious or moral education. Implicit in student rights, however, besides the obligation of regular attendance, are obedience, accountability for behavior, and submission to "any discipline that would be exercised by a kind, firm and judicious parent [*in loco parentis*]" (Sec. 150[3] [f]). Accordingly, in the execution of their duties, educators must ensure rights protection for their students, follow proper procedures, provide for due process, and make certain their actions are reasonable in the eyes of the law. While educators do not have the natural affection that parents hold for their children, "*in loco parentis* is not a license to treat students in an arbitrary and capricious manner" (Essex, 1999, p. 9). Reasonable actions that a careful parent would exercise under similar circumstances are generally supported in the courts.

In matters of school governance, educators often find themselves walking a tightrope between the rights of individual students or minority groups, and the rights of the entire school population. Therein lies the challenge for moral leadership: In their roles as ethically and legally responsible individuals, how can educators effectively and fairly reconcile the rights of individual students against the collective rights of the majority?

A Delicate Balance

Student sued school, alleging school violated his First Amendment rights ... Held: for the school. Parents sued school board and Department of Defense for violating child's rights under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA] ... Held: for the parents. Parents sued school board for violating student's due process rights ... Held: for the school district. (*Recent*, 2004, pp. 227-232)

Recent American judicial decisions such as these suggest litigation in the school setting is becoming more commonplace in the United States. Educators in this country should be wary of a similar trend. Watkinson (1999) suggests that if a school's focus is the traditional authoritarian model where uniformity, authority, and control are stressed, "then increasing pressure from students and their parents on the subject of student rights will lead to conflict between those who attend schools and those who run them" (p. 43). Educators, it appears, have the twofold responsibility not only of ensuring the well-being of all students but also of preserving the rights of individuals. "School officials should be guided by fundamental fairness and a regard for the individual rights of all students in disciplinary cases" (Essex, 1999, p. 4); however, they also are entrusted with maintaining order so that teaching and learning can take place. Administrators are required not only to maintain order and discipline, but also to uphold the rights of students. Justice must be balanced, and educators are expected to maintain neutrality in the sense that one set of rights must not be chosen over another because of bias or prejudice.

The contextual framework for acting justly emerges from the general principles of law recognized by civilized nations, judicial decisions, and the teaching of the most highly qualified publicists of various nations. Certain groups may require more privilege than others "when they [the privileges] are designed to correct past injustices" (Ignatieff, 2000, p. 74); what is more, the principles of vertical and horizontal equity are guaranteed under Section 2 of the *Charter*. Educating special needs students, for example, necessitates additional financial resources, and provincial funding grants usually allow for this requirement. Likewise, many First Nations students may require greater cultural, social, and academic support. In such cases, the principle of equity (i.e., the privilege and entitlement of a special group is acknowledged in the light of past injustices and special needs and rights are accommodated) recognizes and appreciates the distinctiveness of a particular group. Such differences, however, do not have to fragment but have the potential, instead, to contribute to the richness that diversity brings. Consequently, boards of education, for example, may often develop Human Rights Equity Policies to "promote everyone's right to equal concern and respect, and provide an environment which promotes and fosters growth, harmony, and equality of opportunities" (Regina Public School Division No. 4, 1992). Therefore, through the establishment of equity policies and Human

Rights Codes, the privilege and entitlement afforded to special groups can be accommodated in the school setting and the distinctiveness of special groups within a school can be recognized, while individual rights are maintained. Some parents of those students in the majority, however, may feel that the rights of the minority have been won at their expense and, filled with resentment and recrimination, may view such recognition as exclusionary, and decry equity policies as inequitable, blatant examples of reverse discrimination. They may perceive, for example, that their child is being negatively affected by the inclusion of a special needs student in the classroom, or by a student with behavioural challenges, and that too much instructional time is being diverted from the regular program. Similarly, parents of special needs students will advocate for appropriate educational placements for their children. As Sussel (1995) contends, immediately upon the entrenchment of the *Charter* “parents and interest groups supporting the ‘right’ of disabled children to be integrated in regular classrooms, took steps to initiate *Charter* challenges on human rights cases in order to enforce this right” (p. 165). She goes on to note that in the ensuing years, the courts have been “increasingly called on to strike a balance between the competing rights and educational philosophies of school officials and parents in determining the most reasonable and appropriate educational program and placement that should be provided to students with special needs” (p. 56). While endeavoring to reconcile rights such as these when responding to parental demands, educators may feel overwhelmed and professionally compromised if concerns such as paraprofessional assistance and adequate facility supports are not acknowledged.

As for the school’s principal, Roher (1994) maintains that

The critical issue appears to be whether the school authority is acting as an educator, attempting to maintain order and discipline within the school, or, on the other hand, taking upon him/herself the role of law enforcement officer investigating crime. (p. 430)

He further suggests that “the more a school official puts himself or herself in a policing role and the stronger the punitive measures taken become, the more likely a *Canadian Charter* argument will be successfully invoked against him or her” (p. 430). But, according to Dickinson (1989), principals, in particular, are entrusted with

maintaining an “appropriate learning environment” (p. 206), a position that can leave them in situations that may be difficult to reconcile. He describes this dual nature of the administrators’ role, then, “as Jeckyll, they embody the kind, firm, and judicious parent with all attendant authority and responsibility. As Hyde, they are the executors of state imperatives in education legislation and thus, potentially, invested with other legal responsibilities” (p. 204). With such conflicting natures inherent in their position, it is little wonder that administrators and teachers often find that reconciling student rights and maintaining a safe learning environment are Herculean tasks. There is some reassurance for educators, although some policies themselves “may be subject to legal scrutiny if thought to violate one’s legal rights” (Black-Branch, 1993, p. 39). Nevertheless “courts will usually rule in accordance with the principal, even if he or she violates a student’s rights, as long as the action was ‘reasonable’” (p. 165).

Educators, therefore, must model fairness by gathering facts, considering circumstances and, possibly, consulting with resource officers, guidance counselors, or social workers, to determine consequences for student behavior based on severity, urgency, and past history (Essex, 1999). Indeed, as Watkinson (1999) posits, “equal treatment or equal opportunity is not enough. In fact, treating everyone the same can exact inequality” (p. 197). Educators should determine what is the ethical and legally correct action in any given situation, mindful of the rights accrued to their students in the school setting. The November 1998 Supreme Court decision in *R. v. M. R. M.* (1998) “confirmed that the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* applies to schools” and, as a result, “the *Charter’s* net falls over the actions, policies and decisions of departments of education, school boards, and school administrators” (Watkinson, p. 27). However, “court rulings are subordinating the rights and freedoms of students, parents and staff to the reasonable management of the schools. Rulings typically state that legal rights do not apply to the same degree in a school situation” (Black-Branch 1993, p. 290). For example, while students in the school setting do not totally discard their rights, they do have a diminished expectation of privacy (*R. v. M. R. M.*, para. 33) because of the need for schools officials to maintain order and discipline. This ruling “allows school officials to search students based on the flexible standard of ‘reasonable suspicion’ rather than the high standard of ‘reasonable ground’” (Ballosingh & Thorning, 2001, p. 38). Keel (1998) also observes that “the obligation and authority to maintain

order and discipline must be balanced by the rights of students to attend school” where “this juxtaposition of rights is a common element in many areas of education as well as a reflection of a democratic society” (p. 49).

While the courts generally defer to the decisions made by school officials about how best to maintain order and discipline in the school setting, they will not, presumably, allow this to happen at the expense of the privacy rights of students. “Nevertheless, courts are concerned that educators act in accordance with legislation and due recognition of student rights, including due process” (Keel, 1998, p. 129). Clearly, “courts seem to want to give the school system the advantage of a more lenient standard of suspicion than probable cause in order to enable them to carry out their function”; however, “if the police were allowed to work with school officials under the school officials’ exceptional standing, school children would lose a great many of the rights they enjoy outside of the school” (Hurlbert & Hurlbert, 1992, p. 109). In searches of students, the level of intrusion must be reasonable and not arbitrary, as in searches of entire groups recently characterized as “suspicionless” (Zirkel, 2000, p. 3). Reasonable grounds for a search may include information received from a student or students deemed to be credible, the educators’ own observations, or a combination of these two, which is deemed credible by the school official (Roher, 2004). Furthermore, the search must be reasonable in scope and related to “the magnitude of the suspected violation ... [and] conducted in a sensitive and a minimally intrusive manner” (Ballosingh & Thorning, 2001, p. 39). Consequently, educators must limit their searches under certain circumstances and avoid being overzealous in group searches that have the potential to infringe on students’ rights in their desire, for example, to combat “the war on drugs” (Zirkel, 2000). It would be prudent for educators, when deciding to search on school premises, to be mindful that “random or dragnet searches... [that] target a whole class or school” are unlikely “to be regarded as reasonable in the eyes of a court” and would be considered “intrusive and sweeping” and violate Section 24(2) of the *Charter* (Roher, 2004, p. 7). In certain situations, however, students’ rights can be suspended for serious behavioral concerns (e.g., weapons or drug offences), or their freedom of expression restricted if they disrupt the pedagogical mission of the school. The school’s need to ensure the well being and safety of its entire population and to maintain an atmosphere conducive to teaching and learning must be balanced against the individual right.

Some principals, it appears, are very apprehensive about acting in cases of severe breaches of student discipline because they believe the *Charter* and the [former] *Young Offenders' Act (YOA)* have contributed to a "rights conscious society" (Black-Branch, 1993, p. 225), where students can sometimes act with impunity, contributing to a mentality that is accepting or tolerant of crime and violence (p. 226) in the school setting. Indeed, this "rights consciousness causes a reluctance to discipline students" (p. 220); some school-based administrators who feel threatened may choose not to follow through on disciplinary issues for fear of litigation. This reluctance to discipline may, in fact, contribute to the perception by some students that they can act with impunity and with a lack of respect or even disdain for the established rules of the school. Some principals, feeling "bound by 'rights talk'" (p. 228) believe their "routine decision-making" and traditional authority have been seriously eroded by the entrenchment of the *Charter* and may bend to pressure by parents or students who demand their perceived rights. This so-called "*Charter-chill*" (p. 236) may cause principals to act cautiously or not at all amid fears of potential litigation. There is a perception that "administrative practices are increasingly being challenged under the *Charter*" and that administrators "paint a bleak picture, reporting increased apprehension concerning student disciplinary issue and general administrative decision-making" (p. 325). As a result, some educators perceive this lack of desire to discipline students has led to an increased level of violence in the schools, although "judges, however, are upholding traditional administrative practices allowing for administrative autonomy for the reasonable management, safety and security of schools" (p. 324). The *Criminal Code of Canada* does protect teachers who use reasonable corrective force to maintain order and discipline. A 2004 Supreme Court ruling found that under Section 43 educators are permitted to use "minor corrective force" in order "to restrain or remove a child in appropriate circumstances" (*Canadian*, 2004). The decision noted that it was unacceptable for teachers to use corporal punishment, but that Section 43 existed so that educators and "parents could not be charged for corrective force that did not exceed what was reasonable" (*Supreme Court*, 2004).

Educators must base their decisions on school division policies (which themselves must be aligned to *Charter* imperatives) and ensure students receive due process. School officials have the responsibility to not only to protect students' rights under the

provisions of the *Canadian Charter*, but also under the provisions of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA)* (2003). *YCJA* replaces the *Young Offenders Act (YOA)*, and emphasizes rehabilitation rather than incarceration for youth criminals. One of the purposes of the new act is to “promote the long term protection of society through youth crime prevention rehabilitation, reintegration [and] meaningful consequences for offenders” based, in part, that “society has a responsibility to address the developmental challenges and needs of young persons, [and that] young persons have rights and freedoms” (*Youth Criminal*, 2003). While Canada boasted the dubious distinction of some of the “highest youth imprisonment rates in the world” (Blackwell, 2003, A6), a decline in youth incarcerations by approximately 25% in Alberta and Ontario since the law took effect, suggests that one of the aims of the new act is working; however, the resulting strain on rehabilitation programs and alternative measures programs may also offset some of the benefits. The overload may cause case workers to lose “[their] capacity to monitor the young offenders as they fulfill a diversion program” (p. A1). Critics of the act feel that it is too lenient, because police are “required to consider alternatives to laying a charge, such as taking no further action, giving the suspect a caution or referring them to a program” (p. A6). There is some suggestion that charges would continue to be laid in cases of “bullying and schoolyard violence cases...because of school zero-tolerance policies” (p. A6), but there still may be a perception that certain young offenders are being treated too leniently, that victims’ rights will be minimized, the offenders’ rights will be upheld, and that the principle of fairness will not be met. Others believe that

Schools need to be given a leadership role in crime prevention because they are often able to come up with creative solutions to difficult behaviors, and because schools can help children learn the skills they need to cope with their environment. (*Youth Justice*, 2003, p. 3)

In this way, “the youth justice principle of community involvement can be used in a school” (*Youth Justice*, 2003, p. 3). The effect upon students’ rights in school under this new act, and the response by educators in the school setting, remains to be seen.

Administrators and teachers, as a result, should have an understanding of the law as it pertains to the school setting and, in addition to the use of common sense, apply each on a situational

basis. They “must constantly be weighing the right of the individual student (and his or her parents) against those of the entire student body (and their parents)” (Martin, 2000, p. 40), and work to find some middle ground. At the same time, however, many educators have to be able to work within zero-tolerance policies. Dolmage (1995) claims such policies have taken all sense of fairness and discretion out of the hands of administrators, and that they can use common sense and administrative discretion when determining what is an intentional or a nonintentional violation of the policy. Furthermore, administrators working within zero-tolerance boundaries cannot arbitrate between what they have authority to do or not to do, and are unable to respond with any degree of subtlety when circumstances can alter facts. A recent incident in the US, where expulsion was recommended for a student who had brought a Nerf-style gun to school (Martin, 2000), underscores the need for prudence and thoughtfulness when educators are considering student rights, school policies, and legal issues.

Somewhat disturbing is the research conducted by Peters and Montgomerie (1995) that found that educators “appear to support those rights which appear to impact on their own area of operation but they appear to be either ignorant of or indifferent to rights in areas which do not affect them directly” (p. 75). Furthermore, they “appear to be willing to provide selective support for particular rights, generally in those areas which do not appear to impact directly on their own operations in their classrooms or schools” (p. 75). Educators often must come to terms with the notion of limiting the rights of the minority if the overall consequence of doing so will maintain order and discipline in the school. Perhaps, in certain cases, school leaders may conclude that the entire student population may be better off with the violation of some individuals’ rights. Why should the majority lose out simply because the rights of one or a small group were infringed? Such an assumption, however, could be used to justify abhorrent behavior. One might suggest that in this case, school leaders must clearly understand the difference between denying fundamental rights and abridging them temporarily when a student disrupts the educational process for others. It is up to the individual educator to decide if trading-off the restriction of the rights of one against “the welfare of many is reasonable” (Haller & Strike, 1986, p. 124). To find a balance between the two can often be problematic.

The Educator's Role

In its ruling *R. v. M. R. M.* (1998), the Supreme Court of Canada observed,

Schools have a duty to foster the respect of their students for the constitutional rights of all members of society. Learning respect for those rights is essential to our democratic society and should be part of the education of all students.

The Court noted that “these values are best taught by example and may be undermined if the students’ rights are ignored by those in authority,” but then went on to pose the question, “How should the appropriate balance of these values be achieved?” Educators have a number of ways to improve their effectiveness when dealing with matters concerning student rights. First, they must have a sound basic knowledge of legal principles as they relate to student rights. The law is playing an increasingly significant role in the educational lives of Canadians, the result of factors such as the advent of the *Charter*, the changing societal values with respect to the family and children, the growing numbers of at-risk young people, and the distorted views of increased youth violence (Leschied, Dickinson, & Lewis, 2000). The desire for legal redress to solve social problems in schools has catapulted cases formerly resolved out of court into the legal arena. Teachers may rightly be confused by the notion of rights in the age of the *Charter* when they “worry whether their practices, or lack thereof, measure up to *Charter* standards” (Black-Branch, 1994, p. 7). Consequently, some may question whether their decision-making in matters of discipline could become clouded by the fear of court reprisals. This fact has resulted in the need for educators to become more familiar with the law to be aware not only of their students’ and of their own rights, but also of their responsibilities. Education law, too, is evolving to meet the demands of a constantly changing society and the needs of schools, but just how well educators are keeping abreast of changing legislation is questionable. Studies reveal there is generally poor comprehension among educators with respect to knowledge about legal matters (Leschied et al., 2000; Peters & Montgomerie, 1998; Pritchard, 1993; Snelgrove, & Warren, 1989). It is imperative, then, that educators and administrators become more familiar with legislation and its effect upon education in order to work effectively with their students. Hurlbert and Hurlbert (1992) reason that administrators and other educators,

Who have an understanding and an appreciation of not just school law but the law of the land will in their relationships with each other be more sensitive, discerning, alert, and capable in recognizing responsibilities, obligations, rights, and consequently, litigable situations. (p. 35)

Within their school divisions, educators must be given greater opportunities for professional development and inservice in the area of education law. Educators might also supplement their professional collections with recent judicial decisions in education, or they may subscribe to an electronic journal or visit a website on education law in order to increase their knowledge of the law and, in turn, to help them make informed decisions regarding students' rights consistent with prevailing legal judgments. Additionally, they must review and keep abreast of current human rights policies.

Second, Starrat (1991) suggests that teachers and school officials have a moral obligation to create an ethical environment in their schools. The creation of an "ethical school" (p. 187) may help educators make the best choices possible and would help to acknowledge the importance of student rights. The ethic of justice, the ethic of caring, and the ethic of critique would all serve as a framework for school leaders when they are making ethical decisions about all matters from student discipline to budgetary considerations and curriculum goals. The ethic of justice demands "that the claims of the institution serve both the common good and the rights of the individuals in the school" (p. 194). The ethic of justice encourages discussions and fosters understandings between different minority and cultural groups to enhance better relationships and, possibly, implements changes to grading and testing procedures that seem to benefit certain groups, or oversee the allocation of resources so that a disproportionate amount of money is not spent on above-average students. The ethic of caring requires "fidelity to persons, a willingness to acknowledge their right to be who they are, [and] an openness to encountering them in their authentic individuality" (p. 195). One imagines that an ethical school would also "enhance the capacity of as many individuals as possible to secure public recognition of their different cultures" (Ignatieff, 2000, p. 70). Educators must develop sensitivity to the uniqueness of each student and work to create a culture of caring in their schools. The ethic of critique serves to question the hierarchical structures of the organization and critically analyzes "its own bureaucratic context, its own bureaucratic mind-set"

(Starrat, 1991, p. 189). In these ways, the “inherent injustice” of the structures of the school system, the power struggle between various groups, and the conflict between competing interests are examined, evaluated and altered, if necessary, to be “more responsive to the human and social rights of all” (p. 190), to preserve human dignity, and to provide justice and pursue the common good.

For Watkinson (1999) the ethic of care is foremost. Focussed on compassion, it is also based on trust, respect, connectedness to others, and empathy, whereas the ethic of justice is founded upon responsibility, on reciprocity, and on obligation, where everyone is treated the same. “When individuals act within a justice perspective, the focus is on competing rights; within the care perspective, individuals focus on conflicting responsibilities” (p. 34). What, then, is the role of the educator in a caring school? Clearly, Watkinson suggests that it is not in the traditional roles undertaken by educators: “the courts’ interpretation of the fundamental and equality rights contained in the *Charter* serve as evidence that the former expectations and practices of educational administrators are inappropriate, harmful, and possibly litigious” (p. 43). Within the new era of rights consciousness, the traditional educator model of authority, power, and control appears outdated and ineffective in meeting the challenges of students’ rights. Instead, she posits, caring is essential and necessary in dealing with student-rights issues and needs to be embraced by educational institutions. “If educators reject the traditional model and work instead to create a caring democratic educational environment, then schools will be able to go on with the job of preparing children to take their places in a democratic society” (p. 43). Similarly, Beck (1992) argues that the ethic of justice must be guided by the ethic of caring. In a caring school, justice and fairness are vehicles by which the total development of each teacher and student are promoted, where “a caring ethic assumes that personal, private concerns and the public good are linked and that solutions to problems must seek to promote both” (p. 480). A caring ethic nurtures student rights because it suggests flexibility, empowerment, and a supportive environment.

The perception of *Charter* rights may affect a school’s “discretionary powers” (Snelgrove & Warren, 1989, p. 36), and will solidly affect the decisions that school officials and teachers make with respect to student rights; therefore, they must ensure their policies accurately reflect the provisions of the *Charter*. Because schools are becoming more open to “public scrutiny,” educators must

be practiced in the “new rights consciousness” (p. 39), and Snelgrove and Warren also suggest that schools and teachers play a critical role in creating “an education system where respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms will become a way of life” (p. 8). Educators and administrators must assume “a leadership role in the area of human rights and ... look at the whole issue in a comprehensive manner” (p. 38). They should ensure their present practices are just, transparent, and accountable and, in this way, they can become exemplars of human rights and reinforce these principles in their daily interactions with students. Administrators should also ensure their decision-making is rights based and firmly established in fairness, justice, and respect.

Most important, however, educators must exercise moral leadership in every aspect of their practice, but especially when considering collective and individual rights in their schools. As moral leaders, they must uphold the laws of the province and country and observe the rules and policies of the school division. Quite beyond these imperatives, however, they must treat each student impartially, act justly, and respect the dignity and worth of each individual (Thomas & Davis, 1998; Watkinson, 1999), and encourage respect for the rule of law. They are called upon to display sensitivity in their judgments and to act swiftly and fairly when the rights of one or of a group are imperiled. Moral leaders engage in continuous reflection; for example, they must ask themselves if their actions abide by their legal obligations, or if they have implemented their best practice. Moral leaders work from a set of core values at their moral centre; these values affect their decision-making. The virtues they possess are qualities such as honesty, beneficence, fairness, respect, and trust, to name a few (Thomas & Davis). They lead people to do what is right. What appears to be most crucial in their leadership, however, is that they must demonstrate these values in every decision they make, in every act they perform. Lashway (1996) suggests that the most important quality that moral leaders can have is stewardship, “to accept accountability for results without always trying to impose control over others . . . to acknowledge their own human faults and limitations rather than hiding behind their status and power” (p. 3). Certain historical figures, such as Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Theresa, or Nelson Mandela, embodied this ideal of stewardship. They recognized the humanity of others, acknowledged individual and groups, and struggled to treat people fairly and equally. Moral leaders in schools should do no less.

A View to the Future

As educators, we desire to be effective leaders in our schools, acting ethically and creating caring and secure environments where all students can be successful. At times, these goals may appear unattainable, especially when situations occur that may require the wisdom of Solomon or the patience of Job. When students, staff and community demand what they consider to be their rights, school leaders must act fairly, impartially, and justly to balance these claims, for “the entire legitimacy of public institutions depends on our being attentive to difference while treating all as equal” (Ignatieff, 2000, p. 139). Although it may be easier to respond in a cavalier manner to parents’ requests that their children deserve to play on certain sports teams or to have a major part in the school musical, at other times, rights problems may not be dismissed so readily. Rights issues often appear nebulous, and resolutions are not always finely delineated. Nonetheless, educators who possess a solid knowledge of education law and the nature of rights, whose ethical standards guide their actions to do what is right, and who exercise moral leadership in their daily practice will, undoubtedly, be well equipped to effectively meet the challenges of their position so that all individuals in the school setting will be treated equally with dignity and respect and that all students will have the opportunity to reach their greatest potential.

References

- Ballosingh, C., & Thorning, P. (2001). The search of students by school officials. *Orbit*, 32(2), 37-41.
- Beck, K. G. (1992). Meeting the challenge of the future: The place of a caring ethic in educational administration. *American Journal of Education*, 100, 454-496.
- Black-Branch, J. L. (1993). *Traditions, rights and realities: Legal, de facto and symbolic influences of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms on educational administration in Canada*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
- Black-Branch, J. L. (1994). Weighing the balance between constitutional legal rights and administrative duties. *The Canadian Administrator*, 33(8), 7-15.
- Blackwell, T. (2003, July 18). Fewer youths jailed under new law. *National Post*, pp. A1, A6.
-

-
- Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Part 1 of the *Constitution Act*, 1982, being Schedule B of the *Canada Act* 1982 (U.K.), 1982, c. 11.
- Canadian Foundation for Children, Youth and the Law v. Canada* (Attorney General). (2004). S.C.J. No. 6 (Supreme Court of Canada).
- Dickinson, G. (1989). Principals and criminal investigations of students: Recent developments. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 14(2), 203-219.
- Dolmage, W. R. (1995). One less brick in the wall: The myths of youth violence and unsafe schools. *Education Law Journal*, 7, 185-207.
- Education Act*. (1995). Chapter E-0.2 of the *Statutes of Saskatchewan*, 1995, as amended by the *Statutes of Saskatchewan*, 1996, c. 45. *Criminal Code of Canada*.
- Essex, N. (1999). Safeguarding rights, minimizing exposure [Electronic version]. *School Administrator*, 56(6), 1-4.
- Haller, E. J., & Strike, K. A. (1986). *An introduction to educational administration: Social, legal, and ethical perspectives*. New York: Longman.
- Hurlbert, E. L., & Hurlbert, M. A. (1992). *School law under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (2nd ed.). Calgary, AB: University of Calgary Press.
- Ignatieff, M. (2000). *The rights revolution*. Toronto, ON: Anansi.
- Keel, R. G. (1998). *Student rights and responsibilities: Attendance and discipline*. Toronto, ON: Emond-Montgomery.
- Lashway, L. (1996). *Ethical leadership*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 397463)
- Leschied, A., Dickinson, G., & Lewis, W. (2000). Assessing educators' self-reported levels of legal knowledge, law-related areas of concern and patterns of accessing legal information: Implications for training and practice. *Journal of Educational Administration and Foundations*, 14(2), 38-67.
- Majority can't name their rights*. (2002, November 18). *The Leader-Post*, p. A3.
- Martin, W. M. (2000). Does zero mean zero? *American School Board Journal*, 187(3), 39-41.
- Owens, A. (2002, August 28). Take Josh out of that class or I'll sue. *The Globe and Mail*, pp. B1, B2.
- Peters, F., & Montgomerie, C. (1995). Educators' attitudes towards rights. In W. F. Foster (Ed.), *Rights, responsibilities &*
-

- reasonableness: Striking the balance in education* (pp. 49-84). Chateauguay, PQ: Lisbro.
- Peters, F., & Montgomerie, C. (1998). Educators' knowledge of rights. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 23(1), 299-46.
- Pritchard, B. W. (1993). *Legal issues under the Charter and federal YOA*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.
- R. v. M. R. M.* [1998] 3 S.C.R. 393, S.C. J. No. 83.
- Ray, D., & Tarrow, N. B. (1987). Human rights and education: An overview. In N. B. Tarrow (Ed.), *Human rights and education* (Vol. 3) (pp. 3-16). Oxford: Pergamon.
- Recent decisions: Primary and secondary education. (2004, April). *Journal of Law and Education*, 33(2), 227-243.
- Regina Public School Division No. 4. (1992). *Policies and bylaws*. Regina, SK: Author.
- Roher, E. (1994). Privacy, confidentiality and privilege in a school context. In W. F. Foster (Ed.), *Rights, responsibilities and reasonableness: Striking the balance in education* (pp. 412-441). Chateauguay, PQ: Lisbro.
- Roher, E. M. (2004). Court rules that drug detector dog search at school violates students Charter rights. *Capsule comments*, 14(1), 6-7.
- Schafer, S. M. (1987). Human rights education in schools. In N. B. Tarrow (Ed.), *Human rights and education* (Vol. 3) (pp. 191-205). Oxford: Pergamon.
- Snelgrove, V. J., & Warren, P. (1989). *Legal rights in education: Educators' knowledge and opinions. A Report to the Office of the Secretary of State, Ottawa*. St. John's, NF: Memorial University.
- Starrat, R. J. (1991). Building an ethical school: A theory for practice in educational leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 27(2), 185-202.
- Supreme Court defines 'reasonable force' narrowly. (2004, March). *Education Law Reporter*, 15(7), 49-56.
- Supreme Court outlines school search approach. (1998, December). *The Saskatchewan School Trustee*, 3(10), 4.
- Sussel, T. A. (1995). *Canada's legal revolution: Public education, The Charter, and human rights*. Toronto, ON: Emond Montgomery.
- Thomas, M. D., & Davis, E. E. (1998). *Legal and ethical basis for educational leadership*. Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa.
- Watkinson, A. M. (1999). *Education, student rights and The Charter*. Saskatoon, SK: Purich.
-

Young Offenders Act, S.C. 1985, c. Y-1. repealed by S.C. 2002, c. 1, s. 199, effective April 1, 2003 (SI/2002-91).
Youth Criminal Justice Act. S. C. 2002, c. 1.
Youth Criminal Justice Act. (2003, March). Paper presented at the YCJA Orientation Conference, Regina, Saskatchewan.
Youth Justice & Schools Update. (2003, May). Saskatoon, SK: Public Legal Education Association of Saskatchewan.
Zirkel, P. A. (2000). Suspicionless searches [Electronic version]. *NASSP Bulletin*, 84(616), 1-4.

Nora M. Findlay nmfindlay@hotmail.com is an elementary school principal and has been a school-based administrator at both elementary and high schools for almost 7 years. She has also been a teacher for 10 years. In addition to having BA and BEd degrees, she recently completed a master's degree in educational administration. She has previously published articles in the *Education Law Journal* and has been the recipient of two awards for her work at the graduate level.



Integrating the Creative Arts (with INTEGRITY)

Robyn Gibson and Robyn Ewing

University of Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

The Importance of Creative Arts Education in Enhancing Learning

I believe arts teachers have in the course of their lives as children, as adolescents, and as college students experienced in the arts certain qualities of life that they value highly and that they would like to share with their students. (Eisner, 2001, p. 8)

As two creative arts educators, we are keenly aware that the arts are essential components of the human experience; that they are not a frivolous 'extra' (Boyer, 2002) or a soft option. In fact:

Research in arts education has consistently shown that the arts are a distinct form of knowledge requiring sustained and demanding work and yielding kinds of empathy, understanding and skill both equal and distinctive from those available in [other subject disciplines]. (Wolf cited in Boyer, 2002)

Even more importantly, as many have argued (e.g., Egan, 2003; Greene, 1995) nurturing the imagination is *the* most important role educators can have. It is well documented that students can attain higher levels of achievement in other Key Learning Areas through their engagement with the creative arts. The American Arts Education Partnership (Fiske, 1999) project, *Champions of Change*, described by the Australian Arts Council as "the most significant research into arts and learning to date" (Bott cited in Russell, 2003, p. 6), found that students engaged in the arts do significantly better, academically, than those who are not. There is clear evidence that sustained involvement in particular art forms such as music and theatre are highly correlated with success in mathematics and reading (Catterall, Chzpleau, & Iwanaga, 1999). Such findings are echoed by Floyd (2001) who claims that "studying

music and learning a musical instrument in high school can open the door to a better tertiary education” (n. p.). Students who studied instrumental music averaged up to 304 points higher in the *Scholastic Aptitude Test* (SAT) that largely governs their options for admission into American universities.

According to the study, *Learning In and Through the Arts* (Dickinson, 2002), there is considerable evidence to show that learning in the arts significantly effects learning in other domains. Addressing the question as to ‘Why do the arts change the learning experience?’ researchers involved in the *Champions of Change* initiative discovered that while learning in other disciplines often focuses on developing a single skill or talent, the arts often engage multiple skills and abilities. The report concludes that “engagement in the arts – whether the visual arts, dance, music, theatre or other disciplines – nurtures the development of cognitive, social and personal competencies” (Fiske, 1999, p. ix).

The creative arts also generate a range of personal and social benefits. The recent study, *Evaluation of School-Based Arts Education Programmes in Australian Schools*, by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) (2004) found that exposure to the arts provides positive general learning outcomes, particularly for young people who are Indigenous, are in remote or regional communities, or are from disadvantaged backgrounds (p. ix). American studies suggest that arts-rich education can bring disadvantaged students closer to their peers, reach students who have become disengaged, offer ‘classroom-failures’ a means of becoming high achievers, and stimulate successful students who are ‘at risk’ of becoming bored (Russell, 2003, p. 6). Recent Australian research has shown that participating in the arts has a positive impact on students’ engagement with learning and helps build their confidence and self-esteem, their team-work skills, and their ability to plan and set personal goals (ACER, p. x). Senator Helen Coonan (Coonan & Nelson, 2004), Minister of Communications, in speaking about information technology and the arts, states:

The inherent value of education in the arts has never been in question. But the potential of the arts to engage students in learning more broadly – particularly those who are not otherwise being reached – is an opportunity which demands attention.
(p. 1)

Despite these findings, and contrary to Auh's (2000) statement that "creativity in the arts is strongly emphasised in Australian schools" (p. 60), the arts continue to be marginalised in many New South Wales (NSW) primary schools. They are often designated as extracurricula activities rather than integral components of students' learning. Until 2000, drama and dance had not been included in the NSW primary curriculum and only became mandatory in 2006. Recent proposals by the NSW Board of Studies to reduce the number of required outcomes in primary syllabus documents, however, threaten inclusion of the arts as mandated components of the primary curriculum. The desire "to promote the value of the arts as a life-long learning choice for every Australian" (Australian Council for the Arts, 2002, p. 131) could become mere rhetoric. To compound the situation, teacher education courses such as the B.Ed (Primary) and the M.Teach (Primary), offered at the University of Sydney, continue to reduce arts components of the degree, and the arts do not feature strongly in other course components.

Over 15 years ago, Reimer (1989) suggested that a way for the individual arts to survive in school curricula was through integration. Integration encourages teachers to explore common themes, ideas, concepts and issues both across and within areas of study. "By adopting an integrated approach to the curriculum, a teacher is adhering to the belief that nothing is learned in isolation ... that learning is about making meaningful connections" (Gibson, 1999, p. 7).

While the integrated approach has many benefits for students, there are obvious advantages for teachers. As Hargreaves and Earl (1994) put it: "Curriculum integration does not just break down philosophical walls. It brings new relationships among teachers. It brings together teachers as much as materials" (p. 8). Despite the difficulties of an overcrowded curriculum, many teachers look for opportunities to make meaningful connections across content areas, based on pedagogical and philosophical reasonings. According to Ralph (1997):

Using an integrated approach which places the arts at the centre of learning and teaching allows schools to be explicit about the fact that the arts are important and central to human lives. (p. 3)

Maintaining authenticity and integrity when integrating within the primary classroom poses a significant challenge to many

teachers, not the least is that the creative arts have valid curricula in their own right. Many of the ideas, experiences, and learnings that occur in the arts are unique to the arts because they are at the centre of cultural expression and understanding. Unfortunately, a lack of professional development in integrating the creative arts has made it difficult for teachers to achieve curriculum integration in the arts with any integrity.

In 1994, rather than implementing integrated art classes, the United States conducted a national reform for arts curricula which resulted in the *National Standards of Art Education*. This National Arts Curriculum specifies the interrelationship of the arts in several ways: by making a strong case for the arts as a whole, by establishing standards for all the arts, and by recommending interdisciplinary curricula (Fowler, 1996, p. 4). In comparison, the recent introduction of the *Creative Arts K-6 Syllabus* (Board of Studies, 2000) into NSW primary schools has confronted teachers' and student teachers' understandings and expectations of the teaching and learning associated with the four arts strands: visual arts, music, drama, and dance. Clearly, understanding the importance of each of the arts and the relationships among the arts has important ramifications for primary school teachers.

Accepting that the creative arts are both powerful teaching and learning strategies across the primary school curriculum, as well as disciplines in their own right, and, given the lack of professional learning for primary teachers in the creative arts and in integrating the arts, we developed two new preservice teacher education units at the University of Sydney for primary teachers. In designing these units, we emphasised improvisation (Sawyer, 2004), creativity, and collaboration rather than traditional *cultural scripts* (Barone, 2001) for teaching at the postsecondary or tertiary level. In the remainder of this article, we outline our rationale and provide our initial data on the effectiveness of these units. We also offer our reflections about the difficulties of developing units of study that push the boundaries of the traditional tertiary education.

Rationale and Aims of the New Preservice Teacher Education Units

In response to the introduction of the new *Creative Arts K-6 Syllabus* (Board of Studies, 2000) document in NSW, the expressed needs of final-year student teachers, and our own understanding of the value of learning through the arts, we developed two new units

of study, *Integrating the Creative Arts A and B*, which were offered as an optional, year-long course to the final year University of Sydney Bachelor of Education (Primary) students. These units, implemented for the first time in 2002 have, as stated purposes, the following:

- to enable our student teachers to develop their own understandings and expertise in the creative arts
- to provide our student teachers opportunities for thinking about how to use the arts creatively in their teaching across the primary curriculum
- to model a negotiated curriculum (Boomer, 1992) that would empower student teachers to take responsibility for their own learning and push the boundaries of a traditional academic curriculum
- to help our students explore ways of integrating the arts with integrity.

We were keen to offer alternative modes of learning and growing in the creative arts, by teaching them to primary-age children and by sharing our expectations with the student teachers. We also shared the research findings that provide the evidence that the creative arts should be a central component of the curriculum.

Getting Started

Anticipating a cohort of 25 Bachelor of Education (Primary) students, we were overwhelmed when 40 enrolled. We wondered if it was because the two units of study were innovative in their approach, especially given the traditional constraints at the tertiary level. For example, course content was negotiated (Boomer, 1992) in the first session. This was new to most of the student teachers who were accustomed to being presented with an already developed, largely unchangeable course unit outline. Before beginning the unit, we wrote to the students, encouraging them to take at least one arts experience before the semester began. We suggested they explore art and design exhibitions, music, drama and dance performances – whatever was unfamiliar or they felt less confident about.

In Week 1, after negotiating each week's activities and the assessment alternatives, the student teachers were divided into groups and given a small section of a map of the university campus. They were asked to visit this spot and observe/experience what it had to offer. In the next session they would creatively interpret this

site, be it through movement, sound or music, visuals such as photographs or slides, role-play, or any combination of these art forms. In this way we hoped to encourage the students to begin to experience new ways of doing, seeing, and being through making the familiar or the taken-for-granted parts of their world suddenly strange. We asked them to record their experience and use this as the basis for critical reflection.

Semester 1

Examples of the negotiated arts topics for Semester 1 are listed in Table 1. The topics were based on the students revisiting their own past arts experiences to identify areas in which they lacked deep learning (New South Wales Department of Education and Learning, [NSWDET], 2003):

Table 1

Negotiated Content, Semester 1

Week	Themes	Task	Presentation
2	What does integration actually mean?	An examination of different models of integration.	Interdisciplinary v. multidisciplinary approaches
3, 4	The importance of place	Workshops using <i>My Place</i> (Wheatley, 1987) as a stimulus/pretext	Visual Arts, Music, Drama and Dance
5, 6	Using group performances/exhibitions as a basis for learning.	Reflecting on performances by storytellers/musicians/art exhibitions	Observing, interacting, reflecting
7	Using drama to teach poetry	Enactment of the expert and understanding poetry	Understanding intensity of emotion through enactment
8	Exploring identity through collage	Developing a metaphor to express philosophy of teaching	Visualising and conceptualising
9	Evaluating and assessing using performance	Different evaluation and assessment strategies	What is authentic assessment?
10	Using multi-media resources with K-6 students		Technology as a tool, rather than a focus

Assessment

Just as the course content was negotiated, we offered the student teachers a range of alternative modes of assessment, then negotiated the criteria. We made it clear that we did not want them restricted to traditional expository essays or programs. Rather, we hoped they would portray their experiences using creative art forms, if possible. By offering different types of assessment, we expected evidence of the effectiveness of arts activities from various perspectives.

In response, some of our students designed an integrated arts unit; others developed a reflective scrapbook of their cumulative experiences, together with their analysis. A number of them read widely and developed a rationale for the integration of one or more of the creative arts, while others made critical responses to a range of arts experiences outside those offered in the course. We were impressed by the quality of the work submitted. The following is a summary of a jointly developed, highly innovative unit.

An Exemplar – A Creative Arts Unit on Surrealism

Two students, Michael and Shonagh, worked collaboratively to develop an innovative unit around the topic of Surrealism. They introduced this unit, with a quote from Bloomfield and Childs (2000):

As a model for the new millennium, the integrated Arts mode accords dance, drama, music and visual Arts a collective, central and pivotal role in primary education and demonstrates that when children experience the Arts from an integrated approach their learning in the humanities, sciences, technology, literacy and numeracy is complemented and enriched. (p. 1)

The aims of their unit included:

- introducing students to the world of creative and practical arts to which they had very little exposure
 - exploring the concept of Surrealism by tapping into and developing their creative, investigative, and interpretative skills.
-

Lesson 1 – Discovering Surrealism

Use simple predictive drama activities and drawing tasks to begin to understand the main ideas behind Surrealism.

Lesson 2 – Dreams and Surrealism

Introduce the importance of dreams to Surrealism and encourage language development in response to Surrealist art.

Lesson 3 – Story Telling and Drama

Follow from previous lesson and develop students' storytelling skills through drama.

Lesson 4 – Surreal Portraits

Using parts of dream paintings created in *Lesson 2*, students explore concepts inherent in Surrealist art through the creation of their own Surreal portraits.

Lesson 5 – Grand Finale

Using movement and creative dance as mechanisms to explore the influences of Surrealism.

What is clearly evidenced in the students' planning is a logical sequence for interesting and worthwhile creative arts learning to occur. No single art form dominated and each activity led quite naturally to the next. The unit was subsequently trialed in Semester 2 and a discussion of the outcomes follows.

Semester 2

The teaching/learning context in the second semester moved from the university to the primary school - this was the 'in-school' experience. Four primary schools agreed to participate, and teachers eager to be involved in offering creative arts experiences in their classrooms were identified. We stressed that these cooperating teachers must be volunteers because we were striving for a real partnership between the school and the university. We wanted to work with teachers who viewed this experience as a symbiotic relationship. The cooperating teachers would help manage the class so the student teachers could focus on the arts experiences. In this way the teachers would benefit by gaining new ideas and insights from our students.

We visited each of the selected schools prior to the start of Semester 2 to discuss the new unit of study with the cooperating teachers and explain the rationale behind its development. We also

offered professional development in the arts at each school as a way of acknowledging the teachers' support of this new program and of contributing to the development of their expertise in teaching the arts.

The in-school experience involved an initial observation and consultation between the student teachers and the cooperating teachers. From these discussions, the students were asked to devise a range of age-appropriate integrated arts experiences. Over a 6-week period, the students visited the class on the same day and time, integrating the arts - visual arts, music, drama and dance - as much as possible and documenting both their experiences and reflections. Still digital and video cameras were available for this record-keeping purpose.¹

Some of the Bachelor of Education (Primary) students worked alone, while others worked in pairs, with one student acting as a critical friend. In some classrooms, the cooperating teacher took on the role of a teacher's aide; at other times they stepped backwards, giving the student teacher full autonomy over the class.

Not surprisingly, because there were both advantages and disadvantages to each of these arrangements, this component highlighted the differences between the intended and the actual curriculum experience (Smith & Lovat, 2003). There were some cooperating teachers who clearly did not understand the purpose or rationale behind such an approach to the arts. For example, until we intervened, one teacher requested her student teacher make dioramas with the children for the whole time.

Following this in-school arts experience, each school group made a short (20-30 minute) presentation, sharing their collective time in the schools.

Presentations

The student teachers were encouraged to use video excerpts, photographs, posters, poems and plays to summarize their varied experiences at the schools and provide evidence for their reflections. The presentations were both creative and entertaining. Some students being so accustomed to highly prescriptive assignments in other areas of the program found the degree of choice in these units daunting. One group of student teachers, as the mechanism to

¹ Multimedia workshops were offered to the students. Topics included Power Point presentations, loading digital images onto a computer, burning CDs, etc.

explore their in-school experience used a large collage, which they added onto during the course of their presentation. Another produced and read a rhyming *Big-Book* complete with photographs and artwork. A third group employed a TV-show format, with fictitious letters from parents, cooperating teachers, and school students. The final group offered a movement performance in which each letter of their school's name provided the inspiration.

Although varied, each presentation gave insights into the role and perceived value of the creative arts within the school/classroom; the experience, or lack thereof, of the practicing teacher; and the efforts of the student teachers to integrate the creative arts with integrity.

Documentation

Student teachers were also asked to document their work with their respective classroom students and to include the following:

- a contextual statement about their classroom students and the school
- aims and anticipated outcomes
- an outline of the unit and learning experiences
- critical reflection about their experiences linked to reading and other arts performances/exhibitions
- evaluation comments/reflections of the various stakeholders (i.e., student teacher, cooperating teacher, and classroom students).

Reflections of Surrealism

Michael and Shonagh had created their Surrealism unit together but taught it separately to different Year 5 classes of students at the same school. In a Power Point presentation, they offered detailed accounts of their time and a comparative analysis of their learning environments and the outcomes achieved.

Both classes had students of varied ethnicities who had very little exposure to the arts beyond painting and drawing. According to Shonagh:

These factors combined to make the task of teaching a unit on Surrealism through the creative arts a challenging experience.

Michael commented that:

The teacher was excited by the presence of an 'arts specialist' in the classroom and encouraged an environment where my creativity and direction reigned supreme.

Although Michael and Shonagh taught the same creative arts lessons, their detailed evaluations demonstrated the impact of different classroom contexts on the teaching and learning experience. Clearly, student teacher evaluations supported the value of their time at the school. Cooperating teachers also found the student teachers innovative and enthusiastic and commented that their own classroom students eagerly anticipated the next weekly instalment.

Student Teachers' Evaluations of the Units

As a final step, we requested feedback from our first student teacher cohort regarding the effectiveness of the unit. In focus group discussions, our student teachers said they liked the flexibility of the unit and particularly appreciated the experience of curriculum negotiation. They found the Semester 1 input valuable as it helped to fill the holes in their creative arts learning. Semester 2's school-based component proved to be more of a challenge for them. They felt they did not have enough time to understand the schooling context and that 1 hour per week over 6 weeks was not enough time for authentic creative arts teaching/learning. As two students put it:

Reflecting back on our planning of the learning experiences, because we could not acknowledge the full extent of what the learners already knew, due to time constraints we were somewhat limited in our efforts to meet the needs of all students ... Spending only 1 hour a week with students during which the whole time was devoted to teaching, meant that we were not given substantial time to learn all their names, become aware of their interest or learning styles. (Melissa & Muoi)

Overall, though, the student teachers rated the new unit of study very positively. Michelle recorded that:

On reflection, the work completed with the class allowed me to put into practice my educational philosophy that integration is essential in the classroom ... As [a] teacher about to graduate, I

found it a really positive and empowering activity to be given the opportunity to teach in a class without direct supervision.

Nicole commented:

Overall, I believe that while I was fortunate enough to experience an encouraging amount of success over the weeks with 6T, there was indeed many an opportunity whereby I was forced to reconsider strategies in terms of catering for behavioural problems as well as maintaining interest and motivation ... I feel that the lessons I have taught have given me more insight and a certain confidence to be able to adapt in this way and be more flexible.

Some cooperating teachers, despite the voluntary nature of the program and our attempts to discuss our intentions, were still not helpful or involved. This was disappointing, and we continue to look for ways to ensure that the school-university partnership is more productive. So, where to from here?

Conclusions

In this article we recounted our attempt to articulate and demonstrate to student teachers how important the creative arts can be in primary education. In doing so, we challenged traditional modes of teaching at the tertiary level. The success of our unit has been gratifying both professionally and personally. The unit - incorporating changes based on the student teachers', the cooperating teachers', and our own reflections - was offered again in 2003, 2004 and 2005. In 2004, one student responded: *This is the best course I've ever done. This is what education should be like!*

Nevertheless, issues and problems remain. For example, we are aware of the need to negotiate more effective partnerships with schools because the differences between our expectations and what actually happens in the classroom continue to concern the student teachers as they begin to negotiate their teaching of creative arts. Given the increasing prescriptive nature of tertiary curriculum, we have encountered ongoing challenges in terms of using negotiation as an underlying principle for these units. Also, we are acutely aware of how difficult it is for some students to let go of many of the traditional trappings of 4 years of university life and assume the professional autonomy we practice in these units. It was very difficult for some to be creative and to stop guessing what was in

the teacher's mind. Barone (2001) talks of how we often acquiesce to the scripts of our culture: those prepared on behalf of the interests of others. In this vein, Dalton (1999) refers to 'real' teachers in contrast to 'reel' teachers. We wanted our student teachers to engage in exploring, questioning and critiquing their own scripts. It was very challenging for others to accept that we were sincere about negotiating the unit outlines and assessment criteria, that we weren't just doing these things in name only, that we really believed in their educational merit.

In conclusion, it is crucial to provide quality preservice education in the creative arts in terms of improving learning outcomes for primary school students. Despite the difficulties of designing units of study that are 'outside the traditional square,' our experience has convinced us that our beliefs in the essential importance of authentic, creative, and integrated arts experiences are well grounded. Taught with integrity, the creative arts can transform the primary school curriculum. To do that, it is crucial that this kind of integration is modelled as part of the preservice teacher education curriculum, a curriculum that when incorporating the creative arts can transcend traditional tertiary education 'scripts.'

References

- Auh, M. (2000). Analogies of creativity and curriculum standards for integrating the arts for creative arts education. *CREArTA*, 1(1), 60-83.
- Australian Council for the Arts. (2002). *Support for the arts handbook*. Strawberry Hills, NSW: Author.
- Australian Council for Educational Research. (2004). *Evaluation of school-based arts education programmes in Australian schools*. Canberra, Australia: Author.
- Barone, T. (2001). *Touching eternity*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Bloomfield, A., & Childs, J. (2000). *Teaching integrated arts in the primary school*. London: David Fulton.
- Board of Studies. (2000). *Creative arts K-6 syllabus*. Sydney, NSW: Author.
- Boomer, G. (1992). *Negotiating the curriculum: Educating for the 21st century*. Washington, DC: Falmer.
- Boyer, E. (2002). *Becoming knowledge: The evolution of art education curriculum*. Retrieved 20/04/05 from <http://www.newhorizons.org>
-

- Catterall, J., Chzpleau, R., & Iwanaga, J. (1999). Involvement in the arts and human development. In E. Fiske (Ed.), *Champions and Change: The impact of the arts on learning* (pp. 2-18). Washington, DC: The Arts Partnership & the President's Committee on the Arts & the Humanities.
- Coonan, H., & Nelson, B. (2004, August). *The arts-Helping students to embrace learning* [joint media release]. Retrieved 30/03/05 from <http://www.craftaustralia.com.au/articles/20040813.php>
- Dalton, M. (1999). *The Hollywood curriculum: Teachers and teaching the movies*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Department of Education & Children's Services. (1997). *Integrating the arts: 12 school based experiences*. South Australia: Hyde Park Press.
- Dickinson, D. (2002). *Learning in and through the arts*. Retrieved 18/04/05 from <http://www.newhorizons.org>
- Egan, K. (2003, February). Start with what the student knows or with what the student can imagine. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 443-5.
- Eisner, E. (2001). Should we create new aims for art education? *Art Education*, 54(5), 6 – 10.
- Fiske, E. (Ed.). (1999). *Champions of change: The impact of the arts on learning*. Washington, DC: The Arts Partnership & the President's Committee on the Arts & the Humanities.
- Floyd, R. (2001). Music gets students better tertiary education. *ASG-The Scholastic*, 4, n. p.
- Fowler, C. (1996). *Strong arts, strong schools*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gibson, R. (1999). Integration v. art: Is it an either/or situation? *The Primary Educator*, 5(2), 7-12.
- Green, M. (1995). *Releasing the imagination. Essays on education, the arts and social change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Hargreaves, A., & Earl, L. (1994). *Integrating the arts: 12 school based experiences*. South Australia: Hyde Park Press.
- Morgan, S. (1987). *My place*. Fremantle, WA: Fremantle Arts Centre Press.
- National Arts Education Associations. (1994). *National standards for arts education*. Music Educators National Conference, Reston, VA.
- New South Wales Department of Education and Training (NSWDET). (2003). *Quality teaching: A discussion paper*. Sydney, Australia: Author.
- Ralph, D. (Ed.). (1997). *Integrating the arts: 12 school based experiences*. South Australia: Hyde Park Press.
-

-
- Reimer, B. (1989). *A philosophy of music education* (2nd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Russell, A. (2003, April 9). The art of a good education. *The Age*, p. 6.
- Sawyer, R. (2004). Creative teaching: Collaborative discussion as disciplined improvisation. *Educational Researcher*, 33(2), 12-20.
- Smith, D., & Lovat, T. (2003). *Curriculum: Action on reflection* (4th ed.). Tuggerah, NSW: Social Science Press.
- Wheatley, N. (1987). *My place: The story of Australia from now and then*. Melbourne, Australia: Collins Dove.

Robyn Gibson r.gibson@edfac.usyd.edu.au is a Senior Lecturer in Visual and Creative Arts Education in both the Bachelor of Education (Primary) and Master of Teaching (Primary) programs in the Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney. Her current research focuses on primary children's understandings of art, art making and art education.

Robyn Ewing r.ewing@edfac.usyd.edu.au, is an Associate Professor and Associate Dean of Academic Programs in the Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney. She lectures in Curriculum, English and Drama, working with undergraduate and graduate students and is committed to innovative quality teaching and learning at all levels of education.



Experiential Learning and Debriefing in University Classrooms

Nancy Browne

University of Regina, Regina, SK Canada

Kathryn McNaughton

University College of the North, The Pas, MB Canada

Introduction

Kolb (1984), an experiential learning theorist, defines experiential learning as “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (p. 41). He describes a descriptive model of adult learning that was inspired by the work of Kurt Lewin. Kolb’s model includes the stages of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Kolb expands this idea and describes these stages as a cycle or spiral in which the learner engages in a recursive process that is responsive to all four stages. University courses are dominated by one component of the Lewin/Kolb four-component model of experiential learning, namely, abstract conceptualization. The other three components: concrete experience, reflective observation and active experimentation are either absent or limited in scope. While the pedagogy of experiential learning is practiced widely in K-12 schooling (Hohmann & Weikart, 1995), this is not the case in universities. The text dominates university teaching (Eickmann, Kolb, & Kolb, 2002).

Experiential learning is slowly becoming a credible, recognized approach within university courses. Because university courses are typically text driven (Eickmann, et al., 2002) and because they are typically delivered in 50- or 90-minute sessions, the incorporation of experiential learning is often difficult. If, as adult learning theorists suggest, the heart of all learning lies in the way we process experience (Friere, 1998; Mezirow, 1991), in particular in our critical reflection on experience, then university teachers must understand the pedagogy of experiential learning.

In university courses that have an experiential component, it usually takes place outside of scheduled class sessions, in the laboratory, studio or field placements, cooperative education programs, or internships. Students in these programs come to class with a range of valuable, but obviously different, experiences. However, there is little certainty whether or not their instructors take the time to work through these experiences with the students to consolidate and organize the learning that has occurred.

Experience is as strong a basis for intellectual activity and learning as is a written text. For Redfield (2004), the text is the starting place for teaching. Our own work with experiential learning has convinced us that a common, planned experience involving all class members can be the basis for intellectual development and conceptual understanding.

In this article, we attempt to understand *why* by asking the question, "What is needed to bring experiential methods into academic courses?" We discuss four aspects of responding to a question: (a) identification of the types of concepts or topics that experiential learning best serves, (b) description of the processes of planning and preparation for using experiential learning methods, (c) descriptions of the debriefing process and the demands it makes of the teacher, and (d) identification of institutional barriers and how they may be overcome.

Concepts/Topics Best Served by Experiential Learning

One of our program goals is to prepare preservice teachers who can work with an elementary school curriculum in an integrated manner, that is, we want to make the natural linkages between subjects and concepts and encourage the natural flow of ideas as students explore complex topics over time. In our classes we discussed the curricular basis for integration, showed model lesson plans, and studied videos in which teachers practiced a pedagogy of experiential learning, in particular, the idea of the integration of subjects and concepts.

We discussed these ideas and examples with our students and they gave the desired in-class responses. This suggested that they understood integration. However, when we gave assignments requiring the development of teaching plans, they used traditional, discipline-based, segmented methods. We tried to invent better explanations, show additional model plans, and talk more about the video examples. We also gave constructive feedback, showing that,

in their planning, one subject or topic carried the content (e.g., doing a science experiment) and the other subjects were subordinate (e.g., making a poster about the experiment) and often unrelated to the central concepts. We explained examples of nonintegration - how colouring a pumpkin, cutting a pumpkin, and singing a pumpkin song was not integration in a conceptual sense. As instructors, we were frustrated that learners could not apply theory to practice. When we reflected on it, we realized we were using a detached approach to teach integration.

This teaching/learning gap, as we called it, persisted until we began to use experiential methods to teach this topic. In the mid-1990s, several instructors designed an integrated learning experience for a 2-hour session. The topics were grids and coordinates as they occur across the curriculum. First, we had our students, the preservice teachers, experience the learning sequence on campus, and we debriefed how the concept of grids and coordinates was taught and developed in each of the activities. Then we had the students replicate the same series of activities about grids and coordinates with a group of children and observe the children's concept development. We debriefed the preservice teachers, using their experiences with the children. When they shared their experiences and ideas, we found that the preservice teachers began to do integrated planning and teaching. We concluded that our students did not really understand integration until they had experienced integrated teaching and learning in both a university classroom and a school setting.

We understand now that we were trying to transmit knowledge that had to be constructed by the students, because it contradicted their experiences and understanding of how concepts are related. Their previous experiences provided little useful basis for the creation of this new conceptual learning. Once we introduced this experiential learning component to our courses, students began to create integrated teaching plans that incorporated other curricular topics and learning activities. In this specific case, the students had two experiential sessions, the first on campus to prepare them for the second, in a school.

Traditional learning in universities is typically based on a transmission model where the teacher narrates, prescribes, and deposits information which the students receive, memorize and repeat. Friere (1970) refers to this as "banking education." Certainly, university teaching is becoming more interactive and innovative than Friere's metaphor suggests, but it continues to rely

on text-based methods. Given this, when is it appropriate to use experience-based methods?

Mezirow (1991) answers, in part, when he compares his construct of transformative learning to the more widely recognized approach of reflection. Mezirow argues that reflection alone does not automatically lead to more inclusive, discriminating, permeable, and integrative perspectives.

Perspective transformation is the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our presuppositions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; of reformulating these assumptions to permit a more inclusive, discriminating, permeable and integrative perspective; and of making decisions or otherwise acting on these new understandings. *More inclusive, discriminating permeable and integrative perspectives are superior perspectives* that adults choose if they can because they are motivated to better understand the meaning of their experience. (p. 14)

Our experiences suggest that experiential learning is the method of choice when the course requires the student:

1. to challenge the concepts they developed through past experiences and then propose new possibilities for understanding those experiences. For example, if the course includes a concept (or set of concepts) that contradict(s) students' ideas and experiences held prior to the course, then a well-planned, novel experience will provoke fresh questions and thinking. Mezirow (1991), Friere (1970) and Cranton (1994) endorse the transformative power of learning that is connected to experience.
 2. to create 'sturdy' concepts, richly connected, that can withstand both constant professional application and critique and generate critique (e.g., when students must thoroughly understand a complex or subtle concept based on experience rather than text).
 3. to use first impressions, sensory perceptions, raw data or observations. Debriefing needs to be immediate because working memory does not span days. For example, when teaching in-depth observational methods where perceptual material is crucial, nuance and descriptive details are unlikely to be retained over several days.
-

4. to participate in specific, concrete experiences followed by systematic guided opportunities which allow students to develop and articulate their ideas.

The dominant teaching paradigm in the university course is reading a text, followed by discussion. Experiential learning replaces the text with a common class experience which all participants can 'read.' While field-based experiences (i.e., internship, labs, cooperative education, etc.) are often rich learning opportunities, they are usually very diverse in both the level of implementation of ideas that might be relevant to the course and the types of experiences that a learner might encounter in the setting. Further, they are usually not shared and do not become common to the learners in the class. In-class experiential learning can ensure that students work through certain fundamental experiences with the instructor's guidance and support. This means that *all* learners have the opportunity to reach a sophisticated level of meaning-making based on personal and social experiences.

Planning/Preparation For Using Experiential Learning Methods

While most examples of experiential learning may involve one instructor and one or two class periods for the experience and debriefing, it is also possible to take a more expansive view of the application. In the following example, we committed a significant portion of each of the classes (Social Studies Methods and Arts Education Methods) to a sequence of experiential learning events sustained over a semester because we wanted students to understand the intricacies and multiple levels of curriculum integration. Our goal was to enable students to create authentic, meaningful learning experiences in an independent way, using all manner of 'texts.'

The Celebrations Assignment

We worked with a group of 30 students in arts education and social studies education courses. We devised a group project assignment to generate in-class events that would greatly expand the students' knowledge about other cultures, about the arts, about gathering information in the community, and about the cultural lives of children. We discussed how the assignment satisfied the requirements of each course, and how we would ensure that the

students understood the dual nature of the expectations, the shared values of the instructors, and the timeframe which the class activities would occupy within the courses. During our planning, we also considered the importance of debriefing the experiences and the possible ways we might do that together. Such discussions were ongoing as we debriefed each other, made minor adjustments to the schedule, and connected the in-class activities to our objectives.

The classes were organized in groups of five students. We informed the groups that each could select a different topic from a list of special days that are celebrated in Canada, but are unfamiliar to many Canadians. In preparing students to teach their peers about the special day, we adapted Hohmann and Weikart's (1995) definition of *active learning* which involves direct action on objects, reflection on actions, intrinsic motivation, invention and generativity, and problem-solving.

Copanning for Debriefing

We also worked together to determine how the experiential learning sessions could be debriefed. Debriefing is a pedagogical activity in which students learn about the multiplicity of responses to a single event. It requires teachers to work with multiple perspectives in a context of openness and examination. We understood how important it was to 'set the stage' for the activity. In debriefing each session, we highlighted the goals, discussion processes, and the validity of each person's experience. We wanted to make the classroom a safe and stimulating place to 'unpack' socially constructed values that, otherwise, could remain unexamined. We provided opportunities for participants to articulate how they would like to be involved to ensure that all students in the group not only had a voice, but also understood they were expected to use it.

In-Class Celebrations

The students planned rich sensory experiences for their peers, with multiple avenues for engagement and response. These in-class experiences engaged the students as active learners exploring physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and intellectual components of the class presentation.

Debriefing for the Instructors

In coteaching a portion of a course, we wanted to spend time after each session talking about the connections the students were

developing and how these were influencing their understanding and theory building. We also discussed our responses to the in-class celebrations and how we might introduce and develop contrasts in the forthcoming debriefing session.

The Debriefing Process For Teachers

The central method for processing the in-class experiences was debriefing during plenary sessions in which the whole class engaged in discussions with the instructors. This is crucial because, as Wildemeersch (1989) points out,

What is missing from many contemporary applications of experiential learning is that element crucial to our construction of reality: the centrality of 'conversation' or 'dialogue'. Indeed, without this we are less able to engage in the transformation of our reality and more likely to get caught up in the imperative of the status quo. (p. 61)

However, debriefing must not be equaled with discussion; it requires more of the teacher and the students.

Discussion teaching is a well-established approach in university classrooms involving the teacher's use of questioning to lead learners through a sequence, usually in response to a text. Questions are used to guide the students' thinking through what they formulate and verbalize of their understanding of the text. It also involves clarifying any misinterpretations or confusions that students may have. Discussion teaching is characterized by reflective, analytical, and critical thinking; it emphasizes participation and multidirectional communication as the class moves toward one or two major ideas. The teacher's preparation and deployment of strategic questions at different levels of abstraction lies at the foundation of discussion teaching. The advantage of the discussion is that it provides an opportunity for class members to work actively with the ideas and concepts being pursued (Redfield, 2004). Some of the skills involved in successfully using discussion teaching are also applicable to debriefing, namely: asking thoughtful questions, listening carefully to student responses, encouraging participation, and shifting the locus of attention between student and instructor. Discussion teaching and debriefing are learner centered and both involve the instructor and students in conversation around conceptual learning goals.

While discussion teaching and debriefing have some similarities, they fundamentally differ because of the pedagogical processes involved. While designing strategic questions at different levels of abstraction is the key to discussion teaching, it is at this point that discussion teaching and debriefing reveal their different pedagogies. At the heart of effective debriefing is eliciting contrasting, provocative experiences (vignettes, sensory material) that provide the basis for concept development based on systematic, well-connected information that allows for both persistent flexibility in thinking and confidence in application to practice. This is especially important in a professional program where theoretical construction and professional practice are intertwined.

These differing goals and processes require that teachers have a different orientation and skill set than in discussion teaching and, in our experience, debriefing involves more sophisticated skills in active listening, interacting with student experiences, and recognizing the importance of perceptual and conceptual differences.

Debriefing also involves reflection of a specific kind. In teacher education, off-campus experiential learning (e.g., field experiences, service learning, learning fairs, field trips, school visits) enriches students' experiences and aids in the process of their professional development. Learning to reflect on these experiences plays an important part in the development of teaching practice (Schön, 1987). It also contributes to their maturing sense of teacher identity and appreciation of the complexities of teaching. Van Manen (1977) identifies several types of issues that come forward in the course of reflection about teaching: practical, technical, social, political, moral and ethical. While he describes these issues as levels of reflectivity, in our experience, they are also types of content that emerge when doing reflection with a group of preservice teachers.

In teacher education, it is important that reflection be incorporated into the off-campus activities. In our teacher education programs, we usually use three questions to guide reflection. These are what Arbutnot (2006) prescribes as the standard model of debriefing:

1. What went well?
 2. What did not go well?
 3. What would you do differently and better next time?
-

Arbuthnot's (2006) three questions are useful in situations where the instructor and students are reflecting on events in practice, in which the student is repeating the implementation of a procedure or set of strategies. Through repetition comes a gradual increase in skill development and sophistication in conceptual understanding.

Debriefing experiential learning requires individual learners to think through their own experiences with and through others, as perceptions are shared and anomalies explored. Perhaps the most important contextual factor in debriefing is the active participation of an individual with a mature conceptual framework who serves as a guide to and through the process of group theory building. This individual, usually the teacher, creates a situation where students can learn to describe their experiences for themselves and others in their class; uses questions and examples to encourage students to explore their experience; models a critical attitude; and creates an atmosphere in which critique flourishes, without disintegrating into criticism. Because teachers in this situation are dealing with individuals' lived experiences, each of these experiences becomes a validation of and/or a challenge to the teacher's theories.

Anomalies in interpretation are of particular interest in experiential learning when the class has had a common experience. It is too easy to assume this results in common perspectives. Different interpretations of the experience allow the class members to develop new and deeper understandings of the meaning of the experience than they might otherwise have had. This can be viewed as an opportunity for students to develop an appreciation of the complexity of knowledge being created.

Debriefing not only extends student thinking, but it also provides opportunities for teachers to refine their own thinking. In reflecting on our own experiences with debriefing, we discovered some common components in the large group class discussion sessions. Because of the content of our courses, a wider variety of representations was possible. We developed an 8-component process to occur after an in-class experience: introduction, getting started, developing contrast, concept building, posing a challenge, taking stock, concluding, and professional application. Each component is briefly explained in the following.

1. *Introduction*: teacher comments, a recap of the experience, summarizing how the plenary will proceed and setting the tone of the plenary.
-

-
2. *Getting started*: some ways include asking a student to describe a first impression, to identify a novel experience that had not been anticipated, or to contribute an idea that surfaced during the experience. We usually tried to keep this discussion from having one focus or perspective because the goal is to generate a broad basis for more extensive conversation.
 3. *Developing contrast*: invite students to pose contrasting vignettes to include a wide array of possible experiences and interpretations. If several people pose explanations of similar experiences (especially if positive or conventional), the teacher should intervene to encourage contrasting responses without inferring that these positions are 'outliers.' To do this the instructor may:
 - Invite a contrast by saying, "I'd like to hear from somebody who has had a quite different experience."
 - Describe nonverbal cues (facial expressions, body repositioning, silence) that were observed which suggest types of experiences that have not been put forward.
 - Launch a trial balloon by saying "What if I were to tell you that my experience consisted of x, y, and z?"
 4. *Concept building*: encourage students to create explanations that connect the array of experiences (or a selected range of vignettes) to challenge or expand the ideas under discussion. This cycle is repeated to generate a number of potential explanations.
 5. *Posing a challenge that requires theory expansion*: the teacher challenges what's been discussed and proposed as explanatory by presenting a personal experience or a simulation ("What if I'd had this experience?") or highlighting some aspect of one of the student vignettes. This is intended to cause cognitive disequilibrium, a potent force to encourage thoughtfulness. This impels the discussion forward to expand established ideas, set boundaries for what the ideas can account for, and/or to reject the proposed explanations.
 6. *Taking stock*: because debriefing can be a rich, multifaceted process that sometimes requires interim conceptual organization, the teacher can summarize what has been discussed, what questions have been asked, what concepts have been developed, and/or what questions have yet to be asked.
-

7. *Concluding*: Near the end of the debriefing session, the teacher may choose to:
- Leave the students with a closing summary.
 - Give the students one more piece of challenging information which may be the starting place for the next class session. For example, the teacher may pose an incongruity, perhaps a 'what if' that challenges the information synthesized so far.
 - Play a video or piece of music that has text which throws a different light on the discussion.
 - Summarize the discussion to outline the concepts and examine how the discussion process was used to develop them.
 - Ask an individual in the class to take one of the concepts and explain it in their own words.
 - Use a blackboard or chart to visually display concepts and discussion points.
 - Ask the students to represent their understanding through dance, writing, image or object construction.
 - Ask the students to think of applications of the concepts to project ahead. This is particularly important in a professional setting, where thinking about the implications of theory or practice is essential.
8. *Professional application*: The entire process can be invoked again to analyze a real situation by asking students how the knowledge and insights (gained through experience and debriefing) might apply to a specific or general future situation.

These components are fluid and interconnected, rather than discrete steps. It is an iterative process, as students work together to build an in-depth understanding or an expanded theoretical understanding, or to articulate a concept that is richly elaborated from the pooling of their tentative perceptions, first impressions, and early interpretations. Facilitating discussion in this way is challenging for teachers in a professional program because theoretical work requires the validation and challenge of experience. When students are asked to explain what they thought or felt during a particular episode, the teacher is asking them to share their tentative interpretations with their class colleagues. Given the public aspect of this, it must be done with permission and care because students are revising personal theories and concepts in front of others.

Overcoming Institutional Barriers

While discussion teaching is a well-established approach in some university settings (Redfield, 2004), methods based on experiential learning theory are not as common. As mentioned earlier, this is in part a function of the structure and processes of universities where large class size and inflexible environments encourage teachers to select text-based approaches to their pedagogy. The following presents some ideas from our experience as to how these barriers can be overcome.

- Although the text is the dominant source of information, teachers can examine their course content to find places where information could be derived from experiential sources. For example, we could have had students reading sample lesson plans from integrated units; instead, we had them participate in an integrated lesson which demonstrated the elements.
- When the context involves teaching a cohort of students (a standard practice in many professional schools) collaborative teaching can be accomplished because teachers can find ways to vary schedules. For example, we were able to pool some of the time from social studies and arts education, to be more flexible with the prescribed timetable.
- Collaborative teaching necessitates collaborative debriefing, which leads to a richer discussion of ideas from more than one disciplinary stance. It is helpful if students participate in this kind of dynamic conversation because it demands that they acknowledge multiple expert perspectives.
- It is important to talk with colleagues and administrators about the value of experiential learning, especially as it applies to professional programs, so that the institution can respond positively to teachers when they create flexibility through innovative uses of time and space.

Conclusion

Experiential learning has an important place in university education. There are challenges to adopting and integrating experiential methods into university programs. Our description of our experiential teaching is provided to encourage others who are ready for it.

References

- Arbuthnot, S. (2006). *Debriefing delivers*. Retrieved November 23, 2006 from http://www.arbuthnot.com.au/arbuthnot_frameset.htm?Articles/1997/8_debrief_deliv.htm~mainFrame
- Cranton, P. (1994). *Understanding and promoting transformative learning - A guide for educators of adults*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Eickmann, P., Kolb, A., & Kolb, D. (2002, June). *Designing learning*. Paper presented at the Conference for Management Education and Research, Weatherhead School of Management, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH.
- Friere, P. (1998/1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (M. B. Ramos, Trans). New York: Continuum.
- Friere, P., & Faundez, A. (1989). *Learning to question: A pedagogy of liberation*. New York: Continuum.
- Hohmann, M., & Weikart, D. P. (1995). *Educating young children*. Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Educational Research Foundation.
- Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative dimensions of adult learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Redfield, J. (2004). *On discussion teaching*. Retrieved February 2, 2004 from <http://teaching.uchicago.edu/handbook/tac10.html#redf>
- Schön, D. (1987). *Educating the reflective practitioner*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Van Manen, M. (1977). Linking ways of knowing with ways of being practical. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 6, 205-228.
- Wildemeersch, D. (1989). The principles meaning of dialogue for the construction and transformation of reality. In S. Weil & I. McGill (Eds.), *Making sense of experiential learning* (pp. 60-69). Milton Keynes, UK: Open University Press.

Nancy Browne nancy.browne@uregina.ca is a Music Educator, who has served several years as Chair of the Elementary Education Program at the University of Regina, Regina, SK.

Kathryn McNaughton kmcnaughton@ucn.ca is an Early Childhood Education specialist and is teaching at the University College of the North, The Pas, MB.



Using Contextual Cues to Promote Associative Information Retrieval in Multiple-Choice Assessment Scenarios

Wanda Boyer

University of Victoria, Victoria, BC Canada

Testing is not evil, of course. A primary purpose of school is academic learning, and we must know whether, and how much, students are learning. (Merrow, 2001, p. 657)

The standards movement towards greater accountability emphasizes *content standards* (i.e., what information should be presented to students) and *performance standards* (i.e., the level of mastery a student must achieve to pass, to be promoted to the next grade, or to graduate) (Lewis, 2001). Assessment is one method to ensure that once these standards are set, they can be measured. Yet, there is more to the evaluation process than these standards. Test development must also consider what Nave, Miech, and Mosteller (2000) refer to as “opportunity-to-learn” standards (p. 129). As Gulliksen indicated, in the preface to Carlson’s (1985) monograph, *Creative Classroom Testing*, “good instruction involves a creative interaction between the teacher and the learner. An important aspect of instruction is the evaluation of learning outcomes as a means of communication between the teacher and learner” (p. 6). Learning outcomes expressed in measurable terms can lead to the development of learning experiences, and assessment and evaluation strategies. In order to ascertain if these learning outcomes have been achieved, the emphasis for educators must be on providing varied venues for the expression of student learning, including tests.

Multiple-choice (MC) tests are the most maligned of these learning venues. One reason for this is test construction. However, Thorndike (1997) indicates that good item writers have an expert knowledge and linguistic expression of the content, are very conversant with item-development methodology, and construct the

test with the test-takers in mind. In addition, well-formulated MC tests can target not only student comprehension and general knowledge of the material but also conceptual knowledge, higher order thinking, and extrapolated application of concepts to new contexts. Thus, even MC tests can provide active and engaged opportunities for the expression of what has been learned and therefore can be fully reflective of the ongoing educational dialogue between teacher and learner.

Interestingly, the dialogue between teacher and learner (outside of the testing scenario) is thematically organized to capitalize on the theoretical framework for how learning occurs. Information processing is a theory of cognitive development, thinking, and memory which attempts to explain the learning process. The basic metaphor views the human mind as a computer engaged in iterative and ongoing cycles of input, process, and output. Information is taken from the senses into immediate sensory memory, which is a bridge between perception and memory that gives the brain an opportunity to organize and categorize what was seen, transferring meaningful results to working memory. Working Memory (WM) is what a person remembers several minutes after the sensory experience and “refers to a limited capacity short-term cognitive system for processing and storing information. It serves as a gateway and workroom for a multitude of cognitive processes” (McNamara & Scott, 2001, p. 10). Ideally, if the information in WM is given attention, rehearsed, and not disrupted with interfering activities, the information is transferred to permanent storage in long-term memory (LTM).

Weinstein and Mayer (1986) employ this information processing model where “learning is viewed as an active process that occurs within the learner and which can be influenced by the learner” (p. 316). In citing the work of Cook and Mayer, they indicate that the encoding process for information transfer between working memory (WM) and long-term memory (LTM) is made up of four components: (a) selection, (b) acquisition, (c) construction, and (d) integration. In the selection process, the learner must actively pay attention to the information impinging on her/his sensory receptors or the material being covered in class and highlighted as “possible questions for the exam.” Once selection is achieved, then acquisition occurs where “the learner actively transfers the information from working memory into long-term memory for permanent storage” (Weinstein & Mayer, p. 317). Rehearsal strategies for basic and more complex learning tasks are used for both selection and acquisition of

information processing and also *retrieval of information* from LTM. Similarly, the learning strategies of comprehension monitoring, (e.g., advance organizers) (Ausubel, 1960) and affective learning strategies (e.g., techniques to ensure an individual is alert and calm) are important to the selection and acquisition of information. With the use of these rehearsal, comprehension, and affective and motivational strategies, construction is more likely to occur whereby “the learner actively builds connections between ideas in the information that have reached working memory” (Weinstein & Mayer, p. 317). These internal connections involve the use of organizational strategies for basic and complex learning tasks such as the development of a coherent outline; hierarchical, chronological, or thematic organization of information; or listing of events or schema in the form of a diagram to denote the relationship between entities being studied. Information that is held together with active construction leads the learner to integration, where the individual searches for prior knowledge in long-term memory and transfers this knowledge into working memory.

Recent work in the area of working memory capacity and strategy by McNamara and Scott (2001) suggest that “with more efficient memory use comes less strain and more capacity or activation for additional information to be processed or stored” (p. 11). They suggest this is possible because, as Ericsson and Kintsch (1995) found, skilled memory performance is due to long-term working memory (LTWM) and that

LTWM is a more efficient WM with faster access to long-term memory (LTM) than normal WM. LTWM would allow an individual to more efficiently reaccess the words from LTM ... Hence, a person using strategies would appear to have greater WM capacity. (p. 11)

Introduction of learning strategies, specifically organizational strategies for basic and complex tasks as identified in the construction component of the cognitive encoding process according to Cook and Mayer (as cited in Weinstein & Mayer, 1986) should support the learning efforts and opportunities of students. Ratner, Padgett, and Bushey (1988) indicate that young adult learners may be better able to exploit the logic of an event and make better use of category relationships or temporal ordering. It has also been suggested that postsecondary students are very effective at selectively encoding information and discarding irrelevant and

misleading information before it gets processed in working memory (Hasher, Stoltzfus, Zacks, & Rypman, 1991; Hasher & Zacks, 1988). Thus, test development which promotes exam-based opportunities for the retrieval of organizational learning strategies (e.g., use and practice of contextual cues from the exam, associative strategies, and mnemonic strategies) should assist in more resourceful LTM accessing of information when needed for learning and remembering information (e.g., for occasions such as exams).

This literature review prompted the following research question: Is there a statistically significant relationship between final-exam performance when individuals are presented with multiple-choice exam questions which have been thematically sequenced versus randomly distributed? In the context of this study, two exams were taken by the participants: a midterm and a final exam. At the mid point in the courses, all 60 students took a midterm exam with 60 randomly distributed questions (MC and 5 fill-in-the-blank). Group 1 and Group 2 were given tests with the same questions in a different random order. On the final exam, the questions for Group 1 were thematically sequenced MC questions, while Group 2 received the same questions in a random order of MC questions.

The use of contextual cues as a memory trigger were employed specifically to identify if thematically sequenced MC exam questions increased the information processing ability of young adult learners to retrieve, organize, and relate course material (Pugilisi, Park, Smith, & Dudley, 1988). The main hypothesis of this study was that there is a significant relationship between young adult learner's performance on a final exam and the use of thematically sequenced multiple-choice exam questions.

Method

Participants

Participants were 60 undergraduate, third year, preservice elementary teachers (48 females and 12 males) enrolled in Child Development courses in a mid-sized Canadian university. Ages ranged from 20-33 years, with an average age of 21. Each student completed one midterm exam and a final exam as partial completion of the course requirements.

Students' eligibility for placement in the education program and in these Child Development courses was dependent upon: (a) completion of 2 years of university-level studies within the Faculties of Fine Arts, Humanities, Sciences, and Social Sciences;

(b) demonstrated competency in written English; (c) a term grade point average of at least 4.00 (B-) on the most recent session of their completed 2 years of university studies.

Measures

The multiple-choice exam questions were based on the recommended course textbook material by Bee (1999), and the questions derived from Meyer (2000), specifically for use with the Helen Bee materials. Each multiple-choice question was referenced to page number, topic, and skill. Comprehension or general knowledge, conceptual, and application questions were selected.

Procedures

The Child Development course covered preschool and elementary school children from birth to 11 years, including topics on physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development. In addition, the course included three lectures and classroom activities exploring the topic of Cognitive Empowerment (Chapters 6, 7) targeting brain research, information processing as a cognitive theory, and control or cognitive processes, which can be used by learners to improve memory skills (e.g., organizational strategies: contextual cues, associative strategies, mnemonics, imaging, semantic wording, episodic learning, rehearsal strategies, etc.). Study guides spanning the content material covered through the class (Chapters 1-14, 16) were available at the beginning of the course to enable the students to practice test-taking procedures and to ensure comprehension of the textbook and class material before the midterm and final. A preexam overview or advance organizers of all of the concepts and big ideas that would be on the exam were discussed 8 to 9 days before the exams to ensure that students knew what material would be covered and had time to prepare study notes (e.g., using organizational strategies to create a coherent outline, hierarchical, chronological, or thematic organization of information to be studied for this multiple-choice exam). Students, with this advance notice of exam content and test format, could use notes prepared during this time to study on an individual basis or in study groups. Thus, advanced knowledge had the potential to make the students more alert to targeted curricular material and relaxed and confident about their ability to review the material with sufficient time before the midterm and final exams.

At the midterm point in the course, all 60 students took an exam with 60 questions. The first 55 questions were multiple choice.

These multiple-choice exam questions had been randomly distributed throughout the midterm exam. Five fill-in-the-blank questions were featured at the end of the exam. The questions on the midterm exam were given in random order to Group 1 and different random order to Group 2. These exams covered the same material in Chapters 1-7 (e.g., basic questions in psychology, prenatal and newborn development, physical, perceptual, and two chapters on cognitive development).

The final exam consisted of a format which was familiar to the students. There were 100 multiple-choice questions, which covered Chapters 8-14 and 16 (e.g., language, personality, identity, social, emotional, family, community, and school development).

Group 1 included 29 participants (21 females and 8 males) from one class, who experienced sequential and thematically related MC questions on the final exam. Their ages ranged from 20 to 33 with an average age of 22. Group 2 included 31 participants (27 females and 4 males) from another class, who experienced MC questions which had been randomly distributed throughout the final exam. Their ages ranged from 20 to 27 with an average of 21.

Results

Analysis

The analysis was performed after the exams were taken and the marks submitted. The first two steps of the analysis were to establish the equivalence of the two groups. The Regression analysis was performed to show that the midterm was a strong predictor of the final exam mark. Descriptive statistics, including the means and standard deviations for all measures, were included to provide information about the general patterns of the performance of the groups. An analysis of variance was used on the midterm exam marks to show the equivalence of the academic levels of the two groups. Effect size was calculated (Kirk, 2001; Thompson, 2000; Vacha-Haase, 2001). The last step of the analysis compared the final exam marks of the two groups, one of which received thematically sequenced exam questions while the other group received randomly distributed questions.

Findings

Regression Analysis was conducted to examine the midterm exam mark as a predictor of the final exam mark. The findings are in Table 1. Results of the Regression Analysis indicate that the use of the midterm is a strong predictor of the final exam performance.

The B weight of .523 indicates support for “the best possible prediction of the subjects scores on the criterion variable” (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996, p. 440) which, in turn, supported the use of the midterm as a baseline for the final results based on the strength of the b weight and the beta weights .637 in their standard score form.

Table 1

Summary of the Simultaneous Regression Analysis for Variable Predicting Final Exam (N = 60)

SP^a	R	R²	A^bR²	SEE^c	B	SE B	β	p
Midterm	.637	.406	.396	6.4376	.523	.083	.637	<.001

^aSignificant Predictors (Criterion Variables). ^bAdjusted. ^cStd Error of the Estimate.

Descriptive statistics including means and standard deviations for all measures are presented in Table 2. For the midterm exam, the highest observed mean score was 83.2517 in Group 1. This mean exceeds the mean score of Group 2 by 2.2872. The mean scores of Group 1 and Group 2 decreased for the final exam. For the final exam, the highest observed mean was 72.7742 in Group 2. This mean exceeds the mean score of Group 2 by .4294, indicating there is a small difference between the mean scores of students who experienced sequential and thematically related MC questions on the final exam and those who experienced MC questions which had been randomly distributed throughout the final exam.

Table 2

Summary of the Means and Standard Deviations for Midterm Exam and Final Exam

Exam	Groups			
	Group 1 (n=29)		Group 2 (n= 31)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Midterm Exam	83.2517	10.2169	80.9645	10.0037
Final Exam	72.3448	8.2863	72.7742	8.4131

Analysis of Variance was conducted on the midterm exam to identify if there were differences between Group 1 and 2 on this measure. The findings are presented in Table 3. The F of .767 is less than the F table .05 of 4.02 . The F ratio is not significant at the .05 level, indicating there is no statistically significant difference between Group 1 and 2 performance on the midterm exam.

According to Thompson (2000), the “effect size characterizes the fit of a model (e.g., a fixed-effects factorial ANOVA model) to data (p. 1).” The “one-way ANOVA, η^2 is computed as the sum-of-squares explained divided by the sum-of-squares total” (p. 2). As is shown in Table 3, the effect size of .0130564 demonstrates a negligible difference between Group 1 and 2 on the midterm exam. The prior two findings have shown that the two groups were equivalent on a measure (the midterm exam) that was strongly related to final exam performance.

Table 3

Summary of the Analysis Within and Between Groups 1 and 2 on the Midterm Exam

Source of Variation	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F	p	Effect Size
Between Groups	1	78.383	78.383	.767	<.385	.0130564
Within Groups	58	5925.003	102.155			
Total	59	6003.386				

Analysis of Variance was conducted to test the main hypothesis by examining if there is a significant relationship between an adult learner’s performance on a final exam and the use of thematically sequenced multiple-choice exam questions. The findings are in Table 4. The F of .040 is less than the F table .01 of 7.12. The F ratio is not significant at the .01 level. Therefore, the main hypothesis, which indicates there is no statistically significant relationship between an adult learner’s performance on a final exam and the use of thematically sequenced multiple-choice exam

questions, must be rejected. Group 1 did no better than Group 2 on the final exam.

Table 4

Summary of the Analysis Within and Between Groups 1 and 2 on the Final Exam

Source of Variation	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F	p	Effect Size
Between Groups	1	2.762	2.762	.040	< .843	.000682
Within Groups	58	4045.971	69.758			
Total	59	4048.733				

Conclusion

There was no significant difference in learner performance on the final exam when multiple-choice exam questions were thematically sequenced or randomly distributed. This finding is unexpected in light of three consistent course conditions for Group 1 and Group 2:

1. Before the midterm in the course, a three lecture unit of study and classroom activities were presented on Cognitive Empowerment supporting the use of organizational strategies: contextual cues, associative strategies, mnemonics, imaging, semantic wording, episodic learning, and rehearsal.
2. A study guide covering the course content (Chapters 1-14 & 16) was provided to the students at the beginning of the course.
3. Preexam advance organizers were presented 8 to 9 days before each exam.

All these resources provided opportunities for spaced or distributed learning effects (Ebbinghaus, 1913) and for the effects of self-tests as a means of strengthening memory of the material and connections between parts of the material (Bahrick & Hall, 1991). That there was an insignificant result for the main hypothesis was

unexpected in light of the research on young adult learners because the literature suggests (a) the attentiveness of young adult learners to specific contextual cues (Puglisi et al., 1988), and (b) the ability of young adult learners to make use of categorical relationships, temporal ordering, and organizing principles (Ratner et al., 1988).

This finding invites two questions: Do learners use organizational strategies for the construction and encoding of the information so that when faced with the multiple-choice questions they are able to use these associative strategies to retrieve the information, or are most learners simply reading the question at face value with no cues or connection to the other material presented on the previous or successive questions?

One student who received the randomly sequenced exam indicated that she “had noticed that the multiple-choice test appeared to be harder than she expected because the questions were not in order of chapter/thematic sequencing.” Although students may recognize a cue, they do not necessarily use it or do not use it effectively when it is presented to them. Thus, even after training and opportunity to practice organizational learning strategies, learners may extrapolate that these strategies are something to learn for an exam and not to practice personally and internalize as a cognitive strategy for their learning success before, during, and after the exam. In order for exams to operate as opportunities-to-learn, students must be willing and able to see the exam as a forum for practice and learning. This learning forum follows a *cycle* which includes provision and learning of test-taking strategies: taking the test, receiving correction, receiving teacher support to motivate the student to persist in learning, opportunity for the student to reflect on errors and to relearn or take steps to advance her/his thinking. Without this cycle of learning and practice, there is an inherent tension between performance and opportunity-to-learn standards, but is this tension found in the test-taking scenario or in the engaged and active mind of the learner?

Future research would be enriched from a sample taken from a larger population across faculties. It would be important to train participants specifically in organizational learning strategies in domain-specific material. During this training, students would learn to use efficient retrieval strategies and contextual cues to improve their ability to organize, relate, and remember course material throughout the course. Whether or not the lack of statistical results are due to the test development and the types of questions, the finding that learning strategies do not have a tendency to generalize

to other domains, and that learners do not tend to use the exam as an opportunity-to-learn provoke intriguing lines of questioning for future research.

References

- Ausubel, D. P. (1960). The use of advanced organizers in learning and retention of meaningful verbal material. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 51*, 267-272.
- Bahrlick, H. P., & Hall, L. K. (1991). Preventative and corrective maintenance of access to knowledge. *Applied Cognitive Psychology, 5*, 1-18.
- Bee, H. (1999). *The developing child* (9th ed.). New York: HarperCollins College Publishers.
- Carlson, S. B. (1985). *Creative classroom testing: 10 designs for assessment and instruction*. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.
- Ebbinghaus, H. (1913). *Memory*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Ericsson, K. A., & Kintsch, W. (1995). Long-term working memory. *Psychological Review, 102*, 211-245.
- Gall, M. D., Borg, W. R., & Gall, J. P. (1996). *Educational research. An introduction* (6th ed.). White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Hasher, L., Stoltzfus, E., Zacks, R., & Rypman, B. (1991). Age and inhibition. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning Memory and Cognition, 17*(1), 163-169.
- Hasher, L., & Zacks, R. (1988). Working memory, comprehension, and aging: A review and a new view. In G. H. Bower (Ed.), *The psychology of learning and motivation* (pp. 193-225). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Kirk, R. E. (2001). Promoting good statistical practices: Some suggestions. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 61*(2), 213-218.
- Lewis, A. C. (2001). A performance test for districts and states. *Phi Delta Kappan, 82*(8), 567-568.
- McNamara, D. S., & Scott, J. L. (2001). Working memory capacity and strategy use. *Memory and Cognition, 29*, 10-17.
- Morrow, J. (2001). Undermining standards. *Phi Delta Kappan, 82*(9), 652-659.
- Meyer, C. (2000). *Test bank for Bee the developing child* (9th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Nave, B., Miech, E., & Mosteller, F. (2000). A lapse in standards. Linking standards-based reform with student achievement. *Phi Delta Kappan, 82*(2), 128-132.
-

-
- Pugilisi, J., Park, D., Smith, A., & Dudley, W. (1988). Age differences in encoding specificity. *Journal of Gerontology, 43*(1), 145-150.
- Ratner, H., Padgett, R., & Bushey, N. (1988). Old and young adults' recall of events. *Developmental Psychology, 24*(5), 664-671.
- Thompson, B. (2000). A suggested revision to the forthcoming 5th edition of the APA publication manual. Retrieved June 17, 2000 from <http://acs.tamu.edu/~bbs6147/apaeffect.htm>
- Thorndike, R. M. (1997). *Measurement and evaluation in psychology and education* (6th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Vacha-Haase, T. (2001). Statistical significance should not be considered one of life's guarantees: Effect sizes are needed. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 61*(2), 219-224.
- Weinstein, C. E., & Mayer, R. E. (1986). The teaching of learning strategies. In M. C. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (3rd ed.) (pp. 315-327). New York: Macmillan.

Wanda Boyer wboyer@uvic.ca is an Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies in the Faculty of Education at the University of Victoria. Her research interests are in the promotion of self-regulatory teaching and learning practices in preservice teachers and the development of self-regulation in young children in all areas of their experience and exploration.



Writing at the Edge: Narrative and Writing Process Theory

Jeff Park

REVIEWED BY *Valerie Mulholland*
University of Regina, Regina, SK Canada

There is much to be commended in Jeff Park's recent book *Writing at the Edge: Narrative and Writing Process Theory*. With the cooperation of four participants, Park researched a community writing group, called the Writer's Group, that had successfully served the members of a local Canadian Mental Health organization for many years. For more than 10 years, Park volunteered as a leader for the group, and he clearly developed a profound commitment to the writers with whom he worked. The portraits of the participants are drawn with such warmth and intimacy that they become characters in Park's larger story of the power of narrative methodology and ways of knowing. Although the text is in every sense an academic project, the reader may be forgiven for reading *Writing at the Edge* as one might a novel.

The centrepiece of the book, Park's representation of the four participants' narratives, in many respects is the fulfillment of the theoretical framework that is explicated in the opening chapters. Park's promise of "linking story and context in connection with logic and reason to provide a new perspective on what it means to write" (p. 38) and "to explore the complexity of the relationships involved in the Writer's Group, and the act of writing as an individual act and as a social construction" (p. 39) is fully realized.

Park's own skill as a writer is most evident in the representations of the four participants' stories in Part Two, The Riparian Zone. His extensive knowledge of the participants and writing process theory is translated into recreations of their stories and, most significantly, their voices. After Park wrote their narratives, he used Seidman's interview structure to "create an agreed upon meaning" with each participant. The shifting subjectivity of the researcher, the subject, and the phenomenon of what happens in the Writer's Group is explored in the analysis. Although clearly the result of a refined research methodology, the

overall effect of the book is too moving to be ‘just’ research. The reader is left with a sense of knowing real people with whom the author, Jeff Park, has shared a most profound and sustained experience.

Much of the writing done in the Writer’s Group began with freewriting, a strategy widely used by writing teachers in many contexts to generate or explore ideas in preparation for more formal writing. To that end, writers were encouraged to write freely, to be unfettered by concerns for the rules and conventions of written language. Through careful reading of the writings from the group, through individual interviews and, most importantly, through authentic personal relationships, Park saw that freewriting resulted in far more than beginnings. He shows that Britton’s concept of expressive language needs to be revisited by writing teachers. Expressive language creates a text that becomes an artefact related to the writer. Park uncovers the ways the participants used freewriting to become writers of texts and of their own lives. In many ways, this is commensurate with Derek Owens (1993) assertion that: “To write (or paint or perform or compose) is to fashion not so much our identities but bridges that connect various facets of our experience within an incomprehensibly dense and unmapped personal landscape ... Writing is an architectural medium” (p. 164).

Many in the Writer’s Group drew upon personal experience for inspiration and, by retelling stories of their lives, were able to rebuild or revise aspects of their lived experience. Park refers to the work of Butler and Bentley (1992) who support the use of lifewriting (traditional forms – biography and autobiography, as well as memoir) and suggest that writing the self can be a source of “healing at the site.” Park urges writing instructors to reclaim freewriting from the dustbin of “pre-writing” strategies and to rehabilitate the practice as an essential but “different strand of writing” (p. 29). He suggests that free-writing be renamed “freewrighting” (p. 150), to refocus the practice on the constructive, rather than the heuristic, aspect of the writing practice.

The author is present on every page as a narrator, a teacher, a researcher and a writer, skilfully combining his synthesis of narrative theory with artful representations of four writers who used writing for unique purposes. This is where Park’s skill as a writer shines. He introduces each participant with a brief description of the writer’s history and identifies what he wants the reader to gain from reading the narrative that follows. He admits

that all of the narratives may be considered literary constructions, based on extensive interviews and intimate knowledge of the writers and their writing over many years. The respect, in fact the reverence that Park has for the participants is evident on every page. Each story and, remarkably, each voice is distinctive and engaging.

Two participants requested that pseudonyms be used to protect their anonymity; the other two insisted that they be identified by their real names. Caroline Murphy is a serious writer who completed a draft of a novel during her association with the Writer's Group. After she read what Jeff had written as her narrative, she provided valuable editorial advice which he acknowledges. Her extremely moving evocation of Disassociative Identity Disorder (DID) begins with: "I'm invisible. It has to be that. I've disappeared somehow." Her narrative includes powerful dialogue used for very dramatic effect. As well as respecting Caroline's writing, Park reveres her commitment to writing and to living.

In Brian Borley's narrative, entitled "Writing is my Playground," he praises the dynamics and structure of the group and the leader, Jeff, who "isn't exactly an autocratic leader. He's probably the furthest thing from it" (p. 59). Describing the therapeutic nature of his involvement in the group, Brian/Park writes: "We cannot change the past, but we can change the way we see and interpret it. This is the process of becoming whole" (p. 60). The reader is left not only with a sense of each writer as an individual, but also a sense of the nature and importance of the Writer's Group to all members, including its leader.

In a recent talk on CBC radio, the Canadian novelist, Lee Maracle, defined *storyline* as "the silver line between water and land where the story becomes myth." Park evokes a similar image when he defines *freewrighting* as "the riparian zone between the self and culture" (p. 151). A riparian zone is the edge of a riverbank, near flowing water. The selection of the riparian zone as a metaphor is at once artful and illuminating. Artful because of the images of fragility and beauty he creates in the narratives. Illuminating because the apparent vulnerability of his participants is disrupted by their resilience and strength. Park recognized the artistry within each participant to reveal how, "A writer both creates language and is created by language" (p. 151) in a way only a researcher devoted to learning, teaching and art could do.

A final word about the painting on the cover – an image of light, water, and murky complexity – is perfect for this work. If part of the

author's purpose was to suggest the restorative power of creating art, I was convinced.

Reference

Owens, D. (1993). Composition as the voicing of multiple fictions. In A. Ruggles Gere (Ed.), *Into the field: Sites of composition studies* (pp. 159-175). New York: MLA.

Valerie Mulholland val.mulholland@uregina.ca is Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education, University of Regina. She teaches undergraduate courses in secondary English language arts, curriculum, and language awareness.

Writing at the Edge: Narrative & Writing Process Theory
Peter Lang
2005
179 pp.
ISBN: 0-8204-6785-5



Unfolding Bodymind: Exploring Possibility Through Education

Brent Hocking, Johnna Haskell, and Warren Linds
(Eds.)

REVIEWED BY *Mary Jane Warner*
York University, Toronto, ON Canada

Many educators cling to the concept that text has the primary place in learning, but this edited book of essays deviates from this narrow viewpoint by demonstrating the value and potential of learning through our senses, emotions, language, intuitions and relationships. The title, *Unfolding Bodymind*, gives a strong sense of the book's content. Unfolding can be understood, according to the editors, through the image of a plant developing from a seed and unfolding into a shoot, then a bud, and finally a flower in the sensuous magic of transformation. Bodymind concepts initially emerged from the work of French phenomenologist, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, with his insights into the body as a "lived, experiential structure." Throughout the book, the authors try to make links between knowing what and knowing how that are the essential components of experiential learning.

The individual essays originated in 1999 at a conference on "embodied learning," sponsored by the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia. The conference brought together academics, including graduate students, from many disciplines - biological sciences, cultural studies, feminist theories, gay and lesbian studies, ethics, phenomenology and performance studies - to concentrate on the theme of "embodied learning." In particular, Phenomenology, Buddhist philosophy, and ecology influenced many of the papers. The eclectic topics range from teaching scuba diving and working with adult students from other cultures to nurturing young girls in science classes. Each essay raises questions about the ways that current educators define learning and knowledge.

Participants were allowed to present their work in any format, and this freedom is evident, to some extent, in the actual essays that vary in both subject and format. Poems, conversations and

unusual typography are intermingled with more traditional formats to offer a series of articles covering a wide range of topics that are linked in their beliefs of learning through the body and the mind. From page to page, the reader never knows what to expect. This diversity makes for an exciting excursion through the field of bodymind learning, a highly appropriate approach in a work that seeks to reconnect the mind and body. Although writers could present their vision of bodymind in innovative ways, each essay is framed by a standard format which gives cohesion to the book. Each begins with a short biography of the author, followed by an abstract and keywords, and finishes with endnotes and references.

This collection is the fourth volume in the Foundation of Holistic Education series. Although holistic education began in the late 1970s, many educators (from primary school to doctoral studies) still retain Descartes' mind/body split. In light of recent work by Howard Gardner on theories of intelligence and that learners use different modes to learn, it is time to move beyond the traditional focus on linguistic, logical ways of learning to more inclusive teaching styles. This volume encourages readers to make the transition by presenting a number of successful models of bodymind learning.

The book is divided into four sections, with rather lengthy titles but interesting concepts. Each section begins with an "Editorial Conversation" that makes connections with the four to five essays that relate to the theme, usually in very different ways. Section One, "Turning Together on Paths of Awareness," discusses pedagogic practices by concentrating on the sensory interplay between individual educators and their worlds. Section Two, "Embodying 'Pedagogical Possibilities': Teaching Being, Being Teaching," intertwines languages and understanding of bodymind with those of embodiment to offer alternative views of mindful awareness. The next section, "Education and Culture: Experiencing Im/possibility," focuses on curriculum as cultural and human artifacts. The final section, "Ecological Interplay-Humans/Nature in Freefall," concentrates on the ecological interplay between body and nature through which we experience both the environment and our own bodies as living phenomena.

The number of essays and the range of topics and styles make the book rather daunting, initially; however, the interspersal of poetry, short sayings, unusual typography and conversations lighten the density of the work. Rather than reading in linear fashion, from cover to cover, readers may want to select an essay of

interest. Most articles motivate the reader to reflect on the teaching method used and consider how it could be applied to the context of their teaching.

Dance or movement is used as a metaphor in several essays. One particularly effective image is that of the tightrope walker who illustrates that life is frequently risky and scary. Another author writes about falling in love with her first ballet teacher but, unfortunately, there is no essay about dance. Ironically, dancers and choreographers have always engaged in bodymind learning; however, the academic dance community often remains invisible, as others discover the joy of breaking away from the Cartesian body/mind split to engage the whole being in learning.

One of my favorite articles, by Frank Kull, describes a scuba class and the need to create a safe environment for those new to diving. He stresses the need for students to model his own actions, exactly. Learners must follow his precise instructions, from learning to put on their masks to descending into the depths. By accurately following instructions, the novice diver is enabled to have a positive experience, one that provides freedom. Holistic learning is not about being free to do anything one wants; rather, it is about ensuring a positive experience for the learner, one that involves physical and full engagement.

“When the Wind Blows,” by Marilyn Low and Maria McKay, speaks of being aware of the constant interplay between teachers and learners. This is especially true in teaching those from other cultures, because misunderstandings arise from making incorrect assumptions. In another essay, “Beyond the Educated Mind,” Heesoon Bai comments on the disintegration of society and the environment, worldwide, claiming the purpose of education is translating knowledge into action. He comments that students, rather than using all their senses to resolve an issue, are often on autopilot. He urges educators to cultivate an internal awareness in youth so they can discover their connection to the physical world. Sonia MacPherson describes a negative experience she had in a science class in having to watch a praying mantis kill and devour a butterfly. As a youngster fond of animals, she was angered at watching this act of aggression, suggesting that girls need to be nurtured by attending to values that cultivate a child’s love of animals and the human body.

Throughout, several issues keep reoccurring such as the need to honour diversity in the classroom, to learn through bodily experience, and to learn in a context of freedom. Rather than

teaching through fear and competition, learners must be nurtured to develop a deep ecological understanding of renewal, in which learning is an ongoing process that allows for different kinds of transformation.

This collection of essays should particularly appeal to graduate students and faculty in education programs; however, the essays are helpful to anyone engaged in teaching, whether in a traditional classroom or a community environment. Numerous possibilities for teaching in a holistic way are demonstrated through personal narratives that represent many disciplines. Teachers willing to modify their teaching styles will find the book inspiring and filled with possibilities for change, empowering them to incorporate bodymind learning in their teaching to achieve a more holistic approach.

I encourage anyone interested in teaching and learning to delve into *Unfolding Bodymind* to consider alternative ways of presenting concepts. With some creative thinking, the ideas of the various writers can be applied to a myriad of teaching situations. Only by being open to new or alternative methods of presenting material can we keep our teaching fresh and alive, enabling learners to fully experience the potential of embodied learning.

Mary Jane Warner mjwarner@edu.yorku.ca is professor and chair of the Department of Dance at York University. She teaches courses in dance education and Laban Movement Analysis.

Unfolding Bodymind: Exploring Possibility Through Education
Foundation for Educational Renewal, Brandon, VT
2001
333 pp
ISBN: 1-885580-08-8



Teaching for Equity and Diversity: Research to Practice

R. Patrick Solomon and Cynthia Levine-Rasky

REVIEWED BY *Meredith Rogers Cherland*
University of Regina, Regina, SK Canada

R. Patrick Solomon, a professor in the Faculty of Education at York University, and Cynthia Levine-Rasky, a sociologist at Queen's University, are committed to an ideal of inclusive democratic schooling. Both believe the desire for justice is a venerated value in Canadian society, and both are concerned that the abstract ideal of social justice has not effected change in K-12 education. Their book explores theory and practice to address the disconnection between the ideal of justice and daily life in Canadian schools and presents an explanation to the resistance of Canadian teachers and a possible solution in antiracist teacher education.

Teaching for Equity and Diversity: Research to Practice has two parts. Part 1 reports on a mid-1990s national survey of Canadian teachers which found that few were able to use antiracist pedagogies to equalize opportunities for racial and ethnic minorities. As well, many were ambivalent or hostile to the concept, the policy, and the practice of multiculturalism. In contrast, Part 2 is inspiring. It reports on York University's Urban Diversity Teacher Education Program and proposes key elements for a preservice teacher education program that prepares teachers to work effectively for equity in Canadian schools.

Research shows that racialized groups suffer educational inequities in Canadian schools. Racism is manifested in racial incidents and harassment, in Eurocentric curriculum, in devaluing parental and community participation, and in the attitudes and practices of teachers and administrators. The authors open with a bleak review of this research, followed by a review of research in equity and diversity education, which emphasizes its hopeful goals. Next is a review of the research on responses to equity and diversity education, which concludes that most efforts to address racial inequities in Canadian schools have met with tenacious resistance.

This leads to a detailed presentation of an early 1990s large-scale Canadian research project - a national survey of teachers in five

urban centers in British Columbia, Manitoba, Nova Scotia and Ontario. One section of the survey used a 5-point Likert scale to ascertain teacher perspectives on various aspects of multicultural and antiracist education policy and practice. Another section solicited comments and requested volunteers for follow-up interviews. Thirty-five teachers were interviewed: 32 were of white European-Canadian heritage; 2, African-Canadian; and 1, Asian-Canadian. Also, 10 administrators were interviewed; all were European-Canadian.

Solomon and Levine-Rasky devote three chapters to presenting and discussing the findings of this research project. Chapter 2 presents Canadian educators' ethnocentric meanings for race, ethnic identity, and difference, using teachers' words to reveal a presumed Canadian norm of middle class whiteness that excludes Canadians of colour, devalues Others, and denies the existence of racism by equating social differences of race and class with "cultural" differences. The teachers and administrators believe the antiracist education is the *source* of racial tension at school and the authors indicate the ways these beliefs protect the power and privilege of Canadian teachers and deny the need for social change.

Chapter 3 centers on educators' responses to equity and diversity policies, and the conservative practices which create the obstacles equity initiatives face and the ways they are resisted. Focusing on multiculturalism (rather than on power and privilege) is one response, arguing that multicultural education (MCE) is positive and preventative, and antiracist education (ARE) is negative. Many respondents avoided antiracist curricula, blaming "curricular overload." At best, classroom activities for MCE and ARE were unsystematic and serendipitous. Fear of backlash discouraged parental involvement groups at school, and professional development programs centered on equity and diversity in MCE and ARE were sporadic and ineffective.

Chapter 4 draws conclusions about teachers' resistance to MCE and ARE, about transformative possibilities, and about strategies for more effective professional development. The authors conclude that teachers work in a climate that lacks empathy for or outrage against social injustice; that powerlessness and guilt are barriers to action; and reluctance to acknowledge racism is a tenacious obstacle. But the authors also argue that teachers and principals are not entirely responsible. They indicate the systemic nature of resistance and the political and ideological currents that work to counter educational policies. They conclude that current

professional development in MCE and ARE is ineffective to systemic change. They call for professional development that begins with the study of society and schooling as arenas in which race, ethnicity, and social class are constructed. They present many ideas and strategies for helping teachers develop a multidimensional, critical and reflective practice in antiracist education.

Part II centers on preparing pre-service teachers for working competently with equity and diversity in schools and communities. The context is York University's Urban Diversity Teacher Education Program, developed in 1994 in response to Ontario's growing diversity. York's Faculty of Education targeted and recruited students from groups that were underrepresented in Ontario's teaching force. This 1-year, after-degree teacher education program integrates the study of race and social difference with the idea of schooling for social justice, pairs white mainstream university students with students from diverse backgrounds, and provides the pairs opportunities to develop teaching competencies and professional relationships.

Part II describes York's Teacher Education Program in four chapters. Chapter 5 discusses racial identity and teaching; Chapter 6, cross-race dyad partnerships in preservice teacher education; Chapter 7, community involvement and service learning; and Chapter 8, the "community of learners" model.

Chapter 5 was especially fascinating. Having spent the first half of the book presenting a teaching force socialized and educated in a society with a history of racism, the authors explain how teacher education can encourage critical self-reflection on "dyconscious racism" (King, 1991). The authors describe the application of racial identity development theory and the uses of critical race theory to help students understand the impact of racism on other peoples' lives and the discursive forces that racialized them.

York University's Program pairs white and racialized students; attends to racial identity development; encourages critical self-reflection; offers an extended practicum in schools with a high degree of racial and ethnic diversity; and requires service learning. The authors believe that pairing students across race, people they know well and care about, has been effective in changing white teachers' attitudes and transforming their understandings of race.

As a teacher educator working to create an antiracist teacher education program at my own university, I read this book with my own local context in mind. I saw ways in which York University's program differs from mine. My Faculty of Education cannot pair

white and racially Othered preservice teachers, because in this province Aboriginal teacher education students work in programs created by Aboriginal groups 30 years ago. We have a mostly white-mainstream, 4-year program, and a 2-year after-degree program that allows us more time to attend to teacher development than is available in York's 1-year program. Also, we work in a different social context, preparing teachers for rural and urban schools, in a province where Aboriginal peoples constitute the largest racially different group, but where the population of refugee and immigrant K-12 students is rapidly increasing.

And yet, York's teacher education program is like ours in important ways. It attends to issues of teacher identity, understanding that teacher identity develops over time and with experience. It values field experience, makes use of critical race theory and counseling psychology, requires service learning, and encourages critical self-reflection.

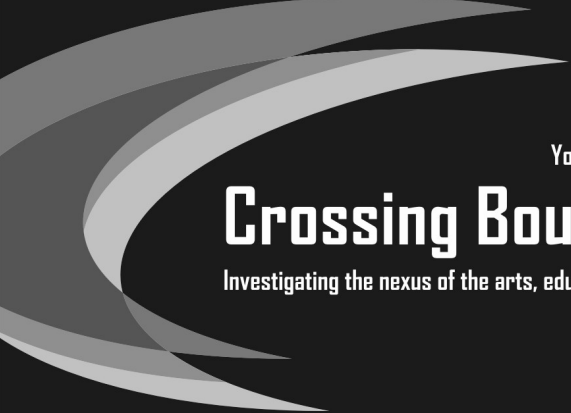
Although I thought it deserved more attention, I appreciated that Solomon and Levine-Rasky understand that changing teachers' minds and identities is not the whole solution to the problem of eliminating racism in Canadian society. As they point out, racism is structural and systemic, as well as personal. Antiracist education is about making white privilege visible, about understanding how the myths of meritocracy, of objectivity, of neutrality, and of colour blindness work to make race invisible. Also, it is about moral accountability for other people's suffering; about finding ways to work by acknowledging the existence of racism, and about teaching Canadian school children about it.

Teaching for Equity and Diversity is a valuable book. It presents an important national study of Canadian educators' perspectives on and practices in multicultural and antiracist education. It offers possibilities for antiracist teacher education and shows ways of connecting critical scholarship, self-reflection, and classroom practice in teacher education. The teacher education program described is specific to its context in urban Ontario and, of course, no one program will be suitable for every Canadian context. But this book serves as an inspiring discussion starter for Faculties of Education interested in renewing and transforming their teacher education programs to contribute to the pursuit of social justice. Importantly, it offers practical strategies for teacher educators committed to better, more inclusive and democratic schooling for all Canadian children.

Meredith Rogers Cherland Meredith.Cherland@uregina.ca is a Professor in the Faculty of Education, at the University of Regina, where she teaches Language Arts courses and engages in program development.

Teaching for Equity and Diversity: Research to Practice
Canadian Scholars' Press. Toronto, ON
2003
211 pp
ISBN 1-55130-246-2





You are invited to attend

Crossing Boundaries

Investigating the nexus of the arts, education and community

May 9 - 12, 2007
University of Regina
Regina, Saskatchewan
CANADA

A gathering of emerging and established

- **Actors**
- **Artists**
- **Arts Educators**
- **Dancers**
- **Musicians**
- **Policymakers**
- **Writers**

to explore visions for the future.

We invite you to participate as a delegate and presenter of a performance, paper, panel, workshop, lecture demonstration or installation. Check out the website for more information.

crossing.boundaries@uregina.ca | <http://scratchpost.uregina.ca/cb>

Early Childhood Education Professional Development Opportunity

WONDROUS PLACES TO LEARN AND GROW

MARGIE CARTER
& DEB CURTIS

May 4 - 5, 2007

UNIVERSITY OF
REGINA

MARGIE & DEB
are authors of:

Designs for Living
and Learning
(Carter & Curtis, 2003)

Art of Awareness
(Carter & Curtis, 2000)

Spreading the News
(Curtis & Carter, 1996)

The Visionary
Director
(Carter & Curtis, 1998)

Training Teachers - A
Harvest of Theory and
Practice
(Curtis & Carter, 1994)

And are featured in
the videos:

Setting Sail
Thinking Big
Building Bridges
It Takes Time to See
Side by Side
Time with Toddlers
Children at the Centre

Inspiring Transformation

*Interacting with Margie and Deb
through hands-on experiences*

- Creating environments that reflect our beliefs and values about children and the learning process
- Keeping space flexible and material open-ended
- Provoking wonder, curiosity and intellectual engagement
- Planning programs and building community

For more information contact:

Darlene Dixon at (306) 543-4393
or d.dixon@sasktel.net or go to

<http://nonprofits.accesscomm.ca/ecepdo/>



Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Facsimile: _____

E-mail: _____

In Canada

Individual Subscription (1 year) \$20.00 (CN) _____
Individual Subscription (2 years) \$38.00 (CN) _____

Institutional Subscription (1 year) \$25.00 (CN) _____
Institutional Subscription (2 years) \$48.00 (CN) _____

Outside Canada

Individual Subscription (1 year) \$20.00 (US) _____
Individual Subscription (2 years) \$38.00 (US) _____

Institutional Subscription (1 year) \$25.00 (US) _____
Institutional Subscription (2 years) \$48.00 (US) _____

Make cheques payable to
Policy and Practice in Education

Back issues are \$20.00 each. Please contact the Editorial Assistant regarding availability.

Mail to: *Policy and Practice in Education*
ED Room 220.4
Faculty of Education
University of Regina
Regina, SK S4S 0A2

Further information may be obtained by contacting the Editorial Assistant, Juanita Duncan <juanita.duncan@uregina.ca>.

Notes to Contributors

Authors are informed when manuscripts and disks are received. Each manuscript is previewed prior to distribution to appropriate reviewers. Manuscripts are anonymously reviewed. Once all reviews are returned, a decision is made and the author is notified. To expedite matters, it is important for authors to provide a complete postal address, office and home phone numbers and, if possible, a facsimile number and e-mail address. The *Journal* reserves the right to make changes in manuscripts to improve clarity, to conform to style, to correct grammar and spelling, and to fit available space. Manuscripts should be original material and should not be currently under consideration by other journals.

- **Copyright.** Accepted manuscripts remain the copyright of the author(s), unless otherwise specifically agreed.
- **Author anonymity in manuscript.** Authors must avoid any reference in the text that may reveal their identity(ies) to our anonymous reviewers.
- **Length.** The manuscript, including all references, tables, charts or figures should be between 15 to 20 pages and must be numbered. Figures should be included, on separate pages, at the end of the text.
- **Typing.** Double-space all text, use 1 inch margins all around, left justify.
- **Style.** For writing and editorial style, follow the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (2001, 5th ed.). References should also follow *APA* style and avoid discriminatory language.
- **Abstract.** In 50 to 75 words, describe the essence of the manuscript. Double-space on a separate sheet, and place it at the beginning of the manuscript. Do not include your name or any other identifying information with the abstract.
- **Cover Page.** Include the following: title of the manuscript, date of submission, author's name, title, mailing address, business and home telephone numbers, facsimile number, and e-mail address. Please provide a brief biographical sketch and acknowledge if the article was presented as a paper or if it reports a funded research project.
- **Multiple-authored manuscripts.** The designated contact will check the Printer's Proof, will do all correspondence, and will receive a copy of the issue in which the manuscript is published.
- **Program Format.** Microsoft Word or .rtf files from an IBM computer.
- **Form.** Hard copies required: 4 hard copies of the manuscript, complete with a cover page, abstract, and biography(ies) mailed to: Juanita Duncan, ED Room 220.4, Faculty of Education, University of Regina, Regina, SK S4S 0A2; Telephone: (306) 585-5142; Fax: (306) 585-4880. As well, a copy of the manuscript can (a) be included on an IBM computer disk **or** (b) e-mailed as a Word .rtf file to <juanita.duncan@uregina.ca>.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACTS	3
EDITORIAL	5
Ann Kipling Brown	
ARTICLES	
<i>Educators and Student Rights: An Ethical and Legal Challenge</i> 8	
Nora M. Findlay	
<i>Integrating the Creative Arts (with INTEGRITY).....</i> 29	
Robyn Gibson and Robyn Ewing	
<i>Experiential Learning and Debriefing in University Classrooms..</i> 44	
Nancy Browne and Kathryn McNaughton	
<i>Using Contextual Cues to Promote Associative Information Retrieval in Multiple-Choice Assessment Scenarios</i> 58	
Wanda Boyer	
REVIEWS	
Park, J. (2005). <i>Writing at the edge: Narrative and writing process theory</i> . New York: Peter Lang.	
Reviewed by Valerie Mulholland	
70	
Hocking, B., Haskell, J., & Linds, W. (Eds.). (2001). <i>Unfolding bodymind: Exploring possibility through education</i> . Brandon, VT: Foundation for Educational Renewal.	
Reviewed by Mary Jane Warner.....	
74	
Solomon, R. P., & Levine-Rasky, C. (2003). <i>Teaching for equity and diversity: Research to practice</i> . Toronto, ON: Canadian Scholars' Press.	
Reviewed by Meredith Cherland	
78	
EVENTS	
<i>Crossing Boundaries</i>	
83	
<i>Wondrous Places to Learn and Grow</i>	
84	
Subscription Application	
85	
Notes to Contributors	
inside back cover	

ISSN 1708-2749

