



EIDOS EMERGE

Volume 1. September 2007.

ISSN 1837 - 1833



Eidos Emerge 2007 was held on the 10 september 2007 at the Brisbane Powerhouse, New Farm.

The event aimed to showcase human capital related research from a range of disciplines and was a part of the emerging researchers initiative of Eidos Institute and its partners.

ORGANISED BY:



IN ASSOCIATION WITH:





CONTENTS

VALUING THE MINDS OF THE YOUNG

Karen Maras, Australian Catholic University

Pages 5 - 10

INVESTING IN HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Nicki Brake, Australian Catholic University

Pages 11 - 15

PROMOTING PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

Dr Karen Noble, University of Southern Queensland

Pages 17 - 23

CHANGING PLACES, CHANGING PEDAGOGY

Debbie Kember, Queensland University of Technology

Pages 25 - 30

THE GROWING VALUE OF LIVES

Evan Yabsley, Central Queensland University

Pages 31 - 36

FROM INVISIBILITY TO INCLUSIVITY

Dr Ruth Bridgstock, Queensland University of Technology

Pages 37 - 42

ISSUES IN INDIGENOUS LITERACY POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN QUEENSLAND SCHOOLS

Pauline Taylor, James Cook University

Pages 43 - 47

QUEENSLAND'S FUTURE

Helen Boon, James Cook University

Pages 49 - 56

RETENTION AND FIRST YEAR B. ED. STUDENTS' MENTAL MODELS OF THEMSELVES AS UNIVERSITY LEARNERS

Trang Nguyen, James Cook University

Pages 57 - 61

UNTITLED SUBMISSION

Carolyn Timms, James Cook University

Pages 57 - 61

THREE IMPERATIVES

Karen Hawkins, University of Southern Queensland

Pages 71 - 76

THE EIDOS INSTITUTE

166 Ann St
BRISBANE Q 4000

MAILING ADDRESS:

Eidos
GPO Box 3277
Brisbane Q 4001

CONTACT:

T +61 7 3009 7900
F +61 7 3229 6184
E info@eidos.org.au
W www.eidos.org.au

Eidos Institute acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which it is situated and is committed to fostering a culture of remembrance, recognition and respect for indigenous people.

EIDOS IDEAS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

WHO WE ARE

Eidos is an independent research institute and think tank. Its objective is to generate new ideas and dialogue on good human capital, productivity and wellbeing social public policy. We believe that engaged research collaboration and policy innovation contributes to a good society. Eidos is Greek for ideas. Our aim is to inspire, facilitate and support our members and partners to be more collaborative, effective and legitimate.

Eidos members include universities and policy leaders. Its work is conducted through a network of participating research centres and partners, through which Eidos draws the intellectual strength of the research community into an active dialogue with policy makers and practitioners. Within its universities and government agencies, there are more than 70 research and policy centres, and over 500 active senior and early career researchers.

WHAT WE WORK ON

Practical, applied, policy relevant research. Eidos believes research is likely to have a greater impact on policy and practice through supporting coordinated bodies of work, rather than a scatter of atomised, free-standing projects. We focus on five areas:

- **LIFE:** lifecourse learning and work transitions;
- **WIRED:** new communications, technologies and education and social policy;
- **COMMUNITY:** learning, labour and community;
- **SUSTAINABLE:** sustainable education systems and education for sustainability;
- **SAFE:** strengthening the nation's social and economic fabric.

Our top 15 Eidos researchers in each program have collectively undertaken more than \$100M in national and international research and evaluation consultancies over the past five years.

WHO WE WORK WITH

Our partners include policy-makers, universities, companies and public service providers.

HOW WE WORK

Eidos increases the collaborative and creative capacity and impact of researchers, policy-makers and practitioners. We position the partners at the forefront in creating good public policy - locally, nationally and globally. We seek to bring new voices and mentor a new generation of researchers and policy-makers, for example through an active program of internships, winter schools and emerging researchers conferences.

WHAT WE OFFER

Our research and policy teams analyse social and economic change, which we connect to innovation and learning in organisations. We help our members and clients forecast, lead, and respond to emerging challenges.

HOW WE COMMUNICATE

Eidos gives high priority to effective dissemination and works closely with the research teams to ensure that the findings are of value to policy-makers and practitioners. We use media, public events, seminars, workshops, and publications to communicate our ideas. All our reports can be downloaded free from the Eidos website.

THREE IMPERATIVES

Valuing an anti-bias curriculum, investing in early childhood education and promoting collaborative research

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I am currently a full-time PhD candidate with the University of Southern Queensland. Before undertaking full-time study I was at the grassroots of education having taught every grade from preschool to Year 10 and in the tertiary sector; and holding positions such as preschool director, special needs coordinator and librarian. My research interests gravitate toward early childhood education, social justice and literacy. Therefore, it is no surprise that my PhD topic investigates how children's literature may be employed in preschool settings to support and promote teaching for social justice. I am currently the postgraduate student representative on the executive committee of the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE).

ABSTRACT

This paper draws on a collaborative inquiry that employed the methodological design of Participatory Action Research. It involved two Australian preschool communities exploring how children's literature could be used as a strategy to support and promote an anti-bias multicultural curriculum. Based on the argument that anti-bias multicultural education is a key factor in developing human capital for an inclusive, productive multicultural society this paper discusses three imperatives that impacted on the collaborative inquiry. The first imperative concerns the fact that anti-bias multicultural education must begin in the early years. The second imperative highlights the importance of investing research energy into early childhood education to assist educators with strategies for implementing an anti-bias multicultural curriculum. The third imperative emphasises the need to underpin such research with collaborative inquiry that is participative and transformative.

THREE IMPERATIVES

Valuing an anti-bias curriculum, investing in early childhood education and promoting collaborative research

INTRODUCTION

It has been argued that anti-bias multicultural education is a key factor in developing human capital for a productive multicultural society (Derman-Sparks and Ramsey 2006). This paper highlights what was discovered in the literature review that premised the current research: the imperative for anti-bias multicultural education to begin in the early years to lay solid foundations for lifelong learning based on respect and mutual accord. This necessity underpins the second imperative, which is the importance of specifically investing research energy into early childhood education to assist educators with strategies to implement anti-bias curricula. The research outlined in this paper addressed the second imperative by investigating the use of children's literature as a strategy to support and promote an anti-bias multicultural curriculum in two Australian preschool settings. Finally, the paper highlights the importance of collaborative inquiry and discusses how this investigation employed the research design of Participatory Action Research (PAR). PAR is a socially just mode of inquiry (Kemmis and McTaggart 2005) that encouraged co-construction of positive change in the preschool settings involved in this study.

Derman-Sparks and Ramsey (2006) used the term anti-bias multicultural education to describe their work and is similarly employed throughout this paper. Derman-Sparks and Ramsey (2006) explain that "multicultural education has broadened its scope and has shifted from a focus on cultural pluralism to critical thinking" (p. 3). The focus has moved from 'appreciating difference and diversity' to working toward social justice. This paper uses the term anti-bias multicultural education to "embrace the 30-year history [of multicultural education] and to emphasise the struggle towards social, economic and cultural equity" (Derman-Sparks and Ramsey 2006, 3).

Although the meaning of the term social justice is dynamic and ever changing and means different things to different people, it is closely linked to the term anti-bias multicultural (Derman-Sparks and Ramsey 2006) and should be defined here for the purpose of this paper. For this collaborative study, the research team proposed five ways that social justice should work within a school setting. Social justice should:

- maintain a society where all individuals may contribute to social, economic, cultural and political life irrespective of race, religion, gender, age, sexuality, (dis)ability, socio-economic status, colour and/or descent;
- uphold the dignity, rights and freedoms of all individuals and communities through inclusion, acceptance, equity and respect (especially those who are disadvantaged, oppressed and/or discriminated against);
- support freedom of speech and strive to give voice to the vulnerable, often 'silenced', minority groups (e.g., people of colour, people who are [dis]abled, people who are poorly educated and young children);
- oppose discrimination and prejudice against gender, race, religion, ethnicity, sexuality, socio-economic status, age and/or (dis)ability; and
- reject any attempt to dominate, oppress and subjugate any individual or group, and promote peaceful practices.

Exploring social justice issues (such as race, culture, colour, gender and [dis]ability) goes hand-in-hand with an anti-bias multicultural curriculum. However, such investigation is not only theorising on the concepts. Together with Leistyna (2005) this inquiry also asked, "how can theorising be used as a social practice that inspires people to not only read the world critically, but to also act within it?" (p.14). This paper suggests that anti-bias multicultural education in the early years may help to answer this question.

THE FIRST IMPERATIVE: THE IMPORTANCE OF ANTI-BIAS MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

Today's preschoolers are tomorrow's parents, citizens, leaders and decision makers (Connolly, 2003; Swiniarski and Breitborde 2003). There is no doubt that throughout the preschool years children are not only becoming more conscious of their world and how to act in it, but are developing their moral structures by absorbing the attitudes and values of their family, culture and society (Nixon and Aldwinkle 1997). The preschool years are crucial in shaping cultural and racial understandings and are critical in forming

THREE IMPERATIVES

Valuing an anti-bias curriculum, investing in early childhood education and promoting collaborative research

Karen Hawkins, University of Southern Queensland

attitudes toward diversity and difference (Mac Naughton 2003a).

Research has demonstrated that by the time children reach preschool age they have already become socially proficient in the ways they appropriate and manipulate racist discourses (Connolly 2003; Mundine and Giugni 2006; Siraj-Blatchford 1995; Van Ausdale and Feagin 2002). Numerous investigations initially pioneered in the early 1900s and repeated in a multiplicity of forms since then have revealed that children have the capability to distinguish racial differences and to develop negative attitudes and prejudices towards particular groups from the age of three (Connolly 2003; Mac Naughton 2003a; Nixon and Aldwinkle 1997; Siraj-Blatchford 1995; Van Ausdale and Feagin 2002).

Thus, early childhood educators share a major responsibility in fostering an anti-bias multicultural curriculum that upholds equity, justice, acceptance, respect for human dignity and peace. "Peace is not merely the absence of hostilities, but a positive human security founded on equity" (al-Hussein 2000, 162). Guiding children towards an appreciation for and valuing of difference and diversity while honouring peaceful and just practices will hopefully go towards creating a peaceful and just world.

THE SECOND IMPERATIVE: INVESTING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Early childhood education sets the foundation for lifelong learning and participating productively in a multicultural society (Swiniarski et al. 2003, 245):

Current theorists, based on research on the affective and cognitive development of the young child, place an emphasis on the importance of beginning the study of global education during the earliest years of childhood... To resolve world issues, protect the environment, seek viable means of employment, and ensure peace and tranquillity within and between nations, tomorrow's citizen will need to be comfortable working cooperatively in settings with a diverse membership.

However, a number of researchers discovered that educators struggle to find appropriate pedagogical strategies to support and promote an anti-bias multicultural curriculum in their classrooms (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2006; Lingard, Mills & Hayes, 2000; Siraj-Blatchford & Clarke, 2000). Moreover, Derman-Sparks and Ramsey (2006, 1) suggest that early childhood educators find anti-bias multicultural education problematic in classrooms "if all the kids are white". Scholars, critical thinkers and research philosophers have called for research into new pedagogies that will inform policy and

teacher development regarding anti-bias multicultural education (Connolly 2003; Denman-Sparks and Ramsey 2006; Elenes 2002; Lingard et al. 2000; Mac Naughton 2003b; Noddings 1995). Therefore, it is imperative that research initiatives are developed with the aim of exploring pedagogical strategies to assist early childhood educators in implementing an anti-bias multicultural curriculum that will guide young children to value difference and diversity for the sake of a productive, inclusive and respectful multicultural society.

The current study embraced this imperative by examining how storytime sessions could assist with strategies to support and promote an anti-bias multicultural curriculum. It adopted the collaborative research design of Participatory Action Research (discussed later in this paper) involving two preschool groups. Both groups were mostly homogeneous, coming from middle class families of Anglo backgrounds.

The research team included two preschool directors, two preschool assistants, a preschool teacher and the researcher. All team members had a declared interest in exploring strategies that would promote and support an anti-bias multicultural curriculum in their classrooms. The research team wished to explore how this action research could positively influence the two preschool groups to value difference and diversity of race, culture, colour, gender and (dis)ability.

Furthermore, the research team wanted to investigate children's literature to discover which texts worked best to enhance young children's interest, reflection and understanding of social justice issues. These educators had also noticed gender stereotyping and exclusion occurring during play. For example, a group of boys would not include the girls in their play and endeavoured to force the girls from the 'fort' because "they [the girls] should be in the home corner". The educators wanted to explore strategies that would encourage acceptance and inclusion. They believed that anti-bias multicultural education should not only theorise on the concept but it must inspire positive action (Greene 1995; Leistyna 2005).

Semi-structured interviews with all preschool children conducted during the orientation phase of the study (one school term) revealed the need to explore picture books that challenged gender stereotyping and celebrated difference and diversity. During the intense data gathering phase (completed over the school term that followed the orientation phase) all research team members participated in weekly meetings. At these meetings team members scrutinised their own and each other's teaching and empirical data gathered by analysing videotaped storytime sessions. During the course of the research, 36 storytime sessions were videotaped and analysed.

THREE IMPERATIVES

Valuing an anti-bias curriculum, investing in early childhood education and promoting collaborative research

Karen Hawkins, University of Southern Queensland

The continual analysis of preschoolers' understandings and opinions regarding social justice issues such as race, colour, culture, gender, class and (dis)ability during these sessions propelled the study.

A second set of semi-structured interviews with all preschool children was conducted at the end of the data gathering phase. Full analysis of the research project included examination of both sets of interviews with preschoolers, transcripts of videotaped storytime sessions, research team members' reflective journals, and meeting notes. This analysis highlighted the fact that deep, reflective whole class discussion regarding critical texts (picture books that celebrated diversity of race, culture, colour, [dis]ability, gender and sexuality; and encouraged discussion on gender stereotyping, socio-economic status, suppression, bullying and exclusion) over a period of time impacted positively on children's recognition and understanding of difference and diversity, and sensitivity to social justice issues.

The research team also discovered that elevating the status of storytime from a simple transition activity to a valued, integral session of the preschool program and ensuring that preschoolers were given ample opportunity to explore and voice their opinions regarding social justice issues positively influenced critical discussions. Other strategies that were successfully implemented include reflecting on children's responses to choose picture books, asking higher order and divergent thinking questions, placing the issues addressed by the texts in the preschool context, encouraging artistic response, and involving parents and the community.

The current study may contribute to the development of theories that inform anti-bias multicultural curricula with a view to raising preschool children's positive recognition of difference and sensitivity to social justice issues. This in turn could inform policy relating to early childhood anti-bias multicultural education and future teacher development to equip educators with strategies to implement an anti-bias, multicultural curriculum.

THE THIRD IMPERATIVE: PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

This study is underpinned by the collaborative design of Participatory Action Research (PAR) which has been demonstrated to be influential to the social justice movement (Torres, 2004). PAR signifies a position within qualitative research methods, an epistemology that believes knowledge is embedded in social relationships and most influential when produced collaboratively through action (Fine et al., 2004). To this end, the following cyclical, spiralling action research process was undertaken: planning, observation,

reflection, collaboration/theory building, planning (based on observations), and implementation of planned action; re-observation, re-reflection, re-collaboration, re-planning and re-implementation (Bell, 2000; Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005; Mac Naughton, 2001). In this way the cycle continued.

The cyclical, spiralling nature of PAR became the methodological framework on which the current research project was constructed. Denzin and Lincoln (2005, 384) confirm that "work in this tradition attempts to make qualitative research more humanistic, holistic, and relevant to the lives of human beings. This worldview sees human beings as co-creating their reality through participation, experience and action". To this end, PAR was employed as a research design that allowed participants to re-examine storytime in their preschool settings to bring about positive change.

PAR is a means that produces knowledge and improves practice through its collaborative nature: the direct involvement of participants in setting the schedule, data collection and analysis, and use of findings (Greenwood and Levin, 2005; Kemmis and McTaggart 2005; Mac Naughton 2001). PAR values and invests in the human capital that will mostly benefit from the findings, in this case the preschool communities involved in the collaborative inquiry.

The application of PAR was appropriate for this study because its participative nature and transformative action allowed teachers and children to critically understand their worldviews by actively and collectively shaping and reshaping them through exploration and reflection of social justice issues in children's literature to understand these issues better. The study impacted positively on preschoolers' recognition and understanding of and sensitivity to, difference and diversity of race, culture, colour, gender, (dis)ability and socio-economic status. The study also provided educators with strategies to support and promote an anti-bias multicultural curriculum.

If these were the only outcomes of this study then the application of PAR "may be conceived as little more than a technique to improve daily practice of a group or organization" (Hooley 2005, 69). However, further outcomes of a far more personal nature attest to the successful application of PAR for this study. McTaggart (1991,34) contends that action research "transforms the way teachers see themselves". This study was no exception. Educators involved in this collaborative inquiry now see themselves as champions of an anti-bias multicultural curriculum. A process of "transformative consciousness" (Hooley 2005, 71) took place for all team members whereby the research experience developed new thinking at deeper levels. Not

THREE IMPERATIVES

Valuing an anti-bias curriculum, investing in early childhood education and promoting collaborative research

Karen Hawkins, University of Southern Queensland

only did team members scrutinise the teaching practice of storytime but also reflected deeply on their individual philosophies of difference, diversity and pedagogy.

Hooley (2005) suggests that “changed personal and professional thinking by researchers are revealed throughout the process and certainly at the formal conclusion of the research. This would be seen as an additional task in academic research but an essential component of participatory research” (p.71). This participatory action research, therefore, not only improved practice but also influenced personal and professional philosophies to develop practitioners that are more reflective. Upon examination of journal entries it is clear that these educators now deeply and critically reflect on how early childhood education operates within a historical and ideological context and are prepared to challenge the status quo.

CONCLUSION

This paper has put forward three imperatives for early childhood educators, policymakers and researchers. All three imperatives point to the importance of valuing and investing in early childhood education to ensure productive human capital for the future. The first argued that anti-bias multicultural education must begin in the early years to promote lifelong learning that will value positive recognition of difference with the view to a dynamic, inclusive, respectful humanity. Indeed, an anti-bias multicultural curriculum is needed to sow the seeds of change for a productive, inclusive multicultural humanity. The second imperative elaborated the fact that research energy must be specifically expended in the area of early childhood education to assist educators with strategies to support an anti-bias multicultural curriculum. This collaborative study produced positive outcomes for two preschool communities, which may be transferable to other settings. The paper concluded with the third imperative that respectful, inclusive, collaborative research methods are socially just and complement investigations into anti-bias multicultural education. The success of the study’s design renders it a likely candidate for helping to frame future directions in ethical collaborative research. This collaborative study not only improved practice in the preschool communities involved but also had a profound and far-reaching affect on both personal and professional philosophies of each team member regarding difference, diversity and pedagogy. Policy makers may use this study to assist early childhood education with a pedagogical strategy that promotes and supports an anti-bias multicultural curriculum.

REFERENCES

- al-Hussein, Noor. 2000. *Architects of Peace*. Ed. Michael Collopy. Novato, California: New World Library.
- Bell, Judith. 2000. *Doing Your Research Project*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.
- Carr, Wilfred, and Stephen Kemmis. 1986. *Becoming Critical: Education, Knowledge and Action Research*. London: Falmer.
- Connolly, Paul. 2003. “The Development of Young Children’s Ethnic Identities.” In *Social Justice, Education and Identity*, edited by Carol Vincent. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Denzin, Norman K. and Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds. 2005. *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Derman-Sparks, Louise, and Patricia Ramsey. 2006. *What if all the kids are white?* New York: Teacher’s College Press.
- Elenes, Alejandra. 2002. “Border/Transformative Pedagogies at the End of the Millennium: Chicana/o Cultural Studies and Education.” In *Decolonial Voices: Chicana and Chinaco Cultural Studies in the 21st Century*, edited by Arturo J. Aldama and Naomi H. Quinonez. Indianapolis: Indiana Up.
- Fine, Michelle, Maria.E. Torre, Kathy Boudin, Iris Bowden, Judith Clark, Donna Hylton, Migdalia Martinez, Melissa Rivera, Rosemarie A. Roberts, Pamela Smart and Dedora Upegui. 2004. “Participatory Action Research: From Within and Beyond Prison Bars.” In *Working Method Research and Social Justice*, edited by Lois Weis and Michelle Fine, New York: Routledge.
- Greene, Maxine. 1995. *Releasing the Imagination. Essays on Education, the Arts, and Social Change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Greenwood, Davydd, and Morten Levin. 2003. “Reconstructing the Relationships Between Universities and Society Through Action Research.” In *The Landscape of Qualitative Research*, edited by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, 131-166. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Hooley, Neil. 2005. “Participatory Action research and the Struggle for Legitimation.” *Australian Educational Researcher* 32, 1: 67 – 82.
- Kemmis, Stephen, and Robin McTaggart. 2005. “Participatory Action Research: Communicative Action and the Public Sphere.” In *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, edited by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S.

THREE IMPERATIVES

Valuing an anti-bias curriculum, investing in early childhood education and promoting collaborative research

Karen Hawkins, University of Southern Queensland

Lincoln, 559-603. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Leistyna, Pepi. 2005. "Introduction: Revitalising the Dialogue: Theory, Coalition-Building, and Social Change." In *Cultural Studies from Theory to Action*, edited by Pepi Leistyna. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing.

Lingard, Bob, Martin Mills, and Debra Hayes. 2000. "Teachers, School Reform and Social Justice: Challenging Research and Practice." *Australian Educational Researcher* 27, 3: 99 – 115.

Mac Naughton, Glenda. 2001. "Action Research." In *Doing Early Childhood Research: International Perspectives on Theory and Practice*, edited by Glenda Mac Naughton, Sharne A. Rolfe and Iram Siraj-Blatchford. Crows Nest, Australia: Allen and Unwin.

Mac Naughton, Glenda. 2003a. *Shaping Early Childhood: Learners, Curriculum and Contexts*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Mac Naughton, Glenda. 2003b. "Eclipsing Voice in Research with Young Children." *Australian Journal of Early Education* 28 (1): 36-43.

McTaggart, Robin. 1991. *Action Research: A Short Modern History*. Geelong, Victoria: Deakin University Press.

Mundine, Aunty Kerry, and Miriam Giugni. 2006. *Diversity and Difference: Lighting the Spirit of Identity*. Canberra: Early Childhood Australia.

Nixon, Dianne, and Maree Aldwinckle. 1997. *Exploring Child Development from Three to Six Years*. Katoomba: Social Science Press.

Noddings, Nel. 1995. "A Morally Defensible Mission for Schools in the Twenty-First Century." *Phi Delta Kappan* 6 (5): 365–369.

Siraj-Blatchford, Iram. 1995. *The Early Years. Laying the Foundations for Racial Equality*. Staffordshire: Trentham Books Ltd.

Siraj-Blatchford, Iram, and Priscilla Clarke. 2000. *Supporting Identity, Diversity and Language in the Early Years*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Swiniarski, Louise B. and Mary-Lou Breitborde. 2003. *Educating the Global Village: Including the Young Child in the World*. New Jersey: Merrill Prentice Hall.

Torres, Myriam. 2004. "The Role of Participatory Democracy in the Critical Praxis of Social Justice." In *Social Justice in These Times*, edited by James O'Donnell, Marc Pruyn and Rudolfo Chavez Chavez. Greenwich, Connecticut: Information Age Publishing Inc.

Van Ausdale, Debra, and Joe R. Feagin. 2002. *The First R: How Children Learn Race and Racism*. Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield