

CHANGING PERSPECTIVES ON ASSESSMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION:  
THE POWER OF PEDAGOGICAL NARRATION

by

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## ABSTRACT

This graduating project investigates using the practice of pedagogical narration as a holistic tool for assessment with young children. Pedagogical narration is a practice through which children's learning processes are made visible when educator's observe, document, and interpret children's daily experiences and then share these interpretations in a narrative format with the children, their parents, colleagues, and community. While traditional child assessment practices, typically influenced by developmental psychology, rely on using checklists and classifying children into predetermined categories, pedagogical narration makes children's multiple ways of learning open for interpretation and dialogue. A review of the literature supports pedagogical narration as a holistic assessment tool as it is a strength-based approach to assessment that situates the child as a competent contributor to knowledge construction. It focuses on children's search for meaning and the co-construction of new meaning with the educator and significant others in the child's community. Based on the review of the literature, I identify four principles that can guide educators as they engage in the process of holistic assessment with pedagogical narration: holding an image of the child as competent, initiating a collaborative process between educators, children, parents, and community to elicit multiple perspectives about the documentation, embarking on a collective search for meaning making/interpretation into, and transparency about the educator's pedagogy.

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## Dedication

This is dedicated to all of the young children who have inspired me to

listen in new ways, and to recognize, and respond

in ways that support their curiosity, wonderment, and learning.

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In my capstone project, I investigate using the practice of pedagogical narration as a holistic form of assessment with young children. In *British Columbia's Early Learning Framework*, pedagogical narration refers to a “process to make children’s learning visible” (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 13). Children’s learning is made visible through educators “observing, recording, and individually and collectively, interpreting a series of related ordinary moments” (p. 13) within their early childhood settings. The interpretations of children’s learning experiences are then shared with the community in a narrative format that typically includes text and images. The practice of pedagogical narration invites critical reflection as the educators create the opportunity to think more deeply about the children’s learning and the pedagogical practice. When educators share their thoughts about children's learning processes, they engage colleagues, children, parents, administrators and other community members in the interpretive assessment process as they seek multiple perspectives about the documented material they gathered to enrich and deepen their understanding of and construct a holistic picture of the child.

### Purpose

While pedagogical narration in the *BC Early Learning Framework* (herein, the *Framework*) has been suggested primarily as a tool for curriculum development, I would like to add another dimension and investigate pedagogical narration as a context for initiating holistic assessment with young children. Further, as an early childhood educator and leader in the early childhood community, I would like to open up a dialogue on how pedagogical narration, used as a holistic assessment tool, can enrich early childhood pedagogical practices, as well as the lives

of children, families, and educators, specifically within my professional context of British Columbia's (B.C.'s) StrongStart<sup>1</sup> program.

My learning from this project will be shared in a three-hour workshop with StrongStart, kindergarten and primary school, early childhood educators. The purpose of the workshop is to invite dialogue about using pedagogical narrations as means for educators to consider holistic assessments with young children.

### **Guiding Questions**

My guiding questions for this project are as follows:

- 1) How can pedagogical narration be conceptualized as a holistic approach to assessing young children's ways of knowing?
- 2) How can pedagogical narration be used to holistically assess young children's ways of knowing?

### **Background and Rationale**

My interest in pedagogical narration was piqued during my undergraduate studies. During that time, I was first introduced to practices similar to pedagogical narration, such as pedagogical documentation from the pre-primary schools in Reggio Emilia, Italy (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2007; Rinaldi, 2006), and learning stories from early childhood centres in New Zealand (Carr, 2001, 2011). I also had the opportunity to learn more about pedagogical narration when I became a field leader during the implementation of B.C. Ministry of Education's *Framework* (2008). This leadership project, along with my undergraduate studies, introduced me to new perspectives and ways of knowing, being with, and assessing children that were different

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<sup>1</sup> see <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/topic.page?id=F652EE0BCB224DC4A51BE9765B50817D> for more information about the B.C. StrongStart Centres

from early childhood approaches that are based primarily on developmental perspective and standardised assessment tools.

I am currently interested in exploring pedagogical narration as a holistic assessment tool because I believe that standardized tests and checklists may not account for the relational aspects of the child's learning and meaning making. Different methods for assessing children need to be understood across a variety of contexts such as individual, family, peer, school, community and government, because children are unique and each of these contexts have influence in the child's life. Pedagogical narration is one approach that can be considered as an alternative tool for assessing children in an inclusive and holistic way. Pedagogical narration, a comprehensive way of documenting children's learning, offers a starting point for dialogue on assessment, its form and purpose, because it focuses on meaning making and the children's relationships with their environment. It is important to examine the child's learning within sociocultural contexts as they affect, and are affected, by the child.

One of my responsibilities, in my current role of an Early Years Program Supervisor, is consulting the early childhood educators in the StrongStart programs in my region in Southern Interior B.C. The StrongStart programs are publicly funded parent/caregiver and child participation preschool programs in public school settings in B.C. Early childhood educators who facilitate the program, work collaboratively with parents/caregivers as they both share and celebrate in the children's learning experience. Each session is three hours long and, in many communities, is offered five days per week. Part of my role includes coaching and supporting the educators with the process of creating pedagogical narration. When I coach and mentor the StrongStart educators with the practice of creating pedagogical narration I follow the steps outlined in the *British Columbia Early Learning Framework: Theory to Practice* (British

Columbia Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 16).<sup>2</sup> When we meet, we provide each other with our individual reflections on the narration that was created by each StrongStart educator from a variety of centres. The reflections are discussed and interpreted amongst the educators and then we arrive at a decision on what pedagogical responses we can offer the child or group of children. Based on these experiences, I believe that using pedagogical narration as a tool for assessing young children's learning has the potential to change the culture of assessment in early childhood education. Pedagogical narration takes a strength-based approach to assessment and reflects an image of the child as being capable and competent (Rinaldi, 2006). Since educators, parents, and children are involved in and are seen as valuable contributors in the process of interpreting the documented material, pedagogical narration allows for multiple perspectives and voices to become part of the children's learning journeys (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2007).

Nevertheless, holistic assessment is a complex undertaking. It not only provides insight into the child's ways of knowing, it also offers a glimpse into the pedagogical orientation of the educator. Pedagogical narration, thus, is a tool that can be used to assess the child's ways of knowing in context, along with providing illumination into the educator's teaching practices.

### **Theoretical Framework**

For this project, I will draw from Sociocultural and Social Constructivist (Vygotsky, 1978; Bruner, 1966) theoretical perspectives. Lev Vygotsky (1978) and Jerome Bruner (1966) are both recognized for their development and contributions to sociocultural theory. They argued that children learn within cultural contexts in relationship with adults and peers through meaningful interactive experiences. Fler (2002) notes that, "Sociocultural approaches to

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<sup>2</sup> More information on this document can be found at [http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/topic/57FDB4389CD0FB3F6EC9948B610A6BA9/earlylearning/from\\_theory\\_to\\_practice.pdf](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/topic/57FDB4389CD0FB3F6EC9948B610A6BA9/earlylearning/from_theory_to_practice.pdf)

teaching and learning foreground the notion that learning is more than an individual construction. Meaning (making) occurs in the context of participation in the real world" (p. 112).

Urie Bronfenbrenner's (1979) *Ecological Systems Theory* is another theoretical perspective that will inform my investigation. His theory considers the child's multiple environments a major influence in the child's development and learning (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). He conceptualizes the child at the center of concentric circles with other systems comprised of the child's family, school, neighbourhood, parents' workplace, social networks, and even broader cultural or subcultural contexts and belief systems. All of these systems either directly or indirectly influence the child's development. These theories will support my view that pedagogical narration can be used as a holistic assessment tool. These theories will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Two.

### **Summary**

In Chapter One, I introduced my topic and provided the rationale as well as a personal and theoretical background for this project. In Chapter Two, I will review in depth the guiding theories and explore the relevant scholarly literature about pedagogical narration as a holistic assessment tool. In Chapter Three, I will make connections between the theories and the literature reviewed and the implications of pedagogical narration as a holistic assessment tool to early childhood practice, and in Chapter Four, I will discuss insights from this project, as well as its limitations and future possibilities.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this chapter, I will explain in more depth the theoretical framework I selected, and will review the scholarly literature that explores the practice of pedagogical narration in relation to holistic assessment.

### **Sociocultural and Social Constructivist Theories**

According to sociocultural and social constructivist theoretical frameworks, children are social beings and as such, their learning does not happen in isolation (Vygotsky, 1978; Rogoff, 2003; Rinaldi, 2006). Rather, children are actively involved in co-authoring their learning processes through engaging with social and cultural networks, including those of their peers and educators, yet this reality is often not included in assessment practice of children's learning (Carr, 2001).

Lev Vygotsky (1896 - 1934), a leader in the sociocultural approach, postulated that social interactions were essential for the child's learning and development (Vygotsky, 1978; Rogoff, 2003). Vygotsky focused on the social aspect of child development and the important role of the historical, cultural, and social environments for the child's learning. He coined the term "zone of proximal development" (ZPD) which refers to the distance between the present level of the child's development and the next potential level of development that can be realized as the child is supported by an adult or peer while working on a joint task (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). In this sense, the ZPD attends to the child's strengths (i.e. potential), to the context of learning, and to the significance of the interaction with the adult (educator). From this premise, assessment of learning moves away from a deficit and individualistic view of assessment to a "much more powerful and useful assessment practice for informing teaching and learning practices" (Fleer, 2002, p. 107), because the educator and the child are co-constructing

knowledge in a reciprocal, interactive manner. While Bruner (1966) encouraged children to discover new knowledge on their own, he too recognized, following in Vygotsky's footsteps, that children needed particular kinds of interactions with an adult to extend learning of new skills and knowledge – a term Wood, Bruner, & Ross (1979) referred to as “scaffolding” (p. 90). Through the process of scaffolding, learning is understood within the context of relations and mutual attentiveness, as the adult adjusts the interaction to support the child's construction of knowledge, with the assumption that the child first engages in the task with assistance, and then may engage in it independently. Bruner (1966) argued that evaluation, therefore, “should examine not only the product or content of learning but also the process by which the child gets or fails to get mastery of materials, for only in that way can the efficacy of pedagogy be examined” (p. 164). He further believed that “content cannot be divorced from pedagogy” and that pedagogy “leads the child to treat content in critical ways that develop and express his skills and values” (p. 164).

From a sociocultural perspective, children are seen as competent and intelligent, having rich life experiences that they bring with them to the early childhood classroom (Dahlberg, et al., 2007; Rinaldi, 2006). Educators draw from the children's "funds of knowledge" (Hedges, Cullen, & Jordan, 2011; Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992), consisting of the diverse social and cultural experiences that children have in their homes and communities to enhance learning. The concept of "funds of knowledge" connects the home and the early childhood classroom by bringing what children already know and care about to the forefront, where educators "use information gathered from the children and families themselves, to identify their strengths and to highlight how unique their experiences are" (Amaro-Jimenez & Semingson, 2011, p. 7).

### **Ecological Systems Theory**

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) *Ecological Systems Theory* is relevant to discussions of assessment practices in early childhood education. His concept of "*development-in-context*" (p. 28) focuses on the understanding that human development "demands more than the direct observation of behavior on the part of one or two persons in the same place" (p. 21).

Bronfenbrenner further posits that development in context requires "examination of multiperson systems of interaction not limited to a single setting and must take into account aspects of the environment beyond the immediate situation containing the subject" (p. 28). Bronfenbrenner (1979) defines the ecology of human development as involving the

scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation between an active, growing human being and the changing properties of the immediate setting in which the developing person lives, as this process is affected by relations between these settings, and by the larger contexts in the settings are embedded. (p. 21)

He describes the ecological system using the metaphor of Russian nesting dolls where one rests inside a larger one, and so on. His ecological system is divided into four nested layers: the microsystem (which includes the child's immediate experiences and the most intimate settings such as the home and school); the mesosystem (e.g., relations among home, school and peer group for the child and among family; work and social life for the adult) in which the microsystems interrelate; the exosystem in which the child does not directly participate in but which influences their development (e.g., parent's place of work or network of friends, class attended by older sibling); and the macrosystem (dominant beliefs and ideologies affecting the developing child) (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The aforementioned cultural and contextual theories of learning and development provide the theoretical foundations for my understanding of holistic assessment. These theories are significant to my investigation because the child is viewed as active and engaged in all aspects of their environment. These theories emphasize the importance of cultural contexts to the child's learning and development and they also point out the importance of social interactions and co-construction of knowledge in creating new (shared) meaning in a variety of contexts with others. In the next section, I will consider these theories as I review current literature that I feel is pertinent to my investigation of pedagogical narration as a holistic assessment tool with young children.

### **The Impact of Developmental Theory on Child Assessment Practices**

Traditional child observation techniques were used to “assess children’s psychological development in relation to already predetermined categories produced from developmental psychology and which define what the normal child should be doing at a particular age” (Dahlberg, et al., 2007, p. 146). Historically, young children have had their knowledge assessed using developmental checklists, which offer a narrow view of the child (Dahlberg et al., 2007). The *Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)* (Brooks Publishing, 2013) is a common screening tool used to measure children's development in order to find out if the child is developing typically or if there are concerns that require a further developmental assessment. As Robertson (2006) points out, “observational tools as they are often used, are implemented because they are required and are geared towards deficit models, individual children, teaching evaluation and behaviour management” (p. 49). One reason that educators may have found checklists advantageous to use is because they take considerably less time to implement compared with qualitative methods, such as narratives assessment techniques.

The field of early childhood has long been influenced by the tenets of developmental psychology (Dahlberg et al., 2007; Rogoff, 2003). Child focused institutions are “prominent in developmental psychology, connecting with ideas about stages of life, thinking and learning processes, motivation, relations with peers and parents, disciplinary practices at home and school, competition and cooperation” (Rogoff, 2003, p. 8). Rogoff asserts that “with the rise of industrialization and the efforts to systematize human services such as education and medical care, age became a measure of development and a criterion for sorting people” (2003, p. 8). Before this systematization, children moved forward in their schooling as they learned (Rogoff, 2003). It has only been in the last century-and-a-half that "the cultural concept of age and associated practices relying on age-grading have come to play a central, though often unnoticed role in ordering lives in some cultural communities” (Rogoff, 2003, p. 8). As school became compulsory, children were segregated from their parents and communities, and a gap was formed between the child and adult worlds.

According to New (1994), “the field of child development was built upon a predominance of studies conducted on white, middle-class American children” (p. 68). Since the 1996 version of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) position paper on "developmentally appropriate practice" was adopted, there have been significant changes. With the rise in population of immigrant families, increased numbers of home languages and cultures in the schools, issues of poverty, and an increase of children with special needs, the context and culture of early childhood education has shifted (NAEYC, 2009). No longer do children fit into the prescribed categories suggested by developmental theories, and there may be more than one way to "educate" and assess children (Dahlberg et al., 2007).

Increased accountability policies and learning standards have had a major impact on how educators teach, how children learn, and how assessments are carried out (Dahlberg et al., 2007; Curtis & Carter, 2008). The NAEYC “imbued the definition of developmentally appropriate practice with a belief that young children learn best through self-initiated play and discovery, and teachers should foster independence” (as cited in Curtis & Carter, 2008, p. 90). This belief led to a “hands off” approach to teaching, which consequence was managing children’s behaviour "with the value of protecting individual rights" (Curtis & Carter, 2008, p. 90). While educators came to believe they were protecting children's rights, instead they unintentionally narrowed down possibilities for constructing the image of child as competent and full of possibilities (Curtis & Carter, 2008). Additionally, fostering independence and individuality may marginalize cultural perspectives “that value interdependence over individual efforts and learning in groups over individual efforts and achievements” (Curtis & Carter, 2008, p. 90).

### **Pedagogical Narration and Assessment as Meaning Making**

In contrast with traditional assessment strategies that rely on predefined standards and are mostly retrospective, Dahlberg and Moss (2005) and Rinaldi (2006) discuss pedagogical documentation (narration) as a tool for meaning making that is both retrospective and prospective. Pedagogical narration and assessment as meaning making is about co-constructing and deepening understanding of learning in relationship with others in ways that create new paths for future learning. Pedagogical narration and assessment as meaning making allows for multiple perspectives, varying interpretations, and are open-ended and provisional. Central to this perspective is the idea that children are seen as competent and capable beings with great potential. Children are seen as powerful thinkers, always searching for meaning. Rinaldi (2006),

an educational leader in Reggio Emilia, where the methodology of pedagogical documentation (narration) has been explored and practiced for many years, describes the competent child as follows, “much has been said and written about the competent child (who has the ability to learn, love, be moved, and live), the child who has a wealth of potentials, the powerful child in relation to what s/he is and can be right from birth” (p. 105). Rinaldi (2006) further argues that,

documentation is a substantial part of the goal that has always characterised our experience: the search for meaning - to find the meaning of school, or rather, to construct the meaning of school as a place that plays an active role in the children's search for meaning and our own search for meaning (and shared meanings). (p. 63, author's parentheses)

In their critique of universal standards of quality in early childhood programs, Dahlberg & Moss (2005) resist a definition for quality, which they describe as a "means to make judgements about what is good or right, within a framework of universal, normative ethics" (p. 88). With regards to universal ethics and the conventional discourse of quality, it is assumed that the evaluator is objective and able to conform to code. Dahlberg & Moss (2005) further point out how pedagogical documentation (or narration) reflects assessment as meaning making, because it provides a means for “making judgements of value” which is different from the “normalising judgements associated with evaluation as quality” (p. 157). Dahlberg et al. (2007) describe pedagogical documentation as both process and content. Content refers to the many ways and forms to collect the materials that children and educators have produced (via photographs, written notes, audio/video), and the process is *how* the documented material is reflected on and interpreted in a collaborative, democratic way and in relationship with others (e.g., children, parents, colleagues, administrators, community) (Dahlberg et al., 2007; Rinaldi, 2006).

Pacini-Ketchabaw, Kocher, Berger, Isacc, & Mort (2007) add that, "meaning making also offers alternative ways of responding to and celebrating the diversity that characterizes British Columbia's children and families" (p. 8). Furthermore, they add that from this premise, "evaluation becomes a democratic process, and a (provisional) decision in which people are active participants and for which they must take responsibility - not delegating responsibility to the expert, the legislator and the inspector" (p. 157). Moreover, with the rise of sociocultural theories over the past 30 years, educators have been invited to re-examine the importance of culture in the context of learning and the importance of the adult's role in scaffolding (Curtis & Carter, 2008). The role of the adult (e.g., educator) is demonstrated through their reflections on the pedagogical choices and actions that they make and what thought processes and assumptions orient them as they document (Rubizzi, 2001). Learning through co-constructing meanings with children opens up many possibilities; it is a perspective that gives a different value to the process of assessment.

### **Pedagogical Narration and the Pedagogy of Listening**

In Reggio Emilia, the practice of pedagogical documentation is linked with the "pedagogy of listening" (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005; Rinaldi, 2006) which is "listening with all of one's senses...suspending judgements and prejudice...being open and sensitive...being aware and curious...and listening to the "hundred languages of children" (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1998, p. 3). Listening, as pedagogy and an approach to assessment, is not easy (Rinaldi, 2006). Listening brings the "responsibility to act on what we heard" (Kinney, 2005, p. 121). By using a pedagogy of listening with the child, educators "interrupt predetermined meanings" and disrupt problematic "totalising practices such as the concepts and classifications of developmental psychology which give us as teachers or researchers possibilities to possess and

‘comprehend’ the child” (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p. 101). When classifying the child into predetermined norms, as many assessment tools do, the voice of the child is often disregarded (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005). Yet, when children are presented with documentation of their experiences in narrative form, they realize that they are being heard and that what they have to say has value and meaning (Rinaldi, 2006). Further, as Rinaldi (2006) eloquently states, "they discover that they 'exist' and can emerge from anonymity and invisibility, seeing that what they say and do is important, is listened to and is appreciated: it is value" (p. 72). Additionally, educators are able to gain insight into who the child is through noticing their ways of knowing and theorizing and by listening to the uniqueness of children's words and actions (Rinaldi, 2006). "Through these stories," as Berger (2010) points out, "children are released from their anonymity, they gain a multiplicity of identities, and they become foci for dialogue and interest" (p. 72). Pedagogical narration as a reflection of the pedagogy of listening allows educators to assess, understand, and make visible the richness and intelligences of children (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005; Rinaldi, 2006).

### **Pedagogical Narration and/as Holistic Assessment**

Rinaldi (2006) explains that the practice of documentation (or pedagogical narration) and assessment are inherently entangled because “at the moment of documentation (observation and interpretation), the element of assessment enters the picture immediately, that is in the context and during the time in which the experience (activity) takes place” (p. 69). In their discussion about pedagogical documentation (or pedagogical narration), Pacini-Ketchabaw and colleagues (2007) argue that, "this approach to teaching and learning with young children offers an alternative to models with predetermined outcomes and standardized assessments" (p. 8). Pedagogical narration, when contrasted with traditional child observation and assessment

methods, is used to make children's multiple ways of knowing and learning visible. Pedagogical narration reveals how children make meaning of their world by viewing children's ways of knowing through documenting their creations and experiences using photography, audio/video recordings, and written notes (Dahlberg et al., 2007; Rinaldi, 2006). It is a practice of intentionality, of deep engagement with and in the lives of children, or "a habit of paying attention, watching and listening closely, reflecting together about what we see, planning from our reflections and understandings, and telling the stories in ways that enrich our community" (Felstiner, Kocher, & Pelo, 2005, p. 60). Moreover, the process of sharing pedagogical narration helps link the child's home and community experience with that of the early childhood classroom and opens up a space for communication with parents/caregivers, coworkers, and administrators, about how to meaningfully assess children's learning processes (Curtis & Carter, 2008; Dahlberg et al., 2007). Dahlberg and colleagues (2007), Rinaldi (2006), and Carr (2001) argue in favour of using narrative assessment (e.g., pedagogical narration and learning stories) as holistic assessment tools in early childhood settings with young children.

Importantly, pedagogical narration causes the educator to pause and reflect on what/how children are learning and making meaning of their world (Carr, 2001; Dahlberg et al., 2007). As well, educators reflect on how their own values and beliefs, such as their image of the child, interact with assessment of children's learning (Dahlberg et al., 2007; Felstiner et al., 2005). Because it involves a process of interpretation, the documentation is open-ended, and creates spaces of uncertainty, and this, Rinaldi (2006) adds, is where "true didactic freedom, of the child as well as the teacher" (p. 70) lies, because the interpretation may open up many possibilities for further dialogue, questioning of theories, and comparing ideas. Rinaldi (2006) also posits that

this is "where the meeting on 'what to do' takes place and the process of assessment (deciding what to 'give value to') is carried out" (p. 70).

Carr (2001), who has carried out several studies in New Zealand on the use of learning stories, which are similar practices to pedagogical documentation, describes assessment with learning stories as "creating a shared picture of each child in order to be able to plan for further learning experiences" (as cited in Gould & Pohio, 2006, p. 84). Carr (2001) adds that,

This approach to assessment is like action research, with the teacher/researcher as part of the action. Assessment procedures in early childhood will call on interpretive and qualitative approaches for the same reasons a researcher will choose interpretive and qualitative methods for researching complex learning in a real-life early childhood setting. (p. 13)

According to Carr (2001), in this sense, narrative assessment becomes an "integral part of the learner-in-action" (p. 141), as the focus on assessment leads the educators to "take a critical look at the assessment format" (p. 144) and modify it to make the process more responsive, in tune with everyday practice, and more pedagogically sound.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I explained my theoretical framework and presented the scholarly literature that supports the practice of pedagogical narration in its potential to be a holistic assessment tool. In Chapter Three, I will discuss practical suggestions for using pedagogical narration as a holistic tool for assessing young children's learning within the context of British Columbia Ministry of Education's StrongStart programs.

### **CHAPTER THREE: CONNECTIONS TO PRACTICE**

In this chapter, I connect the theories and literature I have reviewed with the practical application of pedagogical narration as a holistic assessment tool. The review of the literature supports my argument for using pedagogical narration as a holistic assessment tool. This approach to assessment is valuable to young children as they begin to feel heard and understood through meaningful dialogue about the pedagogical narratives. The narrations, crafted by the educator, reveal and expand children's meaning making and learning processes. Further, pedagogical narration helps bring the community together, where through co-constructing the narrations, parents, children, and educators can collaboratively "contribute to the creation of common language and understandings about early learning" (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 14). As a leader in the field of Early Childhood Education, as well as a coach/mentor of the early childhood educators in a number of B.C. StrongStart programs, I will, use exemplars of pedagogical narrations to discuss how our team used pedagogical narration to make children's meaning making visible and how pedagogical narration was used as a holistic assessment tool with young children. Finally, I will discuss the workshop that I plan to offer early childhood educators. The workshop explains and exemplifies the use of pedagogical narration as a holistic assessment tool.

#### **The Creation and Sharing of Pedagogical Narration as a Tool for Assessment**

The exemplars below were created by documenting ordinary moments in the StrongStart Centre using photography and written notes. According to the *Framework*, an ordinary moment "may be an anecdotal observation, children's work, photographs that illustrate a process, audio or video tape recordings, or children's voiced ideas" (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 16) without any interpretation. The purpose of the creation of pedagogical

narrations was to illustrate how children are making meaning within their learning environment (StrongStart Centre), as well as, to use this process to holistically assess young children's learning. After the initial phase of documentation (e.g., notes taking, photography), the educator reflected on the narration and shared her reflections with the children, parents, and colleagues in order to gather their perspectives and interpretations. Pedagogical narration is typically shared with parents and colleagues through dialogue, in person and sometimes by email. Sharing the narrations also allows for collaborative planning for future educational possibilities as the assessment and curriculum processes become reciprocal and complementary to one another. Parents offer a different insight into children's learning processes than colleagues because they have knowledge of the children outside of the early childhood setting. The conversation between the educators and the parents is reciprocal. Both can become partners in the child's education, curriculum development, and holistic assessment process. Since parents are required to participate in the StrongStart programs with their child, the parent-educator partnership can be strengthened through pedagogical narration and the holistic assessment process associated with its creation, because parents feel included and valued. As a holistic assessment tool, pedagogical narration can also demonstrate what children know and can already do independently or with assistance (Vygotsky, 1978).

To illustrate how pedagogical narration is used as a holistic assessment tool, I am proposing a number of guiding principles that are based on the literature review carried out in Chapter Two. Because we recognize that children have complex identities and are "grounded in their individual strengths and capacities, and their unique social, linguistic, and cultural heritage" (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 4), we need to rethink what assessment practices ethically respond to how children learn in diverse contexts and how their learning is

interpreted. More specifically, I argue that holistic assessment entails holding an image of the child as capable and competent with unique perspectives, theories, and views to share (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2008). Further, initiating a collaborative and reciprocal process between educators, children, parents, and community members to elicit multiple perspectives about the meanings of the documentation is imperative for inviting many varying viewpoints, which add to the rich interpretations of the narratives (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005).

Another important consideration is that holistic assessment provides transparency and insight into the educator's pedagogy. It prompts educators to consciously think about their daily practice with children, and their "pedagogy of listening," (Rinaldi, 2006) as they challenge assumptions and create new ways of listening, understanding, and responding to children. As Rinaldi (2006) says, "documentation makes it possible for teachers to sustain the children's learning, while at the same time the teacher learns (learns to teach) from the knowledge building process of the children" (p 57). The fourth principle is the collective search for meaning making/interpretation. As discussed by Rinaldi (2006), children are always searching for meaning, as are educators, who also search for shared meaning with children, parents, and colleagues. Dahlberg et al., (2007) add that it is in relationship with one another and through co-construction that we make meaning of the world around us.

One of the StrongStart educators that I supervise created the first exemplar "*Birds and a Trick*". The educator recorded, in written notes, what was said in the moment with the child, and then captured the moment with a digital photo of the picture they drew during their play. The educator reflected on a "*Birds and a Trick*" for some time and then shared her reflections with her colleagues and the child's parents to gain their perspective or interpretation of the narration. The educator thought that this interaction with the child was worth documenting because it

revealed what/how the child had learned and remembered from a previous visit to the StrongStart Centre and how this child was applying her learning in a different way.

The second exemplar, "*A Restaurant Called Dissolve*," is one I created by documenting an ordinary moment at a StrongStart Centre. I had used written notes and photographs of the child's work to create the pedagogical narration. I then reflected on the narration and shared my reflections with the child's parents and my colleagues in order to gain their perspective or interpretation of the interaction. The first section below demonstrates what took place during the ordinary moment. The second section illustrates what happened on the next visit to the StrongStart Centre.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Consent to use the narrations in this project was obtained from the parents and the educator.

## Exemplar #1 - Birds and a Trick

*Lisa is a four-year-old girl who has been attending StrongStart since she was an infant. On this particular morning, she arrived with her mom and announced that she wanted to do some colouring. I joined her at the craft table and she talked about colouring birds for her grandma, "because grandma likes birds, blue birds and robins". Lisa began to draw a robin using felt markers while I coloured a blue bird on my page. I asked her if we needed to add anything else and she said, "yes, food". She moved closer to me and said, "I'll do it" and started dotting my paper with blue dots. I asked her if she could tell me what it was and she said, "It is bird food, like seeds." Of course, I thought.*



*Lisa's mom came and sat down at the other end of the table with two blank sheets of paper for colouring. Lisa said with excitement, "I will show you a trick. I need another white one" referring to another white (blank) sheet of paper. I asked, "Is it going to be a magic trick?" and smiled at her mom. Neither of us knew exactly what she was going to do. Lisa reached for her mom's white paper and also a piece of paper with a turkey pictured on it and brought them both over to me. She put the plain white paper on top of the turkey picture and began to colour vigorously with her blue felt. Lisa's mom and I looked at each other trying to figure out what she was doing. Lisa stopped, lifted the top page and looked at the turkey paper disappointed and confused. Lisa didn't say anything. Moments later, Lisa's mom and I figured out that Lisa was trying to do a crayon rubbing like we had done two weeks earlier with leaves. I explained to Lisa that the reason it didn't work for her this time was because the picture of the turkey wasn't bumpy like the leaves we used previously. The picture of the turkey was on a smooth piece of paper. I showed her with my hand the smooth paper and encouraged her to feel the page as well.*

**The educator's initial reflections:**

- *Lisa knew what she wanted to do when she arrived at StrongStart that day.*
- *Lisa frequently makes things for her grandma and grandpa.*
- *Lisa knew what her grandma likes and proceeded to draw/colour it.*
- *Lisa's memory is very keen. She remembered that I had shown her the "trick" of rubbing leaves two weeks earlier and she recalled the steps.*
- *Even though she used a felt and not a crayon, she knew to rub really hard and then look at her picture below to compare.*

**Interpretations from parents and colleagues:**

*From Lisa's Family*

- *We live with Lisa's grandparents and they are a big part of her life so it's no wonder she makes a lot of pictures for them.*
- *She is always thinking.*

- *She always has something going on, something she is working on to try and make sense of.*

*From Colleagues*

- *Interesting how even when she is away from her grandparents how they still have an influence on her. Lisa is thinking about them and colouring her grandmother's favourite things. I would have loved to have heard their reaction to the story. Was it shared with them?*
- *I loved that she remembers the crayon rubbing from the previous week and tried to apply her new knowledge to today's activity.*
- *Was she familiar with the word/concept "smooth" and "bumpy" or was that new vocabulary that she learned today?*

## **Analysis through Holistic Assessment Framework**

### *Collaborative and reciprocal process with multiple perspectives*

Pedagogical narration is shared with parents/caregivers and community and helps strengthen the school/community partnership. When the narration was shared with Lisa's family, her mom had several comments. She mentioned that Lisa always had something going on, something she was working on to make sense of and understand. The parent was not surprised

by Lisa's actions and it seemed to confirm for her that Lisa is just as curious at the StrongStart Centre as she is at home. Perhaps Lisa's mom also holds an image of Lisa as capable and competent.

We learned from Lisa's mom that their family lives with Lisa's grandparents. Lisa is aware that her grandma loved robins and bluebirds and proceeded to draw a picture for her. Perhaps Lisa felt connected to her grandma even though they were apart while she was attending the StrongStart

program. Lisa is also showing that grandma is important to her as she frequently makes pictures for her. This exemplar illustrates how important the historical, cultural, and social contexts are for learning and meaning making (Vygotsky, 1978). It also points to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Framework, specifically the mesosystem, where two microsystems (e.g., home and the StrongStart Centre) become interrelated. The comments from Lisa's mom help to construct a holistic picture of who Lisa is and to her "funds of knowledge" (Hedges, et al., 2011; Gonzalez, et al., 2005; Moll, et al., 1992) and the life experiences that she bring to the StrongStart Centre.

The interpretations from colleagues confirmed for the educator what she was initially thinking when she realized Lisa was remembering and taking her learning from a previous activity (e.g., crayon rubbing using paper over leaves); transferring her knowledge and challenging herself in a new learning situation (e.g., rubbing with a felt marker, using a smooth surface instead, and expecting to see the same results).

### *Image of the child as competent*

The educator approached the creation of pedagogical narration, as a holistic assessment tool, through an image of the child as one who is a competent being and a powerful thinker, not a passive recipient of the adult's (e.g., educator's) knowledge.

As the exemplar above demonstrates, Lisa was able to represent what she knew verbally and through her drawing. In this exemplar, Lisa is showing that she is knowledgeable about what birds eat. She knows that bird's seeds are tiny and represented that by colouring dots near the bird. This also demonstrates that Lisa is

being heard and that what she has to say is important and has value.

The educator in this example is looking and listening for Lisa's strengths. Robertson (2006) would describe this pedagogical approach as follows, "I wonder what would happen if we tried to discover what they already knew, before we started to 'teach' them" (p. 46). The educator has clearly let the child take the lead in discovering and rediscovering what she already knew. The educator did not disrupt the flow of Lisa's learning processes and instead observed and waited until she was done to offer her help and an explanation as to why the activity did not work. This was an intentional decision that the educator made practicing the "pedagogy of listening" (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005; Rinaldi, 2006).

### *Meaning making*

The "pedagogy of listening" (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005; Rinaldi, 2006), as described in Chapter Two, is central to meaning making. In the above exemplar, Lisa is being listened to when she expresses herself using many languages, including her choice to be silent, as Lisa displayed when she lifted her page and the drawings did not match. She expected to see a drawing similar to the picture of the turkey. Her silence conveyed a loud message that was interpreted by her mom and the early childhood educator as surprise, and quite possibly, disappointment. One of the comments by the parent was that Lisa was always thinking. Perhaps this silence was representing her thinking and her attempt to make connections and meanings between why the activity worked previously and not on this particular day. Even though she used a felt pen and not a crayon, Lisa

remembered that she needed to rub really hard and then look at her picture underneath to compare. Lisa was experimenting and testing a cause and effect theory. She was also recalling something she had learned and clearly enjoyed in a previous week as she wanted to apply this newly learned knowledge. The educator was curious about the activity Lisa selected and it was through collaboration with Lisa's mom that they figured out what Lisa was doing with the felt rubbing.

This exemplar helps the educator better understand how Lisa is learning through real life experiences and how Lisa thinks and interprets reality and solves problems based on her relationship with her environment (Rinaldi, 2006). The depth of knowledge that children bring with them to the discussions at the StrongStart Centres is remarkable. They are continuously searching for meaning. Children are problem solvers and work collaboratively in co-constructing knowledge and this can become part of the holistic assessment process.

### *Transparency and insight into the educator's pedagogy*

The interpretations from the parents and colleagues had the educator wondering why she didn't share the narration with the grandparent to add yet another perspective on the narration with Lisa. Pedagogical narration and/as holistic assessment allows for not only the child's learning processes to be understood, but also for the pedagogue's as she "encounters the child's ideas, theories and hypotheses with respect, curiosity and wonder" (Dahlberg, et al., 2007, p. 55). The comments from the parents and colleagues have caused the

educator to realize that there are many more possibilities that the educator, parent, and child can explore and realize together.

## Exemplar #2 - A Restaurant Called Dissolve

Laura, her dad, and Ryan were playing in the kitchen centre. Laura (4 years, 1 month) and Ryan (2 years, 10 months) were busy cooking olive and nut soup (using craft eyes for the olives and pompoms for the nuts).

As their restaurant play continued, they added pizza as another one of their delicacies. Other parents and children were involved at some level and were invited to taste-test. They “oohed” and “aahed” over the children’s creations. Laura had quite an audience and she received rave reviews for her dishes.

Brian, Laura’s dad, asked if she had a name for her fabulous restaurant. At that moment she decided she needed some paper and a pen to write out the name of the restaurant for all of us to see.

Laura “wrote” on each of the pages as we made comments about how long the name of the restaurant should be.

When she had finished writing on each page, we asked if she could tell us the name of her restaurant. She replied: “This page says cooking restaurant ... nothing to dissolve.”



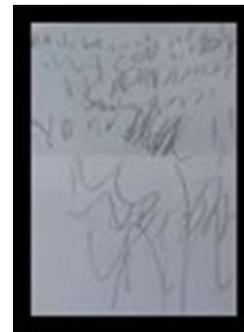
Holding the next piece of paper, she said:



“The restaurant only gives sandwiches and treats ... and pizza ... and NO applesauce.”



“This one says, ‘What do you think of my restaurant? Is it good or is it bad?’ ”



“This one says ‘Thank you for remembering it.’”

*Brian explained that Laura was referring to the customer satisfaction survey that restaurants often provide. As Brian continued with his explanation, Laura interrupted him and said, "You can have a sleepover at my restaurant. A long name for it, to dissolve."*

*I asked Laura to tell me about the word dissolve. She replied, "Dissolve is when you get treats and cookies. When you get surprises, and you thank someone who gives it to you."*

*At the end of the play it was decided that her restaurant name was Dissolve.*

The next time Laura attended StrongStart, she arrived with her abuela (maternal grandmother) Anne. I showed her the pictures of the drawings she had made and read the draft narration I had created. We discussed the restaurant experience we had engaged in the previous time she attended and brainstormed further ideas and thoughts we had about restaurants. One of the ideas Laura mentioned was that "restaurants have menus so you can decide what to eat." I offered Laura the opportunity to create a menu for her restaurant. It was nearing the end of our StrongStart session, and many families had already gone home. Laura, Anne, and I engaged in this activity.

I provided pictures of food from magazines, scissors, glue, and markers. But, Laura had another idea. Reaching for a folded piece of construction paper, she explained to us that she did not want to use the pictures and would prefer to write out the menu. She opened the folded paper and began to write on the right-hand side of the page.

*"How do you write strawberry pie?" she asked.*

*Anne asked her to sound it out and demonstrated how. Laura made a hissing sound "ssssssss" as she wrote the letter. Next she made the sound "te te" for T and then the "rrrr" for R and so on ... until she had written "STROBERE PA" on her menu.*



*"Okay, it's going to be one penny for strawberry pie. Abuela, can you please write 'French fries' on here?" Anne agreed to write 'French fries' and Laura copied the word 'French' underneath.*

*Laura decided that the French fries would cost a loonie. She asked how to write the word loonie. Anne explained to her that she could use a symbol instead that would represent a loonie. She asked Laura to write the letter S and then make a straight line through it.*

*"Then you put the number 1 beside it. And that is considered a loonie."*

*Laura wrote the letter S and drew a straight line through it ... although the line was on an angle and the ends joined the S, making it look like the number 8. She wrote the number 1 below it.*

*Laura moved to the left side of the paper and began to draw the strawberry pie. Next she drew and named the plate of French*

fries with ketchup and, finally, the French chips.

"Here's the strawberry pie and it's sliced in half," she said, as she drew two lines through the pie. She then drew dots on the pie and told us they were extra strawberries.

Pointing to the right side of the page, she explained, "This side is things you need to pay for. The rest you don't need to give money for."

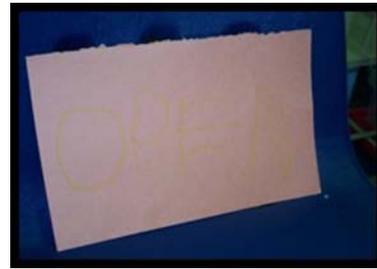
She wrote her symbol for a loonie, drew the number 1 beside the symbol, and followed with two more sets of symbols and numbers. She explained to us that the pie now cost three loonies.

Anne explained that, in future, Laura could draw the number 3 beside the \$ symbol to indicate the value and added that Laura's way was good, too.



Anne asked, "I wonder how we will know the restaurant is open?"

Laura: "I need a flat piece of paper and on one side I will write open and one side will say closed."



Laura did not require any assistance with these signs at all.

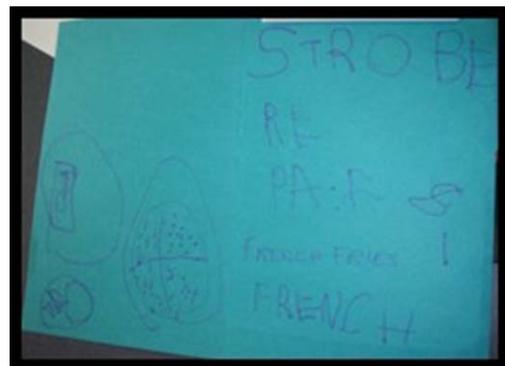
She placed the sign on a chair with the CLOS side showing. Anne and I waited by the sign while Laura set up her restaurant.



Finally Laura motioned for us to come in. Anne asked, "Can we seat ourselves, or do we wait to be seated?"

Laura: "You have to wait. And here's a cell phone in case someone calls you."

Laura led us to our table and seated us. She placed the menu on the table and described her specials.



She took our order and before we knew it, Anne was enjoying French fries with ketchup and I was enjoying the French chips.

**The educator's initial reflections:**

- *Laura enjoys dramatic play and loves to be surrounded by an audience. She likes to take the lead.*
- *I was curious about the word "dissolve" and its meaning for her.*
- *Laura and her parents or her abuela are often reading and writing together. This can explain how effortlessly she was able to write "open" and "clos". She is often practicing writing. She is familiar with "sounding out" and has letter/sound recognition.*
- *Laura appears to be quite knowledgeable about certain elements of the restaurant experience.*
- *Laura also knew some "math" or money concepts, such as half, loonie, three loonies, one penny.*

**Interpretations from parents and colleagues:**

*From Laura's Family*

- *Laura often uses words that she's heard or makes something up to represent what she is thinking at the time.*
- *She and her older brother, along with their abuela, work on science experiments at home. The often "dissolve" ingredients to make something else, almost like alchemy. We suspect that Laura may have used the word*

*"dissolve" in a way that would suggest that you combine different food ingredients to make a new food - cooking alchemy.*

- *Laura is very familiar and enjoys the restaurant experience and has her favourite in town because they give her colouring materials while we wait for our meal to be served.*
- *Laura also likes to help cook and play restaurant at home.*
- *She spends a lot of time "writing" and is constantly asking us to write words for her to copy or to help her spell so she can write the words on her own.*

*From Colleagues*

- *I wondered what the significance of the cell phone was and if Laura notices her parents or others talking on a cell phone while waiting to be seated in restaurants.*
- *I wondered if she knew that a "loonie" represented a "dollar". Or do children nowadays only know loonie or toonie/townie and not really know that it is an actual dollar value.*
- *She knows the alphabet and is able to sound out letters to make words.*

## **Analysis through Holistic Assessment Framework**

### *Collaborative and reciprocal process with multiple perspectives*

Based on her studies on learning stories in New Zealand, Hatherly (2006) says that, "little is more compelling than reading a

story about yourself (if you are the child) or about 'my child' (if you are a parent)" (p. 30). Pedagogical narration allows for a meaningful connection between home and school as several of the StrongStart children attend with a caregiver rather than a

parent. Laura's parents appreciated the opportunity to participate in a narration involving their child. In Laura's case, both parents work and cannot always attend StrongStart with her, therefore she often attends with her abuela. Despite this, her parents and abuela could contribute to the documentation and holistic assessment process by sharing their insight about what the pedagogical narration means to them and what Laura's previous experience has been with the content in the narrative.

In this exemplar, the parents shared that Laura is often involved in science experiments at home and mixing ingredients together, so this is possibly how she may know and use the word "dissolve". Pedagogical narration, as a holistic assessment tool, is a wonderful way to enter into a discussion about meanings of words and also build on the children's vocabulary. Laura's parents also added that she loves to help cook and is often playing restaurant at home. As we learned from her parents, Laura's family frequented restaurants and she enjoyed the restaurant experience. Laura was already familiar with the menu genre when she was developing her own. She had knowledge that menus have print on both sides and include pricing.

Sharing the pedagogical narrations, as a form of holistic assessment with others, allows for multiple interpretations and planning "what's next?" into a process. Pedagogical narration involves a "we" (e.g., educators, parents, children), rather than an "I" (e.g., educator), as educators move from being an isolated teacher to being in interdependent relations with others (Roberson, 2006). Through this collaboration, the educator, Laura, and Anne have a greater understanding of what was noticed and observed. It is important

for the educator to not only listen to Laura but to be fully attentive to what is being observed and then taking responsibility and sharing in the decision making (in this exemplar with grandparent as well).

### *Image of the child as competent*

Revisiting the stories with children is a holistic way of using assessment in learning. In this exemplar, the educator notices that Laura is demonstrating confidence in her knowledge and is able to represent her thoughts through dialogue and writing. Once she was reminded of her previous restaurant experience at the StrongStart Centre, she immediately knew what task she was interested in doing next. It is through this process of pedagogical narration and assessment that Laura's competence becomes visible. Laura is exhibiting that she has a wealth of potentials and resources. She is excited to show what she knows. Had a checklist or another form of assessment been completed on Laura, educators would not have a complete sense of who she really is and her multiple ways of knowing.

### *Meaning making*

In this exemplar, Laura was making connections with what she already knew about restaurants through these varied experiences between home, community, and the StrongStart Centre. As part of holistic assessment practice, the role of the educator is to listen intentionally for purpose in order to interpret and assist in Laura's search for meaning. "This means listening to the ideas, questions and answers of children, and struggling to make meaning from what is said, without preconceived ideas of what is correct or

valid" (Dahlberg et al., 2007, p. 60). Once Laura understood the symbol for a loonie, she was able to represent her knowledge about something costing more and drew the \$ symbol with the number 1 beside it two more times to represent the menu item costing three loonies. Anne was able to scaffold (Wood et al., 1976) this learning for Laura. This is an example of a child led inquiry that is followed up (scaffolded) with the assistance of an educator and another adult in Laura's life. It is in this space that assessment on learning is co-constructed and reciprocal.

Moreover, these rich cultural experiences have meaning for the children because they connect their home and StrongStart Centre contexts and make visible the child's "funds of knowledge" (Hedges et al., 2011; Gonzalez et al., 2005; Moll et al., 1992). Funds of knowledge are meaning centered, which makes it valuable for holistic assessment.

Therefore, curriculum development and assessment become a reciprocal process. By planning and assessing together through pedagogical narration, the adult's world and the child's world become closer. Learning through co-constructing with children opens up many possibilities. The assessment process changes and is modified as educators, children, and parents move forward together. In this exemplar, pedagogical narration and/as holistic assessment provided a deeper understanding of who Laura is, rather than trying to fit her into predetermined categories. Here the educator used her judgment as to what Laura was trying to make meaning of.

### *Transparency and insight into the educator's pedagogy*

The learning that takes place at the StrongStart Centre happens through interactions with others and the environment. Learning from others is very powerful and the educator's role is to support and enhance the learning that occurs. Once the educator, in this exemplar, has had the opportunity to reflect "on how the learning is proceeding" (Rinaldi, 2006, p. 101), she was able to base her teaching on what the child's ideas and what she wanted to experiment with. This was illustrated in section two. After some discussion about restaurants, it was Laura who took the lead when she suggested making a menu for her restaurant "Dissolve". The educator was open and willing to follow the child's lead by making a decision about what to give value to and by following through as part of the assessment process.

In the exemplar above (section one), Laura is showing us that she enjoys playing restaurant. The educator is noticing and noting that this is an interest of Laura's. The educator then follows up (section two) by inviting Laura to make a menu for her restaurant, in order to find out more about Laura's learning processes. Her interest in the restaurant experience acts as a catalyst for challenging herself and learning something new. After reading comments from her colleagues, the educator became curious about learning more about Laura's knowledge of cell phones and her concept of money. This could be something worth exploring with Laura in the future. The comments from the parents and colleagues caused the educator to reflect on the narration and see what else she may not have noticed that would be interesting to explore in the future.

### **Workshop for Early Childhood Educators**

The workshop I propose to present to early childhood educators and Kindergarten teachers in our district/region will focus on using pedagogical narration as a holistic assessment tool within early learning settings. The interactive workshop will consist of a PowerPoint presentation, but will include time for dialogue and inquiry. The workshop will be approximately 2.5 - 3 hours long and will be divided into 3 parts. In Part I, I will discuss pedagogical narration and why this tool can be used for holistically assessing young children's learning with the potential of changing the culture of assessments within early childhood education. In Part II, I will present highlights from the scholarly literature reviewed, including the pedagogy of listening, pedagogical narration as meaning making, the importance of having multiple perspectives, and gaining insight into the educator's pedagogy. In Part III, I will share pedagogical narrations and involve the participants in thinking why/how these can be interpreted as holistic assessments. The presentation will conclude with questions such as: How can early childhood spaces be supported in exploring pedagogical narration as a tool for holistically assessing young children?

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I presented and analyzed two pedagogical narrations that were created by early childhood educators in the StrongStart program as exemplars to show how pedagogical narration can be used to holistically assess young children's learning. I identified principles that can guide educators as they engage in the process of holistic assessment with pedagogical narration. In Chapter Four, I will offer my conclusions, insights, and future possibilities from this project.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

I have learned through my investigation that while it is a complex and multifaceted process, pedagogical narration can be used as a holistic assessment tool to enrich the lives of children, families, and educators in the early childhood settings. Like Vygotsky (1978), Bruner (1966), and Bronfenbrenner (1979), I believe that children do not learn in isolation, and the assessment of children's learning should not be limited to the outcomes of developmental checklists. Instead, what I have argued for is adopting a more inclusive, holistic, and sociocultural form of assessment that includes consideration of the child's ecology, history, and culture within varying contexts.

Like Rinaldi (2006), I believe that the creation of pedagogical narration is inherently imbued with an element of assessment. As educators document (through photographs, written notes, children's artwork and audio/video recording) and interpret (through conversations with children, parents, and colleagues) children's learning processes, assessment inevitably enters the picture. Yet, pedagogical narration as holistic assessment tool, offers a new way of thinking about assessment because it focuses on children's competence and the funds of knowledge that they bring in their search for meaning. Since through the process of creating a pedagogical narration the educator shares her or his interpretation of the documented event with others, this process also invites the educator to examine her or his practice by continuously engaging in self-reflection on the consequences and possibilities of her or his teaching.

### **Recommendations**

Based on what I have learned from this project, I would like to make the following recommendations. British Columbia's Ministry of Education has supported the development of

the *Early Learning Framework* and its companion document the *Early Learning Framework: Theory to Practice* as a curriculum tool, which outlines the creation of pedagogical narration. However, I feel that more support through targeted and frequent professional development opportunities is required to assist educators with the use of pedagogical narration as a holistic assessment tool. Further, educators would require mentors to help understand how the core principles of pedagogical narration, as holistic assessment tool, may work in their early childhood setting. I would also recommend that a major review of the current assessment practices used in early childhood education in B.C. be undertaken in order to devise a new, and more holistic, culture of assessment. Using the four guiding principles outlined in this project (holding an image of the child as competent; initiating a collaborative process between educators, children, parents, and community members to elicit multiple perspectives about the documentation collected; embarking on a process of a collective search for meaning making; and engaging in self-reflection), educators can be encouraged to use pedagogical narration as an effective and holistic assessment tool with young children.

It is important for educators to work closely together, to increase community dialogue about early education and to support children's learning and meaning making more visibly outside of the classroom walls. Being an early childhood educator can be isolating, as centres are often separated from each other geographically and professionally, therefore, administrators must make time and space for groups of educators (and parents) to meet and discuss pedagogical narrations.

Another recommendation is to share the narrations/assessments of the children enrolled in early childhood programs, including StrongStart, with the child's future Kindergarten teacher as part of a transition plan for entering school. Through reviewing pedagogical narration, the

Kindergarten teachers could see firsthand the children's competencies. And perhaps incorporate this form of assessment in the Kindergarten classroom. Pedagogical narration as an assessment tool would also demonstrate the importance/relevance in fostering and maintaining the educator-parent partnership that was formed in the early childhood program.

Inspired by the practices of pedagogical documentation in Reggio Emilia and learning stories in New Zealand, educators in B.C. may consider the use of pedagogical narration as a holistic assessment tool, not only to assess children, but also as a catalyst for energizing educators themselves to reflect on their own practice and challenge their assumptions of children's learning processes. As Rinaldi (2006) says, "being able to reflect and discuss the ways in which children, and all human beings, learn (thus enriching the humanity of each individual and all of us) is a great possibility and necessity that the school up to now has not been able, or not wanted, to offer. It is a time for change" (p. 100).

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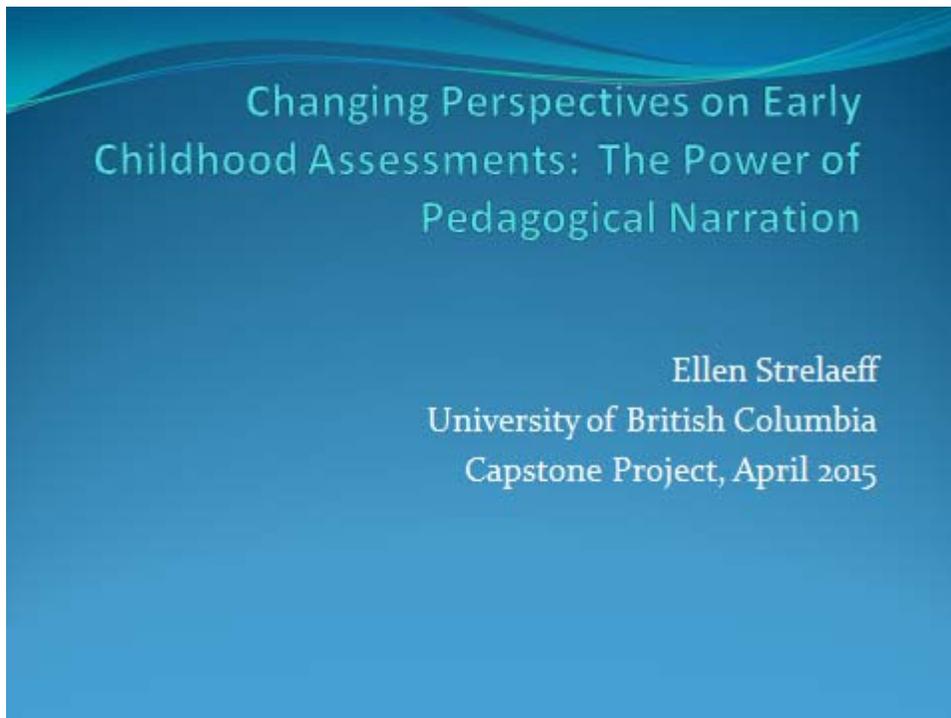
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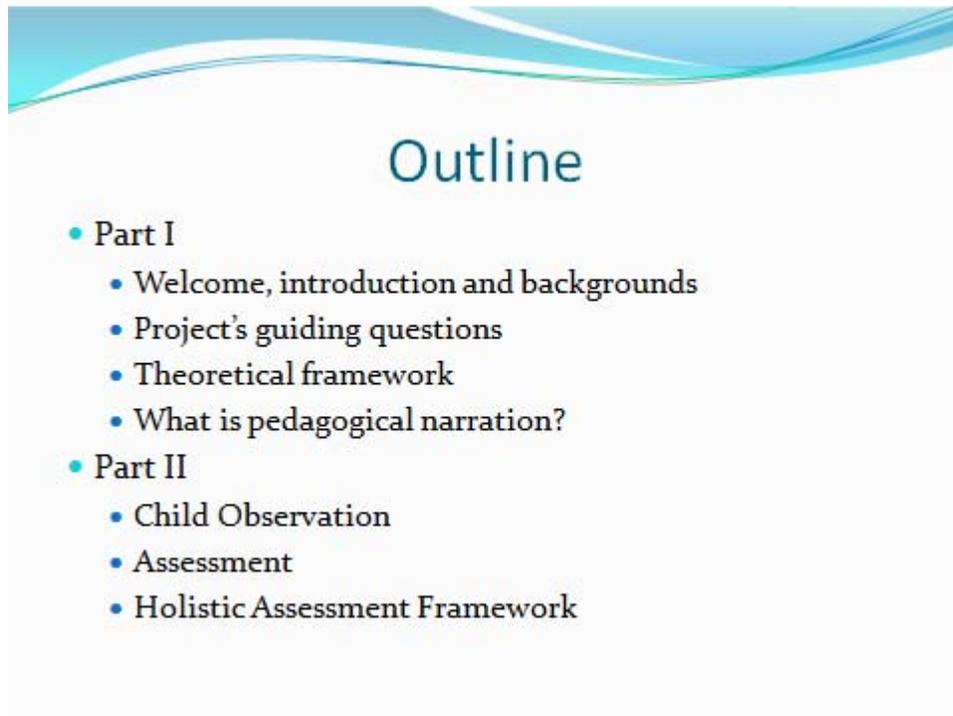
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## Appendix A

PowerPoint Presentation: Changing Perspectives on Early Childhood Assessments: The Power of Pedagogical Narration



Slide 1



Welcome everyone to this three hour workshop - Changing Perspectives on Early Childhood Assessments: The Power of Pedagogical Narration. This workshop was developed as part of my Capstone project for a Master of Education in Early Childhood Education.

The workshop has been developed to present in three parts. In Part I, I will outline my project's guiding questions, discuss my theoretical framework and review what pedagogical narration is.

In Part II, I will discuss child observation and the impact of developmental theory on assessment and introduce the holistic assessment framework.

Slide 2



## Outline

- Part III
  - Creating and sharing a pedagogical narration
    - Analysis of the Four Principles of Holistic Assessment
      - Collaboration, reciprocity with multiple perspectives
      - Image of the child
      - Meaning making
      - Educator's pedagogy
- What's next?



In Part III, I will share two pedagogical narrations and make connections to the four principles of the holistic assessment framework which include: initiating a collaborative and reciprocal process with multiple perspectives, an image of the child who is capable and full of potential, the search for meaning making/interpretation, and transparency into the educator's pedagogy.

Finally, we will discuss where we go from here. This is an interactive workshop which means at any time you can feel free to stop me and ask for clarification, any questions you may have and also offer your thoughts on how this may work (or not) in your early childhood setting.

Slide 3



## Welcome, Introductions, Background

- Let's take a minute to see who everyone is in the room
- Please introduce yourself by saying your name, where you work and your job title, and where you would be vacationing at this moment if you weren't at this workshop



About me: Currently, part of my role is to supervise the StrongStart educators in several programs throughout the Boundary. The StrongStart programs are a publicly funded parent/caregiver and child preschool program. Each session is three hours long and in many communities, offered five days per week. Many service providers, including Public Health Nurses, Infant Development Consultant, Baby's Best Chance Coordinator, Community Dental Hygienist, Coordinator of the Child Care Resource and Referral program, Family Literacy Facilitator and others, visit the StrongStart programs and present information on what their programs and services they offer.

I became interested in pedagogical narration when I was an undergraduate student at the University of Victoria in the Child & Youth Care program. At the same time, I became a field leader during the implementation phase of British Columbia's newly published Early Learning Framework. While the practice of pedagogical narration has been used for curriculum development, I was curious to know how it may be used as a holistic assessment tool with young children and will share this investigation with you.

Slide 4



## Assessment Tools

- What are some of the assessment tools you are familiar with or are currently using to assess young children's learning?

Ask the group: What are some child assessment tools that you are aware of or currently using to assess young children.

List the participant's responses on a chart.

Slide 5



## Project's Guiding Questions

- ★ How can pedagogical narration be conceptualized as a holistic approach to assessing young children's ways of knowing?
- ★ How can pedagogical narration be used to effectively and holistically assess young children's ways of knowing?

Slide 6

## What is pedagogical narration?

- Makes children's learning visible through written notes, photographs, artwork, video/audio recordings
- Multiple interpretations and perspectives
- Invites critical reflection
- BC ELF (2008) and Theory to Practice (2008)



Pedagogical narration describes a contemporary approach to documenting children's learning processes and making their learning visible through written notes, photographs, artwork, video/audio recordings. Educators collect documentation and then reflect and interpret these moments individually or with others.

The interpretations of children's learning processes are then shared with the community in a narrative format that typically includes texts and images.

The practice of pedagogical narration invites critical reflection as the educators create the opportunity to think more deeply about the children's learning and the pedagogical practice. Pedagogical narration offers a starting point for dialogue on assessment, its form and purpose, because it focuses on meaning making and the children's relationships with their environment. It is important to examine the child's learning within sociocultural contexts as they affect, and are affected, by the child. It is one approach that can be considered as an alternative tool for assessing children in an inclusive and holistic way.

The educators in the StrongStart program use the British Columbia Early Learning Framework (2008) and its companion document British Columbia Early Learning Framework: Theory to Practice to guide their practice in creating pedagogical narration.

Slide 7



## Theoretical Framework

- Sociocultural and Social Constructivist - Vygotsky (1978) and Bruner (1966)
  - Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)
  - Scaffolding
- Ecological - Bronfenbrenner (1979)
  - Microsystem
  - Mesosystem
  - Exosystem
  - Macrosystem



The theories that I drew from were Sociocultural and Social Constructivist theories (Vygotsky and Bruner) who argued that children learn in relationship with adults and peers and within cultural contexts through meaningful interactive experiences. According to these theoretical frameworks, children are social beings and as such, their learning does not happen in isolation. Vygotsky focused on the social aspect of children's development and the important role of the historical, cultural and social environment for the child's learning. He coined the term "zone of proximal development" (ZPD) which refers to the distance between the child's actual development and the level of potential development when the child is supported by an adult or peer while working on a joint task. From this premise, assessment of learning moves away from a deficit and individualistic view of assessment to a more powerful and strength based form because the educator and the child are co-constructing knowledge in a reciprocal, interactive manner.

Bruner, following in Vygotsky's footsteps, recognized that children needed particular kinds of interaction with an adult to extend learning of new skills and knowledge – a term he referred to as scaffolding. Through the process of scaffolding, learning is understood within the context of relations and mutual attentiveness, as the adult adjusts the interaction to support the child's construction of knowledge, with the assumptions that the child first engages in the task with assistance, and then may engage in it independently.

Ecological Systems theory (Bronfenbrenner) considers the child's environment, relationships, and experiences a major influence in the child's development and learning. He describes his ecological system as Russian nesting dolls where one rests inside a larger one and so on. His ecological system is divided into 4 layers:

- Microsystem – which includes the child's immediate experiences and the most intimate settings such as the home and school
- Mesosystem – (e.g., relations among home, school and peer group for the child and among family, work and social life for the adult) in which the microsystems interrelate
- Exosystem – (e.g., parent's place of work or network of friends, class attended by older sibling) in which the child does not directly participate in but which influences their development
- Macrosystem – in which dominant beliefs and ideologies affect the developing child

Bronfenbrenner believed that children need to be observed within all of their contexts and not be limited to a single setting (e.g., early childhood classroom)

Slide 8

## Additional Major Influencers

- Dahlberg, Moss & Pence (2007)
- Rinaldi (1998, 2006)
- Carr (2001, 2011)

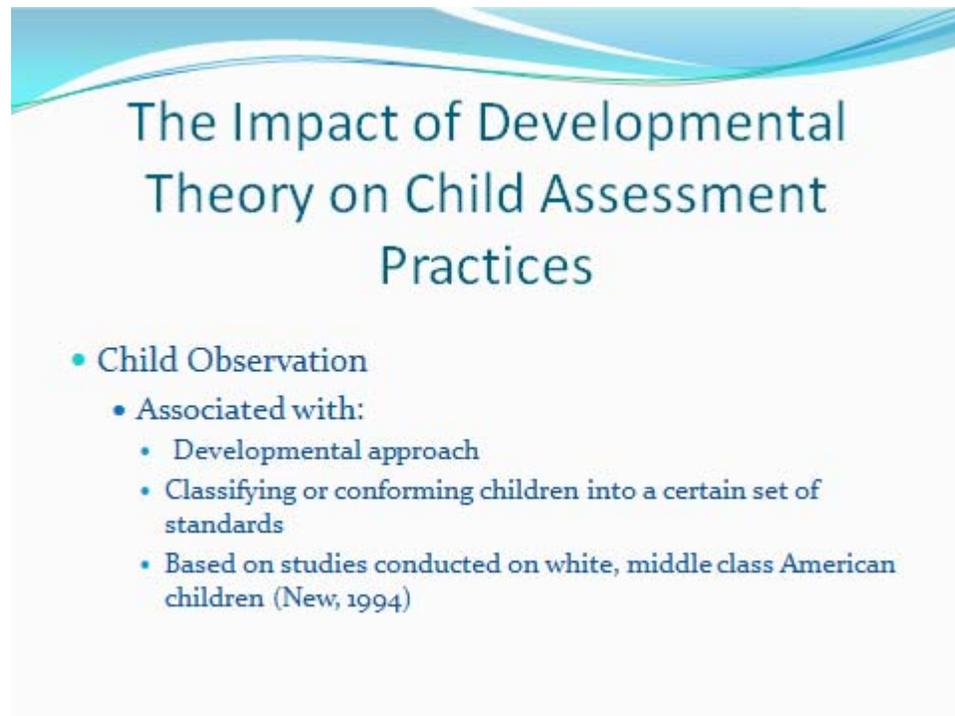
As I mentioned earlier, my interest in pedagogical narration was piqued during my undergraduate studies. During that time, I was first introduced to practices similar to pedagogical narration, such as pedagogical documentation from the pre-primary schools in Reggio Emilia (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2007; Rinaldi, 2006), and learning stories from early childhood centres in New Zealand (Carr, 2001, 2011). My undergraduate studies, along with my work on the implementation of the Early Years Framework, introduced me to new perspectives and ways of knowing, being with and assessing children that were different from early childhood approaches that are based primarily on developmental perspective and standardized assessment tools.

Gunilla Dahlberg is a Professor at the Institute of Education, Stockholm Sweden. Peter Moss is Professor at the Institute of Education, University of London, UK and Alan Pence is Professor at the School of Child and Youth Care, University of Victoria, Canada.

Carlina Rinaldi is an executive consultant for Reggio Children, a professor at the University of Modena and Reggio, and a [councilor](#) for the municipality of Reggio Emilia. Before she became a consultant, she worked as a pedagoga and then as a pedagogical director of the municipal early childhood services in Reggio Emilia.

Margaret Carr teaches early childhood education at the University of Waikato in New Zealand and was instrumental in developing New Zealand's national framework for early childhood education.

Slide 9



## The Impact of Developmental Theory on Child Assessment Practices

- Child Observation
  - Associated with:
    - Developmental approach
    - Classifying or conforming children into a certain set of standards
    - Based on studies conducted on white, middle class American children (New, 1994)

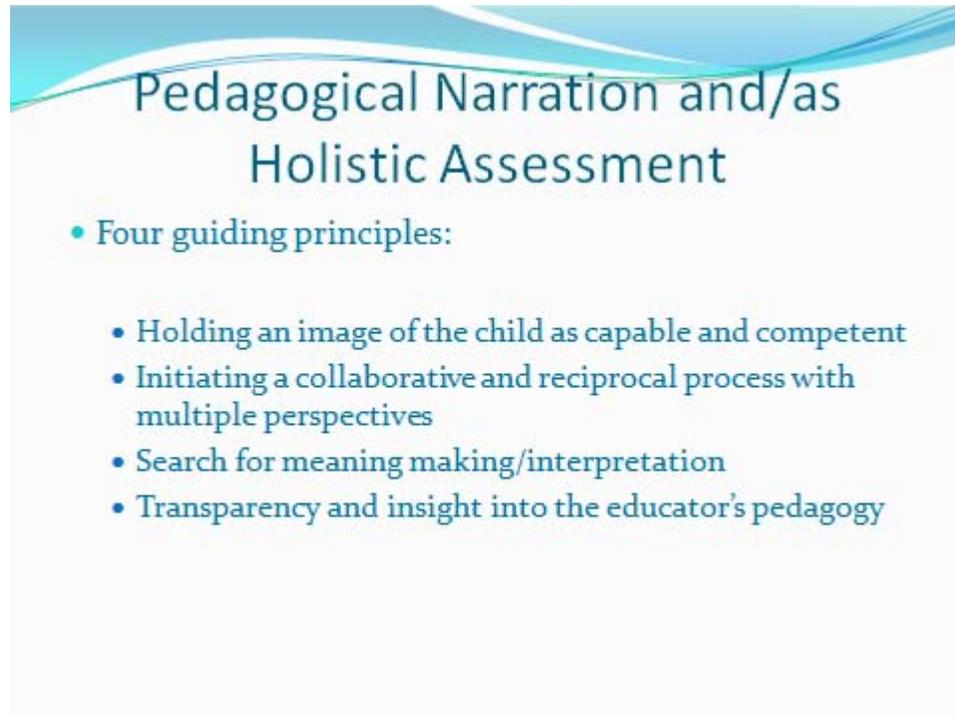
Pedagogical narration is different from traditional child observation and assessment techniques associated with the developmental approach. Traditional child observation is more about classifying or conforming the child into a certain set of standards. The Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) is a common screening tool (as you have already mentioned) used to measure children’s development in order to find out if the child is developing typically or if there is a concern that requires a further developmental assessment. One reason that educators may have found checklists so advantageous to use is because they take considerably less time to implement compared with qualitative methods, such as narratives (e.g., learning stories) (Carr, 2011). Children are capable of much more than what is revealed in a checklist or standardized test and that pedagogical narration can make children’s capabilities visible and significant for their educational journey.

According to New (1994), “the field of child development was built upon a predominance of studies conducted on white, middle-class American children” (p. 68). Since the 1996 version of the position paper by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) on developmentally appropriate practice was adopted, there have been significant changes. With the rise in population of immigrant families, increased numbers of home languages and cultures in the schools, issues of poverty, and an increase of children with special needs, the context and culture of early childhood education has changed (NAEYC, 2009). No longer do children fit into

the prescribed categories suggested by developmental theories, and there may be more than one way to “educate” and assess children.

Increased accountability policies and learning standards have had a major impact on how educators teach, how children learn, and how assessment is carried out. The NAEYC (2009) “imbued the definition of developmentally appropriate practice with a belief that young children learn best through self-initiated play and discovery, and teachers should foster independence” (as cited in Curtis & Carter, 2008, p. 90). This belief led to a ‘hands off’ approach to teaching and (perhaps unintentionally) led instead to managing children’s behaviour “with the value of protecting individual rights” (Curtis & Carter, 2008, p. 90). While educators believed to be protecting children, instead they had a narrowed view of who the child is and what their capabilities are. Additionally, they may have been marginalizing cultural perspectives “that value interdependence over individual efforts and learning in groups over individual efforts and achievements” (p. 90).

Slide 10



## Pedagogical Narration and/as Holistic Assessment

- Four guiding principles:
  - Holding an image of the child as capable and competent
  - Initiating a collaborative and reciprocal process with multiple perspectives
  - Search for meaning making/interpretation
  - Transparency and insight into the educator's pedagogy

To illustrate how pedagogical narration is used as a holistic assessment tool, I am proposing the following 4 principles to guide the educator's practice in holistically assessing young children.

- 1) Holistic assessment entails holding an image of the child as capable and competent with unique perspectives, theories, and views to share (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2008)
- 2) Initiating a collaborative and reciprocal process with multiple perspectives between educators, children, parents, and community to elicit multiple perspectives about the meanings of the documentation. The strength of pedagogical narration as a holistic assessment tool is that it allows for dialogue with children, parents, and educators and invites many varying perspectives which add to the rich interpretations of the narratives (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005).
- 3) The collective search for meaning making/interpretation. As pointed out by Rinaldi (2006), who was a leader in the preprimary schools of Reggio Emilia, children are always searching for meaning as are educators who also search for a shared meaning with the children, parents, and educators. Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence (2007) add that it is in relationship with one another and through co-construction that we make meaning of the world around us.

- 4) Another principle of holistic assessment is that it provides transparency and insight into the educator's pedagogy. It prompts educators to consciously think about their daily practice with children, and their "pedagogy of listening" (Rinaldi, 2006) as they challenge assumptions and create new ways of listening, understanding, and responding to children. We will discuss the "pedagogy of listening" (Rinaldi, 2006) in more detail later in this presentation.

Slide 11



Next, I will lead you through a couple of exemplars that were created by StrongStart educators. We will then have an opportunity to analyze the exemplars using the four principles in the holistic assessment framework.

Slide 12

## Birds and a Trick

*Lisa is a four-year-old girl who has been attending to my class since she was an infant. On this particular morning, she arrived with her mom and announced that she wanted to do some coloring. I joined her at the craft table and she talked about coloring birds for her grandma, "because grandma likes birds, blue birds and robins". I then began to show a rabbit using blue markers while I colored a blue bird on my page. I asked her if we needed to add anything else and she said, "yes, food". She moved closer to me and said, "I'll do it" and started dotting my paper with blue dots. I asked her if she could tell me what it was and she said, "It is bird food, like seeds." Of course, I thought:*



Slide 13



## Birds and a Trick con't.

*Lisa's mom came and sat down at the other end of the table with two blank sheets of paper for colouring. Lisa said with excitement, "I will show you a trick. I need another white one" referring to another white (blank) sheet of paper. I asked, "Is it going to be a magic trick?" and smiled at her mom. Neither of us knew exactly what she was going to do. Lisa reached for her mom's white paper and also a piece of paper with a turkey pictured on it and brought them both over to me. She put the plain white paper on top of the turkey picture and began to colour vigorously with her blue felt. Lisa's mom and I looked at each other trying to figure out what she was doing. Lisa stopped, lifted the top page and looked at the turkey paper disappointed and confused. Lisa didn't say anything. Moments later, Lisa's mom and I figured out that Lisa was trying to do a crayon rubbing like we had done two weeks earlier with leaves. I explained to Lisa that the reason it didn't work for her this time was because the picture of the turkey was not bumpy like the leaves we used previously. The picture of the turkey was on a smooth piece of paper. I showed her with my hand the smooth paper and encouraged her to feel the page as well.*

Slide 14



## Educator's Initial Reflections

The educator's initial reflections

- Lisa knew what she wanted to do when she arrived at StrongStart that day
- Lisa frequently makes things for her grandma and grandpa
- Lisa knew what her grandma likes and proceeded to draw/color it
- Lisa's memory is very keen. She remembered that I had shown her the "trick" of rubbing leaves two weeks earlier and she recalled the steps
- Even though she used a felt and not a crayon, she knew to rub really hard and then look at her picture below to compare

Slide 15



## Interpretations from parents and colleagues

*Interpretations from parents and colleagues*

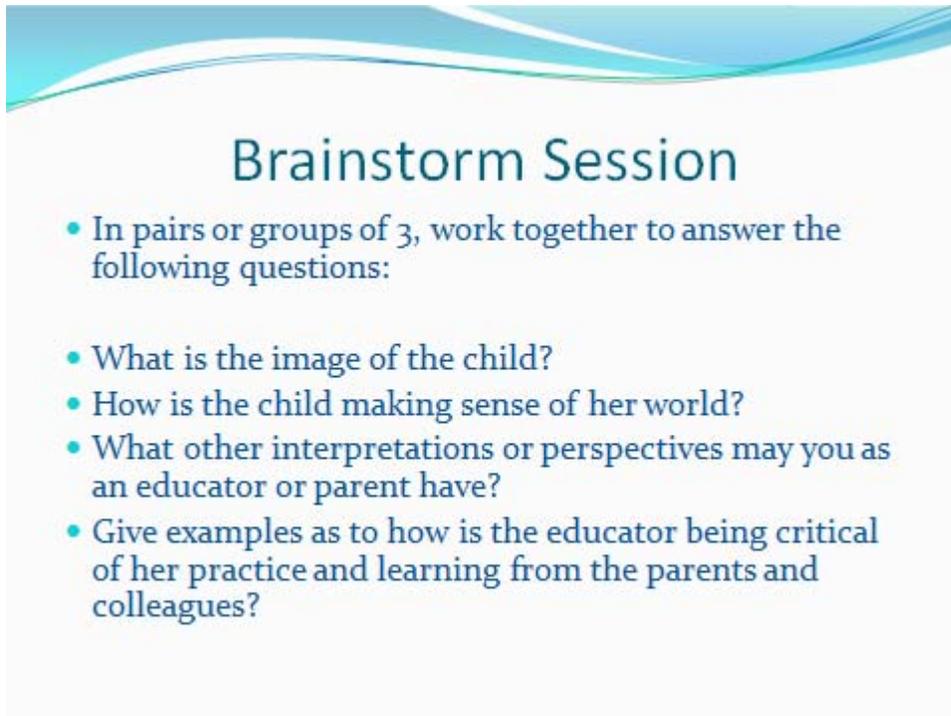
***From Lisa's Family***

- *We live with Lisa's grandparents and they are a big part of her life so it's no wonder she makes a lot of pictures for them*
- *She is always thinking*
- *She always has something going on, something she is working on to try and make sense of*

***From Colleagues***

- *Interesting how even when she is away from her grandparents how they still have an influence on her. Lisa is thinking about them and colouring her grandmother's favourite things. I would have loved to have heard their reaction to the story. Was it shared with them?*
- *I loved that she remembers the crayon rubbing from the previous week and tried to apply her new knowledge to today's activity*
- *Was she familiar with the word/concept "smooth" and "bumpy" or was that new vocabulary that she learned today?*

Slide 16



## Brainstorm Session

- In pairs or groups of 3, work together to answer the following questions:
- What is the image of the child?
- How is the child making sense of her world?
- What other interpretations or perspectives may you as an educator or parent have?
- Give examples as to how is the educator being critical of her practice and learning from the parents and colleagues?

Once the pairings or groups of three have had an opportunity to discuss these questions, we will hear from each group and have a larger group dialogue on the analysis of the narrative.

Then I will share anything that was missed in our collaborative analysis with what I had in my exemplar.

Slide 17



## A Restaurant Called Dissolve

*Laura, her dad, and Ryan were playing in the kitchen centre. Laura (4 years, 1 month) and Ryan (2 years, 10 months) were busy cooking olive and nut soup (using craft eyes for the olives and pompons for the nuts).*

*As their restaurant play continued, they added pizza as another one of their delicacies. Other parents and children were involved at some level and were invited to taste-test. They "looked" and "asked" over the children's creations. Laura had quite an audience and she received rave reviews for her dishes.*

*Brian, Laura's dad, asked if she had a name for her fabulous restaurant. At that moment she decided she needed some paper and a pen to write out the name of the restaurant for all of us to see.*

*Laura "wrote" on each of the pages as we made comments about how long the name of the restaurant should be.*

Slide 18



When she had finished writing an early paper, she asked if she could call on the name of her restaurant. She replied, "The paper is yours. My restaurant... nothing is at stake."



She asked me the name of my paper, she said, "The restaurant is named in honor of your... my paper... as if it's your name."



The next day, she asked me if my restaurant had a partner's name."



The next day, she asked me if my restaurant had a partner's name."



At the end of the play I was decided that her restaurant name was Charlie.

Brian explained that Laura was referring to the customer justification that restaurants often provide. As Brian continued with his explanation, Laura interrupted him and said, "You can't have a partner in my restaurant. It's my name for it, no partner."

I asked Laura to tell me about the word "partner". She replied, "Partner is when you get married and you're not a couple. When you get married, and you have someone who stays with you."

Slide 19



*"How do you write strawberry pie?" she asked.*

*Anne asked her to sound it out and demonstrated how. Laura made a hissing sound "zzzzzzzz" as she wrote the letter. Next she made the sound "ta ta" for T and then the "rrrrr" for R and so on ...*

*... until she had written "STROBERE PA" on her menu.*



Slide 20



*"Okay, it's going to be one penny for strawberry pie. Abuela, can you please write 'French fries' on here?" Ane agreed to write 'French fries' and Laura copied the word 'French' underneath.*

*Laura decided that the French fries would cost a loonie. She asked how to write the word loonie. Ane explained to her that she could use a symbol instead that would represent a loonie. She asked Laura to write the letter S and then make a straight line through it.*

*"Then you put the number 1 beside it. And that is considered a loonie."*

*Laura wrote the letter S and drew a straight line through it... although the line was on an angle and the ends joined the S, making it look like the number 5. She wrote the number 1 below it.*

*Laura moved to the left side of the paper and began to draw the strawberry pie. Next she drew and named the plate of French fries with ketchup and, finally, the French chips.*

*"Here's the strawberry pie and it's sliced in half," she said, as she drew two lines through the pie. She then drew dots on the pie and told us they were extra strawberries.*

*Pointing to the right side of the page, she explained, "This side is things you need to pay for. The rest you don't need to give money for."*

*She wrote her symbol for a loonie, drew the number 1 beside the symbol, and followed with two more sets of symbols and numbers. She explained to us that the pie now cost three loonies.*

*Ane explained that, in future, Laura could draw the number 5 beside the S symbol to indicate the value and added that Laura's way was good, too.*



Slide 21



*Aine asked, "I wonder how we will know the restaurant is open?"*

*Laura: "I need a flat piece of paper and on one side I will write open and one side will say closed."*



*Laura did not require any assistance with these signs at all.*

*She placed the sign on a chair with the CLOSED side showing. Aine and I waited by the sign while Laura set up her restaurant.*



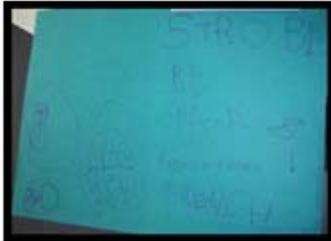
*Finally Laura motioned for us to come in. Aine asked, "Can we eat ourselves, or do we wait to be seated?"*

Slide 22



Laura: "You have to wait. And here's a cell phone in case someone calls you."

Laura led us to our table and seated us. She placed the menu on the table and described her specials.



She took our order and before we knew it, Anna was enjoying French fries with ketchup and I was enjoying the French chips.

Slide 23



## Educator's Reflections

*The educator's initial reflections*

- *Laura enjoys dramatic play and loves to be surrounded by an audience. She likes to take the lead.*
- *I was curious about the word "dissolve" and its meaning for her.*
- *Laura and her parents or her abuela are often reading and writing together. This can explain how effortlessly she was able to write "open" and "close". She is often practicing writing. She is familiar with "rounding out" and has letter/sound recognition.*
- *Laura appears to be quite knowledgeable about certain elements of the restaurant experience.*
- *Laura also knew some "math" or money concepts, such as half, loonie, three loonies, one penny.*

Slide 24

## Interpretations from parents and colleagues

*Interpretations from parents and colleagues*

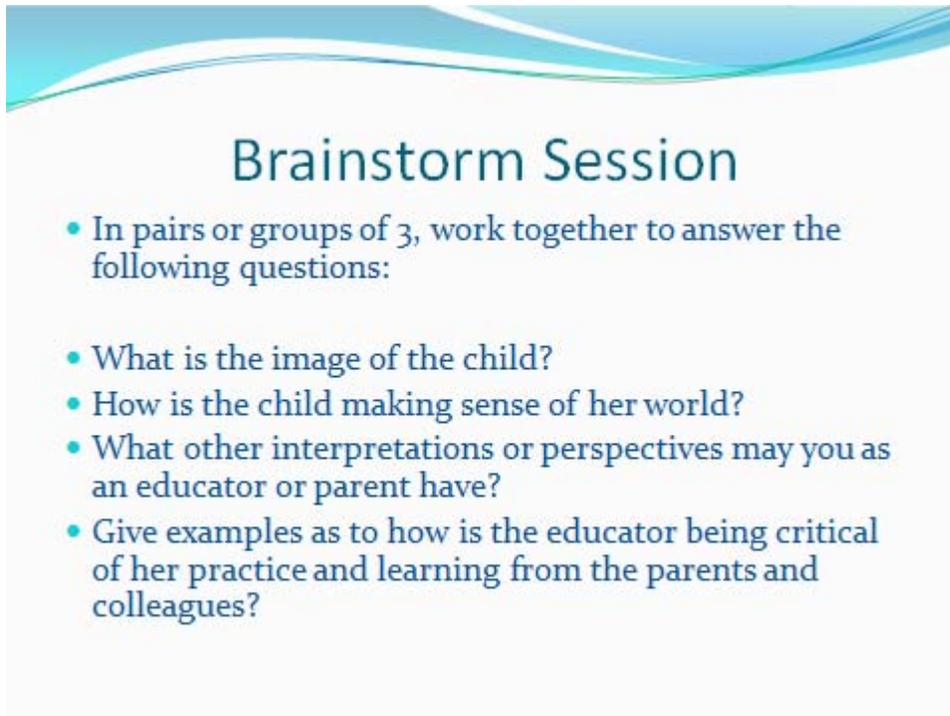
*From Laura's Family*

- Laura often uses words that she's heard or makes something up to represent what she is thinking at the time.
- She and her older brother, along with their abuela, work on science experiments at home. The often "dissolve" ingredients to make something else, almost like alchemy. We suspect that Laura may have used the word "dissolve" in a way that would suggest that you combine different food ingredients to make a new food - cooking alchemy.
- Laura is very familiar and enjoys the restaurant experience and has her favourite because they give her colouring materials while we wait for our meal to be served.
- Laura also likes to help cook and play restaurant at home.
- She spends a lot of time "writing" and is constantly asking us to write words for her to copy or to help her spell so she can write the words on her own.

*From Colleagues*

- I wondered what the significance of the cell phone was and if Laura notices her parents or others talking on a cell phone while waiting to be seated in restaurants.
- I wondered if she knew that a "loonie" represented a "dollar". Or do children nowadays only know loonie or loonie because and not really know that it is an actual dollar value.
- She knows the alphabet and is able to sound out letters to make words.

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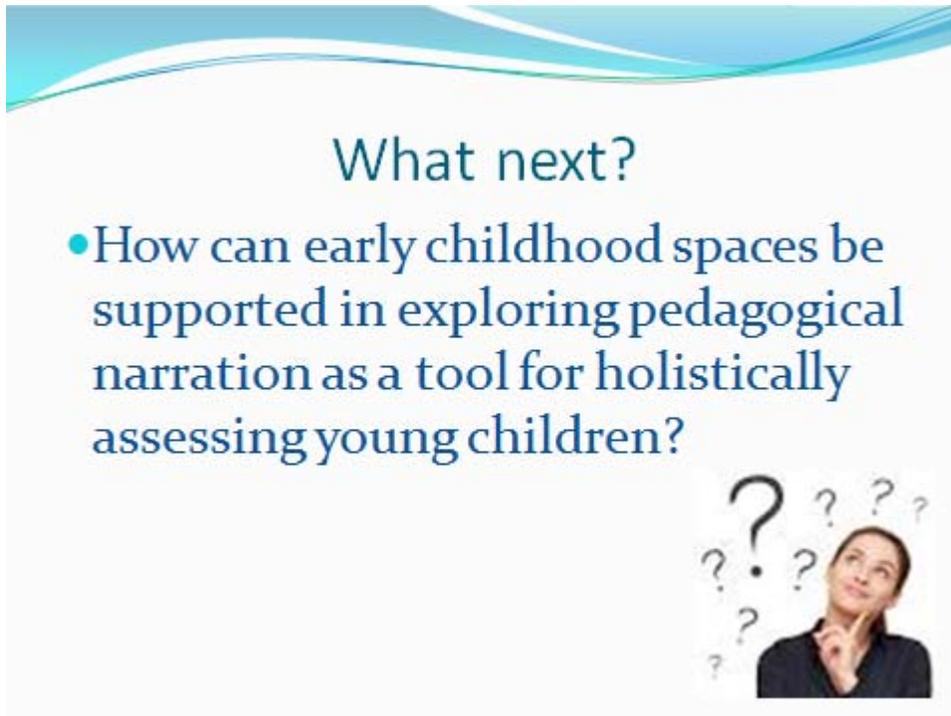
## Brainstorm Session

- In pairs or groups of 3, work together to answer the following questions:
- What is the image of the child?
- How is the child making sense of her world?
- What other interpretations or perspectives may you as an educator or parent have?
- Give examples as to how is the educator being critical of her practice and learning from the parents and colleagues?

Once the pairings or groups of three have had an opportunity to discuss these questions, we will hear from each group and have a larger group dialogue on the analysis of the narrative.

Then I will share anything that was missed in our collaborative analysis with what I had in my exemplar.

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## What next?

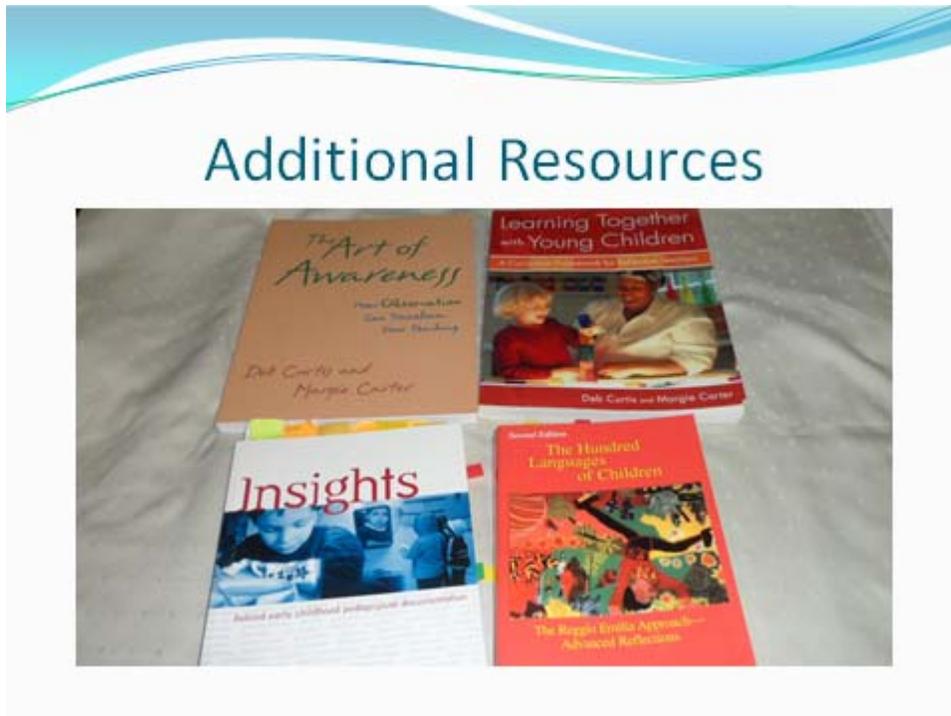
- How can early childhood spaces be supported in exploring pedagogical narration as a tool for holistically assessing young children?



Finally, we will end the evening with a discussion on the following question: How can early childhood spaces be supported in exploring pedagogical narration as a tool for holistically assessing young children?

The participant's thoughts and ideas from the brainstorm will be recorded on chart paper and plans for follow up will be made, depending on the outcome of this session.

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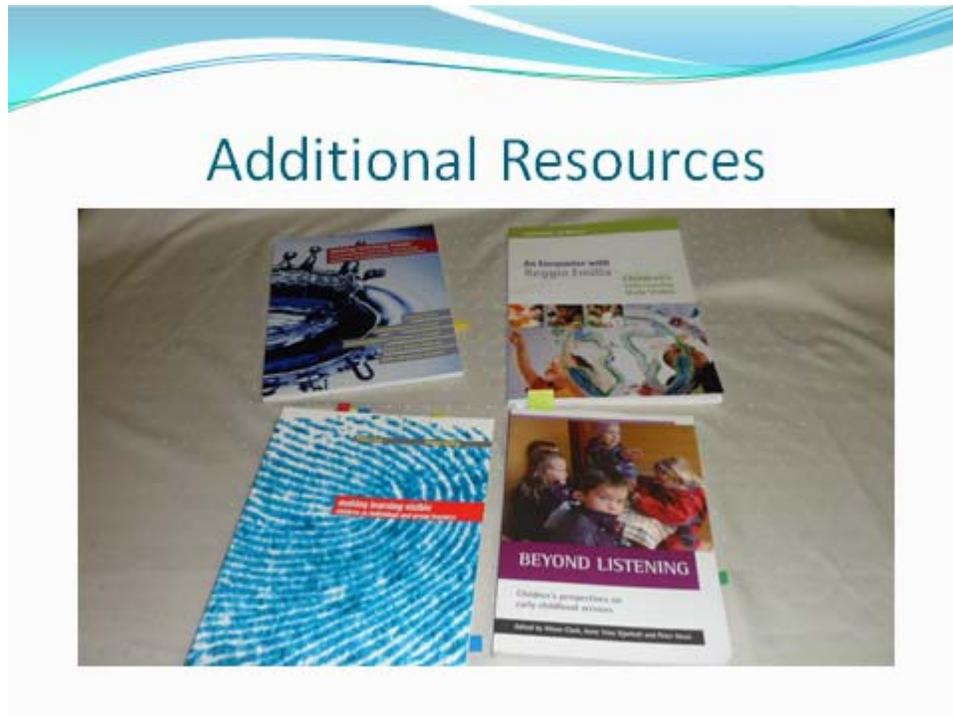
The Art of Awareness – How Observation Can Transform Your Thinking (Deb Curtis and Margie Carter) (2008)

Learning Together with Young Children (Deb Curtis and Margie Carter) (2000)

Insights – Behind early childhood pedagogical documentation (Fleet, Patterson, Robertson (Eds.), 2006)

The Hundred Languages of Children – The Reggio Emilia Approach – Advanced Reflections (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1998)

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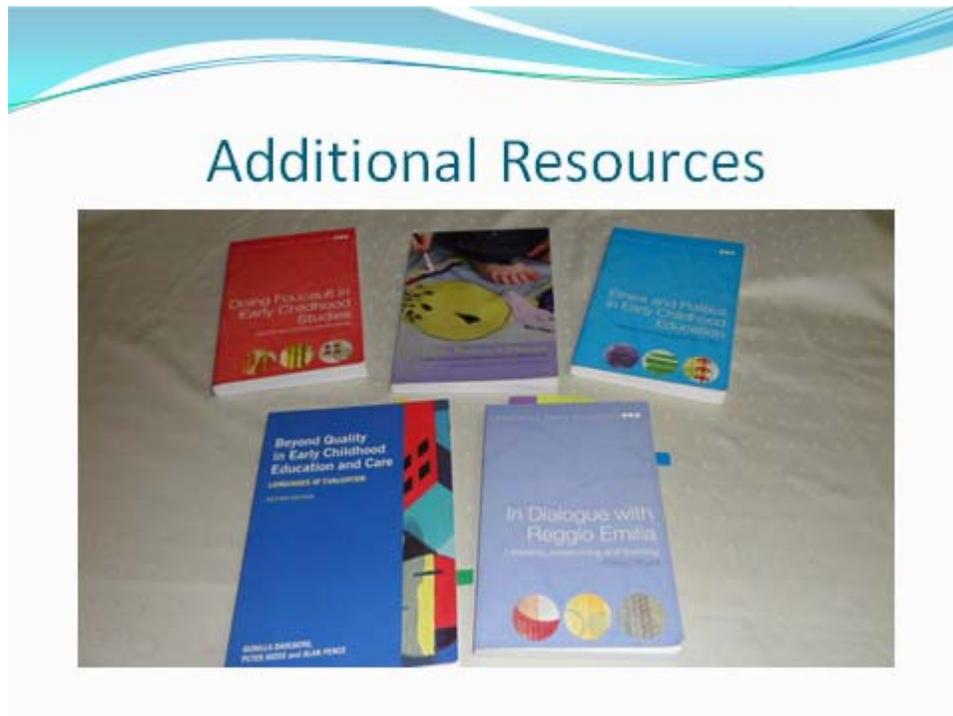
Making Teaching Visible – Documenting Individual and Group Learning as Professional Development (2003)

An Encounter with Reggio Emilia – Children's Early Learning Made Visible (Kinney & Wharton, 2008)

Making Learning Visible – Children as Individual and Group Learners (Project Zero Reggio Children) (2001)

Beyond Listening – Children's perspectives on early childhood services (Clark, Trine Kjørholt, & Moss (Eds.), 2008)

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Doing Foucault in Early Childhood Studies – applying poststructural ideas (MacNaughton, 2005)

Flows, Rhythms, & Intensities of early childhood education curriculum (Pacini-Ketchawbaw (Ed.), 2010)

Ethics and Politics in Early Childhood Education (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005)

Beyond Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care – Languages of Evaluation (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2007)

In Dialogue with Reggio Emilia – Listening, researching and learning (Rinaldi, 2006)

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- Images courtesy of Google Images and Photography (Matrooska Dolls and Resource Books by Ellen Strelaeff)

## **Appendix B**

### **Permission to use photographs and artwork.**

This letter asks for parental consent to allow the children's artwork and samples, from the children in the StrongStart program, to be used in the exemplars for my Capstone project.

Permission was obtained by the parents. The letter is included below.

(letterhead)

December 15, 2014

Dear Parents/Guardians:

As you are aware, I am working on my graduating project in order to complete the requirements of my Master of Education degree in Early Childhood Education with the University of British Columbia.

The focus of my study is using pedagogical narration as a form of assessment with young children. I would like your permission to use the pedagogical narrations that were created by an early childhood educator in the StrongStart program that your child attends. I will not use any identifying photos, only photos of your child's artwork and I will also use pseudonyms to protect your child's identity.

Thank you for your support. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions or concerns. I can be reached at [lenka2@telus.net](mailto:lenka2@telus.net) by email or (250) 442-0567 by telephone.

Sincerely,

Ellen Strelaeff