Rethinking Children's Participation in Curriculum Making: A Rhizomatic Movement

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Today, freedom of expression is viewed as both a right and a universal value. In the early childhood field, respecting children's views is seen as important for children to develop a sense of worth, make responsible decisions, and become active citizens. Children are no longer considered passive objects in the hands of their parents and society, but full-fledged persons to whom public authorities are accountable (Santos-Pais, 1999). Children's rights to be heard and to have their views taken into account are now embedded in education policy and practice.

For example, over the past two decades, considerable movement has been made on the global stage and in Canada to recognize children's right to participate in decision-making processes. Globally, the international policy landmark the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is now used by many states to develop policies for children. These policies generally outline that young children can and should participate in matters that affect them, and suggest that children's early experiences influence their later abilities, identities, and well-being (Lansdown, 2005; Lindsay, 1998; MacNaughton, Hughes, & Smith, 2007).

In Canada, many of the recently developed curricula/frameworks involve ideas regarding children's participation, specifically in relation to curriculum

development. The idea of child participation in curriculum making has its foundation in "an innovative model of the young child, in a new concern with young children's rights as citizens and in new knowledge about the significance of young children's early experiences" (MacNaughton et al., 2007, p. 458). This model is reflected in the BC Early Learning Framework (Government of British Columbia, 2008), which views young children as social actors who shape their identities, generate and communicate legitimate views about the world around them, and have a right to participate in that world. In this document, children are acknowledged as "capable and full of potential; as persons with complex identities, grounded in their individual strengths and capacities, and their unique social, linguistic, and cultural heritage" (Government of British Columbia, 2008, p. 4). Despite this ideal of children as capable persons with the right to participate in decisions about their education, child participation in curriculum development has, for the most part, remained undertheorized and in practice it emerges in a tokenistic manner. Children are typically given few opportunities to engage in everyday discussions about issues that concern or directly affect them. Seldom are they asked to express their preferences in adult-dominated institutions. While children often appear to be given a "voice," they have little or no say about the subject matter or the method of communicating it. They have few opportunities to formulate their own opinions, never mind having these thoughts considered seriously or valued. Regretfully, more instances of tokenism exist than do genuine forms of children's participation in projects (Hart, 1992; Lankshear & McLaren, 1993).

At the same time, researchers in early childhood education have demonstrated that young children are competent at creating hypotheses, constructing theories, and envisioning possibilities for meaning making. Moreover, many scholars have argued that children possess knowledge about the world that differs from that of adults, and that engaging with that knowledge has the potential to improve adult understandings of children's experiences (MacNaughton et al., 2007). Young children can communicate their views about their daily lives and, specifically, about early childhood curriculum (e.g., Clark, 2000; MacNaughton, Barnes, & Dally, 2004). This perspective allows one to embrace a broader notion of education and curriculum development that includes aspects of learning and care based on children's rights and interests. For us to benefit from these understandings, however, we will need to further theorize the idea of children's participation in curriculum making. In particular we need to find new theories that would help us to move beyond tokenistic approaches to child participation.

By examining how child participation has been conceptualized and exploring alternative ways to think about it, this chapter seeks to contribute to an emerging

literature about young children's participation and innovations in early childhood curriculum making. Specifically, the information presented in this chapter sets out to explore how young children's participation can be conceptualized using a rhizomatic perspective. My exploration will be guided by the concept of the rhizome presented by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) and developed in relation to early childhood education by Olsson in 2009. In the first part of the chapter, I explore various perspectives on child participation. This section describes some practical and theoretical views of child participation and how they relate to curriculum making. The second part of the article addresses my emerging views on the concept of the rhizome in relation to children's participation.

Views of Child Participation in Early Childhood Curriculum Making

Images of the young child carry much ambiguity. On one hand, children may be seen as autonomous individuals. On the other, they are assumed to be vulnerable and in need of protection. Despite this ambiguity, proponents of child participation view children as active citizens whose capacity to learn and participate in their environment allows them to give meaning to the world around them. While most child-centred approaches to early childhood curriculum emphasize children's right to be listened do, the degree to which children should have a voice— and how that voice should be incorporated—is a subject of strongly divergent opinion.

The term "participation" generally refers to the process of sharing decisions that affect one's life and the life of the community in which one lives (Hart, 1992). A sociocultural perspective of early childhood conceptualizes young children primarily as members of social groups. Luff (2009), for example, sees early years practitioners as facilitators of children's participation in social life. Her research seeks to identify ways that educators enable young children's active, participatory learning (p. 129). While she argues that adults should respect and facilitate the rights of young children to be listened to, very little depth is taken in exploring how to incorporate children's thoughts, feelings, and ideas into everyday practice to validate and give value to their experiences. The primary focus is on adult–child relationships and on how adults can provide "a context for active growth while also instilling positive dispositions for future social participation and learning" (Luff, 2009, p. 130). In this model, children's right to be listened appears to be most important in terms of its contribution to positive, productive relationships.

It could be argued that this model is based in part on establishing a linear and chronological learning process, as it is primarily based on adult–child relation-

ships. Taking a different perspective, a rights-based approach views participation as the base on which a democracy is built and the standard against which democracies are measured. Hart (1992) suggests that a nation is democratic to the extent that its citizens are involved, particularly at the community level. The confidence and competence to be involved must be gradually acquired through practice. It is for this reason that there should be gradually increasing opportunities for children to participate in any aspiring democracy. (p. 4)

Similarly, Pais (2000) emphasizes gradually introducing children to opportunities for participation, with the child's age and maturity the determining factors in their involvement. And, while respecting children's views means not ignoring them, she states, neither should children's opinions be simply endorsed. Expressing an opinion is not taking a decision. But it implies the ability to influence decisions. Thus, a process of dialogue and exchange needs to be encouraged to pre- pare the child to assume increasing responsibilities and to become active, tolerant, and democratic—combining adults' direction and guidance to the child with the consideration of the child's views in a manner that is consistent with the age and maturity of the child, giving the child an opportunity and ability to understand why a particular option and not another is followed, why a particular decision is taken and not the one the child might have preferred. (Pais, 2000, p. 95)

Both of these rights-based educators see adults as requisite guides for children's participation in democratic decision-making. While these perspectives do not assume that children are too immature to participate in decisions about their lives, they do imply that adults should decide for young children the knowledge, skills, behaviours, and experiences they need to become socially competent. In other words, to perpetuate the well-defined universal developmental stages, young children's participation is valued and examined using a predetermined content of culture, identities, and knowledge based on that which adults think is appropriate. In this format educators take on the role of an arbitrator, overseeing the children and evaluating them against predefined categories of normal development. Educators are then able to develop curriculum for the children based on these judgments, with the objective to help them develop "normally."

In a similar vein, an emergent curriculum model centres "children's interests, worries, desires, understandings, and misunderstandings and use[s] these as the beginning points for curriculum" (Wien & Stacey, 2000, p. 1). However, the model relies on "developmentally appropriate" standards and "well-developed observation skills of early childhood teachers" (Wien & Stacey, 2000, p. 1). For the purposes of this chapter, emergent curriculum can be thought of as beginning when something that fascinates children emerges from their ongoing

activities, often in an unplanned way. The teacher then adapts the children's activities in ways that further stimulate, challenge, or expand their thinking (Riley & Roach, 2006). Rather than the child being an active participant throughout the whole learning process, the adult is expected to observe and interpret children's interests and to develop curriculum based on them, according to "developmentally appropriate" guidelines.

The emergent curriculum model often involves "normalizing the child"—that is, classifying and measuring children in linear and binary ways based on the concept of developmentally appropriate practice (DAP). The guidelines for DAP are the seminal framework of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC; Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). DAP focuses on improving children's developmental outcomes, often articulated in terms of school readiness. According to Stonehouse (1994), DAP "lends itself to being interpreted simplistically, as a set of 'do's and don'ts' that are universal" (p. 76). A large amount of ongoing criticism questions DAP's contention that children's development unfolds in a universal manner (Kessler & Swadener, 1992; Ryan & Oschner, 1999; MacNaughton, 2003).

In contrast to developmental models, early childhood educators who work within a strengths-based framework tend to view children as "beings not becomings" (Qvortrup et al., 1994, p. 2, cited in Clark, 2005, p. 30). Young children are seen as providers of knowledge and co-constructors of meaning, while adults are envisioned as facilitators or opportunity providers rather than authoritative directors. Clark and Moss (2001), for example, place high importance on children's participation in early childhood education and insist that educators need to find practical ways to develop services that respond to the "voice of the child" and recognize young children's competencies (p. 2). Clark (2005) believes that child participation is essential to allow children's perspectives to become the "focus for an exchange of meaning between children, practitioners, parents and researchers" (p. 29). She emphasizes exploring children's experiences and perceptions of their own lives, as well as their interests, priorities, and concerns. She describes her "mosaic" approach, which is based on Reggio Emilia–inspired notions of the competent child, the pedagogy of listening, and the pedagogy of relationships, as multi-method, recognizing the different "voices" or languages of children; participatory, treating children as experts and agents in their own lives; reflexive, including children, practitioners, and parents in reflecting on meanings, and addressing the question of interpretation; adaptable, allowing practitioners freedom to adapt to their early years set- ting; focused on children's lived experiences, with the possibility to be used for a variety of purposes including examining the lives lived rather than the knowledge gained or received; and, embedded into practice, involving

listening that seeks to establish a climate of listening. (Clark, 2005, p. 30).

A child-centred participatory rights-based approach prioritizes "making children's learning visible" and engaging young children as active citizens who are competent, capable, and socially responsible. MacNaughton and Smith (2008) outline the implications of such an approach for building a participatory, rights- based ethic for consulting children. It is not enough merely to observe and document what young children say, they argue: To engage them as active citizens we must take the politics of what has been heard and observed seriously and act on these thoughts accordingly. Doing so enables children to see their thoughts, feelings, and ideas as valid, and creates spaces to support young children to "learn about the complexities of acting on diverse ideas and perspectives in a democratic environment" (MacNaughton & Smith, 2008, p. 40).

For MacNaughton and her colleagues, the most successful consultations include young children's views about the consultation process itself (MacNaughton et al., 2007, p. 462). They bring attention to the notion that children's participation in a project can only be ethical, just, and rights honouring when the consultation processes are designed with care. Listening to children, MacNaughton and her colleagues contend, assists them to become active citizens who participate in public decision making, so the consultation process itself is as valuable as its out- comes (2007, p. 462). By using a methodology that attempts to be as sensitive as possible to the particular ages, contexts, cultures, and backgrounds of the children involved, MacNaughton and her colleagues create a space for all of the children involved to understand what is being proposed and to make reasonable decisions that reflect what they believe are their particular interests.
It is tempting to look for a single best approach to involving young children in curriculum making. However, the CREATE Foundation, an Australian organization committed to child empowerment and participation, cautions that the consultation process can change over time, with different people wanting to participate in different ways at different times, and the success of any consultation process depends on the extent to which children and/or adults can translate their own perspective on the issue at hand into effective action. (CREATE Foundation, 2000b, cited in MacNaughton et al., 2007, p. 462).

Thus one must consider the many different ways to promote and encourage each child's participation in light of their individual abilities, confidence, and experience. Children will assess their situation, consider possible options, express their views, and therefore influence decision-making processes in myriad ways. Further, the child's evolving capacity represents just one side of the equation, while the other has to do with adults' evolving capacity and

willingness to listen to, interpret, and give adequate weight to the views expressed by the child (Clark, 2000; Lansdown, 2005; Pais, 2000). For child participation to be ethical, those who live and work with children—educators, teachers, parents, family members, and society at large—must be prepared to give children as many opportunities as possible to freely participate in the societies of which they are part.

While the approaches to early childhood curriculum-development research discussed thus far in the chapter converge around similar ideals of child participation, often they follow a linear, hierarchical, and unidirectional pattern that centres adults as experts in the pedagogical planning process. They share similarities around the idea that concurrent with valuing children's self-expression is the responsibility to listen to and learn from them. However, many of the approaches are also based on the idea of subjectivity and of "learning as tameable: predictable and possible to plan, supervise and evaluate against predetermined standards" (Olsson, 2009, p. 118). As Olsson (2009) suggests, much learning appears to take place in the unconscious and does not involve a process of achievement. Therefore, a profound challenge lies in considering, interpreting, and understanding children's views enough to reexamine our own opinions and attitudes, and to be willing to transform our practice to both encompass children's ideas and remain open to that which is not yet known.

But how do we incorporate children's participation in curriculum making in ways that are just and ethical and that allow for transformation of early childhood practice? A fruitful starting point might be to engage in a different kind of thinking. For example, Olsson (2009) proposes that rather than finding answers we engage in a struggle—in this case a struggle in the participation process—in which teachers and researchers begin to imagine the child in more open and complex ways, trying to avoid falling into the trap of thinking, talking and acting in a simplified way through the notion of the "competent child." The ambition has been to open up this image of the child to many other expressions; to find more and unknown ways of being a child than being defined through one's competencies.... The ongoing struggle involves an ambition to avoid defining the child beforehand, either through theories of developmental psychology, or through the more or less outspoken definitions of competency. (p. 14) From this viewpoint participation, for adults as well as children, is a dynamic process that involves continual transformation through learning.

To engage in the kind of struggle that Olsson proposes, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) seem to offer important concepts "capable of loosening a few long-established knots within research and social sciences" (Olsson, 2009, p. 93). According to Olsson, their rhizomatic way of thinking can be highly productive

to reconceptualize curriculum making. Through it, curriculum making can be reenvisioned as a way to continually negotiate with shifting knowledge to broaden the learning experience (Olsson, 2009). In this section, I will experiment with these ideas to explore young children's participation in curriculum making. According to Olsson, this type of exploration attempts to do research by using and experimenting with "whatever seems to function so as to create an encounter between experiences" from the chosen world—in this case, the world of early childhood curriculum making—and the Deleuzian/Guattarian philosophy. She writes:

> It is a style of work that is not about imitating thought or telling practices what they are lacking. It is a style that includes looking at the world and human beings without letting the perception and affection constantly turn towards the negative by focusing on lack and need. It is a question of looking at ourselves and the world from another perspective than that of lack. (2009, p. 125)

As described in Olsson (2009), Deleuze and Guattari (1987) used a metaphor of rhizomes to conceptualize networks in knowledge creation. They described rhizomes as dynamic entities. Unlike tree roots, which have fixed origins, rhizomes are tuberous—multiplicitous, adventitious—and they connect in nonlinear and nonhierarchical assemblages to other things. With a rhizome, anything may be connected and interconnected to anything else. In relation to the social field, the work of Deleuze and Guattari consistently focuses on that which is not yet known. It attempts to go beyond the taken for granted and already defined, the predetermined positions and habitual ways of thinking, talking and doing. It is a philosophy that focuses upon ongoing creation of leakages and considers these as non-discursive, non-interpretative potentialities, inherent in any structure or system, that do not need to be deconstructed but rather to be activated (Olsson, 2009, p. 24).

When applied to early childhood education, this movement in teaching and learning with young children suggests an alternative to models with predetermined outcomes and homogeneous assessments. The focus of child participation in curriculum making should be on whatever is going on in the process of learning at the time, not on attaining knowledge or achieving goals. Furthermore, learning should be treated as "impossible to predict, plan, supervise or evaluate according to predefined standards" (Olsson, 2009, p. 117).

Olsson (2009) argues that "one needs to find a way whereby the dualism individual/society is no longer treated as a cause-effect relationship, but rather

find another logic for how to treat what takes place in between constructed and imagined entities such as individuals and society" (p. 31). The rhizome metaphor challenges traditional cause and effect relationships and creates a space for validating and framing knowledge creation in early childhood education. It is here that the idea of content of knowledge can be seen as part of a relational field. In this approach, "one avoids nailing down specific knowledge goals to serve as departure points for the learning process and to be used to evaluate each child" (Olsson, 2009, p. 21).

The intention of the rhizomatic movement is to create a space where everything is valued and can come together to form new and multiple thoughts. In this perspective the child is no longer a passive object to be shaped, developed, prepared, educated, and/or cared for. Instead, when children's desires are listened to and considered, educators can bring their ideas into activity planning in a way that makes children part of producing new realities (Olsson, 2009).

The rhizomatic way of thinking recognizes that "the child" is not homogeneously constructed. Deleuze and Guattari would not see the child as a subject distinct from the socialization frameworks and biological determinism of developmental science that reconstitute a subject which never becomes adult nor remains young (Tarulli & Skott-Myer, 2006). In their view, the child is constituted instead as "subjectivity extracted from chronological time or age in its intensities and productions; that is to say, as a subjectivity that never arrives but is constantly renewed as an idiosyncratic expressive extraction of both location and temporality" (Tarulli & Skott-Myer, 2006, p. 191). Everyone, regardless of chronological age, is in a constant state of "becoming." Becoming refutes binary divisions and enables further transformations, melding subjects and objects in close proximity (Tarulli & Skott-Myer, 2006). In other words, a child is not an image of the world. Instead the child forms a rhizome with the world, a parallel evolution of the child and the world; the child assures the deterritorialization of the world, but the world effects a reterritorialization of the child, which in turn deterritorializes itself in the world, and so forth.

Lines of Flight

Rhizomatic thinking connects multiple viewpoints in innovative and unanticipated ways, creating spaces for creative dialogue that troubles traditional views of child participation in early childhood curriculum development. Olsson explains that for Deleuze and Guattari, "lines of flight" run "like a zig-zag crack in between the other lines—and it is only these lines that, from the perspective of Deleuze and Guattari, are capable of creating something new" (Olsson, 2009, p. 58):

> When something new and different is coming about, when the lines of flight are created and activated in practices, it is never taking place as a relationally planned and implemented change by specific individuals. Rather, there are from time to time magic moments where something entirely new and different seems to be coming about. (p. 63)

A line of flight connects singularities, or planes. As "a fibre strung across borderlines" it is a means of deterritorialization, thinking innovatively. Lines of flight could be seen as networks that have the ability to cut across borders and build links between preexisting gaps and between nodes that are separated by categories and orders of segmented thinking, acting, and being.

In the context of early childhood curriculum making, Deleuze and Guattari might argue that it is these lines of flight that give opportunity for creative and inspired escapes from the standardization and stratification of early childhood education. In other words, young children and educators may seek to move beyond the "standard" or "traditional" planned curriculum to expand curriculum making in new and creative ways that are not relationally planned or specifically change oriented. The goal of rhizomaticism, then, is not the obliteration of existing strata (or organized, territorialized space) but the discovery of the available lines of flight within that space. These lines of flight challenge some of the boundaries and constraints that limit how ECE curriculum is created, thereby promoting spaces where action is possible and unobstructed. Because lines of flight can take place at any time and lead us in any direction, as educators we must not only allow for them to take place, but give them the appreciation they deserve by challenging ourselves to think and act in often unconventional ways. It is in this unconventional space where young children could become a fundamental part of curriculum development and where the "magic moments" described above might take place.

If we choose to understand people, specifically young children, as social actors who are experts in their own experiences, curriculum making must make these lines of flight visible through listening to individuals and having them directly participate in the planning process, allowing for creativity and experimentation. Tarulli and Skott-Myer (2006) contend that each time an adult "becomes a child"— by rejecting the binaries of developmental difference and embracing the common becoming of human life—young children's participation can be set into creative and productive flight. Creativity, in turn, "can be picked up and made use of through struggling with creating the most favorable conditions possible for lines of flight and leakages to appear" (Olsson, 2009, p. 75).

Desire as the Source of All Production

For Deleuze and Guattari (1987, as interpreted by Tarulli & Skott-Myer, 2006), desire is the principal and primal force in everything, the immanent source of all production. Tarulli and Skott-Myer (2006) write:

> Lines of flight are imbricated in the economy of desire; forming the "field of immanence," they are instantiations of desire, and as such constitute the productive force of change, of eventness, of becoming—of all that which would question, unsettle, undermine, evade, or break up the static molar codes that rigidly define, identify, or represent (and hence bind) the subject (subjectus). Desire does not simply flow beneath molar lines: one might say that it over flows, that it always exceeds the banks or channels that strive to contain it, forever emerging as surplus and as the myriad site of ineradicable loopholes (cf. Bakhtin, 1984) out of the social categories and codes that otherwise pretend to fix bodies in time and space. (p. 190).

Deleuze and Guattari's concept of desire challenges the unified, rational, and expressive subject and attempts to make possible the emergence of new types of decentred subjects that are free to become dispersed, multiple, and reconstituted as new types of subjectivities and bodies. It could be suggested that terms such as "drive" and "impulses" imply a singularity, while desire implies a multiplicity. Deleuze and Guattari seek to modify the term desire from the usual usage: It does not refer to conscious desires, but rather to the state of the unconscious forces. The strangeness of desire without an object or subject, as desiring production, is what they seek to present (Tarulli & Skott-Myer, 2006).

When relating Deleuze and Guattari's concept of desire to early childhood education curriculum development, one might argue that young children may have an interest in becoming involved in the curriculum-making process. However, this interest exists as a possibility only within the context of a particular social formation. If children are capable of pursuing that interest, it is first of all because they desire to do so. They are invested in the social formation that makes that interest possible. Their interests have been constructed, assembled, and arranged in such a manner that their desire is positively invested in the system that allows them to have this particular interest. Therefore, Deleuze and Guattari reconfigure the concept of desire to describe that which we desire and invest our desire in as a social formation. Consequently, in engaging

the issue of early childhood participation in curriculum making in the context of becoming, those who identify themselves as "adult" must wrestle with the concept of desire. To ethically engage young children in curriculum development—that is, to go beyond simply giving the appear- ance of consultation and truly involve them in decision making—adults must move beyond "exploring early childhood education" in relation to conventional developmental, social, and economic indicators. Instead, we must consider the ways in which children's desires can be related to curriculum making. Doing this would require us to think, question, and critically analyze our ways of knowing and to open ourselves to otherness, complexity, and multiplicity.

Potentialities for Practice

With a rhizomatic approach, innovative ways to involve young children in curriculum making can become a reality. Following lines of flight, for example, experimenting and latching onto young children's desires requires the ability to connect any point to any other point through construction, deconstruction, and co-construction processes. Child participation research often seeks to explore what Deleuze and Guattari referred to as "states of meaning" where multiplicities change direction and undergo metamorphosis. The "non-closed" nature of the system— in this case, the consultation process—means it is not reducible to "the one or the multiple." The importance lies not in the components but in directions of motion and configuration that give rise to an emergent series of interpretations (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). The experiential process that results provides a map that is "always detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable, and has multiple entrance- ways and exits and its own lines of flight" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 21).

This Deleuzian/Guattarian shift in thinking offers a flexible approach in which initial assumptions about curriculum and education can be challenged, can take on new forms, and can be modified to move in different directions as activities unfold. The rhizomatic perspective encourages us to attend to the multiplicity of events taking place at a particular moment, and new and unpredictable events are valued and expanded. This type of thinking challenges us to move past notions of truth and to think critically about the world in new ways. For many educators, this shift in thinking causes a "crisis in thought" as we struggle over how to give meaning to the world around us (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 1999). Dahlberg et al. (1999) maintain that this crisis in thought and "struggle over meaning can pro- duce opportunities and open up the possibility of viewing children, early child- hood institutions, and early childhood pedagogy in new ways" (p. 123). These new ways of thinking have the potential to enliven the concept of child participation in curriculum development and transform early

childhood policy-making, training, research, and practice.

The rhizomatic model illuminates the complexities that exist within curriculum-development processes and asks stakeholders to consider moving beyond the linear logic that frames current education policy. But can a rhizomatic model be put into practice? Educators who try to move away from tokenistic child participation are often overwhelmed with the functionality of involving young children in curriculum development. Practical questions arise, for example: How can spaces be provided that allow children to feel confident and encouraged to express their opinions? What approaches are suitable? How can the experiences of non- verbal children be included? Which approaches will lead to findings that can transform practice?

By framing children's growth as occurring concurrently across a series of domains in an irregular, diverse, and constantly changing process (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), consulting young children could embody the rhizomatic way of thinking to early learning. It is this "lateral" logic that recognizes the "complex and shifting ways in our 'becoming'" (MacNaughton, 2004, p. 94) and "replaces certain 'hard facts' with shifting and multiple truths" (p. 92), thereby opposing notions of standards-based programming that base young children's education on the achievement of a particular set of academic knowledge and skills. Children act in unanticipated ways that give rise to the unpredictable and unknown. Therefore, in the process of consulting with young children, lines of flight will be created concerning the role of the educator/researcher, the image of the child, and the making of curriculum. Consequently, there is no longer a defined teacher– student relationship, but rather an educational community that is in a constant state of change. This work must not focus on what has happened, but instead embrace the importance of educators and children working together in an ongoing process of constructing and reconstructing the problem.

The Possibility to Move beyond Tokenism

Involving young children in decisions regarding curriculum development is under- pinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and is gaining support around the world. In Canada, the province of British Columbia, for example, has embedded children's right to participate in its early learning frame- work (Government of British Columbia, 2008). However, as outlined above, child participation in curriculum making is complex, and it requires both a clear commitment and ongoing, effective actions to make it a living reality.

A rhizomatic framing of curriculum making acknowledges this complexity and

looks for ways to map it. In this movement, curriculum making is seen as a continuous, dynamic learning-teaching-experiencing process. All stakeholders in early childhood education—children, educators, parents, and community members—are given the opportunity to express their views on curriculum. Through the consultation process, the child is no longer understood as lacking or incomplete but, as they say in Reggio Emilia, intelligent: intelligent, that is, as a person capable of making meaning of the world from his or her own experiences, not as a person who scores more than so many points on an IQ test (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p. 102). A rhizomatic way of thinking about children's participation in curriculum making can shift attention from ways to create programs for children to ways to create programs with children. In this process, we can move beyond tokenistic forms of child participation to truly include, respect, and value children's voices.

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