以兒童為中心與建基於後現代主義的教育法的整合及應用

左佩文

新加坡南洋理工大學國立教育學院幼兒與特殊教育學系助理教授

李貞儀

新加坡南洋理工大學國立教育學院幼兒與特殊教育學系助理教授

摘要

本文旨在結合兩大幼兒教育法，（一）以幼兒為中心（二）建基於後現代主義。 並探索如何將這兩大教育法的中心思想轉化為實務教學，在注重幼兒個別需求及興趣的同時，亦可充分發揮課程影響力以促進社會和諧。換言之， 其目的在於兼顧個體與社會兩方面的發展。作者透過結合兩大理論、引用相關美國實務例證、以及應用後現代主義的知識再造的研究精神為本文之架構， 提出一個可以成功結合此兩大教育法。 透過教師與孩童啟發式的對話，以培養出對自我負責的情操、對弱勢少數社群的尊重、 及認知互惠合作精神的重要性。

關鍵字: 以兒童為中心，後現代主義，幼兒教育

Introduction

Theorists and critics have continued to impact practicing teachers regarding the ways in which they enable their teaching practices flavored with both child-centered and up-to-date theories of postmodernism. Most of the early childhood education literature has done a great emancipative job to take on critical lenses to either empower individual children through activating a child's participation in diverse contexts, or challenging the certainty of any theoretical work through their discursive deconstructions. As child-centeredness has dominated Western early childhood education for the past few decades, possible normalization and standardization of its conception have been nevertheless concerned the practical application, such as the arguments of DAP (Developmentally Appropriate Practices) by Lubeck in 1998. Post-modernists (such as Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2006; Grieshaber, 2008; Genishi, 2008) have provoked the more extensive prospects on the multiplicity of learning and education across time and space through reconceptualizing the various notions of ECE in order to take account of diversity and plurality.

We are hereby driving forward from the tensions, binaries, dichotomies, and boundaries caused when strengthening one paradigm over another, into incorporating child-centeredness and postmodernity by reflecting upon a teacher's real practices. This article will attempt to move the literal meaning into contextual, and the theoretical

into the practical by interweaving child-centeredness and postmodernism.

We argue that child-centeredness and postmodernism should assist one another in order to inform the field of education with more holistic perspectives, rather than being independent and segmented. According to Chung and Walsh (2000), child-centeredness -- the long evolving ideas central to early childhood education -- has been defined and redefined again over many years since first appeared in Froebel's book *The Education of Man*, published in 1826. We believe that the idea itself should be reflected and further elaborated into reconceptual and postmodern discourses, matched with the contemporary trends of postmodern educational movements. On the other hand, most of the conversations regarding reconceptualism and postmodernism are concerned with conceptual discussions and which significance to provide its practical meanings to practical teachers is still in question (Genishi, Ryan, Ochsner, & Yarnall, 2001). Bearing in mind these two concerns, we revamp the ideas of child-centeredness to be able to infuse with postmodernism together, in order to entrench one with the other by reflecting upon real classroom examples. The purpose of this discussion is to embody child-centeredness and postmodernism into the integral and practical meanings, and providing possible ways for practical teachers to contextualize the recent educational theoretical movements. With unifying perspectives and solutions, it aims to provide a view of

teaching and learning through multiple lenses, rather than being grounded within only one paradigm.

Rethinking Child-Centeredness with Postmodernism

Child-centeredness has long been discussed since first appearing in Froebel's book in 1826. According to Chung and Walsh (2000), the term itself has contained more than 40 meanings applied across different contexts. Its denotation has evolved and the term has been widely applied in different situations. Inherent in this application has been the advancement of education to center on children's needs and interests equally, in order to progress from traditional education, which is didactic and linear. It has been argued by the various scholars (e.g. Cannella, 2000; Greshibar, 2008; MacNaughton , 2001）that the current content of child-centeredness should be reconceptualized in order to make it broader, more informed, and sophisticated, as well as to match with contemporary educational movements, namely, postmodernism. We adopt the term postmodernism to address the general concept here rather than poststructuralism which emphasized more on the power of discourses. However, it is worthy mentioning that these two terms are interchangeable.

We believe that the postmodern tenets of rethinking and doing diversity in education in order to promote a more just society through education are actually on the same trajectory as child-centeredness with more expanding landscapes and possibilities. By disrupting the "granted" standards and

incorporating multiple perspectives going with its plural nature of education (Greshibar, 2008), how to base education on the needs of each child and its relevance to social justice and movement is problematized and reconceptualized. The ultimate goal for embracing both child-centeredness and postmodernism is to equally dedicate to individual children's diversified profiles in education, with the forceful objectives of educational equities to promote social movement. Regardless of the varied disputes among the ideas of child-centeredness particularly dominated by child development theories, the philosophical tenor of centering on and following children's leads and needs still lay a strong foundation for reconceptualists' and postmodernists' quests of

emancipating from the only authority. Notions of taking account of children's perspectives (which has burgeoned from child-centeredness) are further addressed by postmodernists' reconceptualizing provocation. For example, Cannella (2000) calls attention to under-representativeness, in order to advance social justice and equality.

On the other hand, concerns of child-centeredness from postmodernism lie in the limitations and insufficiency of child developmental theories, which may dominate child-centeredness discourses. Following with Graue's (2005) remarks, myths of child-centeredness such as hegemonic views toward children's development and theoretical deconstruction efforts to elaborate the plural

nature of children and their development should grant an opportunity to open the new space to assist one another. Regardless of how intricately one intertwines another, the interactive nature of postmodernity should be able to link well with the fluid and evolving nature of child-centeredness. As Graue (2005) indicated, finding the missing tracks from both paradigms involves integral work to combine both, as one should constitute another, rather than be against one another. Child-centeredness is hereby again redefined through incorporating with postmodernism's ultimate goal of a more just society, adopting its transformative and aesthetic tenets of promoting reflection, with implicating meaning from real classroom examples.

Postmodernism: A Commitment to Transform Diversity and Advance Social Movement

Among the varied ways of elaborating postmodern notions of education, we are adopting the provocation of "social justice," as a conventional way to embrace and surface the educational issues of diversities and complexities addressed among postmodernists (Slattery, 2006). Social justice has been widely adopted by reconceptualists, postcolonialists, and postmodernists in various ways, to underpin its positions of rethinking the realities, challenging power and authority in dominating social rules and knowledge, and the missing and unrepresented voices in the historical social movements (e.g., Cannella,

2000; Grieshaber & Ryan, 2005; Slattery, 2006). Even though other visions of freedom and liberation that underline critical theory are believed to uphold postmodernism as well, their practical significance to the educational context is still in question. In particular, concerns of how the individual freedom is able to signify social justice for the ecological sustainability have been remarked by Bohm (1988) and Orr (1992). Therefore, we are adopting social justice to include the equal freedom of knowing the truth, reflecting, and participating to make meanings of a wide array of possibilities. As the conditions and contexts are fast-changing and moving, sustainability should rely on means of rethinking and doing. We believe the means of rethinking and doing are not just for teachers but for every citizen including children we are preparing to be.

As everyone should be freed up in their minds to think and be equal in society, social justice strongly embraces the standpoint of postmodernity to its social-wide and school-wide meaning through continual reflection from diverse perspectives in order to expand our visions and thoughts. Such rethinking and doing rely on deconstructing the practices, reconceptualizing our understandings, and reconstructing more possibilities. Therefore, child-centeredness is necessary to be reviewed and reconstructed again in the real classroom contexts through transformative conversations to expand children's thinking across time and places.

Incorporating Child-Centeredness and Postmodernism

Searching for The Gap and Making The Connections

The purpose of making a connection between child-centeredness and postmodernism here is not to arbitrarily conceive a static future for child-centered postmodernism. My argument is to advance the educational movement through connecting without excluding one theory from another. The connection and advocacy here is to re-manifest the centrality of children's needs and to promote social justice by connecting various notions and paradigms pertaining to its meanings in order to make the individual and societal movement as a reciprocal relationship.

We believe "connection" is placed as the central notion under both child-centeredness and postmodernism. Child-centeredness aims to make the classroom practices connect with each child's needs and interests. Similarly, the ultimate goal of postmodernism is to "disrupt the privileging of theorist" (Cannella, 2000, p.217) by bridging theory-to-practice, and theory-theory.

Moreover, Zeichner (1993) also remarked upon the importance of connection – empowering only one element or value without thinking about its personal and community consequences. Nonetheless, any focused empowerment (such as individual child, just society, and underrepresented voices) addressed from the perspectives of child-centeredness and postmodernity should be empowered together by not negating anyone as one

constitutes another (Graue, 2005). Incorporating without excluding any of the theories and paradigms should make them connectable into the community application by bearing with the consequences and moral significance.

Establishing A More Just Community Starting with Classroom Interaction

Payley (1993, 1999), a renowned early childhood practitioner, has shared her visions of building a socially just classroom driven by the kind and inquiring nature of the child, using her relationships with each child to appreciate their varied capacities and talents as well as collaborating with them toward a longer consequence to achieve the goals of building a socially just classroom with accepting and without excluding. Buzzelli and Johnston (2004) also elaborated

upon the interaction of the classroom and its moral significance, because of the continued implicit influences and possible wide scaffolding of children's reasoning skills, judgments, and perspectives toward others. As the conceptual discourses of curriculum are unable to resolve all the problems, reflective discussions of real classroom examples and actions can indeed be directly relevant to the establishment of more decent and equitable societies (Zeichner, 1993).

In sum, child-centeredness and the notions of postmodernism should be centered on advancing social movement by building a more just society through valuing and not excluding any assumptions. We should admit that neither of them will perfectly resolve the problems we are facing. It is

only through integrating and constituting the conception one another with practical reflection in order to reconstitute the complexity of child, school, and society and not allow them to become oversimplified.

Means of Incorporation: Transformative and Aesthetic Inquiry

Incorporating child-centeredness and postmodernism should be transformative and aesthetic, as they denote the plural nature of postmodernism and the nuanced relationships between teachers and children in child-centered classrooms. Transformative and aesthetic techniques can be utilized as a means to comprehend and realize child-centeredness and postmodernism, as they both bring hidden issues into the open, enhancing quality of life from unconsciousness to consciousness, linear to holistic, literal to life-related, and through encompassing a variety of ways of meaning-making. It is worthy of mentioning that aesthetic inquiry is not limited only artifacts. Postmodernists such as Menen (1988), Greene (1978), and Eisner (2002), have adopted the phenomenal aspects of aesthetic techniques to presenting and representing the interactive and ever-changing understanding, "undergoing the changes imposed on us by our life from day to day" (Picasso, 1971, p. 268). In this way, aesthetic inquiry is in line with postmodernism which attempts to approach the unknown realities by being able to think across time and spaces.

Transformational and aesthetic inquires strength ways of thinking broadly and deeply. It should be used to liberate and elicit our awareness of

consciousness and unconsciousness by inspiring educators to reflect upon the nuanced and complex texts, conversations, and agendas embedded in education and the classroom reality in order to engender better understandings with signifying its practices (Graue, 2005). The format can be diversified, as it is always transformative and aesthetic. This paper provides an example of how the act of transforming theories and practices can be made. The process can be perceived as a fluid and interactive aesthetic inquiry and reflection, as it can always be continued by further shifting its meaning under diverse spaces and timing.

One of the well-developed classroom practical examples is that of Payley (1993, 1999), as earlier mentioned. What Payley has done for her classroom can

be perceived as a transformative, aesthetic experience. She enhanced children's self-awareness and environmental awareness to explore behaviors (such as rejecting others) through acting and dramatic play, in order to reflect upon self and understand others and the environment, using various ways to explore possibilities and image the future -- deep awareness, resistance, negotiating, and transforming.

In sum, the practical meaning of child-centeredness and postmodernism should be incorporated using the transformative and aesthetic process of inquiry and reflection in the real classroom context, which is experienced through individual inner thought as well as classroom interaction. This process can rely on the notion that teachers

are researchers, as well as the idea that teachers and children are inquirers.

Enacting Theories into Practices: Addressing The Arising Questions

However, what do transformative and aesthetic inquiry and reflection mean to teachers?

Furthermore, in what ways does transformative and aesthetic inquiry incorporate child-centeredness and the notions of postmodernism?

How does transformative and aesthetic inquiry elaborate the meanings of the combination of child-centeredness and postmodernism in more practical ways?

These three questions will be answered through reflecting upon three teaching practices. The discourses will be retheorized through elaborating and connecting theory-to-theory, and practice-to-theory as the conclusion.

Practical Notions of Incorporating Child-Centeredness and Postmodernism

How The Practical Notions Are Made

Through adopting the postmodern thinking tools of transformative and aesthetic inquiry, the practical examples below attempt to create the new spaces to infuse practical meanings of child-centeredness with the postmodern agenda of building a more just society.

The examples below are derived from my observation of a kindergarten teacher's real teaching practice and our conversations, in conjunction with my ongoing reflections as a teacher-educator and researcher. Throughout this

process and experience, we grappled with the practical issues of child-centeredness and postmodernism across diverse settings and contexts of teaching. Thinking back and forth, we continued to speculate about the practical meanings of child-centeredness and postmodernism.

Betty is a pseudonym to refer to the kindergarten teacher in the study. Betty has twenty-one years of teaching experience, and has received several awards for teaching. Her teaching experience includes eight years of teaching kindergarten, twelve years in preschool, and one year as a first grade teacher. She has been highly recognized as a child-centred, progressive, and highly critical teacher who continues her ongoing professional growth in collaboration with university

faculty in the mid-west of the United States. All examples shared below are from a larger study, which received ethical clearance, including the permission of the parents for me to observe their interactions with the teachers.

Rather than clustering and categorizing Betty's teaching behaviors, underpinned by the standardized definitions of child-centeredness and postmodernism, we have engaged in transformative and aesthetic personal reflection to reflect deeply upon her teaching practices. I argue that child-centeredness and postmodernity can co-exist, depending upon the processes we engage in to transform theories into practices, and conversely to transform practices into theories. Moreover, aesthetic inquiry is essential for transforming acts

of one to another, because of the continual interactive process of meaning-making, and reshaping our perspectives. As Eisner (2002) suggested, the aesthetic inquiry can "give us a fuller, more complex understanding of what makes schools and classrooms tick" (p. 8). Slattery (2006, p. 254) also indicated aesthetic inquiry is "in the process of becoming and re-creating in each new situation."

The Practical Notions: Creating Spaces for Incorporating Child-Centeredness and Postmodernism

Space 1: The importance of equally valuing "being" and "becoming" and following children's leads; as well as facilitating children's continual reflection regarding the prospect of becoming.

Example: Three boys, Tom, Mike, and John, were good friends who always played blocks in free choice time almost every day since the beginning of the semester. Even though Betty always allowed them to choose blocks during choice time, she consistently asked them to play with the blocks responsibly, meaning they were to have a clear plan before working and to challenge themselves when working. However, these boys often threw the blocks around and did not work constructively.

Betty saw these three boys throwing blocks many times and always asked them to stop doing this. She tried to assist those boys by either encouraging them to include drawing attach on the structured building or inviting the boys to have a meeting with to come up some plans for the block building, with her facilitating.

She encouraged the boys to investigate the possibilities by sharing their ideas and plans.

Yet, these boys continued to throw the blocks after Betty left the block area and was not with them. One day, as usual, they played by throwing blocks everywhere, and Betty asked them leave the block area, making a new choice for them.

Betty: "Okay. Stop. Your right to make your own free choice has been lost because you didn't work well to take responsibility of your choice. Therefore, I will make a choice for you."

Betty took the three boys' hands and led them to the table to play puzzles. After the boys finished the puzzles, they asked Betty if they could go to play Legos.

Betty said, "Okay, if you can show me how you enjoy playing Legos with expressing ideas. I know the puzzles are not your favorite, but I just want you guys to learn that you should be responsible in your actions. Once you don't work well on your choice, you lose the right to make a choice freely. I hope I don't need to make a choice for you guys next time. I really want to see how you are happy as you play blocks and express what you are planning and thinking about rather than just kept throwing blocks around every day for the past few months."

Betty explained that this kind of interplay between these three boys' "wants" and the teacher's visions of making a good plan and could carry on for months and happened repeatedly. She told me that she

would like to follow children's leads, as well as enable them to make better plans and be more responsible. She had gotten tired of nudging them and thought that maybe these boys would benefit from the greater degree of direct instruction that they would receive in first grade.

Incorporating and transforming child-centeredness and postmodernism:

Child-centeredness and postmodernity should come with the coexistence of children's current developmental status with the vision for the future, that the tenets of postmodernity refer to (Sumsion, 2005). As teachers try to create the spaces to incorporate child-centeredness and post-modernity, following children's leads, as well as inviting children's continual

reflection is more important than solely following the leads without thinking. Betty called for the meeting to allow the children to express their ideas, and emphasized the continual reflection between herself and the children as a way to transform their current experiences by envisioning the future agenda.

Space 2: The equal importance of valuing "self" and respecting "others"as the interactive aesthetic transformation between self and others.

Sally is a girl who cries easily if she can't get what she wants. One day during free play time, Sally could not get into the house area to play because there were already four girls there, the maximum number of children allowed to play in that area due to space constraints. Children had been familiar with

this rule since the beginning of the semester. Sally was very upset that she could not play house and started to cry, as she had reacted through crying over many times during the course of the semester. At that time, Betty was in block area helping other children. Betty did not immediately come to help Sally as she had many times before, and instead let her cry for a while. Betty told me that she did not go to help Sally right away because she felt that Sally cried to get what she wanted, without thinking about a way to resolve the problem. Even though Betty thought that Sally's behavior was characteristic of normative behavior for a preschooler, she believed it was imperative that Sally learn to resolve the problem by means other than crying. For this reason, Betty did not go to help Sally right away, and instead went to the girl only after she had cried for a while.

Betty: What's wrong?
Sally: I cannot play in the house area so I am sad and crying. I know it is not good to cry, but I just want to cry. (Then she continued to cry).
Betty: It's okay for you cry if you feel sad. However, maybe you can think about whether there is any other way to resolve the problem before crying. If you can find other ways to resolve the problem, then it is better not to cry because other people may feel sad about your crying.
Sally: (Nod).
Betty: Okay, so try to think about other resolutions next time before you cry.

After that, Betty explained

that if she had helped Sally right away when she cried, the girl would think that crying could resolve all her problems, which is not a constructive attitude for Sally to have.

Incorporating and transforming child-centeredness and postmodernism:

Both child-centeredness and postmodernity are centered on the notion of self-formation, in order to understand self, promote better development, through interacting with others, and continual searching for self. Betty promoted Sally's development by transforming herself through exploring various ways she adopted and can adopt to resolve the problems, as well as transforming herself through empathizing others' feelings. Such transformation of self and others, and empathizing with others are both essential to children's development (as child-centeredness requests) and postmodernity's advocacy of thinking power critically. *Space 3*: Shifting leaders in the classroom regardless of children's diverse abilities, in order to ensure that each child is a continual transformer, and an interactive aesthetic.

Maria was an intelligent girl whose cognitive development was more advanced than that of the other children. She was also a self-disciplined child who always challenged herself to learn and who worked in very goal-oriented ways. She was also a kind child, who treated other children in a friendly manner and liked helping others. Therefore, Betty thought that Maria was natural leader; however, Betty was still concerned about her. She

noticed that Maria had no patience for listening to other children's words and just wanted to show off her own skills sometimes. Betty thought that Maria should not only be a good leader, but that she should also listen to and appreciate others' ideas in order to perform as a good citizen in a democratic society. Therefore, Betty sometimes specifically asked Maria to listen to others' words to help her overcome her weakness.

For example, through Betty's helping Maria to be able to be led, rather than just to lead, Maria worked in a small group on a group project about the habitat of the ocean. The students made a beautiful model of the ocean using a box and paper. After finishing, the children in this group happily showed their work to Betty. Maria then asked if they could share this work with other children at group meeting time. Betty's reply was directed to the other children as well as Maria: "Of course, Maria, you can. But I would like to allow every member of your group to present and tell the class how you guys did this, not just Maria." At group time, Betty invited this group of children to the front of the room to share their works with others. Maria tried to present first, but she was asked to stop by Betty, who said, "Maria, you can talk later, how about letting Ellen and other people in your group talk first?" After the others presented their ideas, Betty said, "Maria, do you have more points to add and share?" and then Maria said, "We did work very hard in this project." Betty reflected to me that she wanted Maria to learn to have patience to listen to others and become

capable of being led, because she was already good at leading others.

Incorporating and transforming child-centeredness and postmodernism:

The common notion shared by child-centeredness and postmodernity is challenging the myths of authority shared and enacted among children and adults. Similarly, the common challenge of child-centeredness and postmodernity is how to deal with power in the classroom, so that every voice is equally heard and respected. Betty has dealt with the notions of power by shifting the roles of being a leader through challenging ego-centricism and coming with patience and appreciation to others. Betty's approach with the whole class is to provide balance by honoring each child's ability through shifting the leadership among each of them and allowing each voice to be heard. Her continual shifts of authority within the classroom community also explain how she is dealing with the intricate interaction between the children's current preference and preparation for the future. The shifted authority and visions of the future denotes attempts to create the productive power as Foucault (1980) addressed. According to Foucault (1980), the productive power, which is changeable and fluid, makes the possible future self interactive within the community, rather than a fixed power over something.

Retheorization: Creating Spaces for Incorporating Child-Centeredness and Postmodernity

Making Continual Transformation between Being and Becoming as An Aesthetic Experience

The tension between respecting children's current and continual development (being) and providing the challenges to prospecting the future (becoming) has been elaborated at the expense of evolving paradigms through child-centeredness and postmodernity. Child-centeredness grapples with how to center and project children's ongoing and future development with children's current needs, as well as preparing children for future developmental concerns. Postmodernity takes on further conceptual thinking, and argues ways to approach our understanding of the reality of children and learning, and remarks on the ongoing process of deconstructing and reconstructing. "Self-formation" (Sumsion, 2005) is thereby resurfaced with deconstructive and reconstructive meaning as the dynamic reflective perspective to the current and the future by postmodernism. Even though both paradigms denote the significance of the individual child's being placed in the center of educational experience and acting as the agent to make individual decisions, how to make the individual agenda run in a longer term is still disputable. The reason is that they both can't deny that the existences of social forces and their influence on individuals through make the individual self contextualized by the experiences and interaction with others.

The patterns of shifting

agendas between present and future, being and becoming, and through plan and reflection have been highlighted above. The critical question to actual teaching practices may not be only dominated by power and freedom of wants as static, rather, self-formation as an ultimate goal proceeds with fluidity of its definition with allowing obscurities as it may be temporary. The examples above have shed light on how to make current being transform into becoming, manifested by the individual's reflection and the primacy of self-formation, as well as through the teacher's facilitation, and the children's interacting with others through classroom activities and events. Furthermore, the transformation of being and becoming can be perceived as an aesthetic experience, and is eternally justified through experiences by postmodernity, as Slattery (2006) indicated:

"Although characterized in many unique, ironic, and even contradictory ways, the aesthetic dimensions of learning in postmodern curriculum emphasize the primacy of experience, the merging of form and content, the recursion and convergence of time, the celebration of the self-conscious individual, and the understanding of the phenomenological experience. This perspective on curriculum offers the individual a process for growing and becoming. It also offers schools an opportunity for critical reflection that is open to what has not yet been but what is also absolutely possible."

(p.258)

Subjective and Objective Aesthetic Interaction between Self and Others through Communicative Competence

Curriculum is complex, as aesthetic experience can represent the common paradigms of child-centeredness and postmodernity -- curriculum as negotiation of self and others (to center each one's needs with considering and respecting others), subjective and objective (perspective and its fluidity and constructivity), rational and sentimental, individual and collective, unique and conforming. Such plurality embedded in curriculum requires "communicative competence" and "social ecological sensitivity" as Bower (1990) remarked. The above practical examples of Spaces 2 and 3 have attempted to create a cooperative self-consciousness of the self and others between the teacher and children.

Such conversation is aesthetic, as the shifting perspectives between the self and others, and ultimately curriculum is aesthetic existence and will be justified and theorized by joint efforts between a teacher and children through conversation and reflection. The postmodern magnificence of the inter-subjective interactions and reflections to extend the possibilities and ways of meaning-making has been demonstrated by the pedagogues, children, and community in Reggio Emilia, Italy (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1998). This paper tries to transform the idea of "aesthetic" into the

communicative capacity teachers and children can make and use to constitute meanings.

The real classroom conversation that Betty had with her children was provided as a real–life illustration to reflect upon for both contemporary conceptual discourses and practical reflection. The aesthetic dimensions of curriculum redefines the vision of "child-centeredness" and "postmodernity," in both ecologically-sustainable and socially-related ways as Bower (2001) remarked, through elaborating it into the visions of "self-others," in addition to "being-becoming." Regnier (1992) also addressed the importance of connection as it examines envision and amplifies the power and freedom of self-determination to its re-envisioning through

connection. The practical examples provided elaborate that an early childhood classroom is filled with socially aesthetic experiences to emancipate from constraints, and work with enacting "social freedom," rather than individual freedom, by envisioning children as socially-related artists, rather than making them outcast artists.

Conclusion: Creating A Transformative, Aesthetic Classroom Community through Connection, Negotiation, and Imagination

Curriculum as the epitomized society represents its fluidity, ambiguity, and uncertainty as the changing contexts of the society across time. Child-centeredness has called for empowering

individuals to represent the realities of society and its demands of giving equal attention and respect to each individual. Postmodernity has brought more concerns for the possibly under-represented group and called for awareness of the continual existence of oppression, inequality, and power. Nothing is eternal and no one theory or paradigm can be strong enough to explain the changing world. As curriculum and the society keep changing context and the agent constructs and reconstructs him/herself, through connection, negotiation, and imagination, transformation and aesthetics, the only answer we can expect is to expand our spaces to create more possibilities.

Relate back to Betty here or in the three sections below:

Connection

As the complexity of certainty, power, and identities pose postmodern questions (Sumsion, 2005), it can be conceived of as an outrageous or aesthetic experience for teachers. Zeichener (1993) has indicated that the way to get out of the outrageous is through connection, both to what has developed and what has been established throughout the challenging process. Iorio (2006) envisioned that connection can be aesthetic "within" the perspectives that teachers should reflect upon within children's thinking and the artifacts they make. The connection among perspectives is a community space between the individual and others, and is a timeline envisioned between understanding the present and imaging the future. Most importantly, the aesthetic is the contextual and shifting perspectives between the

"subjective and objective view" and "being and becoming," similar to the elements of an artist's journey.

Negotiation: Presentation and Representation

Transformation is an experience in which experiencing, exploring, representing, reflecting discourses openly and flexibly. It is by negotiating between self construction, as a way of liberating, challenging, or following collective formative disciplines. It aims with individual and societal elevation through negotiating possibilities through putting forth to make potential transformative change explicitly or implicitly, individually or collectively. Even though transformation is associated with issues of "power, resistance, surveillance" (Sumsion, 2005, p.

205), the provision is to prompt self-formation through negotiating the autonomy and agency that elicits our potential and possibilities with envisioning the future.

Imagination

Driving forward, post-modern adoption of Foucault's (1980) notion of reflection and discourses among individuals should be placed in the classroom context as a shared understating between teachers and children. Teachers should feel confident and passionate again through reflective inquiry as an aesthetic and transformative experience, as post-modernists advocate (Slattery, 2006). We posit that interconnecting post-modernity with the idea of child-centeredness is possible by advocating that children be invited to this reflective journey through the classroom context

in any arena or any scenario through personal reflection. As evolved notions of postmodernism, child-centeredness is centered on children's needs and interests, so children's individual and collective reflection should be negotiated and connected to one another. Incorporating child-centeredness and postmodernity can be emphasized as classroom reflective practices filled with individual reflections and collective interactive meaning-making, further infused with imagination. Following with Gordon's & Obrien's (2006) beliefs in teachers' making "hopes" to their practices, we believe that similar attitudes to classroom conversation among teachers and children, in addition to using imagination after reflection, will bring the personal elevation of making a change with keeping hopes (of self, of the community they construct) alive.

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Connecting Genuine Teacher Development to the Struggle for Social Justice. *Journal of Education for Teaching, 17*(1), 5-20.

Creating New Spaces to Incorporate Child-Centeredness and Postmodernism in Classroom Practices

Tzuo, Pei-Wen

Assistant Professor, Early Childhood and Special Needs Education, National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Li, Jen-Yi

Assistant Professor, Early Childhood and Special Needs Education, National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Abstract

This paper attempts to interconnect the notions of child-centeredness and postmodernism though transforming the complex and diverse notions pertaining to these two paradigms evolving in Early Childhood Education across time. Drawing upon child-centeredness' tenets of attaining to each child's needs and interests, and the postmodern provocation of extending possibilities to advance social movement (Bower, 2001; Slattery, 2006), a new space will be made in order to intertwine both notions in a practically sustainable way. Two dimensions of postmodernism – transformative and aesthetic inquiry– are adopted as a terminology to interweave and transform child-centeredness and postmodernity one another. Here "transformative" and "aesthetic" are utilized in broad ways as an ongoing process of constructing and redefining individual, environment, and society (Eisner, 2002; Grieshaber & Ryan, 2005). The new incorporated spaces are created through socially aesthetic pedagogical experiences, embracing with reflective process, shifting between "being and becoming," and exploring "self and others" in classroom

conversations.

It further addresses that constructing connection, negotiation, and imagination are key to enacting both child-centeredness and postmodernity in classroom practices.