

## **Differentiating Language Arts in Belize**

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**Purpose:** There is limited amount of research that constitutes non-traditional curricula implemented within an institutionalized context of developing countries. An attempt is made in this project to gain a clearer understanding of a non-traditional early learning program within an orphanage campus setting of Ladyville, Belize, Central America. This program is supported through the Belizean Ministry of Education and the University of Belize. In 1996, a comprehensive literacy survey was conducted in Belize that indicated the functional literacy rate to be approximately 40 percent (Cornerstone, 2007). In addition, it is estimated within developing countries one person in four is illiterate (Terry, 2006). Liberty Learning Centre (LLC) of Ladyville, Belize implemented non-traditional theoretical curricula reflecting the social-constructivist theory to early learning. The methodologies include: Pikler, Montessori and components of the Reggio Emilia philosophy. The staff of LLC discovered creative, innovative and strategic ways to differentiate traditional academic learning through a diverse non-traditional learning environment.

**Procedures:** Responses from the administration, caregivers, teachers, staff and students were interpreted and documented through various means of audio/DVD/video recordings, photography, interviews and journals. In addition I used detailed anecdotal field notes that became pieces to the methodology for the project.

**Findings:** Responses, thoughts, ideas and viewpoints were given by the administration, teachers, students and staff regarding the implementation of non-traditional curricula within an institutionalized and non-traditional learning environment of a developing country.

**Implication:** An institutionalized and international socio-cultural perspective will extend early childhood education further through a qualitative ethnographic study in Belize. This project gives voice to the silent and voiceless.

### **Introduction**

The current reform of early childhood education curricula continues to emerge throughout Australia, Europe, North America, and many other countries around the world. At present, this is considered the focus of much challenge and debate today regarding the plight of international early learning (Abbott & Nutbrown, 2001). Today, a period of post-modern thought gives way for opportunities to carefully re-examine many beliefs toward a conceptualized framework that regards early learning curricula. Of course, any self-renewing” profession that allows educationalists the awareness is essential upon the exploration of diverse curricula on a regular basis (Wardle, 2005).

Traditionally, early childhood education evolved through the application of European-based, behaviourist models that were typically enforced by the scholarly elite to be absorbed by the pupils. Several behaviourist theorists include: Locke, Thorndike, Engelmann, Freud and Skinner to have been among traditional models based upon, “associationistic-learning, information-processing, and environmental-contingency theories of development” (DeVries & Kohlberg, 1990, p. 5).

Some critique how implementing European and western-based traditional curricula are part of the colonisation and oppression of those in the developing world (Freire, 1970; Smith, 1999). Namely, the writings of Freire (1970), in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, calls into question an education that has been limited to narrating materials on the part of the teacher that maybe irrelevant to the students (Ngo-Vuong, 2009). At the very least, traditional ways (curriculum models) did not seem to take into account the prior knowledge, concerns, and aspirations of the peoples and culture—it was culturally indifferent (Smith, 1999).

Furthermore, social-constructivist theorists such as: Pestalozzi, Montessori, Dewey, Piaget, and Vygotsky (DeVries & Kohlberg, 1990), emphasized a child-centered learning model that was thought to offset Euro-centric, hegemonic criticisms posed by Freire (1970), Smith (1999), Mutua (2004), and Suadener (2004). Moreover, the wide acceptance of social-constructivist theoretical frameworks and progressive methodologies may have been explored and partially motivated from frustrated educators seeking alternative approaches to that of behaviourist, traditional educational practices (Jones & Brader-Araje, 2002). Schweinhart (1997) indicates that a traditional, teacher-directed approach is likely to *discourage* social and emotional development, intellectual dispositions, and creativity of young children.

### **Historical Child-centred Pedagogy**

Educational viewpoints began more than a century ago, and its roots are much older. Historical research of social development was often taught by Aristotle and Plato who shared the concept of the importance of early education. Plato taught that socialization and the environment are critical factors within child development and the developmental process is continuous. The Greeks and Romans valued the importance of the development of the body and mind and saw the greatness of “play”. Adults within that time period were encouraged to observe a child’s play as a way of learning about children (Martin & Fabes, 2006).

Historical theorist thoughts of child development and early learning were as Rogoff and colleagues (1993) agree, “Goals of development vary according to local practices and values” (p. 151). It is essential to keep in mind that value systems typically come from past theories carried out through practical applications. These experiences in reaching developmental milestones seem

to be related to the values and expectations expressed by a child's social and cultural community.

Consequently, developmental experts in the past were primarily focused on topics that grew out of the welfare for the basic need concerns of young children (Schwebel, Plumert, & Pick, 2000). Martin (et al., 2006) understands that a child's developmental changes are influenced from a variety of mechanisms. Current studies have become more focused on factors that relate to a child's *process* of learning (Martin et. al., 2006). These factors include; transferable skills of communication, collaboration and investigation which may strengthen all aspects of learning individually (Abbott, et. al., 2001).

### *Locating Myself within the Study*

While attending several international academic conferences, I visited a variety of schools around the world. The one that stood out the most for me was located in a small village of Ladyville, Belize, Central America; *Liberty Children's Home (LCH)*. My inquisitiveness about this particular site was because of the style and nature of a rural "orphanage school" within an orphanage campus setting.

As an outsider to Belize, I had been invited by the director of (LCH), to conduct an ethnographic project study at Liberty Learning Centre (LLC), orphanage school. This invitation was a result of my extensive early childhood teaching experiences and interests of working with non-traditional progressive learning approaches; reflecting upon social-constructivist theories both institutionally and internationally.

My academic background of an early childhood educationalist, I was interested in a child-centered pedagogy that allowed me to situate myself in both, "text" and "context" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 3). I was not only interested in the socio-cultural perspectives of a non-traditional learning environment within an institutionalised context. Rather, this study was attractive from a narrative type of genre; a mode of inquiry that I believed provoked the social sciences text which needed a different type of relationship between the researcher, subjects and the author and her readers (Ellis & Bochner, 1999). I began to reflect upon my own personal background of being a, "child of an orphan". I was essentially connected to the project, as I

positioned myself within the study (Ellis & Bochner, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Studies of the social sciences are typically based upon ideas, beliefs, and theories pertaining to the social world (Smith, 1999). This study was critically reflective within an ethical and moral criterion; as ethics, power, truth, and equity were put into the discourse of an educational thought process about practical action (Popkewitz, 1987; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). In the social issues, it often resulted within the wider framework of decolonisation, self-determination and social justice (Smith, 1999). Also, my thoughts of this study were as Ellis and Bochner's (1999) philosophy implies,

A more personal, collaborative, and interactive relationship, one that is centered on the question of how human experience is endowed with meaning and on the moral and ethical choices we face as human beings who live in an uncertain and changing world. (p. 743, 744)

My intentions essentially were to engage within a project that would help me gain a much clearer perspective of the Belizean ways, while at the same time respectful to the culture. Thus, I wanted to focus on a culture where I could use my own experiences to “bend back”, on self (Ellis et. al., 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). A study of this nature is referred to as a reflexive ethnography—a type of “turning back” on self for research paradigms, and for a moral responsibility relative to interpretation and representation (Ellis, et. al., 1999; Madison, 2005).

In addition, I was also very intrigued by the number of diverse ethnic groups that were represented at the school. Primarily, the Belizean culture being unique interested me as a whole. I wondered how a culture of vast diversity in this context, implementing non-traditional European curricula within an orphanage school was effective. Thus, I had learned from my own past, to establish relationships of mutual respect and to gain a better understanding with children and families from culturally diverse backgrounds (Losardo & Notari-Syverson, 2003). I wanted to be a diverse inquirer; moreover I began seeking a better conceptualization of the ways that knowledge could be learned within the social sciences context of institutionalization. Abbott (et. al., 2001) acknowledges that the most important conceptualization in early education is the *manner* in which young children learn.

While at (LCH), I visited the school and campus buildings creating friendships and establishing relationships. I often thought of my own identity and the way I understood order and

social behavior (Madison, 2005). I began to ask myself, “What has given me the right to invade the country of Belize, and take out their knowledge? Smith (1999) suggests when investigating cross-cultural or cross-national work in neocolonial settings may present many ethical and methodological dilemmas, particularly when there is a conscious attempt to decolonize the research (Gandhi, 1998; Smith, 1999). This type of study provided for me was an opportunity to interact within a process of decolonizing my own thoughts and ideas toward research methodologies, as described by Linda Tuhiawi Smith (1999). However, I was aware of Smith’s (1999) stern warning:

It angers us when practices linked to the last century, and the centuries before that, are still employed to deny the validity of indigenous peoples claim to existence...to the survival of our languages and forms of cultural knowledge. (p. 1)

Once again, I began to reflect upon my own personal background of being a, “child of an orphan”. I wondered about my own roots and the type of disconnect or uncertainty that seem to haunt my past. Like so many of the children that had been orphaned, I too, carried a query of unanswered questions, “Where did my family originate from?”, “When will I know?” “Will I ever meet my biological grandparents?” I wanted nothing more than to try to understand and to empathize and sympathize with those of similar backgrounds. Paulo Freire (2002) suggests, “. . . it serves to introduce the pedagogy of the oppressed, in the elaboration of which the oppressed must participate” (p. 124). Thus, I became an active participant as the adults and children began to drive the project.

One day, during one of my conversations, I listened as two of the school-age children shared with me experiences about their parents, “I just want to go fishing with my father like we used to”, as he continued to share with me about his past fishing incidences with his father. Another child shared with me how it was so sad for her not to see her mother, “I wish I could see my mother again”, as she showed me a necklace around her neck that her mother had given her before she left her home (Liberty children, personal communication, February 21, 2007).

As I continued to converse with the children, their responses were consistently affectionate, respectful and responsive. The children helped me feel connected with those that had been orphaned. I wondered if this was due to the way the children viewed their own past, as I continued to reflect back and positioned myself within the culture (Ellis et. al., 1999; Denzin &

Lincoln, 2000).

### **Liberty Learning Centre, Theoretical Approaches**

Privately owned Liberty Foundation, charity of London, England, founded Liberty children's Home, an orphanage that also houses a school. The orphanage was established in 2004 for the care of abandoned, abused and neglected children. Liberty continues to make every attempt to place children within Belizean families as adoptive or long-term foster care parents. The children's home also maintains supportive communication with families after a child departs from the orphanage (J. Rahn, personal communication, February 20, 2006).

The administration and teachers of (LLC), orphanage school had infused several non-traditional theoretical early learning philosophies into the school curricula. I quickly became interested with the implementation of non-traditional philosophies from a traditional, post-colonial developing country and institutionalised context. Specifically, Belize a country that lends itself to a behaviourist model educational system of teaching and learning. Furthermore, I wanted to gain a better understanding from the viewpoints of the Belizean culture.

For the purpose of this project, I use the terms traditional and non-traditional to refer to what is generally considered European and Western ideas for an educational theoretical framework of early learning. Essentially, *Traditional learning* describes "teacher-directed" or a behaviourist model of the teaching and learning process. On the other hand, *non-traditional learning* refers to a "child-centred" pedagogy or a social-constructivist model of the teaching and learning process.

As an early childhood specialist, I became more aware of the cultural influences upon child development, I took all three of the theoretical frameworks into consideration. To me, these philosophies were diverse *ways* to approach learning from a non-traditional, social-constructivist perspective. This project was a theoretical challenge because of the perspectives of knowledge gained from the curricula. The theoretical philosophies of Pikler, Montessori, and Reggio Emilia, were like that of a catalyst; a piece to the methodology through the responses of the students and teachers that drove the research through an ethnographic project design. I again wondered how

these philosophies working together might influence the developmental processes.

The orphanage school, (LLC) had implemented Dr. Emmi Pikler's philosophy of childcare within the infant and toddler programme. Pikler's approach was founded in 1976 and had influenced the field of early childhood education in Eastern Europe and is still being practiced at her institute in Budapest, Hungary (Gonzalez-Mena, 2004). Pikler's research was based on an approach developed to prevent the damaging effects of institutionalization upon young children (Liberty Foundation, 2004; Gonzalez-Mena, 2004). Maria Montessori's principles for the preschool and school-age levels were implemented, as the components of the Reggio Emilia philosophy were being explored in various areas of the programme to augment the Montessori approach.

### **Differentiated Language Arts and Student Responses**

During my third visit to Liberty in June, 2009, I once again enjoyed listening to six of the school-age children tell me more about their life at Liberty; as they had learned so effectively through their previous Montessorian experiences. As a social-constructivist framework of learning, the Montessori methodology is a way that assists learning through an interpretation and understanding of developmental changes through a diverse context of culture and setting (NAMH, 2005). According to Lincoln and Guba (2000), "Constructivism adopts relativist ontology and a hermeneutic, dialectical methodology" (p. 185). Those that are users (LLC) of the paradigm are oriented to the production of reconstructing an understanding of the social world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Lev Vygotsky, social-constructivist emphasised culture and society as embedded in the context of the socio-cultural settings (Jones & Brader-Araje, 2002). Thus, "Constructivism connects action to praxis and then builds upon anti-foundational arguments while encouraging experimental multi-voiced texts" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 185).

Diverse conversations from six Liberty school-age children resulted in sharing their current life stories. Freire (2002) explains, "The inquiries and open-ended questions, as well as listening to the stories provided ways for me to encourage the culture to be, "masters of their thinking" (Freire, p. 124). The children's stories are ways that transform writing within a diverse setting. Within this project, some of the stories written and shared in this paper from the children

were actually penned by the children.

### **“Liberty Swimming Trip to Bacab”**

Brittany, Rupert and Tyrell begin by sharing their experiences at ‘Bacab’ swimming pool:

**Brittany (Age 8):** “Liberty trip Bacab for the Easter holiday and we had fun! We went to Bacab for a trip and we were swimming at Bacab. We had fun, we went on a bus to Bacab, all of the children went too and twenty five children went with us. We dived under the water then we went at the deep part.”

**Rupert: (Age 9):** “Because when we went to swim and I went down the slide it felt very good. I was playing in the water a pool and a fun place. I won’t say it was horrible because they let us in free!”

**Tyrell (Age 8):** “It was fun because we play in the water!” (LCH, personal communication, April 28, 2009).

### **“Liberty’s Farm”**

Zarrina shares her experiences about going to Liberty’s farm:

**Zarrina (Age 11):** “This week, we went to the farm for a camping trip. We had two big tents one for the boys and one for the girls and the little girls and Miss Sandra had her own one on our first night. We set our beds and set the bags under our beds we also eat hot dogs and drink juice and on the other day we eat ponder bun and we drink milk.” “Then Mr. Tillett lit the fire and burned the weeds in the fire” (LCH, personal communication, April 28, 2009).

### **“Rupert feeds the chickens and horses”**

Rupert shares his experiences with the chickens on Liberty’s campus:

**Miss Pamela:** “Rupert, tell me something that you like to do here at Liberty?”

**Rupert (Age 9):** “We went to feed the chickens.”

**Miss Pamela:** “Tell me more about feeding the chickens?”

**Rupert (Age 9):** “We went to the feed the horses. A man rooster wanted to pick at me (Rupert began poking at my knee to demonstrate how the chickens were pecking at him) Ryan, the horse wanted to stomp on my face!”

**Miss Pamela:** “Oh my, what did you do?”

**Rupert (Age 9):** The horse lift up one foot and wanted to stomp me and I ran to Mr. Angel.”

**Miss Pamela:** “What did Mr. Angel do?”

**Rupert (Age 11):** “Chased the horse and put me in the chicken coop!”

**Miss Pamela:** “Wow . . . were you scared? How did that make you feel?”

**Rupert (Age 11):** “Yes, bad!”

**Miss Pamela:** “Why did you feel bad?”

**Rupert (Age 11):** Because I was so scared, I thought that he would stomp me!”

**Miss Pamela:** “Will you ride or help the horse again?”



**Rupert (Age 11):** “I was going to help?”

**Miss Pamela:** “Is there anything else that you want to tell me?”

**Rupert (Age 11):** “No!” (As Rupert shakes his head)

### “Oz the Clown”

Zarrina shares about a visit to the Princess Hotel in Belize City:.

**Zarrina (Age 11):** “One hot sunny day we went to the Princess, and when we went to the Princess everyone went to the rest room. After the rest room we went up stairs at the top of the building in the dining room, and they gave everyone a shirt so they can wear it. When we were done putting on the shirts they called us to eat our food. We ate rice, beans with chicken and potato salad with soft drink. A little while we saw Oz, the clown he was very funny and he made me want to pea myself. He gave everyone a balloon on their head. After that we went in the next room downstairs to watch TV. We watch Hannah Montana and it was a good movie. We had fun at the Princess and everybody enjoyed themselves. We had so many things to do and we wish that we can go to the Princes again. We will go again to swim in the big pool and have more fun!” (LCH, personal communication, June 5, 2009).

### “My Birthday Party”

Brittany shares her birthday party experiences at Liberty:

**Brittany (Age 8):** “Nelson, Brittany and Atia had a Birthday party. Mr. Hugo gave me shades and we ate cake and bakery bread. Mrs. Delfina gave me a C-D. It was a story about a little boy playing in the snow and it was very fun! Nelson got a fish sweet and Atia got a yo-yo and everybody sang happy Birthday for us.” “Nelson was five and I was eight and Atia was ten” (LCH, personal communication, April 28, 2009).

### “Liberty’s Zoo Trip”

Zarrina shares her experiences of visiting the zoo:

**Zarrina (Age 11):** “On Wednesday we went to the Zoo to see the animals. All the animals were so beautiful. We came back from the zoo. I told Miss Sandra the we saw the animals at the zoo, then I told Miss Sandra I saw the Jaguar and the Jaguar had orange and black circles. Then on Tuesday Morning we eat Ponder buns and Fried eggs with Milk and then we went to swim. “Then after swimming we went to play then after playing we went to pack our things. Then in the night we came back to Liberty. We won a game and the game was running race. I won the sack race I got a price lime and spoon, wheel borrow and we played catch the pig. It was slippery and I could not catch the pig. The trip was so fun and I was so happy that I went to the trip. Mr. Tillitt catch the crocodile” (LCH, personal communication, April 28, 2009).

### “Delroy’s Fishing Experience”

Delroy shares a past fishing experience with his father:

**Delroy (Age 11):** “One day my dad told us that we were going to Caye Caulker to go fishing. So we went to Caye Caulker we started to fish. My dad said, “I have a . . . got something on my line”. We saw it was a crocodile and he started to move the boat. I was very scared at that line. My dad finally got a grip on it and we help put him in. My dad took the mallet and knocked him out and we went back home and gave it to our Uncle John he ate it all. “We are good fisherman,” said my mom. We told her that the sea was very blue and deep. We had a lot of fun and my mom cook dinner we went to bed and the next morning we woke up and we went back and we slept at Caye Caulker. (The crocodile that Delroy and his father caught was 15-feet long) (LCH, personal communication, June 5, 2009).

### “I Love Ballet”

Zarrina enjoys ballet and is excited to share about her experiences in dance:

**Miss Pamela:** “Zarrina, tell me why you like ballet?”

**Zarrina (Age 11):** “I like ballet because it is very fun!”

**Miss Pamela:** “Tell me what you do at ballet class?”

**Zarrina (Age 11):** “When I go to ballet, I exercise before I dance. Then, after when ballet is over my ballet teacher always tells me that I . . . umm . . . doing great in ballet.”

**Miss Pamela:** “Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about your experiences in ballet?”

**Zarrina (Age 11):** “Miss Ciste’ always tells me, “The more you practice, the best you will get!”

**Miss Pamela:** “Zarrina, how much should you practice?”

**Zarrina (Age 11):** I should practice every day and when I practice every day, I get more better than first!”

**Miss Pamela:** “How many years have you been dancing?”

**Zarrina (Age 11):** “I have been dancing three years.”

**Miss Pamela:** “Do you want to be a ballet teacher like your dance teacher?”

**Zarrina (Age 11):** “Maybe, I will want to be a ballet teacher like Miss Ciste’!”

**Miss Pamela:** “Zarrina, thank-you for sharing, I’ve learned that you enjoy dancing and you have done very well!” (As Zarrina begins to smile) (LCH, personal communication, June 6, 2009).

### “Tyrell Visits the Zoo”

Tyrell shares his experiences of going on one of Liberty’s trips to the zoo:

**Miss Pamela:** “Tyrell, tell me something about school or what you like to do at Liberty?”

**Tyrell (Age 8):** “I like the horse!”

**Miss Pamela:** “Why do you like the horse?”

**Tyrell (Age 8):** “Because, I like to ride him!”

**Miss Pamela:** “What is the horse’s name?”

**Tyrell (Age 8):** Lena and I like the Liberty bus!”

**Miss Pamela:** “Why do you like the bus?”

**Tyrell (Age 8):** “Because the bus carries us to trips!”

**Miss Pamela:** “What kind of trips, and where do you go?”

**Tyrell (Age 8):** “We go to the zoo and we see the Tapir, and I feed him and the zookeeper said that I could feed him.”

**Miss Pamela:** “What did you feed the Tapir?”

**Tyrell (Age 8):** “Because the zookeeper told me that I could feed him!”

**Miss Pamela:** “Do you know what you fed him?”

**Tyrell (Age 8):** “Big carrots!”

**Miss Pamela:** “Did the Tapir eat them all?”

**Tyrell (Age 8):** “Yes!”

**Miss Pamela:** “Is there anything else that you want to tell me?”

**Tyrell (Age 8):** “No!” (As he shakes his head) Yes, I like the Tapir because he’s my friend and I love the Tapir, by Tyrell” (LCH, personal communication, June 7, 2009).

### “Liberty’s Earthquake Experience”

While visiting Liberty in June 2009, I quickly discovered that just a few days prior to my visit Belize had experienced a massive 7.1 earthquake that literally rocked Ladyville, where LCH is located. Apparently, the earthquake struck off the coast of Honduras and was also felt in Guatemala. A tsunami alert system was put in place for Honduras, Belize and Guatemala however because Ladyville and Liberty are so closely positioned by the sea (within five minutes walking distance) it was also felt.

Delroy, the only boy who was awakened at 2:24 am in the morning by the shaking of his bed, began to share with me how he felt.

**Miss Pamela:** “Delroy, tell me what you know about the earthquake here at Liberty?”

**Delroy (Age 11):** “My bed was shaken and I was afraid and I thought that Mr. Pat was gone and I ran upstairs and I saw Rupert sleeping, and his bed was moving out of place!”

**Miss Pamela:** “Sounds scary, tell me what happened next?”

**Delroy (Age 11):** “I went back downstairs and I went outside and Miss Sandra told me,” “Is the bed still shaken?” I went back inside and Mr. Pat came.”

**Miss Pamela:** “Delroy, you were very brave, is there anything else that you would like to tell me?”

**Delroy (Age 11):** “No . . . Yes, Rupert told me that he got up and his bed was moving!” “In the morning I asked Andy if he felt it and he said, No!” “All the rest of the boys were asleep only me and Timothy and Richard got up!” “Done!” (LCH, personal communication, June 7, 2009).

One day while conversing with the children, “wild animals” became the topic of our

conversation. It was decided by the children to all take part in writing a play and then perform it, as well. Each child began sharing different parts to the play until it was finished. It was then decided by each child to choose an animal character to act out. Zarrina chose to be a dog who would be the narrator of the play. Delroy wanted to be the tiger, as Rupert chose to be a koala bear. Jada decided to be a panda while Brittany was a bear. Tyrell wanted to be an elephant. The children practiced everyday and at the end of the week, performed the play to their friends, caregivers and visitors at Liberty. It was appreciated by all who came to watch the children perform their masterpiece. The children wore animal masks and painted a background jungle scene to enhance their performance. Many were impressed to see the children write, direct and perform their own play. The written play is as follows. . .

**“The Wild Animals Play,” by Zarrina, Delroy, Rupert, Jada, Brittany and Tyrell**

**Narrator:** “In the beginning the bear came out to eat people. The elephant came out and said. . .”

**Elephant:** “Oh no! You cannot eat the animals!”

**Narrator:** “And then the Koala said . . .”

**Koala:** “You cannot fight, it’s against the rules!”

**Narrator:** “Then the panda came out with the food she likes to share with the animals and passed the food. While the animals were eating the food, the tiger came out and said. . .”

**Tiger:** “What is happening all this time?”

**Narrator:** “Then the panda said. . .”

**Panda:** “Come and join us!”

**Narrator:** “The tiger said. . .”

**Tiger:** “I will join you for the feast!”

**Narrator:** “Then the tiger growled and ate all the animals!”

The End

The school-age children at Liberty have shared their stories to encourage and excite young children around the world to read and write within diverse ways. The children have embraced telling stories, writing stories, writing a play, directing and performing it. They have especially enjoyed sharing their stories with each other, myself and for future visitors to come.

**Implications for Public Policy**

The implication for public policy for this project involves early childhood educationalists and teachers that work with young children within developing countries and diverse locations. I

discovered through many inquiries, interviews and observations that children enjoy activities that *interest* them the most. The question is...how can this be done? My suggestions require combining a consult with the adults and the children of any program. Attempts that are made to empower adults and young children as Paulo Freire (2002) suggests, “The important thing is for the people to come to feel like masters of their thinking...” (p. 124). Authentic changes create genuine progress that may indeed promote opportunities that will empower a culture.

Educationalists and teachers that choose to learn to implement diverse skills within their own teaching environments can assist and help children feel in control of their individual learning process. In my opinion and from my own personal teaching background experiences, successful results are gained within diverse learning environments that choose to change teaching strategies that allow children spaces to explore within each other.

## **Conclusions**

In conclusion, authentic as changes occur on a regular basis as an existing world of post-modern thought offers diverse opportunity (Wardle, 2005). New and different ideas for learning can allow young children opportunity for healthy learning as teachers and caregivers consistently plan, implement skillfully and involve children in creative diverse language arts experiences through the use of diverse curricula (Wardle, 2005).

The children at LLC have become empowered so they in return have grown and matured in ways that they have so candidly shared. I admire these children for their energy and enthusiasm toward learning. It is through the consistent efforts of Liberty Foundation, administration, teachers, children and staff that have all contributed to their program. I am grateful for my ongoing visits to LCH and LLC, for I believe that, “A true ethnographic study begins with *humility*, the *meeting* of the eyes, and the *embracing* of the souls” (Cook, 2007).

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