

Investigating Quality (IQ) Early Learning Environments Project

Phase II, 2007–2009

Final Report

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IQ Project Phase II

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Executive Summary

The **Investigating Quality (IQ) Early Learning Environments Project 2005–2009** has worked to broaden and deepen discussions on ‘quality’ in the field of early childhood care and development (ECCD) at local, provincial, federal and international levels. **This report provides an overview of Phase II of the IQ Project, outlining activities and research that took place between April 1, 2007 and June 30, 2009.**

Section I provides an overview of how we set out to broaden and deepen discussions on quality by considering alternative discourses currently found internationally regarding quality early childhood care and education. The roles and processes engaged in by care providers are reconceptualized in this literature. The section also outlines the project’s goals and objectives.

Section II describes how the IQ Project promoted diverse discourses on quality through a series of forums with international early childhood education leaders. Feedback obtained from forum participants shows that the forums were a great success, and participating audiences gave outstanding reviews. Ripple effects have already been seen at the policy and practice levels (e.g., British Columbia and New Brunswick’s direction on curriculum framework). The forums have placed British Columbia firmly at the cutting edge of early childhood education theory and practice, both in Canada and internationally.

Section III describes the professional learning component of the IQ Project. A guiding principle of the project was that actively engaging early childhood educators in dialogue and action would lead to the formation of sustainable, innovative caregiving environments for young children. Thus a series of ‘learning and sharing circles’ were facilitated: A group of 78 early childhood educators from across British Columbia engaged in discussions around quality and applied what they learned in these discussions in their practice settings.

Four different evaluation tools were used to collect feedback from the learning and sharing circle participants, and these findings are also presented in Section III. The findings highlight how educators engaged in critical reflection with others in the ECCD field in ways that resulted in positive changes in their practice. The workshops enabled the educators to feel connected with “big” ideas and discuss what it means to work with young children and families. The workshops also created opportunities to address concerns; engage in self-awareness activities; discuss specific articles; network; share knowledge with others; and feel empowered, valued and connected as professionals.

Section IV describes how the IQ Project broadened and deepened discussions on quality with college instructors by taking a capacity-building approach. Four one-day professional development sessions for college instructors took place through the IQ Project.

Section V provides an overview of the Early Years Specialization that was introduced by the University of Victoria’s School of Child and Youth Care (SCYC) in September 2006 to meet the growing demand for early years practitioners who can work across a range of services for young children (0-6 years) and their families.

Section VI details the major outputs and outcomes that resulted from the IQ Project.

Section VII presents conclusions and recommendations to promote the active engagement of various stakeholders in early childhood education and care in order to continue the field's rejuvenation and professionalization processes. These recommendations include:

Recommendations for Policy Development

- Broaden and deepen constrained definitions of quality to allow for the creation of dynamic, innovative, and sustainable early childhood environments that respect British Columbia's diverse cultural communities.
- Create further opportunities for policy makers in the province's ECE field to be exposed to the wealth of knowledge that exists in the field internationally.
- Create ECE policies that support flexible, diverse and context-sensitive practice.

Recommendations for Training

- Develop training that expands the certificate and diploma options currently available in the province and allows for a more comprehensive educational and career ladder that incorporates Bachelors degree coursework from a variety of early years related programs (i.e. ECE, CYC, and Education).
- Develop training that exposes future graduates to diverse perspectives and cutting-edge approaches to quality early childhood education and care.

Recommendations for Practice

- Support capacity building to develop innovative ECE practices that include and involve diverse children and families.
- Create the role of regional community early years facilitators to act as leaders, mentors and coaches to groups of ECE practitioners across BC.
- Create opportunities for ongoing in-service professional development.
- Create and promote opportunities to continue and support the networking and dialogue among early childhood educators that the IQ Project engendered.
- Create and support centres of innovation that demonstrate sustainable, dynamic, quality early childhood environments.

Section I: Introduction

Promoting Quality in Early Childhood Education Settings

“What children experience in the first five years of life stays with them forever. Much of what they will achieve physically, intellectually and socially in later life is determined during this time” (Government of British Columbia, 2007). British Columbia therefore recognizes the need for quality early childhood education as a primary policy issue.

Within North America, the primary strategy for promoting quality in child care programs is through regulations that set minimum standards for group size, adult-child ratios, caregiver training levels, and ‘best practices’ that outline prescribed activities for young children. Quality improvement approaches have tended to focus on the development and use of measurements and instruments to determine these minimum levels of quality.

The Investigating Quality (IQ) Project worked to broaden and deepen discussions on quality in British Columbia. We set out to accomplish this by considering the literature that includes diverse discourses and ideas about quality. The project has been particularly inspired by a growing body of literature around quality that has emerged since the mid-1990s from New Zealand, parts of Australia, and parts of Europe but is relatively unfamiliar in most of Canada (see Pence & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2008).

Emerging ideas on quality show that quality early learning environments result from the interaction of diverse forces and factors, including physical, pedagogical, social, political and cultural factors (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 1999). Quality is therefore understood differently historically and across diverse cultures. Quality environments represent the coming together of children, their parents and their care providers at specific points in time and place (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 1999). For quality to take on depth, meaning and purpose, processes of engagement, discussion and interaction are as critical as research findings in shaping positive caregiving environments and practices.

Early childhood settings should be seen as spaces for children, families, community and educators to engage and interact, opening up possibilities for levels of program quality that are much more dynamic than those achievable through a ‘minimum standards’ approach. The well-known programs in Reggio Emilia are based on such a process, as are innovative programs in Sweden, New Zealand, Australia, and other locations worldwide. This contextual, interactive approach opens up to local voices, respects diversity, encourages families and community members to participate meaningfully in children’s lives, and nurtures a democratic process at the earliest age of citizenship.

IQ Project Goals

The IQ Project began in 2005 and its first phase extended until 2006 (see Pence & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2006). This report provides a detailed evaluation of the activities undertaken in Phase II (2007-2009).

The objectives of the IQ Project Phase II were as follows:

- To broaden and deepen British Columbia’s approaches to quality by considering diverse discourses currently found internationally regarding quality early childhood care and education.

- To promote the active engagement of early childhood educators in critical reflection and actions that lead to the formation of sustainable and innovative early childhood care and education environments.
- To promote the active engagement of ECE college instructors in discussions on different aspects of quality early learning environments.
- To enhance and augment existing early years training at the School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria.

These objectives were addressed through a series of activities described in detail in sections II-IV.

Section II: Promoting Diverse Discourses on Quality

Investigating Quality Early Childhood Care and Education Forums

As specified in Section I, one of the IQ Project's goals was to broaden and deepen British Columbia's approaches to quality by considering alternative discourses currently found internationally regarding quality early childhood care and education (ECCE). We accomplished this goal through a series of Investigating Quality early childhood care and education forums. The forums were a great success and outstanding reviews were received from participating audiences. The events placed British Columbia firmly at the cutting edge of early childhood education theory and practice, both in Canada and internationally.

Overall, the forums' goals were:

- To bring together for discussions of quality a small group of international leaders in early childhood studies who share a perspective of young children as meaningful knowledge makers.
- To explore ways to disseminate diverse understandings of quality at the policy, pedagogical and training levels.
- To support the development of a sophisticated and innovative early childhood field at local, provincial, national and international levels.
- To create meaningful links between policymakers, researchers and the early childhood field.
- To share these discussions with diverse early childhood stakeholder groups.

Specifically, the forums: (a) created opportunities to engage in rich dialogue that captured diverse concepts and knowledge systems in the context of early childhood development (ECD); (b) made our guests' expertise and learning accessible to the academic, Aboriginal and service communities on Vancouver Island, in the Lower Mainland and in other regions of the province; and (c) allowed stakeholders to move forward, within and across boundaries, in pursuit of new ideas about what constitutes quality care and education. Guests for each forum engaged with diverse stakeholder groups in different venues (adding value to their time in BC).

The Forums

Building Capacity in the Early Years:

Discussion and Consultation with New Zealand Leaders

June 13, 2007

This event engaged participants in discussions on how Canada could move forward with meaningful, community-informed policies and practices that support quality early learning and child care. Special guests included Dr. Margaret Carr (New Zealand) and Ms. Wendy Lee (New Zealand). The poster for this event is included as Appendix A-1.

*Early Childhood Care and Development:
Perspectives from the Majority World*
November 16-17, 2007

This forum engaged participants in discussions with ECCE instructors from British Columbia on approaches to developmental perspectives that are responsive to different cultural contexts. Special guests included Dr. Jenny Ritchie (New Zealand), Dr. Lourdes Diaz Soto (USA), Dr. Bame Nsamenang (Cameroon), Dr. Rhadika Viruru (USA), Dr. Gail Yuen (Hong Kong) and Dr. Mike Niles (USA). Papers based on this forum were published in a special issue of *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood* in 2008. The participant invitation and agenda for this event is included as Appendix A-2.

*Times for Innovation in ECE:
Challenging Our Ways of Thinking About Educators' and Children's Learning*
February 28, 2008

In 1998, Sweden developed and implemented a National Curriculum for early childhood that was designed to focus on children's learning processes. Using this perspective, Sweden has created early childhood institutions where care and learning are inseparable. This seminar addressed the reasons new questions and challenges in early childhood require new ways of ensuring 'quality' in early childhood services. Special guests included Karin and Per Alnervik. The poster for this event is included as Appendix A-3.

Early Childhood Educators of British Columbia (ECEBC) Conference
May 30, 2008

The IQ Project sponsored the international keynote speakers for the ECEBC conference. The purpose of the conference was for ECE practitioners, educators and leaders of British Columbia to engage in discussions with international ECE leaders on issues around pedagogical narrations, social justice, diversity and advocacy. Special guests included Drs. Gunilla Dahlberg (Sweden), Helen May (New Zealand) and Kylie Smith (Australia). The participant invitation and agenda for this event are included as Appendix A-4.

Strengthening Africa's Contributions to Child Development Research
February 5, 2009

This one-day public symposium (co-sponsored by the International Society for Research in Child Development—SRDC) brought together international experts in child development research, including Dr. Sara Harkness (USA), Dr. Çiğdem Kağıtçıbaşı (Turkey), Dr. Robert Levine (USA), Peter Mwaura (Kenya), Dr. Robert Myers (Mexico), Dr. Bame Nsamenang (Cameroon), Dr. Robert Serpell (Zambia) and Dr. Charles Super (USA). The poster for this symposium is included as Appendix A-5.

University of Victoria Early Years Institute
May 25-26, 2009

The primary purpose of the University of Victoria Early Years Institute was to engage in discussions with ECE leaders on issues of quality and leadership in early childhood

education. This two-day institute brought together international experts in child development research including Dr. Glenda MacNaughton (Australia), Dr. Helen Penn (United Kingdom) and Cheryl Rau (New Zealand). The participant invitation and agenda for this event are included as Appendix A-6.

Feedback from Forum Participants

At each of the forums, participants completed a feedback sheet (see Appendix B). Their feedback was compiled and organized into themes, which are presented below with excerpts from their comments.

Dialogue: Laying the Foundation

Dialoguing is integral to evoking a multiplicity of languages, and it helps practitioners to understand the subjective, value-based, relative and dynamic concept of quality in early childhood environments (Dahlberg et al., 1999).

Participants were able to maximize their individual and collective experiences through dialogue and discussions.

This forum allowed me to bring my whole team together so we can have common knowledge, to learn more about pedagogical narrations, and create a space for dialogue and discussions about new innovative ideas in the ECE field. While some of the ideas may take some time to ponder, this [forum] opens the door to discussions that have not been previously had within our team. (February 2008 forum participant)

It was a privilege to be introduced to another culture's way of educating young children and be able to discuss with and question the presenters in a collaborative way. It was nice to be able to have a dialogue about how similar ideas could be implemented in our community. (November 2007 forum participant)

This project, on all the levels, is comprehensive and is making positive changes in the community in which I reside. By involving early childhood educators and college instructors and inviting us to rethink our practices, it leads us to very useful and exciting revisioning of what's possible. I have been challenged to think about not only my image of children and families, but of educators as well. (May 2008 forum participant)

Contextual Exploration of the Early Years Field

Forum participants appreciated exploring children's learning contexts and how these contexts are intertwined yet sometimes distinct from each other.

This presentation brought to all of our attention how contextual child care and early learning needs to be. Not just between countries, or regions, but within centres. Each child's families and experiences are so different, the education that we provide needs to reflect this. (February 2008 forum participant)

Learning Through Networking

The participants appreciated the opportunity to network and learn from each other's individual meaning-making and varied experiences. Participants were able to recognize

the diverse views associated with collaborative discussions and to share these findings by networking with practitioners from diverse fields and backgrounds.

I really value the opportunity to connect and discuss with other instructors/educators around what we do already that connects with the project and how we could extend our world. (May 2008 forum participant)

These [forums] are a great opportunity to network with others in the field. It is amazing how listening to others' experiences and ideas really challenges you to rethink your thoughts and practice. (February 2008 forum participant)

Influencing Participants to Change Practice

Participating in the workshops allowed the practitioners to understand critical paths that lead to change. In addition, being open to utilizing reflective practices enabled participants to discover alternative discourses and pedagogies and move to immediately implement these changes.

There were so many ideas that can be developed and applied to our own practice. The [forum] and the strong, dedicated presenters were invigorating and inspiring in facilitating me to think about the practice of ECE. (June 2007 forum participant)

Growth in Motion

Participants were profoundly affected by taking part in the forums. Their dialoguing and networking experiences at the workshops facilitated meaningful discoveries to support quality early learning and childcare. For example, one individual was moved to shift gears and to put into practice her new understanding and growth:

The opportunity to hear leaders in early childhood discuss research, theory, the political struggles and implementation of postmodern practice from other parts of the world has opened my eyes to new directions in the scholarship of ECE. I hope to help others challenge their ideas of what is possible, as mine have been challenged today. (November 2007 forum participant)

Overall Feedback

Of the 162 participants from the June 2007, November 2007, February 2008 and May 2008 events, 65% completed and submitted evaluation surveys. Overall, 100% of those who completed the survey agreed that:

- The event was effective and useful.
- The presentations and workshops were informative.
- The range of presentation topics met their needs.
- They gained some new information at the conference.
- They could use this information in their work.
- The event met their expectations and, as a result, they would attend a future event.

Outcomes from the IQ Forums

Information about the outcomes that resulted from the Investigating Quality forums can be found in Section VI.

Section III: Learning and Sharing Circles

Promoting Early Childhood Educators' Professional Learning

This section addresses the second project objective specified in Section I: to promote the active engagement of early childhood educators in critical reflection and actions that lead to forming sustainable, innovative early childhood care and education environments. The IQ Project accomplished this objective through a series of 'learning and sharing circles' with a group of 78 early childhood educators from across British Columbia who engaged in discussions around quality and then applied what they learned in these discussions in their practice settings.

A participatory action research approach (MacNaughton & Hughes, 2008) was used to collaborate with the early childhood educators to reflect on knowledge, experiences and values embedded in their practice. Working relationally, pedagogies characterized by depth, meaning, purpose, engagement, discussions, and dialogue were used to explore rich and contextually meaningful understandings of practices.

Objectives of the IQ Project's Professional Learning Component

The IQ Project's professional learning component was conducted to promote the active engagement of early childhood educators in discussions and actions that involved depth and intention in their own practice. The project's major objectives included the following:

- To develop and deliver ongoing professional development to early childhood educators working with young children in a variety of settings.
- To work with early childhood educators to apply what they had learned in the learning circles in their everyday practice.
- To create opportunities for early childhood educators to network and provide critical feedback to others' practices.
- To build capacity in, and bring innovation to, the field of early childhood education in British Columbia.
- To collect feedback on the professional development model used to inform future deliveries and initiatives with early childhood educators in the province.
- To recommend strategies for implementing professional development with early childhood educators beyond the completion of the project.

Professional Learning Delivery

The work with early childhood educators began in 2006 during IQ Project Phase I. In Phase I, 29 early childhood educators from Greater Vancouver and South and Central Vancouver Island were selected to participate in the project; 26 (90%) completed the delivery phase (see Figure 3.1). An evaluation of Phase I found that participants were greatly excited about the opportunity to network with others and engage with emerging ideas in their field. With such positive responses from participating educators, IQ Project Phase II continued and enhanced the activities that took place in Phase I.

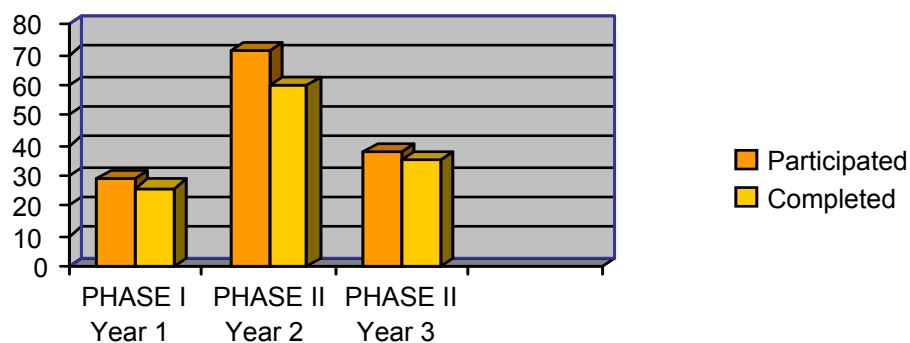
Phase I participants were invited to continue with the project in Phase II. Twenty elected to continue, and spaces were added for approximately 50 more in both the original

locations and in other regions of the province (Interior and North). Of 71 educators who participated in Phase II (Year 2), 60 completed the delivery year (see Figure 3.1).

At the end of Phase II (Year 2), and with funds remaining, the project coordinators decided to build on the project's success by offering a third year of learning circles. Funds available for Phase II (Year 3) were substantially less than those available for Year 2, thus activities had to be scaled back. In Year 3, 31 educators continued with the learning circles and 7 joined the project. A total of 38 educators participated in Phase II (Year 3). Of these, 35 completed the delivery year (see Figure 3.1).

Over the IQ Project's two phases and three delivery years, a total of 78 early childhood educators have participated in the learning circles.

Figure 3.1



Participants

Early childhood educators were selected on a first-come first-served basis. Criteria for inclusion were early childhood educators who:

- were interested in engaging in a collaborative process of critical reflection around issues of quality;
- had five or more years of experience working with young children; and
- were currently working in an early childhood setting in BC.

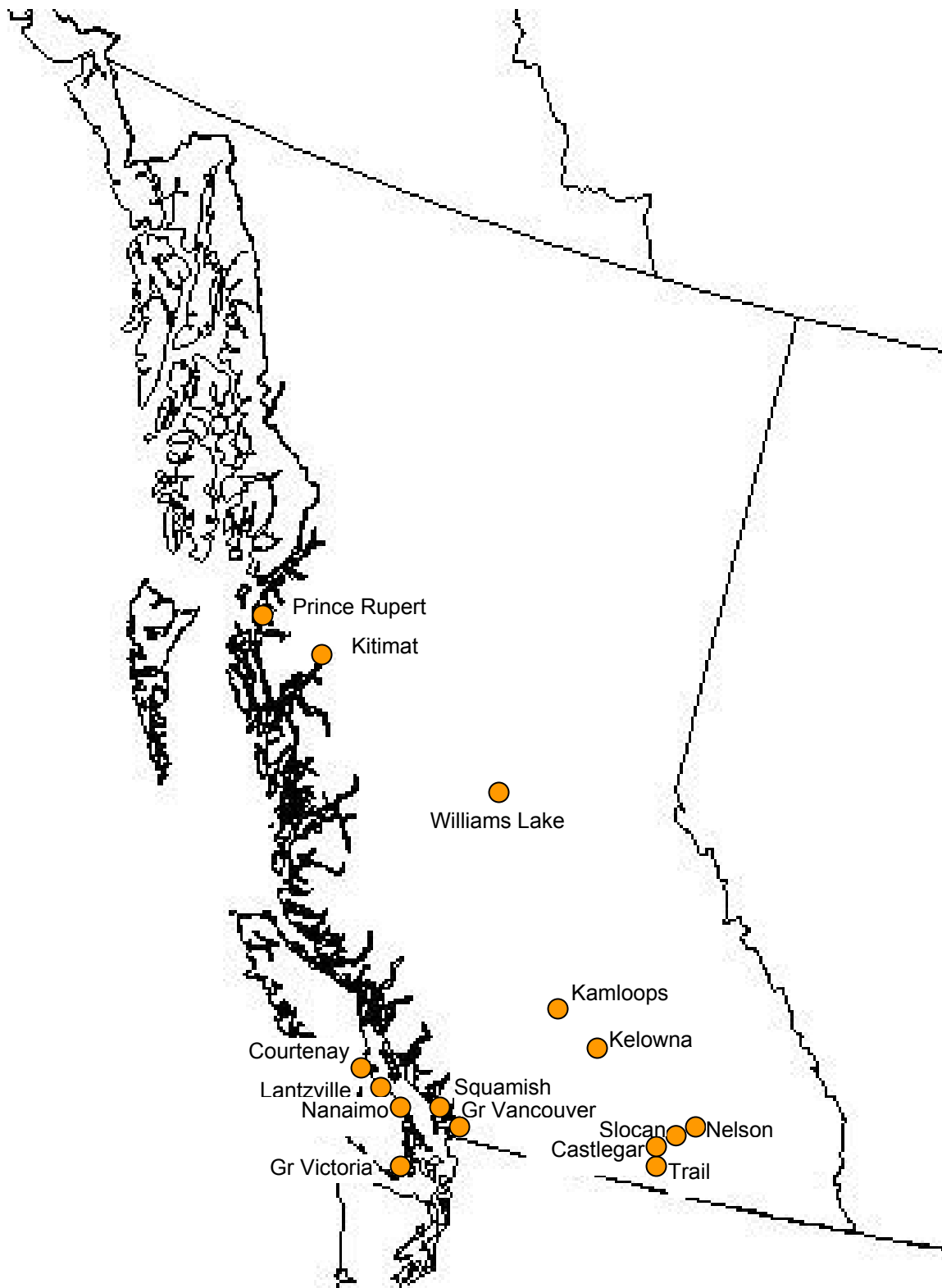
The participating educators had a range of experiences, backgrounds and education, and they represented a wide variety of settings: Aboriginal, multicultural, rural, urban, college- and university-based, preschool, full-time day care, infant-toddler, family child care, nonprofit, and small-scale for-profit (see Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2 Number of participants by type of ECCE setting

Type of Centre	Number of Participants
Out of school care	2
Family daycare	5
Preschool	16
Childcare	29
Infant toddler centre	5
Family resource centre	3
Child development centre	5
Aboriginal childcare centre	2
Research centre	1
Miscellaneous	10
Total	78

The centres that the educators represented were located in the Greater Victoria region; Comox; Lantzville; Courtenay; Nanaimo; Nelson; Slokan; Castlegar; Trail; Kelowna; Kitimat; Prince Rupert; Williams Lake; Kamloops; and greater Vancouver, including Port Coquitlam, Surrey, Vancouver, North Vancouver, East Vancouver and Richmond (see Figure 3.3 on the following page).

Figure 3.3 Map of the BC locations involved in the IQ Project over three delivery years



Delivery

The professional learning curriculum was delivered through a series of 4-hour learning circle (LC) workshops. (See Appendix D for workshop content.) The evolution of the learning circle groups over three delivery years is shown in Figure 3.4 below.

Figure 3.4 Makeup of Learning Circles

Group Name	Phase I Year 1 2006–2007	Phase II Year 2 2007–2008	Phase II Year 3 2008–2009
Vancouver 2006	13	11	10
South and Central Vancouver Island 2006	17	13	–
Vancouver 2007	–	12	8
South and Central Vancouver Island 2007	–	12	–
Central/Interior BC 2007	–	11	–
Online 2007 (participants from central and northern BC)	–	12	–
South Vancouver Island 06/07 (two groups merged in Year 3)	–	–	12
Online 2008 (Central/Interior BC and Online merged in Year 3)	–	–	7

The online group allowed educators from all over the province to participate online and in tri-weekly teleconference calls. Please note that because of limited funds in Year 3, the Central/Interior BC and Online groups were combined (creating Online 08) and the two South and Central Vancouver Island groups were combined (creating South and Central Vancouver Island 06/07).

Each learning circle took place in a central location every three weeks for 9 months, for a total of 11 learning circles. The online learning circles took place through a password-sensitive web-based platform created for the Online 2007 group, allowing participants to obtain necessary information and discuss with each other online between the tri-weekly teleconferences.

A two-day sharing circle took place in Vancouver in March 2008. The purpose of the sharing circle was to bring together all of the participants from the separate learning circles to interact and share the work produced as a result of their involvement in the learning circles.

In addition to the learning and sharing circles, the IQ Project professional learning component incorporated further education and dialogue through two additional venues:

- *Listserv communication.* An e-mail listserv was created and used by educators and researchers in each of the participating groups. This listserv was a means to

communicate ideas in between workshops and to circulate materials in advance of the learning circles.

- *Centre visits.* Members of the research team provided individual support to each educator through centre visits. Each centre was visited at least twice during the delivery of the project. Centre visits provided opportunities to give educators one-on-one support.

Facilitators

Each learning and sharing circle workshop was delivered by a facilitator with extensive experience in early childhood education who had knowledge of and experience with practices framed within reconceptualist and culturally appropriate theories (see Appendix C for the names, qualifications and affiliations of the facilitators). The facilitator's role was to assist participants in engaging in collective discussions regarding early childhood practices. The facilitators were directed by Dr. Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw.

Curriculum

A training manual developed in Phase I was also used with the educators who joined the IQ Project in Phase II. The manual was adapted to be delivered online through distributed learning. See Appendix D for the adapted online learning circle workshops.

A new curriculum was developed in Phase II for those educators who began in Phase I and continued their involvement in the project. The new curriculum built on and extended the content of the first-year curriculum. See Appendix E for the Phase II curriculum.

Evaluation of Learning and Sharing Circles

Four different evaluation tools were used to collect feedback about the learning and sharing circles:

- *Learning Circle Evaluation.* Feedback was obtained from participants on an ongoing basis to support the curriculum development in order that it reflect the most pressing issues early childhood educators were facing in their practice at the time of delivery. The LC evaluations consisted of a one-page questionnaire structured with four open-ended questions about the learning circles. The questionnaire was handed out to all participants at the end of each learning circle and in many cases was returned to the facilitator before the participants left. The questionnaire was voluntary, but most participants saw it as part of the LC process and contributed.
- *Sharing Circle Evaluation.* The SC evaluation consisted of a two-page questionnaire handed out to all participants at the end of each day of the two-day workshop and returned before the participants left. The questionnaires were voluntary, but most participants saw them as part of the SC process and contributed.
- *Focus Group.* Part of each group's final learning circle was dedicated to evaluating the LC and SC process. Questions were posed in an open dialogue format. Feedback was collected through audio and video recordings, which were later transcribed.

- *Survey.* The overall project evaluation took the form of a nine-page in-depth survey. The evaluation tool included both qualitative and quantitative questions in order to (a) increase the perceived validity of the study should the qualitative and quantitative components yield corroborating results, and (b) provide more insight than one method alone could provide. The survey was e-mailed to all LC participants two weeks before their last workshop. Participants were asked to complete the survey and then e-mail, mail or fax it to the project coordinator.

The survey was given to participants in both of the Phase II delivery years; response rates for Years 2 and 3 were 63% and 71% respectively. Some problems were found with the rating scale used in the Year 2 survey, and the scale was changed in Year 3 to collect more useful data. A few of the questions were also slightly changed. These modifications meant that the data collected in the two delivery years could not be combined.

Feedback collected through the four evaluation tools is presented in the following subsections of Section III. Highlights of the quantitative results collected in the project evaluation surveys are presented first, followed by qualitative feedback organized by themes. The qualitative feedback was collected throughout the three delivery years through the four evaluation methods/tools described above. Detailed quantitative results from the Year 3 project evaluation survey are included in Appendix L.

Year 2 Survey Results

- 94% of the respondents indicated that they very much increased their awareness of quality child care and early learning as a result of the IQ Project.
- 70% reported that their knowledge related to quality child care and early learning increased greatly as a result of this research project.
- All but one of the respondents reported learning new skills and competencies, and 45% said they noticed a great change in their practice.
- 65% of the respondents reported a change in their participation in discussions of quality in child care and early learning.
- A majority (53%) of the respondents said they have become more involved in child care and early learning networks as part of their participation in the IQ Project. Some have joined the Early Childhood Educators of British Columbia (ECEBC); others have made contacts with like-minded educators at conferences or via the learning circles.
- 33% of the respondents said they had increased their attendance at early childhood education events; 20% had “very much” done so.
- Most respondents reported a change in their knowledge of pedagogical narrations, and 70% “very much” noticed a change.
- A majority of respondents reported a change in their perspective on pedagogical narrations; 72% said they “very much” noticed a change.
- 85% of the respondents said they were satisfied to some degree with the incorporation of pedagogical narration in their centre.

- A large majority of the respondents said they had access to the resources they needed to incorporate pedagogical narrations at their centre; 75% indicated this was “very much” the case.
- 75% of the respondents felt that the children’s experiences had changed in a positive way due to the use of pedagogical narrations in their centre, and 58% said that parents’ experiences had changed in a positive way.
- 92% of the respondents reported that they noticed a change in their quality of work and in motivating others on their work team.
- **All of the respondents said they were satisfied with the results of the project towards their professional development;** 93% were “very much” satisfied.

Year 3 Survey Results

- 76% of the respondents had noticed a change in their practice setting since their involvement in the IQ Project.
- 88% had noticed a change in their perspective concerning quality child care and early learning.
- 80% had noticed a change in their initiative on the job, and 84% in introducing new ideas on the job.
- 96% of the respondents were satisfied with the results of the project towards their professional development.
- 96% of the respondents had shared knowledge from the IQ Project within their work setting.
- 96% felt they had contributed to the development of new practices or new approaches in their work setting.
- 96% reported that they had made useful contacts through their involvement in the project.
- An overwhelming majority of the respondents felt that the topics covered in the learning circles were beneficial to them (ranging from 80% to 96% on individual topics).
- Most of the respondents felt that incorporating pedagogical narrations had been a positive experience in their centre and that the children’s experiences had changed in a positive way as a result.
- **All of the respondents** liked the group discussions, learning from other practitioners and working with facilitators.

Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative analysis in the following sections draws on participant comments made in the project evaluation surveys, learning and sharing circle questionnaires, and focus groups. Where possible, participants are identified according to their learning circle group; if the comment was made on one of the two evaluation surveys, the delivery year is noted.

Learning Circle Content

The use of pedagogical narrations embraces the values of Reggio Emilia, an early childhood education system that regards the child as an active learner, values the community's role and relationships in learning, and views learning and life as ongoing experimentation and research. The citizens of Reggio Emilia in Italy have devoted thought and time to creating successful, vibrant, dynamic programs with a global reputation for excellence (Pacini-Ketchabaw, Berger, Kocher, Isaac, and Mort, 2006).

If early childhood education centres are to be learning communities for teachers as well as children, parents and others, there need to be opportunities within the work environment for reflection, experimentation and planning (Mitchell and Cubey, 2003, p. xv). Pedagogical narrations (also known as pedagogical documentation and learning stories) can be seen as agents for change that involve such reflection, experimentation and planning. Using pedagogical narrations also follows evidence produced by Mitchell and Cubey's (2003) 'Best Evidence Synthesis' (see Appendix F.)

"Co-constructing learning" acknowledges the child as an active constructor, with others, of knowledge and of making meaning of the world. Both children and adults play an active role in the pedagogical process. Co-construction recognizes the child as part of society and culture – a social actor with rights and agency. Pedagogical practices that flow from these approaches build on and welcome the knowledge and skills of all players and acknowledge the influence of relationships and interactions as well as the social and cultural contexts in which learning occurs (Cannella, 1997; Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 1999; Grieshaber & Cannella, 2001; Mitchell & Cubey, 2003). These approaches and the tool of pedagogical narrations were thus incorporated into the IQ Project learning circles.

Overwhelmingly, participants felt that **the topics presented in the learning circles were beneficial** to them.

All these topics were very interesting, especially the discussions on democracy in education and gender issues were very thought provoking and relevant to our work with children. (Year 2 participant)

I especially found value in the pedagogical narrations analysis, and the discussions relating to the image of both child and family. (Year 2 participant)

I have become very interested in learning more about postmodern theories and how they can apply to every aspect of my work. The image of the child and family really drive our centres, especially those things associated with policies; once we are clear about our image of children and families, we can start constructing more child and family friendly spaces. Pedagogical narrations and analysis have really made me look at how I am practicing and whose knowledge I am using. (Year 2 participant)

A large majority of the IQ Project participants felt that using pedagogical narrations in their centres **changed the children's experiences in a positive way**. (See Appendix G for an example of the pedagogical narrations produced by the LC participants.)

[Learning about pedagogical narration] has been significant for me ... I think the possibilities for creativity on the part of the caregiver

could be enormous with this process, which I think will create wonderful possibilities for children. (Vancouver 2006 participant, Year 2)

Without a doubt, the children's experiences changed in a positive way. (South and Central Vancouver Island 06/07 participant)

[It's a] more respectful, supportive practice. Less policing, more critical thought. (Year 2 participant)

Project Outcomes

Awareness and Knowledge of Quality Child Care and Early Learning

Professional development needs to start from individuals' own aspirations, skills, knowledge, and understanding (Mitchell and Cubey, 2003). A deep-rooted understanding of this process can develop awareness of quality child care and early learning. It also follows that awareness and knowledge of quality child care and early learning can help to challenge views and images of the child, family and educator while supporting change in pedagogical practice (MacNaughton, 2003). Therefore, an important focus of the IQ Project learning circles was to create new knowledge and awareness among the participants. It was thought that participants would then extend this awareness and education to others in their centres and possibly even further.

Participants in all three delivery years noted **a change in their awareness and knowledge of quality child care and early learning** as a result of their involvement in the IQ Project.

I have always sought out new ideas and knowledge in the field of child care, and I felt confident in my practice. However my involvement in IQ has broadened that knowledge, extended the theoretical base, reaffirmed much of what I do and challenged me to consider new ways of thinking and being with children. After participating in IQ I feel my level of professionalism has been raised. I am able to discuss ideas and theories of child care more knowledgeably, and relate those ideas and theories to my practice. I am more confident and reflective in my practice, and now have a burning desire to share what I've learned! (South and Central Vancouver Island 2007 participant, Year 2)

I am more aware of issues involved in providing quality childcare. (Online 2007 participant, Year 2)

With all the readings and opportunities for discussions, my knowledge related to child care and early learning has increased in many ways. (Vancouver 2006 participant, Year 3)

I have changed my perspective. I look at what the children are capable of in their learning and not [simply] what is expected of them. (South and Central Vancouver Island 2006 participant, Year 2)

Extending Awareness and Education to Others

Increased awareness and knowledge of quality child care and early learning often increases the contributions that educators make to the field as a whole (Lee, 2006). A

range of tools is needed to support growth and development, and the greatest tool we can hope to be shared is knowledge. The learning circles allowed educators to engage in collaborative discussions and distribute knowledge within the workshops. The project's goal was for participants to take this knowledge and use it in the broader ECE community. For the work of the learning circle project to spread, participants must be willing to share the information, resources and contacts they acquired through the project.

Almost all of the participants indicated that they had **shared their work within their child care centre**, and many found that as a result of their involvement in the project they **contributed more in discussions of early learning, became more involved in networks related to their field, and increased their attendance at conferences, forums and meetings.**

Not only is my knowledge expanding with the analytical perspectives and current issues with ECE but also I participate differently because I feel more confident in my learning through the sessions. (Vancouver 2006 participant)

I have shared a good deal of the information with others in my workplace. (South and Central Vancouver Island 2006 participant)

I have increased my attendance to conferences, forums, etc. because I know about the forums now. I also feel that I can attend the conferences and know that I can understand what is being said. (South and Central Vancouver Island 2006 participant)

I have something new to share at each of our management meetings. (Vancouver 2007 participant)

I have brought some of the subjects in this project up for discussions at staff meetings ... It has been nice to be able to share ideas from this project with my co-workers. (Online 2007 participant)

[The project] has inspired me to get our staff team excited about its ideas. (Vancouver 2007 participant)

In Year 2, participants were asked what strategies they had for future dissemination of the knowledge they gained through the IQ Project. Their strategies included reporting to the board of directors; sharing information with new staff members; integrating information in curriculum development; using children's stories; suggesting presenters for upcoming workshops; organizing group workshops and discussion sessions; having discussions with the children and staff; passing on the information to early childhood instructors; and presenting the knowledge gained in IQ to early childhood classes.

Increased Skills and Competencies

Effective professional development in the ECE field aims to increase skills and competencies in three important areas: enhancing pedagogy, contributing to children's learning, and building linkages between early childhood education and other settings (Mitchell and Cubey, 2003).

There is evidence that the learning circles significantly contributed to enhancing participants' skills and enriching the pedagogy in their early childhood settings.

The knowledge gained from attending the sessions this year has been extremely valuable to me. I have a whole new perspective on writing as a documenter which was probably the most significant in my learning [and] which in turn affects me as an observer. Learning and practicing the pedagogy of listening!
(Vancouver 2006 participant, Year 2)

Examples of the skills and competencies that LC participants said they had obtained include:

- Learning to be more observant of children
- Improving communication skills with co-workers and parents
- Moving from a teacher-based curriculum to reflective practice
- Learning how to work with and display pedagogical narrations
- Sharing new ideas with staff and parents
- Engaging children in developing rules
- Questioning taken-for-granted knowledge
- Improving presentation skills
- Organizing information to present
- Working in teams
- Gaining confidence in EC practice and in group settings
- Honing listening skills
- Playing a greater role in decision making
- Gaining confidence with technology
- Becoming a better documenter/writer

Enhanced Job Initiative and Decision Making

Many IQ Project participants noticed **an increase in their long-term focus** and felt that they were **more goal-directed and action-oriented, more likely to take part in decision-making processes, more persistent in the face of barriers and setbacks, and more likely to be self-starting and proactive** due to their involvement in the project.

An overwhelming majority of the participants noticed a change in their quality of work and in motivating others on their work team.

I've been excited about sharing information and assisting staff with implementing ideas in our program. (Vancouver 2007 participant)

It has added a new zip to my step at work and given me another thing to focus on and be creative with. (South and Central Vancouver Island 2006 participant)

Some participants reported that they played a new role in decision making within their work setting. Examples of this new role included purchasing reading materials for child

care providers in a lending library and questioning the appropriateness of certain policies or practices.

[I] feel more compelled to step in when policing or less than respectful practice is sliding in ... “Is that our rule – where did it come from – is it appropriate?” (South and Central Vancouver Island 2007 participant)

Professional Revitalization

The learning circles provided a space for professional revitalization of educators by giving them a venue for reflection and critical analysis and challenging them to think about ECE issues differently. The opportunity to connect, participate, collaborate and grow with colleagues from all over BC was invaluable for many of the participants.

I am a better ECE and that is the point of pro-d. It has given me fresh eyes. (South and Central Vancouver Island 2006 participant)

I feel that it was the ultimate pro-d experience. I had the opportunity to read interesting and thought-provoking articles, discuss ideas with others, share in the projects that were going on at other centres and expand my knowledge and thinking. (Vancouver 2006 participant)

I have been more than satisfied; I have been enriched and challenged in a myriad of ways. This kind of exchange of ideas has been severely lacking in other professional development opportunities. In my mind it is imperative that we move our profession forward with this kind of dialogue. We have been stuck on ‘how to’ and we need to move to ‘why.’ (South and Central Vancouver Island 2007 participant)

I am completely satisfied with my professional development. I feel this knowledge is transformational and no educator who has been a part of this experience could say they haven’t walked away with some new ideas to ponder. (South and Central Vancouver Island 2006 participant)

New Practices or Approaches in the Work Setting

An overwhelming number of educators felt they had been exposed to new practices and approaches through the open dialogue and discussions that took place during the learning circle sessions; they also indicated that they were likely to try the new approaches in their ECE setting. Examples of new practices or approaches include **reevaluation of rules and daily routines; having children contribute to planning; and observation with intent and curiosity.**

We have reevaluated some of our rules and daily routines as a direct or indirect result of this project. (Online 2007 participant)

I have been able to incorporate some of my learning in my practice. I have changed the way I look at and do documentation. I have become more reflective and look for ways to make this reflection visible to others. (Vancouver 2006 participant, Year 2)

I have broadened my understanding and now need to further that understanding through my own research and further education.

Lots more to learn! (South and Central Vancouver Island 2007 participant)

Relationship Building

Educators who participated in the learning circles reported many benefits, but what they valued most was the relationships they were able to foster and support.

The group sessions were extraordinary for my learning as an ECE'er. Talking to other professionals in the field and having a qualified, well distinguished facilitator was beyond helpful in my learning. (Vancouver 2006 participant)

Networking and having a forum of colleagues to discuss issues and theories with [was the most important thing that happened as a result of my involvement in the IQ Project]. (South and Central Vancouver Island 06/07 participant)

Participants in all three delivery years reported that their knowledge and experiences with child care and early learning were valued by the researchers during the learning and sharing circles. Participants felt they were appreciated, supported, valued, respected and given any opportunity they needed to discuss or comment.

I always felt our comments were listened to closely and our work in the field was used by facilitators to further the discussions and used to build new information. (Vancouver 2006 participant)

The processes and experiences that make for effective professional development require highly skilled, knowledgeable and critically aware learning circle facilitators. Participants in all three delivery years commented that the learning circle facilitators supported and guided them and facilitated access to resources. They also indicated that the facilitators were open, honest, patient, and willing to listen and share.

The facilitators did an amazing job in supporting the participants. We always received e-mails to remind us of meeting locations and times, and the agenda for the discussion and ongoing feedback on our work. (Vancouver 2006 participant)

[They opened] my eyes to different possible meanings. Really help[ed] me keep an open mind and continue on the learning path. Focusing on the positives in children and their abilities, rather than what they still need to learn. (South and Central Vancouver Island 06/07 participant)

I enjoyed the hard questions and challenges put forth by the facilitators. They were always ready to support us and provide us with resources if and when necessary. (Victoria 2006 participant)

Participating in the IQ Project learning circles also enhanced relationships between ECE practitioners in child care settings.

I am extremely satisfied with the results of this project towards my professional development. I feel great being able to share current and relevant knowledge and ideas with my work mates. Being a part of the project aids my partner and I to connect on a deeper

level when working within our preschool environment. (Vancouver 2006 participant, Year 3)

Strengthening Links Between Parents and Caregivers

Significant evidence exists that professional development aimed at strengthening links between parents and teachers can “contribute to increased learning opportunities for children, changed perceptions by teachers of parents’ knowledge and skills, changed perceptions by parents of their roles as teachers/educators, and greater understanding of children’s experiences and interests” (Mitchell & Cubey, 2003, p. xi).

I already held strong beliefs in valuing children and their families and accepting them and believing in their strengths. But I was introduced to thinking that truly provides space for living these beliefs. (Year 2 participant)

IQP has transformed the way I view my work, my relationship with my coworkers, the children and the families. I feel I am gaining a broader perspective which helps me to slow down and to take time, to be more understanding. (Year 2 participant)

I am immensely satisfied with the results of the IQP towards my practice. It has enhanced it on so many levels – my relationships with the children, co-workers, families and other professionals. (Vancouver 2006 participant, Year 3)

While many of the participants indicated that parents’ experiences changed in a positive way due to the use of pedagogical narrations in their centre, some found that it was a challenge to engage parents.

It continues to be a work in progress to have the parents engage with documentation. (Vancouver 2006 participant, Year 2)

I have not noticed a change in the parents. They do not necessarily take the time to read or look at the items posted in the centre. (Year 2 participant)

Still don’t see them getting much from it. Not from lack of trying though. I still say a workshop for parents on this would be great. (Year 2 participant)

Future Directions

Participants’ Views on Improving the IQ Project

Participants in the IQ Project were asked to give input with regard to improving the project. An overwhelming number of participants would like to see the project expand to meet a larger and/or more diverse audience.

Participants recommend the IQ Project for early learning partners including civic leaders, government officials, elementary school teachers, child development centres, community recreation programs, health authorities, social service workers, churches, family centres, remote communities, First Nations communities, non-licensed centres, kindergarten teachers, parents, college instructors, students, school districts, supported child development staff, and early intervention therapists.

In addition, participants made the following suggestions to improve the project and advance its goals:

- Develop courses at the college and university levels for students involved with child-related courses. Teach students how to set up a typical day at a centre that includes time for teachers to collaborate and discuss the very important learning that takes place every day.
- Provide a way to share and implement ideas with others who are not part of the learning circle.
- Work more closely with participants/centres that need more time to process new practices or approaches or are dealing with staff or organizational resistance.
- Increase LC participants' access to technological equipment (digital cameras, video cameras, computers, etc.) to create pedagogical narrations.
- Give participants an opportunity to visit other LC participants in their centres.
- Create a workshop that incorporates the main message of deconstructing modern approaches and co-constructing a more postmodern way of learning.
- Find ways to get more people involved.
- Address the shortage of substitutes to enable LC participants to engage in project activities.
- Provide a venue to share learning with the wider early childhood community, for example, at a sharing circle.
- Create more opportunities for networking among ECE professionals around the province.
- Give group workshops to include staff at LC participants' centres who are not involved in the project.
- Provide more funding for professional development (e.g., to attend other conferences and workshops).
- Continue next year!

Summary

Overall, participants were greatly excited about **the opportunity to engage in critical reflection**, and doing so has made positive changes to their practices with children. Participants appreciated the **ideas introduced** through the articles, speakers and discussions, as well as the **critical edge** the curriculum gave them. They also spoke about **the importance of having an opportunity to network and make connections with others in the ECE field**. The ongoing nature of the program, as well as the time it provided to think and reflect outside of their time with children, made them **feel empowered and valued as professionals**.

I have been fortunate enough to be a part of the IQ Project for two years and it has greatly affected the setting in which I practice/work. (Vancouver 2006 participant)

This experience was incredible. My understanding has deepened, and the possibility of learning more is very exciting. (South and Central Vancouver Island 2007 participant)

I have appreciated the opportunity to engage in real discussions about quality education and childcare with like-minded supportive colleagues. I felt supported, listened to, and a great sense of camaraderie within our group. I have been searching for further educational opportunities to find a deeper understanding, a more thoughtful academic approach, and was excited by what the IQ Project initially offered. Having now participated in the IQ Project I am more motivated than ever to continue the investigation and the learning. (South and Central Vancouver Island 2007 participant)

The IQ Project has exceeded all my expectations for professional development, and set me on a path for seeking new learning, sharing what I have learned thus far, and continuing to reflect, modify and expand my work with children. Thank you for giving me this amazing learning experience. (South and Central Vancouver Island 2007 participant)

Section IV: Investigating Quality With College Instructors

The broadening and deepening of discussions on quality with early childhood educators through the IQ Project professional learning component was expanded into the pre-service training sector. These activities involved collaboration with ECE college instructors. By adding a dedicated day for college instructors to each of the forums (see Appendix H for the invitation and agenda for one of these events), we have taken a capacity-building approach (Ball & Pence, 2006; Pence & Marfo, 2005; Pence, Habtom, & Chalamada, 2007), working from the existing strengths of pre-service programs.

Findings and Comments From College Instructors

The one-day professional development sessions dedicated to college instructors took place on June 12, 2007; November 16, 2007; February 29, 2008; and May 30, 2008 (See Section II). All were held in Victoria except for the May 2008 event, which took place in Richmond as part of the instructor's track at the ECEBC 2008 annual conference.

Feedback from the June 12, 2007 event is included in Section II of this report. Of the 78 college instructors who completed participant feedback sheets, 100% agreed or strongly agreed that **the presentation topics met their needs, they gained new information they could use in their work, the event met their expectations, and they would attend a future event.**

College instructors were asked to identify the three things they enjoyed most about the event. They enjoyed:

- Exposure to the wide range and depth of international perspectives on ECE.
- The opportunity to dialogue with colleagues and international speakers on topics that challenged their thinking about ECE.
- The opportunity to network with colleagues and share ideas about specific presentation topics such as community-informed policies and practices, documentation, advocacy, and diversity.

Below are some comments made by college instructors who attended the sessions.

I will continue my exploring and learning! (November 2007 participant)

This has been/continues to be an engaging, provocative series. (February 2008 participant)

Thank you so much for providing leadership in this area. (May 2008 participant)

Section V: The Early Years Specialization

This section of the report describes activities that took place through the IQ Project to enhance and augment the work of the School of Child and Youth Care (SCYC) at the University of Victoria in early years training. The initiatives accomplished by the IQ Project build on the newly developed Early Years Specialization at the University of Victoria's SCYC. The section highlights:

- The development of a system that allows students entering the SCYC without a previous ECE background (basic or post-basic) and obtain their ECE certification (through the ECE Registry).
- The development of a transfer system that allows ECE diploma graduates to enter directly into the SCYC degree program.
- The development and delivery of a graduate-level course with a focus on cross-cultural and community capacity in early years to be offered to masters and doctoral students at the SCYC.
- Graduate leadership and development that supports leaders in the early years field.

A key aspect to creating a strong and dynamic career ladder in the early years field is top-end leadership. The SCYC is now providing research and training opportunities to leaders within the field at Bachelors, Masters and Doctoral levels. It is important for the future of early years and early childhood education in BC and Canada that advanced education and opportunities not be limited to one discipline or profession.

Background

The Early Years Specialization was introduced by SCYC in September 2006 to meet the growing demand for early years practitioners who can work across a range of services for young children (0-6 years) and their families. Prior to this specialization, virtually no training was available in the province that specifically addressed professional education in the early years at the Bachelor of Arts degree level. A career ladder for individuals working in the early years did not exist. SCYC has taken leadership with the first BA program in the province that includes an early years specialization. Having the specialization in place enhances training opportunities and provides a rich education and career ladder for early childhood educators.

The Early Years Specialization at the SCYC is a dynamic program that focuses on issues related to early childhood theory and practice, broadens and deepens the notion of quality in the field of early child care and development, and responds to the challenging landscape of ideas about what it means to work with young children. It offers students a space to build their own critically informed positions on the field as well as their own practices. Critically informed positions are explored through, and informed by, the possibilities that postmodern, feminist, cultural, critical and postcolonial theories offer for social and individual transformations that disrupt the current social inequities faced by young children and their families within political, cultural and economic contexts.

The courses are instrumental in building on and expanding the knowledge and skills addressed in college-level certificate and diploma programs related to the early years. They include a variety of topics: Aboriginal issues; working with racialized migrant

communities; pedagogical narrations; social justice; practices within the context of communities; minor and major politics; young children's positions as social and cultural subjects; alternatives to 'quality' standards; and children's voices in policy making, among others.

In addition to required CYC courses, students in the Early Years Specialization must complete the four courses outlined below, as well as a fourth-year practicum (CYC 410/410A) in an early years setting. The four Early Years courses are as follows:

- **CYC 380: Practices for Young Children and Families: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives** (1.5 units). In this foundational course for the Early Years Specialization, the historical and philosophical trends that influence and shape services and policies for young children and their families are examined. Students investigate the roots of some of the current issues in the area of the early years through an applied analysis of local, national, and international approaches to services and policies for young children and their families. This analysis is framed within a social justice approach.
- **CYC 381: Leadership, Advocacy and Policy for the Early Years** (1.5 units). This course focuses on generating an understanding of leadership, advocacy and policy within the context of key political debates and controversies affecting the early years field. Areas of study include conceptualization of the nature of leadership for the early years; creation of networks and relationships with governmental and nongovernmental organizations; roles and strategies of advocacy groups concerned with early years services and decision-making processes within particular social, cultural, economic, and cultural contexts; policy development; and the role of early years practitioners as advocates engaged in a wider global context.
- **CYC 480: Advanced Applied Capacity Building for the Early Years** (1.5 units). The central focus of this course is the practitioner's role in strengthening community capacity for early years care and development, and developing supports for young children in community-based settings. Local, national and international case examples are used to explore the relationships between theory, practice and supportive policies. Students undertake a major project designed to stimulate transformative processes in the provision of early years services within the context of communities.
- **CYC 481: Issues of Assessment and Evaluation with Young Children and Families** (1.5 units). This course explores two different concepts: assessments of young children and families and program evaluation. The first part of the course challenges students to explore the implications and effects of assessment in the lives of children and families. Topics include a critical examination of data gathering and standardized assessments used in the early years; and consideration of the aims and use of data obtained. Alternative possibilities for assessment of children and families are addressed. The second part of the course focuses on the challenges and implications of the practices and methods of program evaluation. Students reflect on ethical implications; impacts on programs, practitioners, communities, families and young children; and relevance to diverse cultural contexts.

The Early Years Specialization prepares students for advanced work in the early years field. This might include a new career in government as an early years specialist or advancement as a community agency leader. In other instances, a Bachelor of Child and Youth Care (BCYC) with a specialization in the early years prepares students to perform at a higher level and demonstrate key leadership skills in their existing jobs. In other cases, the Early Years Specialization may represent a step towards enrolment in a masters program in the field.

Direct Transfer from an ECE Program Into SCYC

The IQ Project has assisted SCYC in creating a seamless transfer for students who pursue a BCYC following the acquisition of a Diploma in Early Childhood Education. A report describing the transfer process is included as Appendix I. The report provides an analysis of ECE competencies relative to BCYC course goals and learning outcomes, with a view to identifying: (a) the competencies that ECE students have already attained upon entry to the BCYC program from their previous education and training; and (b) the gaps they need to address in their BCYC coursework. The overall intention is to ensure that ECE students who transfer to the University of Victoria graduate with all the skills associated with a BCYC without having to take courses that focus on knowledge and skills they have already acquired. This process involved collaboration between SCYC and ECE training institutions.

As a result of the implementation of the report's recommendations, ECE transfer students will attain a BCYC with an Early Years Specialization in less time than they previously could, while developing all the knowledge and skills required for a BCYC.

ECE Certification and the Early Years Specialization

The IQ Project has developed a system that allows students entering SCYC without previous ECE training (basic or post-basic) to obtain ECE certification through their BCYC. A report titled *Certification of University of Victoria Graduates in Child and Youth Care with Early Years Specialization* was presented to the Ministry of Children and Families' ECE Registry in April 2008. (A draft of this report is included as Appendix J.) We are currently working to bridge the gaps identified in the report.

The report provides an update on how students who pursue a BCYC at the SCYC can attain certification to practice as early childhood educators in British Columbia. Specifically, the document outlines how BCYC students with an Early Years Specialization can meet the requirements for ECE certification as outlined in the ECE Registry's Child Care Occupational Sector Competencies. The relationship between provincial requirements and the ECE competencies is specified by the Ministry of Health. The report details the mapping of the ECE competencies to the relevant learning outcomes, objectives and activities in SCYC courses.

Graduate Courses on Early Years

In the summer of 2008, Dr. Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw developed a graduate course entitled Educating Young Children (see Appendix K for a course description). It is expected that this Early Years course will be offered to SCYC graduate students in the future.

Graduate Students

The IQ Project is currently working with four doctoral candidates and two masters students.

Section VI: Major Outputs and Outcomes

A great deal of enthusiasm has been generated among the IQ Project participants about the opportunity to engage in critical reflection and make valuable connections to the ECE field on local, provincial, national and international levels. People appear to appreciate the opportunity to encounter innovative ideas and to be informed about what is going on in the field of child care and early learning around the world. Several publications and presentations have emerged from the forums and the learning and sharing circles, as detailed below.

Major Publications

- Ball, J., & Pence, A. (2006). *Supporting Indigenous children's development: Community-university partnerships*. Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.
- Dahlberg, G., Moss, P., & Pence, A. (2007). *Beyond quality in early childhood care and education* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge/Falmer.
- Garcia, M., Pence, A., & Evans, J.L. (2008). *Africa's future, Africa's challenge: Early childhood care and development in sub-Saharan Africa*. Washington: World Bank.
- Pacini-Ketchabaw, V., & Pence, A. (Eds.). (2005). *Canadian early childhood education: Broadening and deepening discussions of quality*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Child Care Federation.

Journal Special Issues

A special issue of *Alberta Journal of Education Research* will be edited by V. Pacini-Ketchabaw & L. Prochner (in press).

A special issue of *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood* published in 2008, was edited by Alan Pence. Articles in this issue include the following:

- Niles, M., & Byers, L. (2008). History matters: United States policy and indigenous early childhood intervention. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 9(3), 191-201.
- Nsamenang, B. (2008). Agency in early childhood learning and development in Cameroon. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 9(3), 211-223
- Pacini-Ketchabaw, V., & Berikoff, A. (2008). The politics of difference and diversity: From young children's violence to creative power expressions. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 9(3), 256-264.
- Pence, A. (2008). Introduction. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 9(3).
- Pence, A., & Pacini-Ketchabaw, V. (2008). Discourses on quality care: The Investigating 'Quality' Project and the Canadian experience. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 9(3), 241-255.
- Ritchie, J. (2008). Honouring Māori subjectivities within early childhood education in Aotearoa. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 9(3), 202-210.

- Soto, L. (2008). Hearts of compassion: A concern for violence against children, *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 9(3), 234-240.
- Viruru, R. (2008). Childhood labor in India: Issues and complexities. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 9(3), 224-233.

A special issue of *Interaction*, published in Winter 2007, was coordinated by Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw and Alan Pence. Articles in this issue include the following:

- MacNaughton, G. (2007). Transforming early childhood curriculum: Educators making curriculum, making change. *Interaction*, 20(4), 27-28.
- Pacini-Ketchabaw, V., Elliot, E., & Berikoff, A. (2007). Reflections on meaning making with early childhood educators. *Interaction*, 20(4), 29-30.
- Pacini-Ketchabaw, V., & Pence, A. (2007). Innovative approaches in ECE: An international dialogue. *Interaction*, 20(4), 24.
- Swadener, B.B., & Cannella, G. (2007). Reconceptualizing early childhood education in North America: A brief introduction. *Interaction*, 20(4), 25-26.

A special issue of the *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, published in 2007, was edited by Carmen Rodríguez, Alan Pence and Margo Greenwood. Articles in this issue include the following:

- Endfield, C. (2007). Defining quality: New insights for training practitioners. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 30(1), 145-157.
- Fasoli, L., & Johns, V. (2007). Children's services in remote Australian Indigenous communities: Practices and challenges. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 30(1), 83-100.
- Greenwood, M., De Leeuw, S., & Ngaroimata Fraser, T. (2007). Aboriginal children and early childhood development and education in Canada: Linking the past and the present to the future. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 30(1), 5-18.
- Greenwood, M., & de Leeuw, S. (2007). Teachings from the land: Indigenous people, our health, our land, and our children. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 30(1), 48-53.
- Iokepa-Guerrero, N., & Rodríguez de France, C. (2007). Nest of voices: Early child care and education in Hawaii. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 30(1), 41-47.
- Martin, K., & Rodríguez de France, C. (2007). Australian early childhood education and care: The fourth discourse. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 30(1), 19-27.
- McClutchie Mita, D. (2007). Māori language revitalization: A vision for the future. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 30(1), 101-107.
- Niles, M., Byers, L., & Krueger, E. (2007). Indigenous early childhood programs and interventions. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 30(1), 108-125.
- Pakai, E. (2007). Initial Teacher Education Program in Aotearoa/New Zealand. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 30(1), 158-175.

- Pence, A. (2007). Creating space for innovation: Responsive program development in the borderlands of tertiary education. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 30(1), 176-188.
- Priest, K., King, S., Nungurrayi Brown, W., Nangala, I., & Nangala, M. (2007). Warrki jarrinjaku jintangkamanu purananjaku 'working together everyone and listening': Aboriginal child rearing in remote central Australia. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 30(1), 61-74.
- Rameka, L. (2007). Māori approaches to assessment. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 30(1), 126-144.
- Rousselot, N. (2007). A multitude of identities. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 30(1), 54-60.
- Terbasket, K., & Greenwood, M. (2007). British Columbia First Nations Head Start Program: An overview of policy development 1998-2007. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 30(1), 75-82.
- Walker, R., & Rodríguez de France, C. (2007). Foundations of ECD in Aotearoa/New Zealand. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 30(1), 28-40.

Other Publications

- Pence, A., & Pacini-Ketchabaw, V. (submitted). The Investigating Quality Project. In N. Howe & L. Prochner (Eds.), *New Directions in Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada*.
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- Pacini-Ketchabaw, V., & Kind, S. (2009, February). *Early childhood educators investigating quality child care in BC and Exploring the BC Early Learning Framework.* Children the Heart of the Matter Conference, Vancouver, BC.
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- Pacini-Ketchabaw, V. (2007, June). *Reconceptualizing practices in early childhood education: Opening towards diversity.* Reconceptualizing Early Childhood Education Conference, Victoria, BC.

Conference Keynote Presentations

- Pacini-Ketchabaw, V. (2008, April). *Diversity and difference in the early years: Rethinking practice.* Keynote address at The Second Child and Youth Care in Action Conference, Victoria, BC.
- Pence, A. (2007, September). *Creating the global child: Childhood in an era of globalization.* Keynote address at New Zealand Early Childhood Convention, Rotorua, New Zealand.
- Pence, A. (2007, June). *Broadening and deepening our understanding of quality: Working towards inclusion and equity.* Pre-conference keynote presentation at 'Set Sail for Quality on an Ocean of Caring' National Child Care Conference, Halifax, Nova Scotia.
- Pence, A. (2007, May). *The hundred languages of early childhood care and education.* Keynote address at 'Honouring Childhood' Early Childhood Educators of British Columbia (ECEBC) Conference, Richmond, BC.
- Pence, A. (2006, October). Lavelly Lecture: *The past, present and possible future of ECE in North America.* University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida.
- Pence, A. (2006, June). *Seeking the other 99 languages of ECE.* Keynote address at 'Leading the Way to Quality' Canadian Child Care Federation (CCCCF) Conference, Calgary, Alberta.

Other Activities

Inspired by their participation in the IQ Project, several early childhood educators engaged in a series of activities that allowed them to continue the work they had begun through the learning circles. Some activities are detailed below:

- Throughout the process of professional learning, early childhood educators applied ideas that emerged during the learning circles to their own practice. The work generated by the early childhood educators inspired parents to engage in the process of pedagogical narrations and ask for more information. Due to this interest, two of the LC educators in Victoria and one in Vancouver hosted an informational session for parents and centre staff to come and learn more about the IQ Project and pedagogical narrations.
- The second phase Vancouver LC group saw the need to share the ideas of pedagogical narrations with their staff members. They organized a professional development workshop that involved 36 ECE staff members from five different centres around the Lower Mainland.
- A group of four ECEs (Debbie Thompson, Colleen Thompson, Megan Brame and Kim Atkinson) who participated in the IQ Project presented a workshop *Rethinking Practice: Educators Working in the Postmodern Turn* at the Second Child and Youth Care in Action Conference, Victoria, BC, in April 2008.
- A second group of four ECEs (Natalie Lucas, Emily Mliczko, Anne Favlo and Linda Murdoch) who participated in the IQ Project presented a workshop *Rethinking Practice: Educators Working in the Postmodern Turn* at the Early Childhood Educators of British Columbia 2008 Conference, Richmond, BC, in May 2008.
- A group of five IQ learning circle facilitators (Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw, Laurie Kocher, Sylvia Kind, Iris Berger and Ahna Berikoff) presented a workshop *Early Childhood Educators Working Across, Between and Within 'Modernist' and 'Reconceptualist' Paradigms* at the 16th International Reconceptualizing ECE Conference, University of Victoria, Victoria, BC, in June 2008.

As a result of many of the issues discussed in the Early Years Specialization courses at SCYC at the University of Victoria, a number of undergraduate and graduate students have become involved with the project. For instance:

- A group of six CYC graduate students (Mackenzie Dean, Marina Harpe, Cynthia Lee, Elicia Loiselle, April Mallett and Nathan Patten) presented a workshop *Critical and Postmodern Theories and Their Application to CYC Coursework and Practice* with Dr. Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw and Dr. Alan Pence at the 2nd Child and Youth Care in Action Conference, Victoria, BC, in April 2008.

Section VII: Conclusion and Recommendations

The IQ Project sparked excitement within the early childhood community in British Columbia and outside the province and the country. The project demonstrated the need for innovations that have the capacity to transform theory and practice in the ECE field. Key stakeholders in early childhood were given an opportunity to engage in critical reflection and to share information and ideas. The conferences and forums that the IQ Project sponsored placed British Columbia firmly at the cutting edge of early childhood education theory and practice, both in Canada and internationally.

To build on the momentum created by the project and to capitalize on the province's investment to date in rejuvenating the ECE field, the IQ Project makes the following recommendations.

Recommendations for Policy Development

The IQ Project recommends that the Province of British Columbia:

- Broaden and deepen constrained definitions of quality to allow for the creation of dynamic, innovative, and sustainable early childhood environments that respect British Columbia's diverse cultural communities.
- Create further opportunities for policy makers in the province's ECE field to be exposed to the wealth of knowledge that exists in the field internationally.
- Create ECE policies that support flexible, diverse and context-sensitive practice.

Recommendations for Training

The IQ Project recommends that the Province of British Columbia:

- Develop training that expands beyond the certificate and diploma options currently available in the province and allows for a more comprehensive educational and career ladder involving an appropriate range of professional programs at the Bachelor degree level.
- Develop training that exposes future graduates to diverse perspectives and cutting-edge approaches to quality early childhood education and care, such as those included in the IQ Project.

Recommendations for Practice

The IQ Project recommends that the Province of British Columbia:

- Support capacity building to develop innovative ECE practices that include and involve diverse children and families.
- Create the role of regional community early years facilitators to act as leaders, mentors and coaches to groups of ECE practitioners across BC.
- Create opportunities for ongoing in-service professional development.
- Create and promote opportunities to continue and support the networking and dialogue among early childhood educators that the IQ Project engendered.

- Create and support centres of innovation that demonstrate sustainable, dynamic, quality early childhood environments.

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List of Appendices

Appendix A: Forum Posters, Invitations and Agendas

Appendix B: Forum Participant Feedback Sheet

Appendix C: Learning Circle Facilitators

Appendix D: Learning and Sharing Circles Content

Appendix E: Phase II Curriculum

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Appendix G: Sample Pedagogical Narration

Appendix H: College Instructors’ Invitation and Agenda

Appendix I: Transfer Report

Appendix J: ECE Certification and Early Years Specialization Draft Report

Appendix K: “Educating Young Children” Course Outline

Appendix L: Year 3 Project Evaluation Survey Results