

**VIDEO**  
**STUDENTS GENERATING CURRICULUM**

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## Introduction

This action research project contains a video and a written component to answer the question "What are the results when grade ones and twos are given the opportunity to demonstrate their learning by generating projects based on their interests?" The video demonstrates how capable and successful grade one and two students were when they were involved in generating curriculum. The significance of allowing students to design and to communicate a portion of their learning based on their interests is portrayed in the video. Throughout the video, research is included on the print screens and is elaborated on by the researcher's explanations. Clips of students are used to reinforce the research points and summaries are placed throughout each section of the video. There were two teachers, Dianne Fisher, the grade two teacher, and myself, the grade one teacher, involved in implementing generative curriculum with the students. Only I was involved in producing the video and writing the observations and the reflections that are included in this paper.

The written component is divided into two sections. The first portion of the text has been developed to help teachers understand the process that Fisher and I followed when implementing a generative curriculum. This segment evolved after a number of practicing teachers and student teachers previewed the video for the researcher and they expressed an interest in learning how the generative curriculum process was implemented. The remainder of the paper includes my personal reflections as I compared myself to the students and recognized that I was generating my own curriculum in a manner similar to the students. The knowledge that I gained has caused me to question some of my teaching beliefs and practices.

## Rationale

The motivation for this investigation was a desire to improve my knowledge about generative curriculum and to enhance the students' educational life. Issues that were dealt with were an integral part of the educational environment of my teaching situation because I was personally involved in this research in an attempt to bring about improvements in my educational practice by involving students and parents. The study is recognized as action research because the research was directly connected to my work place and involved Fisher, the students, their parents and myself. Kemmis and McTaggart (1990) describe action research as a spiraling action. A plan is developed and acted upon, while making observations and reflecting on the practice. The plan may then be modified and new observations will be noted which will direct whether revisions are necessary. This process tends to occur on an ongoing basis as the researcher continually interprets data gathered. The new knowledge is assimilated with prior experience and linked to research.

The procedure for this action research project was flexible to allow for necessary changes as Fisher and I myself observed and reflected on the processes that the students followed while generating projects. As I produced the video I reflected on the effectiveness of the editing process and the needs of the perspective audiences, which caused me to adapt and revise my plans. The purpose of producing the video was to illustrate the significance of the use of generative curriculum as a learning process for students and to share this knowledge with teachers and parents. Data was gathered by video taping the generative curriculum learning environment and then the tapes were used to analyze whether generative curriculum was an effective learning procedure for grade one and two students. The medium of video was chosen because a video can

provide concrete evidence of what the children are doing. The audience has time to view and reflect on the authentic learning environment. I plan to use the video to help bridge the lack of common ground that can occur at times with parents who are uncomfortable with changes in education that they perceive to be without foundation. It is anticipated that after viewing the video, supportive parents will become more aware of how capable students can be when given an opportunity to generate a portion of their learning as well as other benefits that can occur.

A personal goal of mine was to become more knowledgeable about using technology as I developed my final project in the Masters' program. I had minimal experience operating a video camera and no experience in producing a video with the use of the computer at the beginning of the project. I would like the teachers who view the video to realize how digital video has become more accessible as a research tool even for the inexperienced. Despite the imperfections of the video, it clearly illustrates the answer to the research question.

Pages 4 to 16 of the document have purposely been organized with one topic per page. The intent was to accommodate busy teachers who may be interested in trying to implement generative curriculum. Teachers are often inundated daily with documents and are provided with very little time to read and to implement material received. For that reason I have attempted to simplify the document so that it is easy to read and apply. I would like the video to be a resource for teachers interested in learning about generative curriculum.

### Why Generative Curriculum?

For many years I had been searching for a way to allow the students to have more opportunities to generate projects based on their interests rather than the teacher always establishing the learning. The inspiration for the video research was a result of reading about the learning experiences provided by a grade one teacher in the book "Thinking and Learning Together" (Fisher, 1995). The author introduced me to her method of students generating curriculum and Fisher (not the author of the book) and I adapted the concept to match our students and included the Multiple Intelligences theory of learning (Gardner, 1983). My research question that evolved was, 'What are the results when grade one and two students are given the opportunity to demonstrate their learning by generating projects based on their interests?' I think my video clearly demonstrated the results that are possible when students are encouraged to generate curriculum.

A generative curriculum helps learners apply the processes of reading, writing, speaking, listening, art, music, drama, and mathematics to gain meaning and understanding for the content areas of social studies and science, with children's literature playing a central part in integrating both processes and content areas. (Fisher, 1995, p. 23)

Generative curriculum is not an add-on to an already busy day in school. It is the core of the learning environment. The task is to fit skills and content to the student rather than fit the learner to the curriculum.

### Multiple Intelligences Account

For the school year, 1997 - 1998, the grade two students (then in grade one) and their parents had been introduced to the theory of Multiple Intelligences based on the work of Howard Gardner. Gardner's theory of intelligence suggests that learners have eight or more intelligences that should be valued with equal importance. His research led him to propose that the eight intelligences are tools for learning, problem-solving, generating new questions to solve and fashioning products in a context-rich environment. The Multiple Intelligences are verbal linguistic, logical mathematical, visual spatial, bodily kinesthetic, musical rhythmic, interpersonal, intrapersonal and naturalist. Each person has his or her own unique combination of these intelligences and within a lifetime, the intelligences can and do become altered as a result of experiences. Gardner (1983) stated that it was of the utmost importance that all of the Multiple Intelligences and all of the different combinations of Multiple Intelligences should be recognized and nurtured.

In the section on my reflections, I discuss the Multiple Intelligences in more depth and as well, I have included a bibliography that lists resources that aided in my understanding of Multiple Intelligences.

As a part of my Masters Program, I conducted two practicums with Multiple Intelligences as the focus when these students were in grade one. At the same time, Fisher was a co-learner with her class. The topics for my practicums were "Enhancing Learning With Multiple Intelligences" and "Helping Parents Learn About Multiple Intelligences." Fisher and myself continued to present the Multiple Intelligences theory as the main learning focus for the school year 1998 - 1999. The grade one children involved in the practicums were the grade two students in the video project. They became role models for the grade one class portrayed in the video.



In my work with Multiple Intelligences and generative curriculum, I have discovered that there is much less frustration and a sense of failure for the students who have traditionally been labeled as learning-disabled. In this investigation, the students used several of the Multiple Intelligences while working on a project. Although the students tended to choose their strongest intelligence, it appeared that they also showed growth in weaker intelligences. An example was when a young girl wanted to use her strength in musical rhythmic intelligence to sing a song; she used her weakest intelligence, verbal linguistic intelligence, to write the song using the pattern of a familiar song.

The basic knowledge that all students must master, such as language arts, mathematics, history, and science does not need to be taught in the same manner for everyone. Frustration and academic failure might be greatly reduced if teachers presented information in numerous ways, offering students multiple options for success. (Campbell, Campbell & Dickinson, 1996, p. xxi)

### Background of the Grade One and Two Students

There were 24 two students, consisting of 17 boys and 7 girls involved in the research. There was one special needs student on a behavior management plan who received the support of a childcare worker for about one half of each day. Four boys were not progressing at the level of what would be expected of a grade two child. Some of these children were highlighted in the video. If the viewer does not know the children, it is very difficult to locate them because of the success that the five students experienced. When these children had been in grade one, I was their teacher.

Of the 24 grade one students participating in the research, there were 7 boys and 17 girls. There was a range of abilities within this group of students. Prior to entering the grade one class, one of the girls had repeated kindergarten and had spent the afternoons in my classroom. This young girl has a prominent part in the video because she demonstrated capabilities that were not evident prior to her taking part in generative curriculum. Jensen (1996) theorized that many of the "slow" learners become articulate and engaged when they are allowed to learn within an environment that enables them to use their unique intelligences. I believe that the video supports his theory.

## School Features

The elementary school, located in southeastern British Columbia, had been in existence for four and one half years at the time of this research. It is a new building that has a sense of openness with its large windows, skylights and walls that slide open in several of the classrooms. All classrooms have windows on the hallway walls or have hall walls that slide open. The school has nine classrooms with classes from Kindergarten to grade seven. Some of the teachers trade classes or team-teach. School wide events are held throughout the year, such as multi-age art centres. Parents are encouraged to visit and participate in classes. Many parents either visit classes or observe through the windows. The hallways are about three times the size of regular hallways and it is customary to see students working outside of the classroom in co-operative groups or with parents. In the school you can always hear and see students learning. It is not a silent school.

The staff had very clear expectations about what type of school they wanted to be a part of. When the school opened, the staff collectively developed a mission statement and worked together to implement goals that we perceived to be necessary for an effective school. The teachers seem to respect the different methods of teaching that each employs. As in any school there are very traditional teachers as well as teachers who are more progressive.

The students feel that they are important. The principal and teachers spend a lot of time with students with behavior problems trying to help them gain a sense of self worth and to help them learn different ways to handle problems that they encounter. Students are acknowledged in recognition assemblies, on the PA system, in the newsletter and work is displayed throughout the school. The school has a very positive atmosphere.

## Grade One and Two Environment

During the year prior to when generative curriculum was implemented, the wall between the grade one and two classrooms remained open to make one large room. The students had a very large area to work within because the grade one wall facing the hallway was also kept open. Since September 1998 the students had many opportunities to work together when Fisher and myself planned themes together. Approximately one third to one half of the learning experiences included both grades. Within the theme work, the children had many choices of what activity they could choose to demonstrate their learning but they did not have an opportunity to offer input for choice of the topic studied or what types of activities might be included. For three or four mornings each week, we provided a choice time for about 30 minutes to start the day immediately after announcements. Choice time allowed the children the freedom to choose anything within both classrooms that interested them. Activities that were often carried out were building with blocks or connecting materials, woodworking, crafts, dress-up, drawing and painting as well as many other choices. The activities during choice did not have any particular focus, just whatever interested the child at the moment. In January 1999 we began the generative curriculum project.

### Implementing Generative Curriculum

The following section shows the process that we followed. These students had a background of having opportunities to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways due to their participation in the Multiple Intelligences practicums, class theme work and the multi-age art centres conducted by the school. A class without these prior experiences perhaps would not develop the extensive presentations of learning as the students in the study, but given the opportunity I feel that most or all students would experience success. I believe that all students have a personal interest in something, although they may not have a clear idea of how to pursue their interest. The children in the research project had very definite plans that they wanted to follow.

Children are asking for opportunities to test their competence. When that competence is affirmed, perceptions of self as *able* grow and become building blocks in the developmental process of can-do. Ego is strengthened, self-esteem blossoms, and children's sense of personal power - that perceived ability to make a change in your environment or in yourself - is significantly advanced.

(Wasserman, 1990, p. 4)

### How the Students' Interests Were Revealed

Each student drew a picture about his or her interest. The students worked privately because we wanted to find out what each personal interest was rather than having students choose topics because their best friend liked something. The pictures were glued onto a large mural depicting the universe, which included the ocean, land, sky and space. Included is a list of statements that support why it is important to allow children the opportunity to express their learning based on their interests.

The interests of the children are the driving force in a generative curriculum.

When learners pursue their own interests, engagement is at its highest. (Fisher, 1995, p. 24)

Interests are the signs and symptoms of growing power. I believe that they represent dawning capacities. Accordingly the constant and careful observation of interests is of the utmost importance for the educator. (Dewey, reprinted 1997, p. 22)

When we disregard student purposes and values, we are tossing out the essential glue that acts as the key to the depth of understanding we wish students to acquire. We then obstruct meaningful learning.

(Caine & Caine, 1997, p. 112)

### How the Students Generated Ideas for Projects

The students were asked to form partnerships, with a grade one and two working together from within their area of interest. The partners were given the task of generating possible activities that could be set up to demonstrate learning based on Multiple Intelligences thinking. When we presented the assignment, we told the children that during the prior year, we had done all the planning but this year we wanted to find out their ideas as well. The students recorded their plans on an 11 x 17 sheet of paper that was divided into eight sections. Each section had a symbol for one of the intelligences. The partners drew pictures or wrote down as many ideas as conceivable for each intelligence area. Fisher and myself attempted to conference with as many students as possible in order to record the children's ideas. Our initial plan had been to gather all of the students' ideas and to type up Multiple Intelligences centre instructions that the students could refer to when planning their projects. After some deliberation, we decided that this might limit planning and decision making by the students. The results that we received indicated to us that the students were capable of proposing many thought-provoking projects and therefore we decided to allow the students to develop their own plans. The video verifies how capable the students were at generating ideas.

### How Partnerships or Teams were Established

At the next meeting, when the two classes met to review the large data analysis pictograph, it became apparent how groups could possibly be formed based on what the children wanted to study. A rule was that each partnership or team had to be working from the same interest section as well as include both grade ones and twos if possible. We wanted to have the grade twos provide leadership and to act as role models if necessary. The size of the groups varied. Larger groups of six or seven were successful if there happened to be a strong leader with organizational skills as is demonstrated by the space group in the video. Throughout the five months that the students generated projects, groups changed both in size and in members. As time went by, grade groups formed because of the comfort of familiar people but also because the grade ones became confident learners and presenters and needed less guidance by the grade twos. The common thread for group formation seemed to be from interest in a topic; however, a few friends did gravitate into forming teams as time went by. Some students entered the generative curriculum project needing direction from their peers but as the months progressed, it was evident that these same students became confident at directing their own learning. Johnson, Johnson and Holubec's (1988) research indicated that peers have a strong effect on productivity whether it is in an educational setting or in the workplace. "Greater achievement is typically found in collaborative situations where peers work together than in situations where individuals work alone" (p. 3:7).



### The Criteria that the Students Used to Plan Projects

The criteria that the grade two teacher and myself established was that the students:

- were required to find ways to extend their current learning of a topic or a procedure
- needed to use resource materials to gather new information
- had to share their knowledge with others
- must use several of the Multiple Intelligences in the process.

The students used the same model of Multiple Intelligences planning worksheet discussed previously to record their plans. Most of the groups recorded several activities for each intelligence area. Having the students propose a variety of activities before starting helped them work on their interest in depth. It was the students' responsibility to prepare for each workshop session by bringing the required items from home or by letting us know what materials they needed us to gather from the school storeroom. After the children completed one of the activities, many continued independently in another intelligence area rather than quitting. Because there was an expectation for the students to share their learning with others, many of the students developed a multi-media presentation to teach or entertain the audience. The children in this research were practicing skills and qualities that will be desired for the future.

Many business leaders in the twenty-first century want individuals who can be in charge when left on their own, who can also be good team players, who can work with multiple cultures and languages, who are innovative and creative in their thinking, and who focus on possibilities rather than "right" answers or doing what they are told. (Caine & Caine, 1997, p. 4)

### How the Students Collected Information

We accumulated library books that we felt would be appropriate for the children's understanding. During buddy reading time, the children chose sections of their information books that they wanted the older buddy to read because most of the non-fiction books in the school library are difficult for grade ones and twos to easily read. Both the grade one and two classes were involved in a buddy reading program with intermediate students two times a week. Fieldtrips, videos, tapes and resource people supplemented as research material for the projects. Parents helped students find material on the Internet. We were not required to be experts on everything but we needed to be able to help the students locate what they wanted to explore. We supported the students, valued where they were in their learning, and facilitated the extension of the children to move beyond their comfort zone.

Jensen (1996) stated, "In this fast moving information age, the preferred sources of information should be the student's real life experience, magazines, computers, videos, television, journals and libraries" (p. 303).

### How the Students' Learning was Assessed

The workshop setup provided a venue for many opportunities to observe authentic evidence of learning while students worked on projects. We observed:

- the process that students followed and whether students completed their projects
- quality of finished products and presentations of learning
- how students handled and resolved conflicts
- methods children used to overcome obstacles they encountered
- the progress students demonstrated over several months as they gained more and more independence
- how group dynamics changed over time
- strengths and weaknesses in the students' Multiple Intelligences areas.

After each presentation of learning, the students evaluated the presenters' work. Children were encouraged to express what they thought the presenters did well, what intelligences they noticed in the work as well as what recommendations they could give that might make the presentation even better for another time. Unfortunately in the filming, much of the children's voices were too soft to be heard. It was evident that the students learned from their peers because if one group added an element, such as introductory music, that the classes thought was effective, then other groups tried to incorporate a similar idea.

Armstrong (1994) concurs that "authentic measures allow students to show what they've learned in context - in a setting that closely matches the environment in which they would be expected to show that learning in real life situations" (p. 116).

### Computer Software and Programs Utilized to Produce the Video

- My IBM computer features - 10 gigabytes hard drive

- 128 megs of RAM

It is possible to run the Avid cinema program with less gigabytes and RAM than I have but you have to consider what else you have on your computer. Videos take a lot of space on the hard drive.

- Avid Cinema - a user-friendly video editing program

- includes a tutorial guide to help the inexperienced learner

- features include - bringing video into the computer

- editing the movie

- creating effects for transitions between clips

- adding music and narration

- superimposing text over picture

- ability to save as a video, for electronic publishing

- on the Internet, in e-mail and on a CD-ROM

- Video/audio card - ATI 128 Wonder

- PowerPoint - useful for creating print screens

- provides more creativity for backgrounds with colour and textures as well as commercial templates

- possible to incorporate WordArt.

## Reflections: a Comparison Between the Students and Myself as Learners Generating Curriculum

The intent of this portion of the project is to analyze the learning process that I experienced to complete the video project and to relate my discoveries about what I learned about myself to observations that I made about the children as they participated in the research. When I began the study, the main focus was to find out what would happen if I permitted young children to generate projects based on their interests. As I proceeded, I began to recognize that there seemed to be many similarities between the children as learners and me, the adult, as a learner. I might not have made these connections if I had decided to do my research in a method that I was familiar with. When I entered the unknown territory of developing a video, I was at a beginning stage of learning, resembling that of the young students making their first attempts at designing a project based on their interest.

The idea that learning is more effective when children have some ownership of choosing what to study; setting the objectives and of designing a method to communicate that knowledge has intrigued me for a long time. This has been the driving force behind my Master's video project both with the work that I carried out with the students and with myself as a learner.

I have learned a tremendous amount about generative curriculum, video development, the ways students learn through generative curriculum, and about myself as a learner because I have had the freedom to construct my own learning in my final project. The video explains and demonstrates my understanding of generative curriculum and what I have learned about the students. The manner in which I produced the video clearly illustrates my competency at making a video. The remainder of this paper

compares my own learning to the learning that I observed in my students. The knowledge that I gained about myself has impacted my teaching by causing me to question some of my beliefs and practices.

#### Realization That I Am Engaged in My Own Generative Curriculum

At one stage of the video production I was asked why I persisted with my video project when it was evident that I was experiencing many difficulties and that I often needed to redo my work. After contemplating my reasons, I realized that I have been totally engaged in my own generative curriculum. Because I had a sense of ownership and pride in this work, I was determined to create a product that I would be proud of. As well, I had a desire for the video to be recognized by my peers, parents of the students and the professors of the University of Lethbridge as being of good quality. This realization dawned on me many months after completing the video taping of the students and sometime after I began placing the video clips on my computer. It was an Ah ha! moment. The video pulled at something in me. It is more than whether or not I have a persistent nature which causes me to complete things that I start because that is not the case. I have started crafts that I have lost interest in and I will never return to complete them. I do however stick with tenacity whenever I have a keen interest in learning.

#### How I Incorporated the Multiple Intelligences in the Project

I did not know anything about video development when I made the decision to try to make one to demonstrate my learning. My original goal was to stretch myself to use another medium than the written form. I now wonder if I was unconsciously thinking about the Multiple Intelligences theory of learning that I introduced to my students over the past three years. Multiple Intelligences have been a predominant focus in my classroom and Masters work. For my final project, I wanted to express myself in a way

other than the Verbal Linguistic Intelligence, expressed through writing. By developing a video, I have had to use my Visual Spatial Intelligence, Intrapersonal Intelligence, Interpersonal Intelligence, Logical Mathematical Intelligence and Musical Rhythmic Intelligence with the support of the Verbal Linguistic Intelligence. I have attempted to explain how I incorporated these intelligences throughout the process of making the video.

### Visual Spatial Intelligence

Visual-spatial intelligence includes an aggregate of related skills including visual discrimination, recognition, projection, mental imagery, spatial reasoning, image manipulation, and the duplication on inner or external imagery, any or all of which may be expressed in a single person. (Campbell et al., 1996, p. 96)

I like having the freedom to present my learning in different media. I think that's one of the reasons I decided to produce a video. With the advances in computers, I found it challenging, exciting and motivating to attempt to display my learning and engage my audience with visual spatial intelligence. When I edited the video, I experimented with a variety of procedures on the computer to make the video visually pleasing to me and hopefully to my audience. Jensen (1996) stated that the most powerful influences on learners are concrete, vivid images because "the brain has an attentional bias for high contrast and novelty and that 90 percent of the brain's sensory input is from visual sources" (p. 56). The implications are that my video will conceivably have more impact on my audience than if I expressed myself solely through the medium of a printed document.

During the past ten years that I have been a primary teacher, I have observed that visual spatial intelligence is one of the primary intelligences that young children naturally

pursue in play. It is an intelligence that does not seem to be valued as children get older. Young children usually start out with great imaginations, visible in the strange creations made from crafts or building constructions. The children in this research did not seem to have any difficulty planning and creating visual projects. Their first response to the request for them to demonstrate what they knew or had learned was to devise and make a concrete product or visual representation as opposed to deciding to write about what they knew.

### Musical Rhythmic Intelligence

Campbell et al. (1996) indicated that a person with a well-developed musical intelligence, listens and responds to a variety of sounds including the human voice, environmental sounds, and music, and organizes such sounds into meaningful patterns. I struggled with using musical rhythmic intelligence in my teaching because I have always felt very inadequate in the musical department.

Jensen (1996) stated that we rely so much on our voices to deliver meaning and that we may be under-utilizing music. He suggested that presenters should use music in their presentations as a powerful way to get the brain into a better state of readiness for learning. This is one of the reasons that I decided to include music in my video even though I am not sure how to use it to make the presentation effective. I encouraged the students to increase their musical intelligence by incorporating music as some part of their presentations. Therefore many students created songs, formed bands and incorporated music and sound effects.

### Logical Mathematical Intelligence

Playing with numbers, a joy of combining and recombining them, finding relationships - these are the signs of the logical mathematical intelligence at work.



Ordering, counting, comparing, categorizing objects as well as determining pattern and relations among them are all marks of the logical mathematical intelligence. (Kagan & Kagan, 1998, p. 4.12)

I needed to be very conscious of time while editing the video as well as having to consider the organizational form to make the most logical sense. I applied logical mathematical intelligence when I interpreted the data that was recorded on the original videos and compared the similarities and differences between my learning and that of the students.

### Interpersonal Intelligence

Interpersonal intelligence enables us to understand and communicate with others, noting differences in moods, temperaments, motivations, and skills. It includes the ability to form and maintain relationships and to assume various roles within groups such as group members or leaders. (Campbell et al., 1996, p. 160)

Networking has been crucial in my attempt to create a video. I searched for people who had more expertise than I did to help solve problems that I have encountered throughout. Computer experts, parents, teachers, the Masters' group, friends and my family have provided support, without which I could not have done this project independently because I just did not have enough prior experience. Without them, I would have given up long ago. My vision for the completed video would have been so far out of reach if it had been expected that I work through the process alone. I would not have attempted to take the risks that I have.

Collaborative learning works for young children in pre-schools as readily as for a team of lawyers working on a difficult legal brief. It is often the case that we can toss ideas around for longer and are more motivated to continue learning when we

work together. Hearing different points of view, the clash of minds, the 'exchange' of ideas, the listing of problems and their solutions, all contribute to the development of thinking skills and deeper levels of understanding. (Hill & Hill, 1990, p. 3)

In order to display some of the written points that I wanted to include in the video clips I decided to learn how to use PowerPoint. This was a time of trial and error as my husband and I attempted to comprehend possible computer capabilities. I often was the person who wondered if something could be done and my husband did a lot of the computer experimenting. This collaborative method of learning was very similar to situations that I observed in the classroom when the children were working on their projects. My husband became engaged in my project because of his fascination with the capabilities of the computer as well as his desire to help me. Many times the children chose to learn about a topic after observing others taking part in a project or because they started to help someone and they did not want to leave until the activity was finished. Unfortunately we usually asked the child to return and finish a project before pursuing a new interest. I now need to reconsider my thinking. My husband did not take over my project but his input increased my learning. I wonder what would happen if young children were given the same opportunity to continue helping a peer when they are part way through their own project. The next time that I observe this happening in the class, I will try to wait and see what happens. If I feel there is a need to redirect the student, I can do that but not before the child has the opportunity to help for an extended time. Will this result in the child having many projects unfinished? Should I expect my students to complete everything they start? These are considerations I need to contemplate more the next time I have students work on projects of their own interest. It has been my

expectation that you finish what you start - at least if you are a student. I know many adults who move on to something else after they discovered that whatever they chose to do did not really meet their needs or interest.

I allowed my students to find the support they needed. When I think of the many products that the students developed, I know that if the students had not been permitted to work with others, they would have been very limited. It can be very difficult to expand as a learner when in isolation.

### Intrapersonal Intelligence

Armstrong (1994) defines intrapersonal intelligence as the ability to adapt oneself by developing new behaviors based on self-knowledge. "This intelligence includes having an accurate picture of oneself (one's strengths and limitations); awareness of inner moods, intentions, motivations, temperaments, and desires; and the capacity for self-discipline, self-understanding, and self-esteem" (p. 3).

As I proceeded with the video project, I continually contemplated and tried to examine the reasons why I think the way I do. This paper explores my thoughts and feelings. The most difficult part for me has been allowing myself to be filmed. I'm not sure why. It's more than whether or not I am photogenic, although that is a concern for me. When a person reads about someone's research, the author is remote while I am personally exposed while demonstrating the value for my research. Although the introductory section and the section that focuses on my interpretations of the video, where I speak and refer to my notes may seem somewhat at odds with the rest of the video, I decided to keep it in that manner. The main reason is because I have become aware that I feel very uncomfortable speaking about my educational philosophy to peers and colleagues. These sections clearly display that it is my beliefs and practices that are

being revealed. In my teaching career, I have noticed very few teachers speak to peers about why they teach the way they do and how research supports their beliefs. The video has provided a place for me to start.

Most of the students were able to discuss which intelligences that they were using in their projects and how they knew which intelligence they were applying. Many recognized that the intelligences were interconnected and were not in isolation. However, I did not spend enough time having the children consider what they had learned about themselves and the significance of that knowledge. One of the difficulties that I encountered was that it was difficult to meet individually with the children to find out their thought processes. I believe that in order for me to understand the children's thinking, they would need to express themselves orally. However, it takes a long time for young children at this level to compose and formulate their critical reflections. At this time I'm not sure how I would incorporate more opportunities for student self-reflection with future primary classes. This is an area that I need to research more to find out how other teachers deal with this issue.

#### Verbal Linguistic Intelligence

Campbell et al. (1993) identified linguistic intelligence as the ability to think in words and to use language to express and appreciate complex meanings. I think that a written document often limits a child because the writer needs to have a certain amount of sophistication to be able to express herself well with words. Primary students do not have enough experience to represent their thinking in depth through the written form. This is one of the reasons that I chose not to include having the children write journals about their learning process. I noticed that by the end of the research, more children were choosing to write to demonstrate their learning but it tended to occur after the students

had made several concrete representations of their understanding of their interest area. The writing tended to be factual information written in their own words.

I discovered that writing text for a video is somewhat different than writing for a paper where I can expand on my ideas. In the video text I needed to condense my writing to point form. I revised many times to express myself concisely and clearly to communicate orally. Prior to putting my voice over the clips, I found it necessary to write what I intended to say. I wrote and edited many times before getting the result that I wanted. Before having myself filmed for the introduction and conclusion of the video, I wrote, rewrote, rehearsed, rewrote, rehearsed and rewrote many times before finally being satisfied. After viewing the clips in which I was filmed, I again revised. I had no idea that it would be so difficult to prepare for speaking. The introduction and conclusion of the video are mini speeches.

#### How My Video Project and the Students' Final Presentations are Similar

The culminating project for my Masters is similar to the student's final presentations. The criteria that we set up were that the students:

- were required to find ways to extend their current learning of a topic or a procedure by incorporating several of the intelligences
- were expected to use resource materials to gather new information
- needed to share their knowledge with others.

Although we were at different stages of life, the children were conducting their learning in a similar manner as I was, as a Master's student. Although it was not a requirement for me to use Multiple Intelligences to extend my learning, I chose to incorporate several of the intelligences because of my convictions that have evolved as a result of my Master's work.

### Organization of the Video

Originally when I started editing the video clips, I selected excerpts of students' work and presentations to form a sequential timeline. The audience would view children progressing through a variety of stages. I planned to speak periodically to explain what was occurring throughout the video as well as to incorporate research points.

As I viewed the first version of my video and thought about the development, I realized that I needed to develop a better framework to strengthen the video. I gained some insight on how to layout the video after watching "The Video Toolbox: How to Make a Video Program" (Wheatley, 1994). I also viewed an educational video, "Multiple Intelligences: Developing Intelligences for Greater Achievement" presented by Gardner and Lazear (1995) in order to see what other researchers have done to share their knowledge. After I examined my research topic in educational journals, I decided to incorporate similar organizational structures in my video. Once I experimented with the editing my own video, I learned terms and acquired a new vision of what I wanted the video to look like. This playing stage assisted me in being more alert to pick up techniques used in the sample videos. Prior to this, I only viewed videos for content rather than trying to discern what techniques the producer used to make the video more effective. I realized that many of my clips were too long and I needed to find a way to help the audience understand why I included the material. This demonstrated to me the importance of learning through doing. I feel that making a visual representation as in a video is comparable to writing a research paper. Once the data is gathered, the writer begins to sort and analyze what the information is communicating. A plan is put in place and the writer begins to write. Often the writing needs to be reorganized because of realizations that occur naturally as new thoughts are formulated. In the same manner, I

gathered information from research material as well as from the videos of the class working. Initially I chose and inserted clips to portray my thinking. The more I worked with my project, the more I learned and therefore made many changes. As I worked in this manner, I realized that I needed some type of system to help me re-organize my work. I no longer felt that putting the video in a sequential timeline was the best method to use to portray the meaning that I wanted. I chose to make a large mind map to develop an outline of focus themes. I cut and taped research points that I felt might clarify each theme. Following this I again viewed all the classroom videos that I had compiled and then chose clips that would highlight the main points and research. I added sticky notes to the mind map to indicate which video clips should be used. Once I made the mind map, I was able to develop a possible layout. Perhaps the layout should have been developed prior to the work I had previously done. However, first I needed to play with the process of learning the computer video-editing program. "Play is the basis for acquiring information, and concept development is built through direct, hand-on experience" (Wasserman, 1988, p. 8).

### Acquiring Understanding

There are many things that I would do differently the next time I plan to video my class because of the knowledge that I have gained about the process of filming and editing. For this first attempt, I learned through trial and error much like my students did during their workshop time when they worked on an area of interest. Things would have been so much simpler if someone walked me through the whole process but I don't believe that I would have become as competent or as engaged. Often when people assist, they take over because it's so much easier for them to do it. Many times, I have witnessed adults being too helpful until the product did not resemble the child's initial plan. I also

would probably have ended up with another person's version because I was not yet able to explain what I wanted the end product to be. The final video, if directed by another, would probably not have satisfied me if I could not convey my dream. Technical advice about the use of the video camera and the necessity of using a tri-pod would have benefited me greatly. Instead I relied on parents and family to video and because they did not use a tri-pod to film, it did not occur to me to use one. I now realize the importance of keeping the video camera steady, which is very difficult to do by hand.

As I met obstacles, I had to find ways to solve my problems. Many times I backtracked and redid something that I had already done. As I learned more, I could see new possibilities. It has been a slow but worthwhile process. It has been beneficial for me to have a flexible time to finish. I realize how fortunate the students in this research have been. Time was not pre-determined for the conclusion of a project because we had to take the individual into account. The students knew when they felt ready to present their learning. At that time, the students had the opportunity to have a consultation to explain or demonstrate their plans for communicating their learning to their peers. This is similar to my process with the University of Lethbridge.

If the child's own play-work was to be his learning method, as I insisted it should, then he must get his inspiration for it in his own way, by knowledge gained by his own eyes and ears. Questions asked by him about things he wants to know, answers found by him within the limits of his own ability to find and understand them. A teacher or parent or sympathetic adult can help and encourage him in his researches, but the original impulses comes from him. (Pratt, 1970, p. 32)

I can certainly relate to what Pratt said because I think that having worked through the process of making a video in conjunction with the computer, I now can ask



questions. Before doing this, my limits of understanding were minimal and therefore I was unable to explain clearly what my goals and objectives were. I did not have a clear picture of what I wanted the end result to be. I did not understand the capability of the computer for developing a video. I needed the time to revisit the videos, read more research and to rethink through the possibilities. It helped me to leave my work and return after periodic absences from it. I think this is probably true of young children as well. It's important to not push children too soon to a final product. It is too easy for an adult to think that he/she has a vision of what a child wants to create, but an adult's vision and a child's vision are not likely to match. I have learned that it is important to let the child lead and I can ask questions, but I should not try to become the director of the child's generative curriculum because then the child loses the ownership. Once the ownership is lost, then there is the possibility that the child's interest may decline and the learning is less significant. Caine and Caine (1997) discuss how crucial it is to give merit to the students' intentions and values.

Because all human beings innately organize their thinking and perception around what they regard to be important (a form of self-organization), educators must deal openly and effectively with what children believe to be important - if we wish the children to acquire real understanding. When we disregard student purposes and values, we are tossing out the essential glue that acts as the key to the depth of understanding we wish student to acquire. We then obstruct meaningful learning. (p. 112)

### What I Learned

The learning that I have experienced while working on my project is far beyond anything that I imagined when I started the project. I have knowledge of a new medium to demonstrate my learning as well as a tool that I can use to illustrate how children are learning. By documenting and editing on video, I had the opportunity to return many times to examine how the students were engaged and to discern how effective my method of facilitating the students' learning was. The video allowed me to view the students in a more objective way. Within the students, I discovered strengths that I did not know existed as well as areas that needed more support. For example, a number of students who were labeled learning disabled, demonstrated with their completed projects and confident presentations, that they were very capable learners. The video provided a more comprehensive picture of the classroom learning situation. I don't think that I could have written a paper that could have demonstrated as effectively what I wanted to portray. I now have a better understanding of the statement that was made in "The Video Toolbox: How to Make a Video Program", when it was stated that the camera creates a window frame through which we view our world and make meaning (Wheatley, 1994).

Although it was my goal to attempt to produce only a video for a final project, I have come to realize that the written component has enriched the project. It was impossible to include everything because the video would have been too lengthy. I think that the two sections about how to set up the generative curriculum and my personal reflections will be more useful to teachers in print than if viewed within the video.

### Problems to be Remedied

As I mentioned earlier, the filming needed to be done with the use of a tri-pod. When I develop another video, I will make sure that I have more experienced people

video taping. I found it most beneficial to have another teacher do the video taping as she focused on the process of what was happening in the class, while parents tended to video finished presentations. The main problem was that because of my lack of experience, I did not give enough direction to those who did do the video taping. I needed to use a better microphone because the children's voices best demonstrate the students' learning. I require more experience editing, as it is a complex skill to be able to select and to clip the exact portion of a shot to illustrate the meaning being communicated. Now that I have completed my first video, I know that I will have a clearer idea of what I might want to portray in future video production.

Setting up the generative curriculum project was a big undertaking and a learning process for Fisher and myself. Since we had to adjust and adapt as we went along, we did not spend time educating parents about the process. After viewing the completed video, I realized that most of the parents did not witness their child presenting their learning. The students did not have a specific time frame to complete projects so we did not have a culminating activity that we often held at the end of a theme. Only a few of the students invited their parents to view their presentations. Most parents were unaware of the incredible learning that was taking place. We encouraged parents to take part as helpers within the class, but many parents found it difficult because they were more comfortable with being told specifically what to do by us. Also they wanted tasks where they could direct the children. Wasserman (1990) also discovered the same problem in her work with empowering children through active learning experiences.

It is very difficult for even the most sensitive adults to walk the thin line between doing too much and doing too little, knowing when to intervene and when to hold back. But, when we can thoughtfully allow children the full range of their own

attempts to do for themselves, the foundations of can-do are demonstrably established, producing energetic, resourceful, inventive, capable, fully functioning adults. (p. 5)

I think this video is an effective way to communicate with parents because it provides concrete evidence of what children can and will do when they are given an opportunity to initiate their own learning. I know that for a program to be successful, it needs the support of parents. Now that I have a better understanding of generative curriculum, I will be able to share my knowledge with future parents.

The students did not get an opportunity to view themselves on the video after their presentations and therefore they missed being able to assess if they wanted to make any changes or improvements to their presentations. I was too apprehensive about losing some of the data that I needed to complete my project.

#### Considerations for Further Research

- I want to use the generative curriculum video as a tool to inservice parents
- I would like to continue with video research to increase my own professional development
- I would like to learn how to develop short video clips of individual student that could be e-mailed to families to demonstrate a student's progress
- I would like to produce videos within my school to demonstrate student
- I am interested in teaching intermediate students how to produce a video. This would mean soliciting support from the Parent Advisory Council group for funding for a computer-editing program.

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