

# ECE Affinity Group: Something to Share



November 2010

Enclosed you will find a series of ideas, approaches and resource links for those delivering early childhood education. The information was gathered at the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual ECE Affinity Group Forum, held in Vancouver from November 4-6, 2010. Forum participants were given the opportunity to share leading practices with colleagues from across the country during the Something to Share part of the program.

## About the ECE Affinity Group

Since it was established in 2005, the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Affinity Group has been bringing together faculty of Canada's ECE post-secondary education community to:

- stimulate dialogue, learning and interchange that informs Affinity Group members;
- promote linkages and sharing of resources (curriculum, delivery formats, resources) between and amongst institutions;
- engage participants in ongoing professional development and lifelong learning opportunities;
- advance and advocate for excellence in early childhood education and training that, in turn, promotes high quality early learning and care services for Canada's children and families; and
- collaborate with the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council and other national organizations.

The main activity for the ECE Affinity Group has been the Annual Forum, which was first held in Winnipeg in 2006, followed by Toronto in 2007; Montreal in 2008; Edmonton in 2009; Vancouver in 2010; and finally, the upcoming 2011 Forum being held in Ottawa from October 20-22, 2011.

### Coordinating Committee

- Gyda Chud – Vancouver Community College
- Jane Hewes – Grant MacEwan University
- Janet Jamieson – Red River College
- Karen Chandler – George Brown College
- Suzane Cormier – Cégep@distance
- Joanne Morris – College of the North Atlantic
- Association of Canadian Community Colleges – Gail Mulhall
- Child Care Human Resources Sector Council – Diana Carter
- Canadian Child Care Federation – Robin McMillan

The ECE Affinity Group is a joint initiative of the Association of Canadian Community Colleges and the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council.

For more information or to join, visit:  
[www.accc.ca/networking](http://www.accc.ca/networking)

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**Participant: Linda Taylor**  
**Organization: Conestoga College, Ontario**

**Key Concept/Idea:**

*Video-On-Demand*

We have recently installed video cameras in our preschool. The cameras are accessed and controlled from the adult learning classroom. These cameras have very high quality audio and video capabilities, and are capable of panning the preschool room and zooming in on the action. This video-on-demand system allows us to observe the children at play, observe the learning environment, and notice teaching practices.

**Success Highlights:**

Rather than “covering” course curriculum in a linear fashion, we are beginning to experiment with “uncovering” the course curriculum in a much more emergent fashion through our observations of the children, the classroom and the teachers. In our “Foundations” course, we are looking at/for curriculum, play, diversity, and creativity. We are intending on building on the initial curiosities of the adult learners to shape the unfolding of the course, week by week. Stay tuned!

**Where Can I Find More Information?**

Contact Linda Taylor at [ltaylor@conestogac.on.ca](mailto:ltaylor@conestogac.on.ca)

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**Participant: Laura Fowler-Massie**  
**Organization: CEGEP Heritage College, Quebec**

**Key Concept/Idea:**

*My Virtual Child*

My Virtual Child is an interactive web-based simulation that allows ECE students to raise a child from birth to age 18 and monitor the effects of their parenting decisions over time. This engaging website lets students apply the key concepts of child development and parenting that they are learning in their ECE Foundations of Child Development 1 course.

**Success Highlights:**

This is a pilot project I am running with my first year students in our Foundations of Child Development 1 course. Along with my traditional classroom lectures, assignments and assessments, students are asked to engage and interact with their virtual child. As we move through key developmental milestones their virtual child grows at approximately the same rate. My pedagogical reasons for using this program are to support and reinforce understanding while consolidating learning of key developmental milestones in a fun and unique way. Feedback from my students so far has been very positive.

**Where Can I Find More Information?**

Visit the following websites:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=HyC2vL\\_Wt8U](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HyC2vL_Wt8U)

[www.cegep-heritage.qc.ca/Programs/ECCE/ECCE\\_Profile.htm](http://www.cegep-heritage.qc.ca/Programs/ECCE/ECCE_Profile.htm)

[lmassie@cegep-heritage.qc.ca](mailto:lmassie@cegep-heritage.qc.ca)

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**Participant: Leigh Ridgway**

**Organization: Algonquin College, Ontario**

**Key Concept/Idea:**

*Snowball Activity*

This activity seems to be successful in getting the students “up and about” so that they can move from boredom to involvement in the classroom. A simple but tried and true idea that can be easily adapted without needing expensive equipment!

*Materials*

- Flip chart paper
- Masking tape
- Colored markers

*Method*

- Decide on a series of questions that you need the class to address.
- Write one question on one sheet of flip chart paper. Repeat this for all of your questions. These sheets are then posted around the classroom.
- Divide the students into groups by the number of questions you need them to answer (i.e. 6 questions require 6 different groups).
- Each group starts at a sheet with a question that’s needs discussion.
- Each group has a different colored marker.
- Each group has 1 minute to respond to the question with as many responses as they can think of.
- Move the students clockwise onto the next question.
- Each group adds to what has already been written by previous group(s).
- Repeat the activity until all groups have responded to each question and are standing in front the question they started with.
- Review/discuss the responses with the class as a whole.

**Success Highlights:**

- Addresses different learning styles
- Engages “quiet” students
- Allows for active participation
- Gets the class “moving”
- Allows for open discussion: first in their small group and then as a whole class
- Students problem solve as they respond to the questions

**Where Can I Find More Information?**

Contact Leigh Ridgway at

[ridgwal@algonquincollege.com](mailto:ridgwal@algonquincollege.com)

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**Participants: Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw, Kathleen Kummen & Deborah Thompson**  
**Organizations: University of Victoria, Capilano University & Vancouver Community College, British Columbia**

**Key Concept/Idea:**

Using Collective Biography to Rethink Child Development

**Success Highlights:**

In the last 3 years we have been working individually and collectively with the pedagogical tool 'collective biography'. We use 'collective biography' in our course(s) to investigate everyday experiences and how power comes into play in the concept of child development. As a critical pedagogical tool, positioned in a postmodern paradigm, 'collective biography' generates memories not acknowledged as an objective truth. The writing assignment instructions for the 'collective biography' work we do in our classroom(s) includes relating a memory (a two- or three-minute event/ experience/short narrative) and describing the bodily and emotional sensations felt during that event, avoiding clichés and explanations.

The assignment allows us to create spaces for students to examine (always attending to embodied experiences) how developmental psychology is a dominant idea that frames our practices (silencing other ways of knowing), and how we can engage in resisting that dominance. As teachers of child development to current and future practitioners, we emerge from this process acknowledging that resisting developmental psychology in our teaching involves life in its entirety. We feel that our teaching has become a way of making visible the usually invisible.

**Where Can I Find More Information?**

Ryan, S., & Grieshaber, S. (2005). Shifting from developmental to postmodern practices in early childhood teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 56(1), 34-45.

Pacini-Ketchabaw, V., Kummen, K. & Thompson, D. (2010) Becoming intimate with developmental knowledge: Pedagogical explorations with collective biography. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*. 56(3), 335-354.

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**Participant: Linda Taylor**

**Organization: Conestoga College, Ontario**

**Key Concept/Idea:**

*Field Placement Fair*

During the final weeks of the semester, students hold a “Field Placement Fair”. Individual students or small groups of students organize displays to feature their placement experience from the current semester. Students may focus their display on their own practice successes, on the curriculum approach they experienced, the age group they worked with, or the details of their ‘special placement’ experience. These displays are organized in a public atrium area of the college and open to the whole college community.

**Success Highlights:**

Students take great pride in sharing their experiences with fellow ECE students. Students learn from each other’s experiences and seek information from each other about placement sites, curriculum approaches, special opportunities and alternate age experiences. This has also been a good public/campus awareness tool and has been covered by our college’s journalism students for the school newspaper.

**Where can I find more information?**

Contact Linda Taylor at [ltaylor@conestogac.on.ca](mailto:ltaylor@conestogac.on.ca)

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**Participant: Louise LaFlèche**

**Organization: Collège universitaire de St-Boniface, Manitoba**

**Key Concept/Idea:**

Our college participates as a member on a francophone inter-provincial committee with representatives from the field of early childhood education in the western provinces and in the north. The committee is called RONPE – *Regroupement de l’ouest et du nord préscolaire pour enfants*.

We are also participating in a project entitled Précept-F, which is a website for exchanges with other francophone colleges. Each can contribute ideas and resources that can be viewed by other participants. The site is protected by password and the participating colleges have discussions by teleconference.

**Success Highlights:**

RONPE has very recently produced a promotional video with emphasis on careers in ECE. The video is available in French only. There is a general section, a section on ECEs, a section on administering an early childhood center and a section on coordinating parent child centers.

For the Précept-F project, materials and resources available include course outlines, useful websites, teaching and practicum evaluation tools, prior learning recognition, conference information, etc.

**Where Can I Find More Information?**

The RONPE video will be available soon on the following web site: <http://cnpf.ca>

More information regarding the Précept-F project can be found at <http://projeteducenfance.collegemv.qc.ca>

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**Participant: Sandy Christie**  
**Organization: Fanshawe College, Ontario**

**Key Concept/Idea:**

*Mentoring Circles*

We have introduced the idea of mentoring circles (6 faculty each mentoring 7 to 10 students). The main purpose is to give faculty and students an opportunity to explore in depth the affective characteristics of a person working in ECE. The characteristics that provide focus for our time together are those provided by Ontario's newly formed College of Early Childhood Educators and include caring, compassion, respect, honesty, creativity, enthusiasm, joyfulness and a quest for excellence.

**Success Highlights:**

The students are given an opportunity to decide whether or not they would like to participate, as it is a voluntary activity. Since beginning, we have seen a steady participation rate of 90%. The students and faculty both report that the circles (offered for 1 ½ hours, twice a month) provide a chance to get connected in a more intimate way. The discussions have opened opportunities to build on emotional intelligence, which we measure using EQi Higher Education.

**Where Can I Find More Information?**

Contact Sandy Christie at  
[schristie@fanshawec.ca](mailto:schristie@fanshawec.ca)

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**Participant: Dominique Arbez and Joanne Vinet**  
**Organization: Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface, Manitoba**

**Key Concept/Idea:**

Within the context of our Professional Development course, our sector developed two assignments that supported course content. The first consisted of giving the students an opportunity to choose from a selection of workshops or events offered in the child care community. Options corresponded to predetermined criteria that integrated course objectives and was also part of their evaluation.

The second project was the elaboration of a professional portfolio that was shared during a networking event organized by the instructors and students. In hosting this networking event, the Collège invited all potential francophone and bilingual employers who wished to attend to meet with our future graduates. This also gave our students the chance to ask questions regarding their philosophies and practices in the workplace.

### **Success Highlights:**

The results of the first assignment were very positive, as many students surpassed our expectations by attending more than one of the workshops or events. One student has even decided to join the Community Living Manitoba Child Care Committee as part of her ongoing professional development as a result of her participating in this assignment. Many of the students have begun their Ethics training and plan to complete it. Some students also chose to attend the AGM of the Child Care Coalition of Manitoba, which promotes their profession and helps them to become advocates. Our main objective was to encourage students to embark as professionals in the child care sector.

For the networking event, half a dozen potential employers were present and our students were eager to meet with them. The students and faculty provided a comfortable environment where participants could meet and hold discussions over refreshments. Students also presented their portfolio to the employers, their peers and the instructors. The event was a success and students came away with information regarding different potential employers in our community.

### **Where can I find more information?**

Contact Dominique Arbez at  
[darbez@ustboniface.mb.ca](mailto:darbez@ustboniface.mb.ca)

