

**ASSOCIATION FOR CONSTRUCTIVIST
TEACHING CONFERENCE 2004**

The Sheraton Westport Hotel, St. Louis, Missouri

October 15 & 16, 2004

ANNUAL CONFERENCE
ASSOCIATION FOR CONSTRUCTIVIST TEACHING

The Sheraton Westport Hotel of Saint Louis, Saint Louis, Missouri
October 15-16, 2004

Friday, October 15, 2004

8:30 AM – 10:30 AM

Versailles Ballroom

Keynote Address:

*“What are the Big Ideas of Early Algebra? What We Have Learned by Examining
Cases of Children's Mathematical Thinking.”*

Dr. Virginia Bastable

In this interactive session, we will examine video and print cases of elementary-aged students' mathematical thinking to develop an understanding of key ideas of early algebra and discuss teacher roles that support such algebraic thinking.

Dr. Virginia Bastable, the Director of the SummerMath for Teachers program at Mount Holyoke College, has been engaged with the professional development of teachers for the past twelve years. Dr. Bastable became a teacher-educator after participating in a SummerMath for Teachers summer institute as a secondary teacher with more than twenty years of classroom experience. As director of the SMT program, she has had opportunities to design and conduct programs examining the learning and teaching of mathematics for in-service teachers, school administrators, pre-service teachers, and teacher-leaders. Dr. Bastable particularly enjoys helping others to discover their interest and abilities in mathematics, even if those interests and abilities have been blunted by past negative experiences with the subject.

Session One 10:45 AM – 12:15 AM

St. Moritz

“Ramps and Pathways”

Rheta DeVries, Regents' Center for Early Developmental Education, University of Northern Iowa
Christina Sales, Freeburg Early Childhood Program, University of Northern Iowa

Ramps and Pathways made with cove molding are a core physical knowledge activity at the Freeburg Early Childhood Program operated by the Regents' Center for Early Developmental Education at the University of Northern Iowa. Teachers at Freeburg integrate literacy, mathematics, social studies, and art into this basic science activity. Participants will have the opportunity to experiment with ramps and pathways materials and analyze the relationships children have the possibility to construct during error-informed experimentation. Included in this presentation will be eleven teaching principles with examples. A DVD will be shown that summarizes a teacher's guide on this activity.

Bern

“Constructivist Pedagogy in a Fifth Grade Mathematics Classroom: A Case Study”
Julie Rainer Dangel, Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia

In this presentation, I share the results of a study that focused on understanding one teacher’s effort to implement constructivist practices with 18 fifth grade children in a suburban public school. The purpose of the study was to document and analyze classroom practice revised to promote children’s mathematical thinking, including teacher’s pedagogy and children’s experiences.

Alpine #1

“Inquiry-Based Early Childhood Curriculum Development: Using Materials to Facilitate Representations”
Jane Broderick, East Tennessee State University, Jackson City, Tennessee
Seongbock Honk, University of Michigan-Dearborn, Dearborn, Michigan

This presentation will foster an awareness of how faculty from two institutions use specific inquiry-based tools for action research in their work with teachers at the undergraduate and graduate level. The action research was designed to evaluate the effect of materials on the participants developing understanding of emergent curriculum, inquiry, and representations, which refers to representations of their thinking and knowledge in various media.

Alpine #2

“Reinventing Reggio: Finding a Space for Voice and Choice in an American Standards-based Classroom”
Sheri Vasinda, Allen Independent School District, Allen, Texas
Martha Foote, Texas A&M University-Commerce, Commerce, Texas

The purpose of this session is to share the teacher researcher’s experience implementing the aspect of negotiated learning and emergent curriculum inspired by the practices of the preprimary schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy in an American Standards-based third grade classroom. This was also the first year that the third grade had to pass the state reading assessment to advance to the next grade.

Davos

Lunch on your own 12:30 – 1:30
The Constructivist Editorial Board Meets

Friday, October 15, 2004

Session Two 1:45 PM – 3:15 PM

St. Moritz

“The Role of the Teacher in a Contextual Curriculum: A Short Story of Dramatic Plan Becomes a Long Term Investigation of the Grocery Store and Café”

Ellen Hall, Boulder Journey School, Boulder, CO
Andrea Sisbarro, Boulder Journey School, Boulder, CO
Alison Maher, Boulder Journey School, Boulder, CO

Since 1995, our school community has been engaged in a study of the schools for young children in Reggio Emilia, Italy. Inspired by the philosophy and pedagogy of these schools and our current work with Carlina Rinaldi, Executive Consultant for Reggio Children, we would like to share a long term investigation that unfolded over two years in the dramatic play space of a pre-kindergarten classroom at Boulder Journey School. This investigation focuses on the importance of dramatic play for knowledge construction and the role of the teacher as a relevant protagonist in children’s play experiences.

Bern

“What Might be the Nature of Proof in an Elementary Classroom?”
Virginia Bastable, Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, Massachusetts

What does it mean to state and justify a generalization? What does mathematical justification look like in a grades K -5? What are the connections between various representations (such as diagrams or drawings, cube structures, story contexts) and algebraic notation? In this interactive workshop we will examine this aspect of early algebraic thinking.

Alpine #1

*“The Effects of Community Building on Student Attitudes
Towards Learning in the Middle School Classroom”*

Lucinda M. Wilson, Associate Professor, Butler University, Indianapolis, IN 46208
Susanna Latham, Fulton Middle School, Indianapolis, IN 46208

This study investigates the importance of community building, and also attempts to accommodate the emotional and physical changes of adolescents to create a learning environment which allows students to feel safe in expressing their opinions and ideas. Two seventh grade classrooms at New Augusta Middle School were used as sample groups to test the effectiveness of promoting a community environment in the middle grades. Students were each given a voice in the classroom and created a set of class guidelines, and thus were able to have a say in what kind of classroom they wanted to be a part of. This study examines how creating this kind of environment impacted the students’ attitudes towards learning.

Alpine #2

1:45 PM – 3:15 PM

2nd Annual Research Round Table

“Qualitative Research on Constructivist Teaching”

Kamilla Bahbahani, Millsaps College, Jackson, Mississippi

This research presentation reviews a year-long research project on the beliefs and practices of constructivist teachers. The presenter will discuss the features of a rigorous qualitative approach in research on constructivism; challenges and opportunities associated with collaborative research between classroom teachers and external researchers; the influence of the school environment and administration on classroom research. This will be followed by a summary of the findings on the multiple factors guiding constructivist teaching practice for three exceptional teachers.

“A Gender Study Comparing Results with Constructivist Taught vs Traditionally Taught Third Graders”

Alice Wakefield, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA

In this session, the researcher will describe an investigation of Qatar public school third graders and the strategies they used for solving double-digit addition problems. When distinct gender differences were noted, the study was repeated with constructivist taught third graders in a Virginia elementary school.

“Evaluating the Effects of Constructivist Teaching Using Student-Achievement Data”

Sharon Ford Schattgen, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Missouri

This research study investigated the effects of constructivist and traditional practices on student learning in kindergarten, using scores from standardized tests as well as informal assessments as outcome measures. Researchers also examined differences in learning environments across kindergarten classrooms. Results indicate that students in constructivist classrooms are "educationally advantaged."

Davos

“Using Constructivism and Problem-Based Learning to Structure an Alternative Certification Program”

Jim Pelech, Benedictine University, Lisle, Illinois

Dr. Gary Ketterling, Benedictine University, Lisle, Illinois

This session examines the structuring and delivering of an Alternative Certification Program through Constructivist principles and Problem Based Learning. Participants will experience the process for themselves in order to more fully understand how former professional mathematicians, engineers, and scientists empower themselves to become 6-12 Mathematics and Science Teachers.

Friday, October 15, 2004
Session Three 3:30 PM – 5:00 PM

St. Moritz

*“Attachment Beyond Infancy: Assisting Parents in
Constructing Realistic Images and Expectations of Parenthood”*
Beverly Kovach, Consultant, Infant Toddler Practitioner, Satellite Beach, Florida
Denise Da Ros-Voseles, Northeastern State University, Broken Arrow, Oklahoma

Secure attachment beyond infancy requires a heightened awareness on the part of front line professionals in supporting first-time parents. This session will describe a framework for assisting parents in constructing realistic images and expectations of parenthood in the child rearing practices. Theories that support parent role and function will be addressed by defining skills and strategic interventions that enhance positive parent practice.

Bern

“Interactive Math Resources for Constructivist Learning”
John Pais, Mathematics Department-MICDS, St. Louis, Missouri
Richard Singer, Emeritus Webster University, St. Louis, Missouri

This session consists of a series of hands-on group activities that will illustrate our new approach to constructing magic (magical) squares of numbers, and the related mathematical concepts. In addition, this session will also include a discussion of the mathematical significance of these activities both from a pedagogical point of view and in relation to the design of different types of constructivist learning resources.

Alpine #1

“Engaging in Meaningful Dialog: Giving value to Children’s Ideas”
Brenda Fyfe, Webster University, St. Louis, Missouri
Jennifer Strange, The College School, St. Louis, Missouri

The primary aims of this session are for participants to learn and explore the value of meaningful dialogue with children, strategies for supporting meaningful dialogue with children, methods of analyzing children’s conversations, the potential of such documentation for assessment, and ways to gain community support for constructivist education through the voices of children.

Alpine #2

“Practical Parenting Partnerships Center: Easing the Kindergarten Transition”
Shelly Lock, Practical Parenting Partnerships Center, Jefferson City, Missouri

The transition into kindergarten is a tough one for children, their families and schools. By partnering together in transition efforts, home, school and community can ease the stress of this exciting time in a child’s life. There are many activities and communication means that can promote a smooth change from the early childhood years into the big school experience. During this workshop session, we will discuss many of these ideas as well as strategies to build a relationship between home, school and community.

Davos

“Geometric Reasoning”

Christina Sales, Freeburg Early Childhood Program, University of Northern Iowa, Waterloo, Iowa

The major goal of this presentation is to demonstrate one way teachers can stimulate children to engage in geometric and spatial reasoning using pattern blocks and pattern block frames. In the process of figuring out how to solve these problems, children construct many geometric, spatial, temporal, numerical, classificatory, and seriatinal relationships.

5:30 – 6:30

Meet the ACT Board

Location TBA

Saturday, October 16, 2004

Session One 8:30 AM – 10:00 AM

St. Moritz

“Attachment Theory, Moral Autonomy, and Cooperative Classroom Discipline”

Marilyn Watson, Development Studies Center, Oakland, CA

Laura Ecken, Jefferson County Public Schools, Louisville, Kentucky

The ideal constructivist approach to discipline is cooperative, but some children won't cooperate. This session will briefly outline aspects of attachment theory and research that explain the origins of children's disposition to be cooperative and discuss practical approaches to working cooperatively even with “uncooperative” children. We will discuss a number of real-life classroom vignettes related to discipline and classroom management.

Bern

“Teachers Experiment and Brainstorm Logico-Mathematical Relationships in Planning Force of Air Activities”

Regents' Center & Freeburg Teachers & Administrators

University of Northern Iowa

Dr. Rheta DeVries, Director of the Regents' Center for Early Developmental Education at the University of Northern Iowa, will lead a discussion of “How to Begin Work on a New Physical-Knowledge Activity.” Panel members include Regents' Center and Freeburg Early Childhood Program teachers and administrators: Shirley Bruce, Beth Dykstra Van Meeteren, Gloria Galloway, Gwen Harmon, Sherice Hetrick-Ortman, Carolyn Hildebrandt, Shari McGhee, Sherri Peterson, Christina Sales, Jeffrey Sales. The Freeburg constructivist school, operated by the Regents' Center, is located in a culturally diverse neighborhood in Waterloo, Iowa.

Alpine #1

“Reaching the Special Needs Student in the Constructivist Classroom”

Mary Lou Farb, Maryville University, St. Louis, MO

Denise Cunningham, St. Louis Public School District, Wilkinson Early Childhood Center St., Louis, MO

Christine Brown, St. Louis Public School District, Wilkinson Early Childhood Center, St. Louis, MO

Kristyn Ulrich, St. Louis Public School District, Wilkinson Early Childhood Center, St. Louis, MO

The purpose of the session is to provide the audience with an overview of constructivist philosophy, theory and curriculum as it applies to the special needs student. In particular, the presenters will share their unique perspectives of how they have contributed to successfully reaching special needs students through a broader understanding of constructivist philosophy and increased implementation of constructivist curriculum.

Alpine #2

“Perceptions of Constructivism: What Teacher Educators Say and Do”

Teresa Harris, James Madison University, Harrisburg, Virginia

What do teacher educators mean when they talk about constructivism and constructivist practices? Do we really practice what we preach? This session takes a look at one group of teacher educators' understandings of constructivism and constructivist practices as a springboard for discussion among session participants.

Saturday, October 16, 2004

Session Two 10:15 PM – 11:45 PM

St. Moritz

“Constructing Constructivism”

Linda Kroll, Mills College, Oakland, CA

Julie Rainer Dangel, Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia

Teresa Harris, James Madison University, Harrisburg, Virginia

Joanne Falinski, Pace University, Pleasantville, New York

Would you like to have a better understanding for constructivist teaching and learning? This workshop will explore some of the basic tenets of constructivism. Join us in this session as we interact and construct the meaning and application of constructivism.

Bern

“Constructing a Video-Mediated Cross-cultural Understanding of Preschool Education”

Yeh Hsueh, Educational Psychology and Research, University of Memphis, Memphis, Tennessee

The goal of this research workshop is to provide participants with an opportunity to have a dialogue among themselves and with preschool educators in China, Japan, and/or other part of the U.S. through video-mediated interaction. The workshop will use preschool videos from the above three countries to explore participants' cultural and professional beliefs about early childhood education.

Alpine #1

*“The Impact of Physical Knowledge Activities on Literacy Development Socio-Moral Atmosphere:
Developing Community and Interpersonal Relationships”*

Beth Dykstra Van Meeteren, University of Northern Iowa, Waterloo, Iowa

Gwen Harmon, University of Northern Iowa, Waterloo, Iowa

Sherri Peterson, University of Northern Iowa, Waterloo, Iowa

Sherice Hetrick-Ortman, University of Northern Iowa, Waterloo, Iowa

The workshop will include (1) an overview of constructivist principles of teaching (2) a review of current literature and comparison of ideas to constructivist practice (3) descriptions of daily schedules and how moral discussions, conflict resolution activities, class meetings, voting are infused throughout the day for all ages of children (4) videotaped examples of class meetings, adult-child interactions, moral discussions, conflict resolution (5) a discussion of how all these work together to facilitate the development of self-regulation.

Alpine #2

“Connecting to Children: Co-constructing Skills in Facilitating Learning”

Tom Drummond, North Seattle Community College, Seattle, Washington

This session will consist of slides and presentations of several sequenced tasks of The Connecting to Children, allowing small groups of participants to construct their own meaning of each task. The presentations include video footage of students in Connecting to Children modules and examples of their performances of understanding. The challenge in presenting this material is to convey the power of this approach to early childhood adult education when the participants construct the content.

Davos

“The Sunlight and Reflection Project: Supporting a Culture of Thinking Together”

Karen Schneider, St. Michael School, St. Louis, Missouri

Chuck Schwall, St. Michael School, St. Louis, Missouri

Louise Boyd Cadwell, Curriculum Researcher, The College School, St. Louis, Missouri

Lori Geismar-Ryan, Clayton Schools' Family Center, St. Louis, Missouri

In this session, the presenters will share a project about Sunlight and Reflection that took place in the 4/5's classroom at The St. Michael School. The yearlong project was sparked by an unexpected event in the classroom that could have been easily overlooked. During a group meeting the children discovered "a circle of light" reflected on the ceiling, and noticed that it moved around the classroom. They wondered together what had caused it. The teachers immediately recognized the potential that this exciting experience offered.

Lunch 12:00 – 2:30
Zurich Ballroom

Keynote Address:

"Building Community Support for Constructivist Education"
Carla Rinaldi

The internationally acclaimed Municipal Preschools and Infant-Toddler Centers of Reggio Emilia, Italy have managed to develop and maintain strong community support for constructivist education for over 40 years. Dr. Carla Rinaldi will draw from her experience with this school system and her encounters with schools around the world to explore concepts of community support and to illustrate and reflect on collaborative leadership strategies that can be used to build community support for constructivist education.

Carla Rinaldi is the Executive Pedagogical Consultant for Reggio Children and was formerly the Pedagogical Director for the internationally acclaimed municipal early childhood centers in Reggio Emilia, Italy. She is also a professor of early childhood education for the University of Modena and Reggio. She has authored many publications, including chapters in a book called, *Making Learning Visible: Children as individual and group learners*. This book (Project Zero, Harvard Graduate School of Education and Reggio Children, 2001) is based on a research study co-directed by Carla Rinaldi and Howard Gardner, former Director of Project Zero.

Saturday, October 16, 2004
Session Three 2:45 PM – 4:15 PM

St. Moritz

"Constructing Mathematical Concepts Through Projects"
Sausan Burshan, Agora—Educational Community, Merida, Yucatan, Mexico

This session will explore the possibilities and benefits of using projects for the construction of mathematical concepts through presentation of various experiences.

Bern

"Constructivist Teacher Action Research"
Kamilla Bahbahani, Millsaps College, Jackson, Mississippi
Kate Chechak, The School at Columbia University, New York, New York
Lisa Coffman, Newsome Park Elementary School, Newport News, Virginia

The purpose of this session is to involve participants in an exploration of how constructivist learning theory can be transformed into a theory of teaching and classroom management to address the real needs of classroom teachers. Participants will grapple with the definition of constructivist teaching and the challenges involved in working to expand this definition. Their theoretical reflections will be put into practice as they work together to devise action research projects addressing current classroom needs.

Alpine #1

“Perceptions of Constructivism: What Teacher Educators Say and Do”
Teresa Harris, James Madison University, Harrisburg, Virginia

What do teacher educators mean when they talk about constructivism and constructivist practices? Do we really practice what we preach? This session takes a look at one group of teacher educators' understandings of constructivism and constructivist practices as a springboard for discussion among session participants.

Alpine #2

“Reader Response and the Personal Construction of Meaning”
Joanne Falinski, Pace University, Pleasantville, New York

This session will help teachers actively construct knowledge about reader response and the use of reading response strategies to support students in the development of a personal understanding of text. Samples of student responses from different grade levels will be shared. The use of traditional logs, as well as course-assisted software and web logs/blogs, will be discussed.

Davos

“Teacher’s Self Study: What Happens When...?”
Julie Rainer Dangel, Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia
Shirley Bennett, Vaughan Elementary School, Atlanta, Georgia
Mary Jo Martucci, La Belle Elementary School, Atlanta, Georgia

From improving reading instruction to increasing children’s creative problem solving ability, teachers actively seek answers to problems in their schools. In this presentation, two teachers share their progress and findings in studying their practice, including practical suggestions for teachers to improve their reading instruction using running records and to increase children’s problem solving ability using divergent and convergent thinking skills. The benefits of studying education practice will be summarized.

Association for Constructivist Teaching

<http://www.odu.edu/act>

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