Global Children in the Shadow of the Global Child

Alan Pence
University of Victoria

Hollie Hix-Small
Early Childhood Consultant

Introduction

Those who advocate for young children assuming a role of greater importance on the global agenda have been pleased to note a number of significant advances in the last decade of the 20th century. On January 26, 1990, the international community commenced signing of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). UNICEF subsequently noted the CRC had been "ratified more quickly and by more countries than any previous human rights instrument" (UNICEF, 2001, p. 1). In March of 1990 the World Conference on Education for All (EFA), held in Jomtien, Thailand, underscored the importance of early childhood development as a crucial part of basic education with the words, "Learning begins at birth. This calls for early childhood care and initial education." (UNESCO, 1990, Section V, Point 1). At the second EFA conference held in Dakar, Senegal in 2000 "expanding and improving early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children" emerged as the first of six key goals (UNESCO, 2000, Point 7, Goal 1), and the 2007 EFA Global Monitoring Report 'Strong Foundations' was dedicated to early childhood care and education (UNESCO,

Alan Pence is a professor at the University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada and Hollie Hix-Small is an early childhood and statistical consultant.[1]

International Journal of Educational Policy, Research, & Practice: Reconceptualizing Childhood Studies
Volume 8(1), 2007. ISSN 1528-3534.

2006). Satisfaction with these hard won advances should be tempered, however, by concern over the emergence of a 'global child' construct based largely on an economically-driven, Western-based image, and the way in which that limited perspective accompanies another—a growing industry of early childhood research that is narrow in method and resistant to diverse voices and perspectives. These limited images and research methods run counter to the roots of international ECCD[2] that are based in culture, context and diversity.

The Western-driven image of the child that dominates media, science and policy today is not valued for who she or he "is", but what he or she can "become" as part of a broader, global, economic agenda. The idea of the child as 'societal redeemer' as put forward by Rousseau, or the child as "full of possibilities", with "a hundred, hundred, hundred languages" as understood by Reggio Emilia sage Loris Malaguzzi (1993, p. vi), is lost in the statistics of institutional progress and economic markers. Such projections foreclose other possibilities, other ways of understanding. While 90% of the world's children live in the Majority World, over 90% of the published child development literature comes from the Minority World.[3] Minority World images and understandings dominate early years' discussions internationally.

This article critiques the 'global child' perspective, seeking to broaden and diversify its image(s) while maintaining ECCD's place in various key international agendas. It briefly explores ECCD's twentieth century roots in child development's universalist quest for "context free" laws (Cole, 1996) and a growing number of critiques of that position (Burman, 1994; Kessen, 1979, 1981; Morss, 1996 ; Walkerdine, 1984). It also briefly considers the emergence in the early 1990s of an alternative construction of childhood from sociology (James & Prout, 1990; Jenks, 1996; Qvortrup, Bardy, Sgritta, & Wintersberger, 1994), and alternative discourses within the field of early childhood care and education (ECCE), both from within the U.S. (Bloch, 1992; Jipson, 1991; Kessler & Swadener, 1992), and from other parts of the world (e.g., Carr & May, 1993; Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 1999, 2006; MacNaughton, 2000; Moss & Pence, 1994; Nsamenang, in press; Viruru, 2001). The article is also concerned, in the second section, with the role of certain types of research, conceived within a positivist tradition of 'truth-seeking', that have become part of a narrow perspective on children, depriving in particular the Majority World of a voice in creating understandings of children.

Imagining the Child: Influences and Critiques

Method and message are intertwined in child development, and in

psychology more broadly. While methods open certain ways of seeing, they limit others. Michael Cole, in his influential 1996 volume, *Cultural Psychology: A once and future discipline*, asked, "Why do psychologists find it so difficult to keep culture in mind?" (p. 1). Over 300 pages later, we have his answer (or answers)—and they are answers that speak to child development and the field of ECCD today.

> I argued that it is difficult for psychologists to keep culture in mind because when psychology became institutionalized as a social/behavioral science, the constituent processes of mind were divided among several sciences: culture to anthropology, social life to sociology, language to linguistics, the past to history, and so on.
>
> Each of these disciplines developed methods and theories appropriate to its domain. As we have seen, in psychology the major methods depended upon the use of standardized procedures (tests, experimental tasks, questionnaires) that permit randomized assignment of subjects to conditions, quantification of data, and the application of linear statistical models to determine the significance of variations among outcomes.…
>
> …The experimental, quantitative approach of methodological behaviorism assumes the generation of context-free laws, but the phenomena of interest can be explained in such terms only in a reduced fashion that does not remain true to the facts of everyday, lived experience and that has great difficulty accounting for the process of developmental change. (p. 328)

The final sentence identifies a central position of this article, namely that the positivist approach to understanding ("context free laws") that has been adopted by psychology and child development studies is *severely limited*. That is, it tells only a *part* of the story of children and development.

Cole (1996) refers to the invisibility of those in psychology who seek to bring 'other ways' of seeing into their work (Greenfield & Bruner, 1966; Witkin, 1967). It is argued that 'other ways' of seeing, understanding and doing offer the greatest hope and inspiration for an international ECCD that is supportive of diversity, context, equity and relevance. Some of these are movements within psychology and child development, others within the early childhood care, education and development field, and another, sociology, represents the emergence of another discipline's interest in the young child.[4]

The Child Enters Sociology

While psychology and anthropology both took an interest in children in the first half of the 20th century, sociology was slower to develop a specific literature. In the mid-1980s sociological interests in childhood were

invigorated (e.g., Alanen, 1988; Ambert, 1986; Jenks, 1982), the journal *Sociological Studies of Children* commenced publication in 1986, and in the early 1990s both the International Sociological Association and the American Sociological Association opened thematic groups addressing childhood. By the mid-1990s a number of key texts, very different in concept from psychology, were available (e.g., James & Prout, 1990; James, Jenks & Prout, 1998; Qvortrup et al., 1994).

While ideas of universality (universally applicable theories of child development) permeate child development and psychology, the child and childhood as a *social construction* is central to the sociological approach. Such an understanding of childhood, as socially constructed and therefore manifesting diversity, would seemingly have great appeal and utility for those working within a global context. An understanding of the child as a social construction allows one to explore the social forces that shape the construction; to appreciate the diversity of human systems; to examine the complex interactions of policy, program, community and family systems; and to take an approach to understanding that is not fundamentally reductionist in nature. Unfortunately, sociological perspectives to date have not formed a significant discourse within international development ECCD discussions.

Challenges from within Child Development

William Kessen notes, in a 1981 reflection on his prescient 1979 article *The American Child and Other Cultural Inventions*, his introduction in the 1950s at Yale to psychology's pursuit of "laws of behavior [that] were to be perfectly general, indifferent to species, age, gender, or specific psychological content" (1981, p. 27). At approximately the same time, the seeds of a very different understanding of the world were being sown by Michel Foucault in France. And while Foucault himself did not address child development specifically in his publications, his ideas are powerfully reflected in the increasingly influential, post-structural work of Walkerdine (1984), Morss (1996), and Burman (1994), to name a few, and in the broader critical literature in psychology (Henriques, Hollway, Urwin, Venn, & Walkerdine, 1984; Rose, 1985). Where structuralists argue that "everything is connected (if properly analyzed), … the emphasis [of post-structuralism] is on diversity… rather than coherence." (Morss, 1996, p. 125).

Post-structuralism poses nettlesome challenges to the orthodox ranks of child developmentalists. Although disturbing to established interests, post-structuralism's insistence that knowledge is not 'out there', an objective 'reality' waiting to be discovered through the tools

of science, but is instead a social construction formed in a vortex of history, power, situated interests and perspectives, opens up possibilities for understanding and appreciating diversity that are not conceivable within a structuralist world view. In addition, through "…pointing out on what kinds of assumptions, what kinds of familiar, unchallenged, unconsidered modes of thought the practices that we accept rest…" (Foucault, 1981, p.155), we are able to investigate the discipline itself and why, for example, certain issues and topics dominate our attention, and others, arguably of equal or greater importance, fail to register. A simple example from international ECCD would be the relative absence of efforts to better understand child rearing and socialization undertaken by other children, familiar for the majority of children globally, and the plenitude of pre-primary group-care studies, despite its rarity in most societies. By having child development itself, and not just children, as the object of study, new spaces for understanding, critical for advancing Majority World work, became available.

ECCE Reconceptualized

Child development theory has served as an anchor for work led by the influential U.S. early childhood professional group, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). In the late 1980s NAEYC turned to 'developmental science' to bolster its argument that 'best practice' in ECCE should be 'child centered.' The result of this adoption was the publication of position statements on developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) (Bredekamp, 1987).

For the most part the publication was well accepted within the field in North America. However, and perhaps not surprisingly based on inherent cross-cultural limitations and the emergence of a variety of critical theories informed by feminist, post-structural, post-colonial and post-modern perspectives, key members of the ECCE academic community in the United States took exception to DAP in its failure to address, among others, issues of culture, context, and the limitations of a positivist approach (Bloch, 1992; Jipson, 1991; Kessler & Swadener, 1992; Lubeck, 1994; Walsh, 1991). The result of this reaction was the creation of an initially U.S. based body in the early 1990s that called itself the Reconceptualizing Early Childhood Education group (RECE) (e.g., Cannella, 1997; Jipson & Johnson, 2000; Soto & Swadener, 2002).

At a similar point in time (late 1980s and early 1990s), related critiques were forming in other parts of the world, but were largely independent of each other and of activities in the U.S. The particular 'European oriented' work referred to here did not have one particular 'spark,' like the DAP,

to ignite activity. Rather, there was a shared discomfort with ideas such as '*best* practice' when one was working across countries or cultures, and a concern that the polyphonic nature of ECCD was not being allowed expression (Balaguer, Mestres, & Penn, 1992). The idea of 'quality' as an 'objective reality' that existed outside of context and could be measured with 'universal instruments' was also disturbing and elaborations of those ideas led to two related volumes (Dahlberg et al., 1999; Moss & Pence, 1994). Work related to early childhood in New Zealand was also opening up possibilities for other ways of understanding—and, significantly, for the opportunity to apply alternative and inclusionary approaches to policy development (Meade, 1988), to curriculum and programming (Carr & May, 1993), and more recently to assessment (Carr, 2001). As in Canada (Ball & Pence, 2006; Pence, Kuehne, Greenwood, & Opekokew, 1993), the serious acceptance of Indigenous perspectives in Aotearoa/New Zealand provided opportunities for other ways of understanding and promoting ECCE.

ECCE reconceptualist authors have begun to address issues more directly bearing on ECCD and international development (Cannella & Viruru, 2004; Mutua & Swadener, 2004). In doing so they are joining several other ECCE/ECCD voices, not necessarily writing from a reconceptualist position, but sensitive to culture, context and diversity (Pence, 1998; Penn, 2005; Woodhead, 1996), and Majority World child developmentalists (e.g., Kagiticibasi, 1996; Nsamenang, 1993, in press; Viruru, 2001). Collectively, a critical mass of those actively engaged in international development reconceptualist writing (or comfortable with that designation) may be emerging, and as those individuals create spaces for interaction, they may find significant numbers of other sympathetic 'fellow travelers' living and working in the Majority World.

Strengthening through Diversity

The perspectives provided above represent only a sample of literatures that can build, expand and deepen understandings of children's care and development within an international context. Each of these critiques forces the reader to consider context and culture—which should be the *sine qua non* of international work. Yet, the discourses briefly noted above seldom play a role in ECCD and international development discussions. In place of debate and dialogue, we are experiencing a level of modernist certainty that has long since been uprooted in numerous other sciences and disciplines. The narrow understanding of childhood that we have had and continue to receive from psychology and child development theory supports the construction of a uni-form 'global

child' amenable to management and standardization found useful by globalization forces.

A second pillar in the construction and perpetuation of the 'global child' is a similarly narrow construct regarding what constitutes valid and valuable research. As noted by Kessen (1981), Cole (1996), and others there has long been an 'attachment' between child psychology and quantitative, positivist research approaches. The following section will provide a brief critique of what a growing number of researchers internationally perceive as problematic excesses in how certain approaches have been privileged in their relationship to political and policy discourses in ECCD.

The Uses and Abuses of Positivist Methodology

As White noted in his preface to Cole's book (1996), psychology has long suffered from a desire to be a 'real science'—like the physical sciences (also see, for example, Bloch, 1992, Walkerdine, 1984). An irony in that yearning is that while the physical sciences have moved on to embrace uncertainty and to appreciate the idea and value of diverse paradigms in understanding various phenomena, the culturally embedded 'science' of child psychology maintains a fervent quest for transcendent universals and a lack of full engagement in the realities of cultural context. Furthermore, while a multitude of research methods and methodologies have evolved to address the social, biological, cultural, political, and environmental complexities of birth and growth, child development and ECCD have privileged a narrow range of research options. Those approaches, based on a philosophy of positivism and reductionism, mesh smoothly with the construct of the 'global child' and the technical and managerial features of that construct. In the name of scientific rigor, much evidence that speaks to the complex particulars of what it is to be human is culled from consideration. This shaping and processing of 'approved information' does not strengthen science, but weakens it. It does not provide us with more useful information, but less. Increasingly these inter-locking systems remind one, to paraphrase President Eisenhower's departing address (Jan. 17, 1961), of the dangers of an '*academic* industrial complex' that serves its own narrow purposes.

Evidence Based—Positioning the Term

The term 'evidence based' is increasingly found in early childhood policy and practice-related discussions. The term has become controversial not because it advocates that practice should be informed by 'evidence' but because of exclusions of certain types of evidence by some individuals

and groups employing the term. To a troubling degree, 'evidence based' has become another 'battlefront' in the unfortunate quantitative vs. qualitative 'wars'—excluding even various types of quantitative research.

Collaborations and Centers

This was not the intent when the term was first used in the 1990s by medical investigators concerned that practice had become dominated by expert, authoritative personal experience without 'a systematic approach to analyze published research as the basis of clinical decision making' (Claridge & Fabian, 2005). Sackett, Rosenberg, Gray, Haynes, and Richardson (1996), one of the early proponents of the approach, defined 'evidence based' as the "conscientious, explicit, and judicious use of current best evidence in making decisions about the care of individual patients…it requires a bottom-up approach that integrates the best external evidence with individual clinical expertise and patient choice" (p. 71). Importantly, Sackett et al. (1996) later noted: "external clinical evidence can inform, but can never replace, individual clinical expertise" and "evidence based medicine is not restricted to randomized trials and meta-analyses" (p. 72). Despite such statements by those who are seen as founders of the evidence based movement, a number of Centers established since the early 1990s have privileged Randomized Controlled Trials (RCT) as the 'Gold Standard of Evidence' (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002) and meta-analysis procedures that unduly privilege certain types of research.

In 1993 the Cochrane Collaboration was established to conduct and distribute systematic reviews of evidence from randomized controlled trials of the effects of health care (Cochrane Centre Mission Statement). In 2000 the Campbell Collaboration, a sister institute of the Cochrane Collaboration (Cutspec, 2004), was established in the field of social welfare and education.

In recent years other centers, following the Cochrane and Campbell framework, have been created to identify "what works" to maximize a child's learning outcomes. These centers and organizations include the Promising Practices Network (Rand Corporation), What Works Clearinghouse (U.S. Department of Education), Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development (Montreal, Canada), the Curriculum, Evaluation and Management Centre (England), and others. Typically, such Centers of Excellence see Randomized Controlled Trials (RCT) as superior (Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy, 2003) and 'reliable knowledge' as being based on systematic review of empirical studies (Tremblay, 2001, p. 1). These Centers understand evidence-based education to be "the applica-

tion of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs" (U.S. Department of Education, 2001, p. 1964). Few would argue with words like 'rigorous, objective, reliable and valid', but what are the implications of privileging RCT and meta-analyses?

Randomized Controlled Trials

Basing practice on evidence is, clearly, not wrong, but depending on how 'evidence' is defined it can be inappropriately limiting. Different research questions and design limitations should lead one to consider different research approaches. Shavelson and Towne (2002) note: "It is a bedrock principle of research that the questions that are being posed by researchers should determine methodology and design decisions" (p. 45; see also Lincoln & Canella, 2004). Willinsky (2001) notes that "educational researchers have developed and adapted a great variety of research methods" and "educational research has long drawn on the full gamut of the social sciences and humanities" (p. 4). According to Willinsky, when discussing the place of randomized trials and meta-analysis in education:

> the very richness of analysis and understanding that is available, the very play of tensions and challenges across these methods, and the positions taken by researchers within them, make critical contributions to our understanding of education…. To think of constricting the focus as a way of redeeming the value of educational research would be terribly shortsighted. (p. 4)

The Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) certainly has its place, but educational research with young children rarely allows for "experimenter-controlled manipulations uniformly applied to all participants under rigorously controlled conditions," the definition of RCT (McCall & Green, 2004, p. 3). RCT alone cannot address the diversity of questions that relate to children and their development nor *rigorously* control for the *non-uniform* diverse contexts in which they learn and live. While Randomized Controlled Trials have been identified as the 'gold standard' by some, Morrison (2001), for example, notes that RCT specialists also face a number of problems as they: "operate from a restricted view of causality and predictability;… neglect the significance of theories of chaos and complexity; display unrealistic reductionism of a complex whole;… and neglect the significance of context" (p. 69). Clearly, RCT, while possessing certain acknowledged strengths, is a narrow and often difficult tool to employ—one that is particularly challenged in its ability to operate effectively in the Majority World. Unfortunately, meta-analysis,

another staple of Centers' of Excellence work, is also restricted in its technique.

Meta-Analysis

The term 'meta-analysis' was first used by the eminent academic and statistician, Gene Glass, in 1976 to refer more to a philosophy than to a statistical technique (Bangert-Drowns & Rudner, 1991). Today, meta-analysis is often defined as "a statistical analysis that combines or integrates the results of several independent clinical trials considered by the analyst to be 'combinable'" (Egger & Smith, 1997, p. 1372). As noted on various Centers of Excellence websites, evidence as promoted from a positivist perspective often uses meta-analytic procedures to evaluate and summarize findings which are then made available to policymakers, program planners and practitioners. According to Boruch (2005, p. 5) a founder of the Campbell Collaboration (C2), "Virtually all reviews start with the assumption that reviewing randomized trials is the priority." Petticrew & Roberts (2006) note the following 'hierarchy' of evidence is sometimes used as a proxy for indicating the methodological quality of the included studies:

1. Systematic reviews and meta-analyses
2. Randomized controlled trials with definitive results
3. Randomized controlled trials with non-definitive results
4. Cohort studies
5. Case-control studies
6. Cross sectional surveys
7. Case reports

Qualitative studies … are towards the bottom (p. 58).

Petticrew and Roberts (2006) go on to note:

> The original purpose of the hierarchy is often forgotten. The intention was not to produce a definitive hierarchy of methodological purity for all purposes, but a guide to determining the most appropriate study designs for answering questions about effectiveness. Answering questions about processes, or about the meanings of interventions, would imply the use of a very different type of hierarchy, perhaps with qualitative and other methods at the top, while for some etiological questions, observational studies would be ranked first—for example in cases where randomized controlled trials are impractical or unethical. (p. 58)

What we are left with, in placing our science in the hands of those who specialize in RCT and meta-analysis, is (with due apologies to the memory of Urie Bronfenbrenner) the science of the behavior of primarily English-speaking children, living in the unique socio-historical and

economic environment of the United States, encountering researchers funded by politically driven policy imperatives and Western-based theories of child development, participating in tightly controlled RCT studies, with results which either implicitly or explicitly are assumed to be relevant and meaningful for the 95% of the world's children living outside that particular context.

For those who suggest that the solution lies in collecting such data from other parts of the world, Bamberger, Rugh and Mabry (2006), authorities on carrying out studies in Majority world countries, note that

> The implementation of randomized designs in real-world field settings offers many challenges. Although it is possible in a number of situations to achieve or approximate a randomized allocation of communities, schools, or other units to project and control groups, most of these designs have found it much more difficult to ensure a standardized implementation of the project in all sites or to control for differences between the project and control sites during the implementation process. (p. 196)

Such technical challenges represent only one part of the dilemma. Many in the Majority World would also question: "Who decides what the critical questions will be?" "Who will undertake the work?" "What methodologies will be employed?" "Who will be the recipients of the work?" If the answers to all, or even some of these questions, is 'Those from the West"—then we must also consider the ethics of such a colonizing venture.

Critical Voices from within Positivism

It is encouraging that critiques of positivism and empirical methods are not limited to individuals from 'outside' those research traditions. Well-respected statistician Harvey Goldstein (2004) noted in a talk on international student assessment comparisons (e.g., Programme for International Student Assessment, PISA), "the methodology used is not culturally or politically neutral and we might well expect the cultural and political assumptions of such funding bodies to interact with this methodology in ways that determine its form and content" (p. 3). He further notes that people who determine policy also determine funding.

We hear in Goldstein's and in others' words the intimacies of method, message and funding in an increasingly globalized (Westernized) world. An increasing number of well-respected researchers and statisticians are beginning to question the language and real-world use of statistical output as it is being used by some to create an image of unbiased, objective representations of 'truth.' Even within the halls of the Cochrane Collaboration questions are being raised as evidenced by a 2005 essay: "Is evidence-based medicine relevant to the developing world?" (Chin-

nock, Siegfried, & Clarke, 2005). The authors' concerns are of critical importance for ECCD in the Majority World: "relevant studies [for meta-analysis] may easily be missed"; "practitioners have questioned the transferability of evidence derived from studies conducted in richer nations"; and "there are important differences in the way in which care is delivered in developing and developed countries" (p. 3).

Reconsidering 'Gold Standards'

The use of meta-analyses and RCTs as singularly privileged foundation stones for an understanding of ECCD in the 21st century is clearly flawed. Such procedures are useful, but not sufficient to adequately inform ECCD's science or the field. Unfortunately, the positivist, reductionist principles that lie at the heart of RCT and meta-analyses have contributed to the establishment of a neo-modernist environment of singular truth and certainty that is increasingly pervasive within international early childhood care for development. Limited constructs of 'the child', including the child as future primary grade student and the child as future employee, working in concert with limited constructions of research, create a reinforcing cycle of narrow understandings and limited possibilities. Such narrowing processes are consistent with the image of the 'global child' and the technologies and 'industries' that serve that construct. They do, however, take us ever further away from the complexities of childhood and away from supporting the growth of capacity at local levels (Ball & Pence, 2006; Pence & Marfo, 2004).

To a significant degree, international research has become a major international industry with millions of dollars directed towards questions and issues that often have their source in Western-dominated globalization agendas that are impervious to the voices and values of the local. While on the one-hand acknowledging the paucity of Majority World led research, international development dollars that could go to promote local research capacity and the study of locally significant issues is instead directed to Centers, Consortia and multi-nationals far removed from the local. The evidence base provided by Western-based Centers of Excellence is limited in its ability to inform policies and practices in the Majority World (Chinnock, Siegfried, & Clarke, 2005). However, given such Centers' financial, technical, and networking abilities to achieve international visibility, they often become the preferred 'partner' for various international donor organizations—to the continuing disadvantage of those seeking to establish viable regional and local centers committed to local and regional capacity building (A.B., Nsamenang, personal communication, October 14, 2006). There is no little irony in the call from

many international organizations to promote ECCD capacity in the Majority World through research and science, while directing dollars to the Minority World to undertake such work. Promoting local capacity to undertake contextually meaningful research should be at the forefront of international ECCD development activities. Such promotion should not employ neo-colonial models of removing the 'best and the brightest' from their home environments to learn at the feet of Western science in western institutions, but rather to support the growth and development of local institutions, and to promote knowledge exchange of western *and* local understandings in order to generate new understandings, new capacities and new possibilities (Pence & Marfo, 2004).

International ECCD at a Critical Point

Early childhood in the context of international development is at a critical point in the opening years of the 21st century. There is still strong support for an image of childhood manifest as global diversity, yet, at the same time, the power of a much more singular and uniform image of a 'global child' is stronger than it has ever been in the past. ECCD 'science,' as supported by the international donor community, is complicit in this press towards uniformity, this stripping away of diversity. Just as there are academically and theoretically sound options and critiques that open up spaces to understand children as diverse, as formed in culture and context, as more than future graduates and workers in a state of 'becoming' but as citizens *now,* there are also options in ECCD research that allow richness and diversity, that are evidence-based and rigorous, and can also open to local perspectives and to local capacity building.

The ECCD international development community must temper celebration at having come onto the world stage through initiatives such as the EFA, with caution regarding what may be lost in that victory. To elevate 'the child' at the expense of 'children,' to achieve visibility for one construct at the expense of 99 (as Loris Malaguzzi might say), is too great a price to pay. And it is a price that need not be paid. It is possible to find a place for children at international tables and it is possible to elevate research *beyond* controlled trials, but to do so requires removing the blinders of normality, of singular 'truth,' and narrowly framed science.

Notes

[1] The authors would like to thank Dr. Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw for her comments on drafts of the article.

[2] Various acronyms are used by international groups to refer to early childhood care, education and development, for example: Early Childhood Care and

Education/ECCE (UNESCO), Early Childhood Development/ECD (World Bank), and Early Childhood Care for Development/ECCD (Consultative Group).

[3] The terms Minority and Majority worlds will be used rather than First and Third, developed and developing, or North and South.

[4] Sociology's interest in the young child is but one disciplinary example. While useful, it, like other perspectives, should also be seen as open to critique.

References

Alanen, L. (1988). Rethinking childhood. *Acta Sociologica, 31*(1), 53-67.

Ambert, A. (1986). The place of children in North American sociology. In P. Alder & P. Alder (Eds.), *Sociological Studies of Child Development*. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Balaguer, I., Mestres, J., & Penn, H. (1992). *Quality in services for young children*. Brussels: European Commission Equal Opportunities Unit.

Ball, J. & Pence, A. R. (2006). *Supporting indigenous children's development: Community-university partnerships*. Vancouver, BC: University of Britich Columbia Press.

Bamberger, M., Rugh, J., & Mabry, L. (2006). *Real world evaluation: Working under budget, time, data, and political constraints* (p.196). Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage Publications.

Bangert-Drowns, R. L., & Rudner, L. M. (1991). *Meta-analysis in educational research. Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation*, *2*(8). Retrieved October 15, 2006 from http://www.pareonline.net

Bloch, M. (1992). Critical perspectives on the historical relationship between child development and early childhood education research. In S.A. Kessler & B.B. Swadener (Eds.), *Reconceptualizing the early childhood curriculum: Beginning the dialogue* (pp. 3-20). New York: Teachers College Press.

Boruch, R. (2005). What is the Campbell Collaboration and how is it helping to identify "what works"? *The Evaluation Exchange*, *11*(2), Retrieved January 5, 2007 from http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/eval/issue30/expert2.html

Bredekamp, S. (Ed.). (1987). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs serving children from birth through age eight*. Washington DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Burman, J. (1994). *Deconstructing developmental psychology*. New York: Routledge.

Cannella, G. S. (1997). *Deconstructing early childhood education: Social justice and revolution*. New York: Peter Lang.

Cannella, G. S. & Viruru, R. (2004). *Childhood and postcolonization*. New York: Routledge Falmer.

Carr, M. & May, H. (1993). Choosing a model. Reflecting on the development process of Te Whariki: National early childhood curriculum guidelines in New Zealand. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, *1*(3), 7-21.

Carr, M. (2001). *Assessment in early childhood settings: Learning stories*. London, UK: Paul Chapman.

Chinnock, P., Siegfried, N., & Clarke, M. (2005). *Is evidence-based medicine*

relevant to the developing world? Public Library of Science, Retrieved July 17, 2006 from http://medicine.plosjournals.org

Claridge, J. A., & Fabian, T. C. (2005). History and development of evidence-based medicine. *World Journal of Surgery*, *29*(5), 547-553.

Cole, M. (1996). *Cultural psychology: A once and future discipline*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Cutspec, P.(2004). Bridging the research-to-practice gap: Evidence-based education. *Centerscope*, 1-12.

Dahlberg, G., Moss, P., & Pence, A. R. (1999). *Beyond quality in early childhood education and care.* London, UK: Routledge Falmer.

Dahlberg, G., Moss, P., & Pence, A. R. (2006). *Beyond quality in early childhood education and care*: *Languages of evaluation* (2nd ed.). London, UK: Routledge Falmer.

Egger, M., & Smith, D. (1997). *Meta-analysis:Potentials and promise. British Medical Journal*, *315*, 1371-1374

Foucault, M. (1981). 'Practicing criticism' or 'Is it really important to think?' Interview by Didier Eribon, May 30-31, 1981. In L. Kritzman (1988), (Ed.), *Foucault, politics, philosophy, culture* (pp.152-158) New York: Routledge.

Glass, G. (1976). Primary, secondary, and meta-analysis of research. *Educational Researcher, 5,* 3-8.

Goldstein, H. (2004). *The education world cup: International comparisons of student achievement,* Plenary talk to Association for Educational Assessment—Europe, Budapest, November 4-6.

Greenfield, P. M., & Bruner, J. S. (1966). Culture and cognitive growth. *International Journal of Psychology*, *1*, 89-107.

Henriques, J., Hollway, W., Urwin, C., Venn, C., & Walkerdine. V. (1984). *Changing the subject: Psychology, social regulation and subjectivity*. London, UK: Methuen.

James, A., & Prout, A. (Eds.). (1990). *Constructing and reconstructing childhood: Contemporary issues in the sociological study of childhood*. Basingstoke, UK: Falmer Press.

James, A., Jenks, C., & Prout, A. (1998). *Theorizing childhood*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Jenks, C. (Ed.). (1982). *The sociology of childhood—Essential readings*. London, UK: Batsford.

Jenks, C. (1996). *Childhood*. London, UK: Routledge.

Jipson, J. (1991). Developmentally appropriate practice: Culture, curriculum, and connections. *Early Education and Development, 2*, 120-136.

Jipson, J. A., & Johnson, R. T. (Eds.). (2000). *Resistance and representation: Rethinking childhood education*. New York: Peter Lang.

Kessen, W. (1979). The American child and other cultural inventions. *American Psychologist*, *34*(10), 815-820.

Kessen, W. (1981). The child and other cultural inventions. In F.S. Kessel & A.W. Siegel (Eds.), *The child and other cultural inventions* (pp. 26-39). New York: Praeger.

Kessler, S., & Swadener, B. B. (1992). *Reconceptualizing the early childhood curriculum: Beginning the dialogue*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Kiagiticibasi, C. (1996*). Family and human development across cultures: A View from the other side*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Lincoln, Y. S. & Cannella, G. S. (2004). Dangerous discourses, methodological conservatism, and governmental regimes of Truth. *Qualitative Inquiry, 10(*1), 5-14.

Lubeck, S. (1994). The politics of developmentally appropriate practice. In B. Mallory & R. New (Eds.), *Diversity and developmentally appropriate practice* (pp. 17-43). New York: Teachers College Press.

MacNaughton, G. (2000). *Rethinking gender in early childhood education*. St. Leonards, New South Wales: Allen & Unwin.

Malaguzzi, L. (1993). Invece il cento c'e' (No way. The hundred is there). (L. Gandini, Trans.). In C. Edwards, L. Gandini, & G. Forman, *The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing.

McCall, R. B., & Green, B. L. (2004). Beyond the methodological gold standards of behavioral research: Considerations for practice and policy. *Social Policy Report 18*(2), 3-19.

Meade, A. (1988). *Education to be more* (Report of the early childhood education and care working group). Wellington: New Zealand Government Printer.

Morrison, K. (2001). Randomised controlled trials for evidence-based education: Some problems in judging 'what works'. *Evaluation and Research in Education*, *15*(2), 69-83.

Morss, J. R. (1996). *Growing critical: Alternatives to developmental psychology*. London, UK: Routledge.

Moss, P., & Pence, A. R. (1994). *Valuing quality in early childhood services: New approaches to defining quality.* London, UK: Paul Chapman.

Mutua, K. & Swadener, B. B. (Eds.). (2004). *Decolonizing research in cross-cultural contexts: Critical personal narratives.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Nsamenang, A. B. (1993). *Human development in cultural context*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Nsamenang, A. B. (in press). (Mis)understanding ECD in Africa: The force of local and global motives. In M. Garcia, A. Pence, & J. Evans (Eds.), *Africa's future—Africa's challenges: Early childhood care and development in Sub-Sahara Africa*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Pence, A. R. (1998). Reconceptualizing ECCD in the majority world: One minority world perspective. *International Journal of Early Childhood*, *30*(2), 19-30.

Pence, A. R., Kuehne, V., Greenwood, M. & Opekokew, M. R. (1993). Generative curriculum: A model of university and First Nations cooperative, post-secondary education. *International Journal of Educational Development, 13*(4)*,* 339-349.

Pence, A. R. & Marfo, K. (Eds.). (2004). Capacity building for early childhood development in Africa [Special Issue]. *International Journal of Educational Policy, Research and Practice*, *5*(3), 5-12.

Penn, H. (2005). *Unequal childhoods: Young children's lives in poor countries*. London, UK: Routledge.

Petticrew, M. & Roberts, H. (2006). *Systematic reviews in social science: A practical guide*. Maden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Qvortrup, J., Bardy, M., Sgritta, G. & Wintersberger, H. (Eds.). (1994). *Childhood matters: Social theory, practice and politics*. Aldershot, UK: Avebury.

Rose, N. (1985). *The psychological complex: Psychology, politics and society in England, 1869-1939.* London, UK: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Sackett, D. L., Rosenberg, W. M., Gray, J. A., Haynes, R. B., & Richardson, W. S. (1996). Evidence based medicine: What it is and what it isn't. *British Medical Journal, 312*, 71-72.

Shadish, W. R., Cook, T. D., & Campbell, D. T. (2002). *Experimental and quasi-experimental design for generalized causal inference*. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.

Shavelson, R. J., & Towne, L. (Eds.). (2002). *Scientific research in education*. Washington, DC: National Academy of Sciences, National Research Council.

Soto, L. D., & Swadener, B. B. (2002). Toward liberatory early chidhood theory, research and praxis: Decolonizing a field. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, *3*(1), 38-66.

Tremblay, R. (2001, November). *Bulletin of the Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development* [Special Edition].

UNESCO, (1990). *The World Declaration on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs.* Retrieved January 5, 2007 from http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/ed_for_all/background/jomtein_declaration.shtml

UNESCO (2000), *Dakar Framework for Action.* Retrieved January 5, 2007 from http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/ed_for_all/framework.shtml

UNESCO, (2006). *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2007: Strong Foundations*. Retrieved January 5, 2007 from http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/evphp-URL_ID=49640&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

UNICEF. (2001, September). *We the children: Meeting the promises of the World Summit for Children.* New York: Author.

UNICEF, (2006). *State of the World's Children*. Retrieved January 5, 2007 from http://www.unicef.org/sowc06/profiles/labour.php

United States Department of Education (2001). *No Child Left Behind Act section 9101(37*). Retrieved August 16, 2006 from http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/107-110/pdf

Viruru, R. (2001). *Early childhood education: Postcolonial perspectives from India*. New Delhi: Sage.

Walkerdine, V. (1984). Developmental psychology and the child-centered pedagogy. In J. Henriques, W., Hollway, C., Urwin, C., Venn, & V. Walkerdine (Eds.), *Changing the subject: Psychology, social regulation and subjectivity* (pp. 153-202). London, UK: Methuen.

Walsh, D. (1991). Extending the discourse on developmental appropriateness: A developmental perspective. *Early Education and Development*, *2,* 109-119.

Willinsky, J. (2001). Extending the prospects of evidence-based education. *Insight*, *1*(1) Retrieved on January 4, 2007 from http://pkp.sfu.ca/files/Evidence-BasedEducation.pdf

Witkin, H. A. (1967). A cognitive-style approach to cross-cultural research. *In-*

ternational Journal of Psychology, *2*, 233-250.
Woodhead, M. (1996). *In search of the rainbow: Pathways to quality in large scale programmes for young disadvantaged children*. The Hague: Bernard van Leer Foundation.