



# SJC Fall Newsletter

## Supporting conversations about curriculum

### Carrle Melsom

How do you know you are an educator? It is a provocative question for early childhood educators. In a society where we often feel undervalued and misunderstood it's an important question to answer.

Understanding yourself as an educator, being able to talk the talk and walk the walk is critical if you want others to recognize the value of what you do—of what we do.

Educators talk about the curriculum they offer (course of studies) and their pedagogy (science of teaching) in relation to their work. In this way educators can talk about the why and how of their work and make obvious the links between their knowledge and their practice.

It can be a challenge to have these types of conversations in early childhood programs. Aside from issues of time, child care practitioners have many different levels of training and experience. Some have never had the opportunity to think about their work in this way.

Offering opportunities for this type of dialogue is one

of the roles of a training institution such as St. Joseph's College. In a field with few resources and minimal infrastructure the relationship between the college and early childhood community is a special one and important to the well-being of our emerging profession.

SJC students rely on their practicum experiences to make important linkages between learning and practice. In class they are always having conversations about curriculum. Talking about the work in this way is something they can share

with their practicum sites and contact teachers.

The Tuesday night workshop series offers early childhood educators opportunities to network and engage in conversations about the what, the how and the why of our work.

For those interested in sustained conversations and reflecting in a supported community of practice the resource centre is offering a new group called **The Curriculum Project**. You can find more about this group on page three of this newsletter or call 420-1492.

### Message from the Director

Dear Colleagues,

With the new initiatives of the *Early Learning and Child Care* plan rolling out it occurs to us that Centres, both new and established, will be looking to training institutions for support. The newly created child care spaces will result in the need for more trained teachers. It is our hope that you view St. Joseph's College as a partner, both in terms of material, and human, resources.

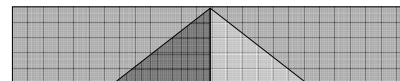
St. Joseph's College is proud to announce that our 3<sup>rd</sup> Lab School (child care centre) opened on August 1, 2007 at the new Waterfront Campus of the Nova Scotia Community College in Dartmouth. This facility includes licensed child care for infants, toddlers and preschool children. We would be delighted to "show off" the Centre and invite you to call Centre Director, Cathy Ramos (491-1330) for a tour of the

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#### Inside this issue:

- Workshops Sept —Dec 2007
- Picture books in an anti-bias curriculum
- Resource Centre groups
- A curriculum story

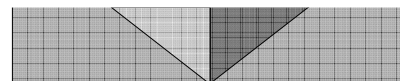
*A publication informing the early childhood education community of events, services and professional development opportunities offered by St. Joseph's College of Early Childhood Education.*



**Please circulate and post this newsletter!**

**E-mail:**

**[ecestjoe@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:ecestjoe@ns.sympatico.ca)  
to be added to our e-mail list.**



## Look for the symbol

The college offers a wide variety of workshops each year to help meet the diverse professional development needs of people working in early learning and child care settings.

It is our belief that people at different stages of their career look for different types of professional development opportunities and are interested in different types of conversations about their work. Look for these symbols on our workshop schedule to help you decide if a workshop fits your stage of development.



**Budding:** Just starting your career in early childhood education? These workshops are designed to meet your early needs and to prepare you for the challenges that lie ahead.



**Advancing:** Growing in your career? Past the basics? These workshops provide advanced training for maturing early childhood educators, which will reinvigorate you and motivate you to climb a little higher.



**Master:** These workshops are designed to challenge seasoned early childhood educators who have a rich background in ELCC. You'll dig deeper and find new and innovative information for your maturation and skill level.



**Something here for everyone.**

Of course, these symbols are just a guideline. We hope they are helpful to you as you make your choices. We look forward to your suggestions and feedback about our workshops to help us fine tune programming for the next term. Please call 420-1492.

## Message

facility. We will be having an official opening event sometime in the fall—details to follow.

A new course, **Emergent Literacy**, has been added to the program of studies this semester. The course will build on child development and curriculum knowledge as students explore theoretical and practical issues regarding language and literacy. Upon successful completion of this course students will reliably demonstrate the ability to design curricula that supports literacy skill development in children ages 0 to 12 and implement activities and programs that enhance early literacy skills. As well as being offered as part of the day program **Emergent Literacy** is being offered as a night course this fall (see insert).

*Jane Cawley*



## Are you mentoring one of our students this fall?

### St. Joseph's College of Early Childhood Education

**Free  
Workshop**

**To reserve your  
spot call:  
423-7114**

We are offering a free professional development workshop for all our practicum contact teachers (those working directly with an SJC student).

*Topic: Behaviour Guidance: strengthening the connection between theory and practice*

Date: Tuesday, October 16, 2007 (7 PM-9 PM)

Presenter: Jane Cawley, Executive Director SJC

Location: 2326 Brunswick Street, 2nd Floor

## Resource Centre

### Professional Development Opportunities for Groups

- Reaching In ... Reaching Out Promoting Resiliency in Young Children in Child Care (2 day training)
- The Encouraging Classroom: social problem solving for preschoolers (full day workshop)
- Magical Environments (1/2 day workshop)
- Meeting the Challenge: effective strategies for challenging behaviours (full day workshop)
- What are we doing here? Reconnecting with our vision (documentation visit + workshop)
- Tumble Bugs Active Play (1/2 day training)
- Hold a Staff Meeting or work bee in the Resource Centre

# Sharing stories of the past

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## Carrie Melsom

This summer I was once again reminded of the important role that early childhood educators play in offering children stories and books to help them to explore the connections and the differences between us.

I truly believe that we all—young children included, deserve more than platitudes about how everyone is equal. When I read about racist graffiti painted on a park bench before the Africville reunion or hear comments about how First Nations' poverty has nothing to do with the rest of Canada I worry about the consequences of failing to engage in the opportunities that an anti-bias approach to education offers.

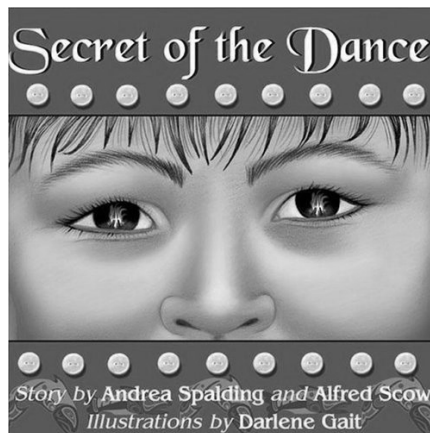
Perhaps you think that the pain and injustice of our shared past is too complex and is inappropriate for young children. And of course, to some extent that's true. But we have always shared stories. It is in stories that there is the safety to share the really important values, beliefs and understandings of our cultures. And it is with stories of the past that are shared in diverse voices that we can access the history we need to understand the present.

With limited program budgets, the predominance of commercial licensed-character books and time constraints it can be a challenge to find and include a diverse range of books on a classroom bookshelf. The resource centre can help. Our library houses a large collection of children's picture books. Many of these books were selected because they can help us to explore our shared humanity with young children in a straight forward and accessible way. We'd like you to think of our bookshelves as an extension of your own. By pulling from our bookshelf you can enrich and add to the diversity of your own.

Here are two examples of books that can help support an anti-bias approach:

*Secret of the Dance* by Andrea Spalding and Alfred Scow is a beautifully illustrated story about Alfred's memories of attending a potlatch ceremony as a young

child at a time when these ceremonies were forbidden by the Canadian government. Children will be drawn in by the illustrations and the story of a mysterious fire-lit night. Conversations about what



people were thinking and feeling grow naturally out of the story and children have an opportunity to learn about an

important piece of our history while gaining an appreciation of the rich culture of our West Coast First Nations.

In *My Brother Martin: A Sister Remembers*, Christine King Farris shares memories of her home and growing up with her brother Martin Luther King Jr. The book addresses clearly and thoughtfully the pain of racism and segregation as it was experienced by the children in their family. Every child understands the pain of not being allowed to play with someone. Making this connection and exploring those feelings through the book can offer children the opportunity to think and talk about discrimination. By sharing this story teachers can also acknowledge and validate the experiences of those children and families who have lived with racism.

We invite you to drop by and explore our picture book collection. We have over a 1000 titles that include board books, big books and of course, the classics.

## Refresh Yourself:

# Join a resource centre group

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## The Leading Edge

This discussion group is for administrators and lead teachers in early childhood programs – Join colleagues for a facilitated discussion about issues of quality, program management and administration, staff development, working with families, etc. Group members share strategies, insights and challenges as part of a learning community.

This group meets once a month with an agenda which grows out of current issues, topics from the last meeting, and whatever the needs are on a particular day. Our format is loose enough for laughter but focused enough for problem solving and a real exchange of ideas. Our goal is to support each other in this amazing and challenging work.

**10:00-12:00 the second Thursday of each month in the SJC Early Childhood Education Resource Centre**

## The Curriculum Project

Join in conversation with other early childhood educators who are interested in exploring curriculum approaches with a focus on what they mean in practice. The goal of this group is to share our knowledge and experience and to engage in joint activities and discussions that deepen our understanding of how we can approach curriculum in our early learning and child care programs.

This group meets once a month in the comfort of the student lounge and uses video, articles and stories about our own work to explore curriculum. Group members support each other, share resources, experiences, tools and problem-solving strategies while they develop friendships with a group of professional colleagues.

**7:00-9:00 the second Wednesday of each month in the SJC Student Lounge**

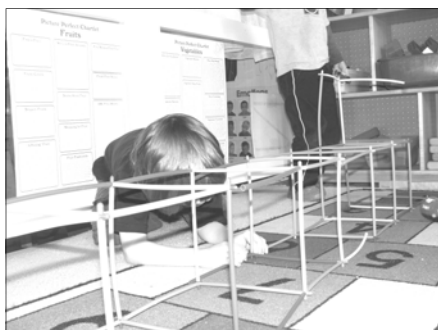


**ST. JOSEPH'S COLLEGE OF  
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One of many materials available from the Resource Centre. See our web-site for more.

*At St. Joseph's College of Early Childhood Education, we provide an opportunity for students to study and gain experience in Early Childhood Education through a diverse range of courses and practical settings.*

*We are proud to lay the foundation for the personal and professional growth and development of our students. It is our hope and goal that SJC graduates continue to learn, practice and reflect throughout their years in early childhood education.*



**Join the crowd—become a member today**

Take advantage of the many services provided with a St. Joseph's Resource Centre membership

**Resources for the early childhood community**



Organization members	\$100
Individual members	\$25

Tel: 420-1492 E-mail: [resourcecentre@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:resourcecentre@ns.sympatico.ca)



# How a summer room move inspired curriculum

**Sarah Fralck**

**Source of Idea:**

At our most recent Staff Meeting our Director informed us that our Centre would have to be moved for a week to allow for a fresh coat of paint and some serious cleaning. She then challenged us to get “creative” and make this the best week of our summer.

Always being up for a challenge we brainstormed and we all agreed that a week-long “Camp-Out” would be a great way to present this to our children and families.

**The Plan:**

We quickly planned our materials- complete with tents, sleeping bags, flashlights, and the use of natural materials like grass, twigs, pinecones, firewood and flower petals.

As the week approached we made signs inviting parents to bring camping materials for the children to use. We also made plans with our children for ‘packing’ our boxes with all the things we would need for our big adven-



ture. The three days before our big move we visited our new rooms with the children and talked about what would happen to our toys and furniture on the big moving day. On Friday afternoon it was difficult to tell who was more excited for Monday morning at the

“campsite” - the children or the staff!

**Reflection:**

After moving the last boxes back down to our refreshed classrooms we truly did have the best week of the summer. The children who were preparing for the transition from the toddler room to the preschool room, and those preschoolers making the move to ‘big school’ were able to gain experience with big changes in their world. As staff members we got excited about planning new curriculum for the children. We did get very creative with the introduction of new materials and activities to engage and expand the children’s interests- which is the true meaning of what we do as Early Childhood Educators.

*Sarah is an SJC graduate and a teacher at Leeds Street Children's Centre. This is one of countless exciting curriculum stories happening in Nova Scotia. We'd like to share yours too. E-mail your story to Carrie Melsom at [resourcecentre@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:resourcecentre@ns.sympatico.ca)*