

THE PROGRAM OF STUDIES: Learning at the College

Jane Cawley

On the NSCECE website, www.nscece.ca, you will find a list of the 23 courses that are part of the 2-year diploma program offered by NSCECE. But what do we actually cover in the four semesters?

Each semester is comprised of a variety of courses that expand the knowledge, skills and abilities of our learners. There are courses which examine the ideas of theorists or as I fondly refer to them ... "That delightful group of deceased, white men". It is often long after graduation that students connect how the work of Vygotsky or Erikson can directly inform their practice as ECEs. All course content is based on current and reliable research, and illustrated by anecdotal examples to make the information relevant and real.

We also have a series of courses that support curriculum development. It is critical that our graduates come to work prepared not only with a variety of fun activities for children of all ages but also with the rationale for providing those activities. Although these courses are very hands-on in their delivery approach, the underlying emphasis is

on linking program development to a philosophical approach based on research



and an understanding of how children learn.

Those of us who have been in the field know that we

are often asked by friends and family "what do you actually do?" The role of the teacher weaves throughout the entire program of studies with several courses directly focused on the unique skills needed to be an effective ECE. Students are introduced to various observation techniques

and then use these to identify children's skills, abilities, interests and emerging skills.

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A Message from the Director

Dear Colleagues,

After writing the article about the College Program of Studies I realized that there is something else that I am extremely proud of.

The Lab Schools (Leeds St., Akerley, and Mawio'mi Child Care Centres) offer child-centred and developmentally appropriate curriculum to infants, toddlers and preschool aged children which is delivered by qualified teachers who are educated and highly skilled in early childhood education. The programs offered at the Lab Schools are based on the Emergent Curriculum Approach which provide experiences that are based on careful observation that reveal what is individually appropriate for each child as well as interests that are shared. In deciding what interests to plan for and actively support, teachers assess the potential of any interest

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- *My First Year as an ECE*
- *Leadership & Management Resources*
- *PD & Training Resources*

A publication informing the early childhood education community of events, services and professional development opportunities offered by the Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education

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www.nscece.ca**



Learning at the College

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In behaviour guidance courses students learn the “nuts and bolts” of guidance strategies and then build on that information as they examine the environment (curriculum, space, routines, transitions and people) as the key to supporting children’s development, behaviour and resilience.

In communications courses the students focus on becoming proficient in the basic communication and writing skills expected at the post secondary level. We know how important it is for early childhood educators to present themselves professionally as they advocate for children and families. We also offer students an opportunity to study the sociology of the family, the challenges families face in today’s society and their effects on the child. Students explore and research various relationship building strategies and barriers to communicating

effectively with parents.

As a College we recognize and value diversity and the commonalities that exist among individuals and families. This phi-

“...students learn to create environments that reflect the diversity of the people who are in them.”

losophy is expressed in all courses but particularly in Inclusive Learning Environments where students learn to create environments that reflect the diversity of the people who are in them. We then expand the discussion of inclusion to focus on children with special needs. Students learn to design, evaluate and revise curriculum and environments to support the develop-

mental needs of all children within a childcare setting.

Our students graduate with over 600 hours of practicum experience. They reliably demonstrate the ability to plan and implement programs based on observations which enhance children’s emerging skills and interests.

We are very proud of the program of studies at NSCECE. The curriculum is current, relevant and evolves as the research about children and issues about childcare change. Changes and additions to course offerings are informed by student feedback, government initiatives and occupational guidelines. For example, we are designing a new course, **Movement, Active Play and**

*Interested in enhancing your management skills? We offer an **Administration and Management** course during the Fall term, Tuesday's from 2-4 PM. For further information call (902) 423-7114 or info@nscece.ca*

My first year as an early childhood educator

Jennifer Brown

When my teachers at NSCECE told me during my second year “that your first year teaching will be your survival year”, they were not kidding.

I began working as an ECE four days after graduating. I was still very much in the frame of mind of being a student and having the comfort and security of the college. I feel that this year has gone by so fast. It’s hard to believe I have one year under my belt already.

I began in the toddler room with five children in my group. Having the classroom knowledge and some practicum knowledge then plunging in and doing “it for real” was a huge change and a little scary.

I began to find my way after a few months and began to feel a little more confident. I then moved to the preschool room in November and began working as the supportive staff member for a child with special needs. I have grown in the pre-

school room and with my two co-workers have learned how to be a supportive and understanding team member. I believe that



without my co-workers, I would not have grown to be the person I have become.

In my first year I have learned that working as a team is hard work. Being a mem-

ber of a small centre and having five other co-workers and a director besides myself, has been an enlightening experience. I also have the greatest group of preschoolers; they themselves have taught me more in a year than I would have ever expected to learn.

I expected that it would be hard work but I never expected it would be this hard! I look forward to going to work each day to see what I will learn. I enjoy watching the look on the children’s faces when they learn something new from me.

When I look ahead to what will come in my career I am excited to see what more I will learn. I believe that in this field if you are not learning something new from the children each day then you have lost the ability to teach them something.

The greatest thing I have learned is that each day you must love, respect and truly care for the children in your centre and what they will give you in return will benefit everyone around you.

In the Resource Centre

Carrie Melsom

With the support of the Department of Community Services Early Childhood Education Training Initiative the Resource Centre is able to purchase resources that help keep the collection current and in good repair. This year, in addition to new toys, we decided to focus on increasing professional resources relating to leadership and administration, professional development, and children with special needs.

Supports for Directors and administrators are critical to the overall quality of our early learning and care programs. Learning the job, on the job, can lead to a few bumps along the way. I'm often reminded of the verse by A.A. Milne when I'm in the middle of one of those bumpy moments.

"Here is Edward Bear coming downstairs now, bump, bump, bump, on the back of his head, behind Christopher Robin. It is, as far as he knows the only way of coming downstairs, but sometimes he feels that there really is another way... if only he could stop bumping for a moment and think of it."

Winnie the Pooh

Related Materials in the Resource Centre

- The Visionary Director 371 CA
- Learning to Lead 371 SU
- Many Right Ways: Designing your home child care environment I 027
- The What, Why, and How of High-Quality ECE: A guide for on-site supervision 371 KO
- The Practical Guide to Quality Child Care 362.7 SC
- Leading People in Early Childhood Settings CD 045
- A Great Place to Work: Improving Conditions for Staff in Young Children's Programs 371 JOR

Chatting with other directors, making time to network and attend professional development, and finding the tools that can help take you and your program to the next level are all strategies to help move you off that bumpy path. A visit to the Resource Centre might be just what you need to clear your head.

Some of our many new resources include:

- *Program Administration Scale* by Teri Talan and Paula Jorde Bloom. This tool measures early childhood leadership and management. It is used in much the same way as the ECERS and measures program dimensions such as human resource development, fiscal management, family partnerships, and center operations. (371 TAL)
- *250 Management Success Stories from Child Care Centre Directors* short and inspirational stories compiled by Child Care Information Exchange. (371 CCIE)
- *Leadership in Action: How Effective Directors Get Things Done* by Paula Jorde Bloom is one of the director's toolbox series. Using humour, quotes, quips, and simple exercises this book takes you on a journey to help you discover your leadership style. (371 JO-L)
- *Managing Money: A Center Director's Guidebook* Child Care Information Exchange. This collection of exchange articles focuses on money management and financial evaluation tools. Also has articles on fund raising and on salary scales and job classification. (371 NE-M)
- *The Business of Child Care Management and Financial Strategies* by Gail Jack focuses specifically on budgeting and record keeping and includes a CD of customizable spreadsheet templates. (371 JA)
- *Staff Challenges: Practical Ideas for Recruiting, Training, and Supervising Early Childhood Employees.* This collection of articles from Child Care Information Exchange has a section on developing personnel policies and procedures, orienting and training staff, and overcoming challenging situations. (371 NE-S)

Resource Centre services are offered with support from the Department of Community Services, Early Childhood Education Training Initiative.

Resource Centre Professional Development Opportunities for Centres or 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 or 3 sessions)
- **What are we doing here? Reconnecting with your vision** (documentation visit + workshop)
- **Tumble Bugs Active Play** (1/2 day leader training)
- **The Affective Curriculum** (five, 3-hour workshops focused on cultural competence, self-esteem, optimism, problem solving, and emotional intelligence)
- **Hold a Staff Meeting or Work Bee in the Resource Centre**

Have a professional development need you don't see listed here? Call Carrie Melsom, NSCECE Resource Centre Coordinator at 420-1492 to discuss the possibility of a workshop designed for your centre or group.



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Participants discuss the issues at the *What Do We Want* workshop facilitated by NSCECE 2009 graduates. (June 2009)

At the Nova Scotia 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 NSCECE 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 NSCECE Resource Centre membership

Resources for the early childhood community

Organization members \$100

Individual members \$25

E-mail: resourcecentre@nscece.ca

Tel: (902) 420-1492



Using challenges as a spring-board for training

Carrie Melsom

Issues often arise quickly in a child care setting and it can be difficult to turn these challenges into learning opportunities for your staff due to constraints of time and resources. The result can be a directive approach which while efficient in the moment leaves us with a learning gap and the possibility that we will face a particular issue again and again because we haven't grasped the essential nature of the problem.

Staff meetings, if they happen on a regular basis, can be an excellent opportunity to engage in the reflection and the ongoing learning that is essential to a quality program. But getting your hands on the resources to support dialogue and learning around particular issues is a challenge. That's where the NSCECE Resource Centre can help. In addition to the possibility of organizing specific professional development for your staff,

the Resource Centre is building a collection of resources that support Directors and Program Administrators in offering training to their own staff. Efficient, timely, easy to use, the best thing about these resources is that you can borrow them and save your PD \$\$ for other types of learning opportunities.

Some of the many resources available include:

- *Developing Dialogue: 20 Worksheets for Interviewing, Staff Development Efforts and Ongoing Dialogue in Early Care and Education Programs* 374 CA-D
- *Early Childhood Workshops that Work!* 374 AL
- *Out of the Box Training* packages on a range of topics. Each package comes with an Exchange article and strategies and tips to spark your thinking and training efforts.

- *Visionary Infant and Toddler Program Environments* CD 026 is one of a number of powerpoint slide shows
- *Room Arrangement as a Teaching Strategy* DVD 031
- *Looking at the Basics of Developmentally Appropriate Practice* DVD 004

Director's Message

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for in-depth learning by both the individual child and other members of the learning community.

These child care centres also serve as demonstration sites, providing student teachers with staff mentors who role model best practice. The early childhood educators and support staff who work at these 3 centres are dedicated, professional and exemplify the ideals of lifelong learning. *Jane Cawley*